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My name is Mary Ellen _____. I don't know how old I am. My mother and father are both dead. I call Mrs. C_____ momma. I have never had but one pair of shoes but can't recollect when that was. I have no shoes or stockings this winter. I have never been allowed to go out . . . except in the nighttime, and only in the yard [to use the outdoor privy]. My bed at night is only a piece of carpet stretched on the floor underneath a window and I sleep in my little undergarment with a quilt over me. I am never allowed to play with other children. Momma has been in the habit of whipping me almost every day. She used to whip me with a twisted whip — a rawhide. The whip always left black and blue marks on my body. I have now on my head two black and blue marks which were made by momma with the whip, and a cut on the left side of my forehead which was made by a pair of scissors in momma's hand. She struck me with the scissors and cut me. I have no recollection of ever having been kissed and I have never been kissed by momma. I have never been taken on momma's lap or caressed or petted. I never dared speak to anybody, because if I did, I would get whipped. I have never had . . . any more clothing than I have on at present...I have seen stockings and other clothes in our room, but I am not allowed to put them on. Whenever momma went out, I was locked up in the bedroom . . . I don't know for what I was whipped. Momma never said anything when she whipped me. I do not want to go back to live with momma because she beats me so.

Mary Ellen's Court Statement