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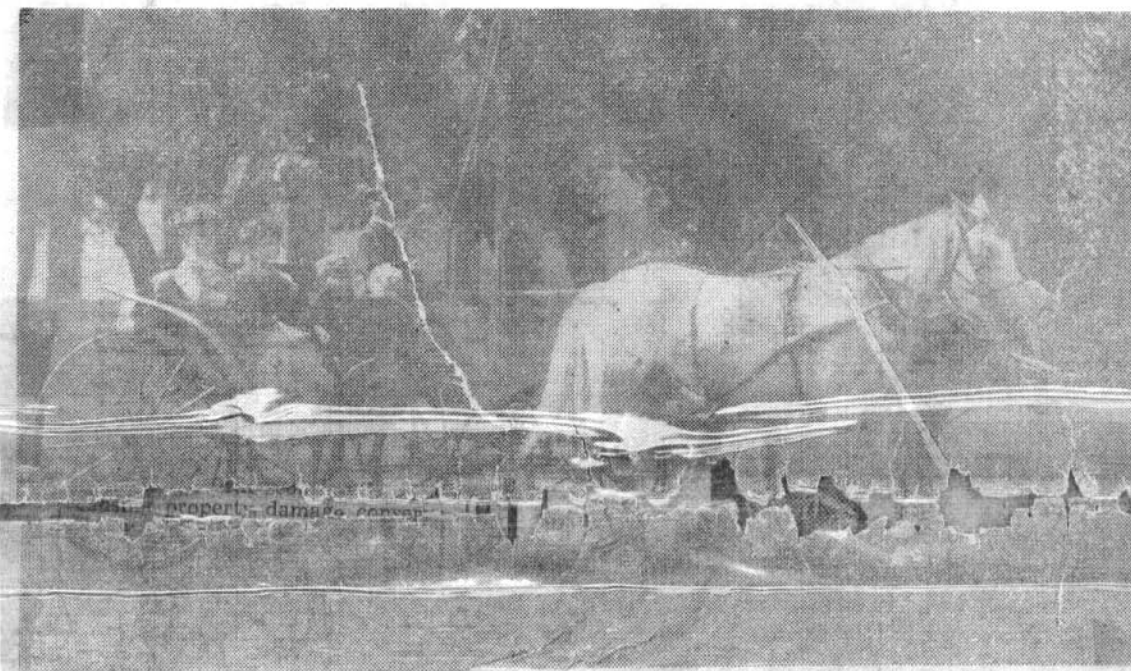
Slaves Recall Pre-Civil War



Mrs. Millie Smith and Mrs. Phyllis Kuhl Edgell.



WALTER AND MARY ORENDORFF



Wilson Russell coachman for the Frank Frorer family, in the nineties.



MRS. LAURA DYER

Lincoln's Former Slaves

Knew Early Plantation Life Before Emancipation

"Fourscore and seven years ago, our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived can long endure." From Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address, Gettysburg, Pa. Nov. 19, 1863.

When the above immortal words were uttered, fourteen months after Mr. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of Sept. 22, 1862, a number of Lincoln's present older colored residents were small children on southern plantations, having been born in slavery from which they were to soon be liberated.

It was not long after the end of the Civil War that these freed slaves began an exodus to find homes in the North. And Lincoln, Ill., named for the great Emancipator, soon became the home of pioneers who sought a new life in a new land of hope and opportunity.

While many of these good people who were born in slavery, have died in recent years, a few still remain, and are proud of their historical heritage.

It is significant that a majority of the plantation emigrants who came to Lincoln and Logan county just after the Civil War, were born in Logan County, Kentucky. In fact a reunion of Lincoln residents who sprang from the Kentucky Logan county would find a very large segment of our colored population represented.

This settlement, was similar to that of Emden, first established by emigrants from Emden, Germany. The first comers wrote back to their friends, and others from their home community followed them.

"Young" At 88

Mrs. Nellie Smith, 441 Ninth street, at 88, is not only one of the oldest of our veterans of southern slave days, but is one of the youngest "old women" in Logan county, or in the state, for that matter.

To the consternation of her neighbors she climbs trees to pick fruit, and says that she will never ask anyone to get anything out of a tree for her as long as she can do it herself. She has never worn glasses. Two years ago, while excavation work for installation of a furnace was in progress at her home, she hauled dirt in a wheelbarrow. Asked why, she told friends she wanted to show the men she worked for as they worked.

