

**REMINISCENCES
OF
LEVI COFFIN,**

***The Reputed President of the Underground Railroad;
BEING
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LABORS OF A LIFETIME IN BEHALF
OF THE SLAVE, WITH THE STORIES OF NUMEROUS
FUGITIVES, WHO GAINED THEIR FREEDOM
THROUGH HIS INSTRUMENTALITY, AND
MANY OTHER INCIDENTS.***

Chapter 1 page 13 (around 1810)

Another incident of my boyhood is indelibly engraved on my mind. I accompanied my father one spring to the famous shad fishery at the narrows of the Yadkin River, a spot of wild and romantic scenery, where the stream breaks through a spur of the mountains and goes foaming and dashing down its rocky bed in a succession of rapids. Every spring, when the shad ascended the river, many people resorted to the place to obtain fish. They brought with them a variety of merchandise, saddlery, crockery-ware, etc., and remained in camp some time, buying and selling. The fishery was owned by two brothers named Crump. They were slaveholders, and sometimes allowed their slaves the privilege of fishing after night and disposing of the fish thus obtained, on their own account. A slave, who had availed himself of this privilege, disposed of the fish he caught to my father. Next morning he came to the place where we were preparing breakfast, and entered into conversation with my father, speaking of the fish he had sold him, and asking if he would take more on the same terms. Noticing this, and thinking it a piece of presuming familiarity and impertinence, on the part of the negro, a young man, nephew of the Crumps, seized a fagot from the fire and struck the negro a furious blow across the head, baring the skull, covering his back and breast with blood, and his head with fire; swearing at the same time that he would allow no such impudence from niggers. My father protested against the act, and I was so deeply moved that I left my breakfast untasted, and going off by myself gave vent to my feelings in sobs and tears.

A few such instances of "man's inhumanity to man" intensified my hatred of slavery, and inspired me to devote myself to the cause of the helpless and

oppressed, and enter upon that line of humane effort, which I pursued for more than fifty years.

<https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/coffin/coffin.html>