Prayed Under Kettles

Mrs. Smith recalls a great deal of those dark and at times seemingly hopeless days when the older slaves prayed for deliverance from cruel masters. They were not allowed to pray publicly, so would take large iron kettles, such as are now used on our farms at butchering time, and would turn them upside down outside their cabins, and pray beneath them. This was to prevent the sound from traveling up to the "big house", the home of their masters. It was the only way in which they could have "church".

Mother Was Wet Nurse

Mrs. Smith, however, says she had a very kind master, as masters were known in those days. Her mother was wet nurse for her mistress. The slave mother would furnish breast milk for her mistress' baby, as bottle-fed babies were unknown in these days, and the aristocratic young white mothers would not nurse their own offspring for fear of losing their figures. A wet nurse had to be well fed, so they had food that was not rationed to other slaves.

There were two cooks on the plantation where Mrs. Smith lived, one for the big house and one for the slaves. The latter on week days were given sorghum, butter, and ash cakes for breakfast and salt pork, turnips or cabbage at noon and evening. There was no tea, coffee or milk. The butter and sorghum was produced on the plantation, or the fare would have been skimpier. The slaves were allowed biscuits on Sunday mornings.

These biscuits were of the beaten variety, such as only the south can produce. Coffee was not known by the slaves. For "coffee" they used parched wheat and parched corn, prepared in the kitchen of the big house. Light bread was made of corn, rather than wheat flour. Beef and mutton was used in quantities, although mutton was never fed in winter as it was thought the sheep caught cold, and people who ate mutton would get colds from eating the meat.

She was born in South Carolina, March 4, 1851, two years before the City of Lincoln was founded. She lived on the plantation where she was born until the liberation of the slaves. In 1875 she married Charles Smith, a Civil War veteran, at Petersburg, Ill., and is the mother of two daughters, Mrs. Nanette Logan, Lincoln, and Mrs. Sarah Clemons, Detroit. Mrs. Armenta Lynn, Lincoln, is a grand-daughter. She has 23 great grand children, and seven great-great grandchildren.

Slave-Day Recipes

The following slave-day recipes are furnished by Mrs. Smith for the benefit of Courier readers:

Beaten biscuits—Flour, very little lard, milk, mix and put on a block like a butcher's block; beat with rolling pin for two or three hours, or until light. Bake in slow oven.

Ash Cake—Simply take corn meal, salt and water and mix to form a stiff mass that can be patted out; put the wood ashes in the fireplace, put dough in and then cover with ashes. Bake a few minutes. Crust forms; take from ashes, wash off, ready to eat.

No measurements were used, but so adept were the cooks that from generation to generation the biscuits and cakes would literally "melt in your mouth."

Couple Born In Slavery

Walter Orendorff, 89, and his wife, Mary, 85, are also among the older of our former slaves. The former, born near Ky., was ten years old when the Civil War broke out. He came to Lincoln with his wife in 1879 to work for Ben H. Brainerd, Lincoln's first banker, and extensive Logan and Sangamon county land owner. After Mr. Brainerd died in 1891 Walter continued in the employ of Mrs. Ella Brainerd, and farmed the Brainerd home place on North Union street.

For many years he was the Brainerd family coachman, and drove the open and closed carriages of those days. He loved horses and spent much time in grooming "White Molly", Mr. Brainerd's favorite mare. The animal outlived her master by many years and was turned out on pasture to die of old age.

Another of the Brainerd family horses was "Jim B", a pacer in which Walter took great pride. "Jim B", a former race horse, was noted for having run second to Don Patch, an immortal piece of horseflesh who was the "Greyhound" of those days. For nearly two decades he made a good family horse, but one failing. When he would hear the bells clang on the horse drawn fire apparatus, while on a shopping tour downtown, he would seize the bit in his teeth and bolt. It reminded him of the race track gongs.

Mr. and Mrs. Orendorff live at the home of their grandson, Alfred Orendorff, on North Logan street. Their daughter, Josie Pierce also lives with them. There are two other married daughters, Helen, of Peoria, and Bella, Chicago.

Recalls Night Riders

Preston Townsend, 78, 347 Fifth street, was four years old when the Civil War ended, and he recalls seeing the original Ku Klux Klan night-riders that became active in the late 60's. As a small boy he saw the dreaded hooded riders who went about the country whipping all colored people who ventured out after dark without a pass.

Townsend came to Lincoln in 1900 from Logan County, Ky. He was twice married and was the father of four children by his first marriage. A daughter, Ida Orendorff, now lives in Chicago. There are six grandchildren.

Preston, now employed by the Miller dry goods store, was for many years employed by the late Dr. and Mrs. H. B. Brown.

Lost Son in France

He is a Gold Star Father, having lost his youngest son, Charles, in France in 1919. The war had ended and young Townsend was engaged in cleaning up shells from a battlefield when a shell exploded killing a group of seven men. He was buried in France. At the time of the post-war tragedy, Bob Foster, of Lincoln, was close to the scene of the explosion, but escaped injury.

Mr. and Mrs. Townsend live in

their own home, which is well kept. Both are lovers of flowers and spend many happy hours working in their garden.

Hidden From Yankee

The late Wilson Russell, who died last year at the age of 82 years, used to recall a raid by Yankee soldiers on the Logan county, Kentucky plantation where he was born in slavery in 1856. His mother hid him in a manger in the barn until the Union soldiers had departed.

Mr. Russell also recalled when his father Wilson Russell Sr. took his family overland in a covered wagon from Kentucky to Kansas, and how a sister died enroute and was buried behind a log on the roadside.

For 22 years Wilson Russell was employed by the late Frank Frorer and for years carried the company pay-roll to the South mine prior to the day when Mr. Frorer himself was driving the pay-roll and was robbed and fatally injured.

Most Stylish Coachman

For the Frorer family Wilson drove a coach for many years and in his swallow-tallow coat and plug hat was known by our older residents as the city's most stylish and Mrs. Frorer he was employed by the Lincoln National bank in 1915 and continued until the bank closed. He became known as the "Human Clock" for his regular appearance at a certain minute each afternoon to polish the brass nameplate at the bank's door.

The last member of a large family

himself Wilson Russell was the father of twelve children, three now living: Thomas Russell and Anna Covington, Chicago, and Hattie Robinson, of Lincoln. There are twelve grand children and four great grand children.

William Fuqua was born at Bowling Green, Ky., after the Civil War, but his late mother, resident of Lincoln, was formerly a slave. Both parents of Mrs. George Townsend, who resides on Sangamon street, also were born in the south during slavery.

Recalls Slave Selling

Lige Townsend, 76, no relation of the other Townsend families here, but another Logan County Ky. native, was born Dec. 8, 1863, while the Civil War was in progress. He came to Lincoln over fifty years ago to join his mother, Martha Ann Bollin, and his step-father, Walter Bennett Bollin, both former slaves, who had come here the year before. Lige's father, however, was always a freeman. He too was named Lige, and went from Canada to Kentucky, where he was married. Lige's mother, during slave days, belonged to Chris Orendorff, a plantation owner, and his step-father belonged to Dr. Jim Bollin. Chris Orendorff had also owned Frank Orendorff, the father of Walter Orendorff, of this city, hence the adoption of the name.

Lige Townsend was employed by Mrs. K. G. Kill and family for more

KNOW LATELY PLANTATION LIFE BEFORE EMANCIPATION

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than thirty years and was employed by Mrs. T. T. Beach for eight years.

Ran Away With Yankee

The late Albert Perkins, father of Anna Mae Perkins, office assistant of Dr. W. W. Coleman, was an Alabama-born slave, and ran away from his plantation home, near Florence, Alabama, at the age of five years to be brought north by Captain Al Lee, of Lincoln, a Union officer.

The Southern used to frighten the slaves by telling them that the blue coated Yankee soldiers "had blue bellies". Young Perkins was a venturesome lad and he had to be shown. He slipped out at night to visit the Yankee billets and peeped in at the windows. The Union soldiers did not have blue stomachs at all.

However, he was afraid of all the soldiers except Captain Lee, who used to help him up onto his cavalry mount. When the soldiers returned north the small boy left with the captain and never saw his mother or father again. He blacked the officers' boots and ran errands. Back in Lincoln he made his home with the Lees until he was grown. He married Sarah Dyer in Lincoln in 1878, a native of Springfield, Ill., who recalled having seen Abraham Lincoln, and recalled the deep mourning of the populace when President Lincoln was assassinated. Mrs. Perkins' death occurred last May. Mr. Perkins died in 1932. For many years he was Janitor at the courthouse and also was night watchman at the Lincoln Collar Factory.

Mr. and Mrs. Perkins had three children, Anna Mae Perkins, Lincoln; William A., Chicago, and Minnie Roper, Indianapolis. Florence is deceased.

Saw Rebs and Johnnies.

Mrs. Laura Dyer, 82, widow of the late Alfred Dyer, was born in Missouri, a slave state, before the civil war, and recalls seeing both Confederate and Union soldiers at Sedalia, near her birthplace. Her father, Strouther Ward, was shot in the knee while waiting on officers, and later during the war was exempt from service in the Union army draft because of the disability.

She came to Edwardsville as a small girl and later came to Lincoln where married Alfred Dyer in 1877. He had been born in Springfield, Ill., and had frequently seen Abraham Lincoln. For many years Mr. Dyer was janitor of the First National Bank here.

Mr. and Mrs. Dyer have four children living, Mrs. Hattie Brummell, Lincoln; Clarence, a pullman porter of Columbus, Ohio; Dr. William Dyer, City police surgeon, Kansas City, and Sadie Tyler, Chicago. Three children are deceased, Etta Mae Groves, Mary B. Dyer and Fred Dyer.

Ex-Slave Remarried

William Bibb, 74, was born in slavery by eight weeks. He was born on a plantation near Paducah, Ky. Oct. 29, 1865 only two

months before the end of the war, when freedom went into full effect. His parents had been slaves. His name different from his grandfather, Lloyd Bibb, who was born on the Bibb plantation in Kentucky, and who died at the age of 85 years at Centralia, Kansas, where he went after the Civil War. Mr. Bibb cherishes an old photograph of his "grandpappy", who was a man of distinguished appearance.

The end of the Civil War made it necessary for many former slave couples to be remarried under the new federal constitution. Under the Confederate constitution permission for slaves to marry was given only by their owners. After the war it was necessary for them to take out a marriage license and have a second ceremony. Mr. Bibb, as a child, recalls seeing his parents remarried. They had eight children at the time.

William Bibb came to Lincoln in 1905 with his wife, Mahalia, who died in 1933. He has two living daughters, Cornelia Foster and Alzeta Foster, both of Lincoln. Warren, Gladys and Lela are deceased.

Dock Fort, also 74, was born on a Tennessee plantation Oct. 9, 1865, eleven weeks before the end of the war. Both his parents were slaves, his mother a cook and his father a house boy. He came to Lincoln in 1904, and was employed as janitor of the Lincoln House and also was employed by Judge S. A. Foley and at the mattress factory.

Even Children Worked

Susan Camper, 1310 Delavan street, was a small child when the Civil War ended. She was born near Bowling Green Ky. and recalls the task assigned to her as a little girl, "shooing the flies off the table" at the "big house". She came to Lincoln 55 years ago with her first husband, Gilbert Linn. He died in 1896. She then married William Camper, also an ex-slave, who for many years worked for Thomas Pegram, of Lincoln. Mr. Camper died 12 years ago.

Mrs. Camper has three children living, William and Samuel, of Lincoln, and Mrs. Birdie Cornelius, of Bloomington. Several children are deceased.

Two of her sons served in France in the World War, the late Troy Linn and Samuel Linn. The latter was shot through the left hip and right ankle by German machine gun bullets, and was "buried alive" by the explosion of a shell while he was crawling along a shallow trench. He was covered for two days by the debris, with only a leg and arm exposed, before rescued. A sliver of the shell had passed through his steel helmet, missing his head. Troy Linn, farmer and boxer, died several years ago.

William Boyd, 73, was born in March 1866, just after the slaves were freed. William Fuqua also was born after the war, but his mother, formerly of Lincoln, had been born in slavery. Both came here from Logan County, Ky., as did The William Starks and Grant Gorens families at later dates.

Most of the older colored residents own their own homes, and it is significant to note that a comparatively few are on relief or on the old age assistance rolls. The per-

centage of residents receiving assistance here is smaller than our white beneficiaries.

Not only have our ex-slaves gloried in their independence, but they have gloried in their ability to work and to serve. A majority of the younger generation too, has been taught to cherish this heritage.



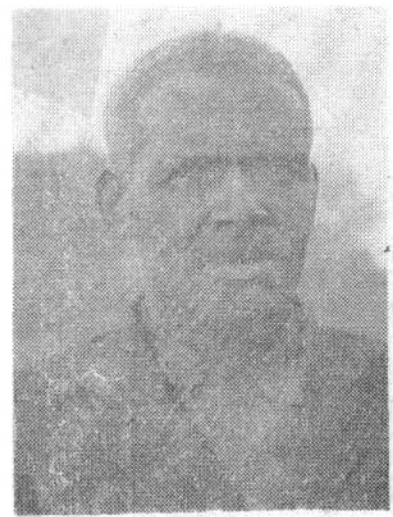
Mrs. Millie Smith and the late Barrett Cosby.



DOCK FORT



MRS. SUSAN CAMPER



WILLIAM BIBB



ALBERT PERKINS



PRESTON TOWNSEND



LIGE TOWNSEND