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"Feature"

St. Paul, Minn.

#250

Feature Article. (FC)

Submitted by: Alfred M. Potekin

No. of words: 700

Date: March 4, 1936.

Rev. Robert Thomas Hickman; Preacher, (col'd) rail-splitter
and Slave liberator.

The high current riding lazily along the Mississippi riv. on its journey to the Gulf, was suddenly broken by white, froth-topped, angry waves,, pitching and slapping the upper shores of the riv. on the banks below the military garrison at Fort Snelling. It was summer, 1863; (eighteen-sixty-three) the warm sun beaming on the heavily-wooded slopes along the riv. sides, colored the water with dancing silhouettes trembling eerily with the lapping waters.

A tiny speck appeared suddenly, on the distant horizon, emerging from a bend of the riv. into the broad expanse of water which lay below the fort. Slowly taking form, it grew into a flat, broad hulk of a river steamer, its stacks pouring thick smoke, wheels madly spinning with a mighty effort, churning the waters into white, frothing waves. The "War Eagle" had successfully traversed "Ole" Man River," arriving at its destination from St. Louis, Mo.

River transportation was an important factor between the key cities along the water front. Negro stevedores labored daily, loading

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freight and merchandise into the holds of the steamers for conveyance to southern points, above the Mason-Dixon line. To the casual observer gazing nonchalantly at the incoming steamer, the arrival was a common occurrence, an every-day event, bringing baggage, a few passengers and eager, tragic news of the raging conflict between the states.

On this day the "War Eagle" was not alone; her holds were full, her passengers many, for she had towed a flat non-motivating riv. boat to the vicinity of Fort Snelling from Jefferson City, Mo. The entire group nestled in the bottom of the flat boat were negro slaves and their families, fleeing from the hardships of plantation labor and persecution to the freedom and protection of the "North." Led by a licensed preacher, they bowed in reverence, praying and singing hymns, thanking the Lord for their deliverance to a promised land.

The preacher, Rev. Robert Thomas Hickman, was a slave log-splitter on a plantation in Boone County, near Jefferson, Mo. Tall and powerfully muscled, his physical strength, leadership and kindly nature were respected by the darkeys who ^{loved} and loved him. His wife and children were owned by a master on another plantation several miles distant. With the setting of the sun, at the conclusion of his daily labor, Robert Hickman would set out by foot through the wilderness toward the destination of his family, returning to his master with the rising of the sun. Repeatedly warned by his master for his nocturnal visits to his family, Hickman was threatened with bodily punishment by whipping. Upon his disregard to repeated threats and his continued nightly visits, he was severely horse-whipped after being subdued with the aid of four men.

Slyly and cunningly, the preacher, aided by fellow slaves, began the secret construction of a flat river boat. After endless nights of tireless labor, the boat was completed and preparations made to gather their families

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and flee. On a dark, moonless night, families and simple provisions were quickly tucked in the stern of the boat and the departure was underway. No oars, no sails, no means of motivation, the fleeing families, led by Hickman, raised their faces to heavenward and prayed and sang hymns, tirelessly, endlessly. "Hallelujah, hallelujah, praise the Lord above, glory be to God, hallelujah, hallelujah," heads bowed in prayer, lips trembling, prayers and song blended with the chirping of crickets and the lapping of the waves upon the shore.

The "War Eagle," plowing the river on her trip from St. Louis, came upon the strange craft and its occupants the following day, drifting helplessly in the center of the wide stream. Learning of the strange circumstances which had brought them here, and being a "northerner," the captain of the river steamer tied a strong towing-cable to the floundering boat and resumed his journey northward. Thus was inaugurated the first record of hitch-hiking by boat on the Mississippi river.

The liberated slaves, upon their arrival at Fort Snelling, set out for separate destinations. Some settling in Stillwater, others in St. Peter, and the majority in St. Paul. Among those settling here were the families of Rev. Hickman, Fielding Combs, Henry Moffit, John Trotter, Giles Cranshaw and others. Rev. Hickman with the aid of his friends organized the Pilgrim Baptist Church in St. Paul, ^{in 1863,} the first colored church organized in the city. Meetings were held in Music hall on Third St. Rev. Hickman was ordained in 1870 (eighteen-seventy); he died in St. Paul, Feb., 16, 1900. (nineteen-hundred.)

A son, John Hickman, who made the eventful trip here with his father at the age of six (6), is now 79 (seventy-nine) years of age and resides with a son and family, John H. Hickman Jr., at 766 St. Anthony Ave. His health is slowly failing, but he vividly recalls the events which prompted the pilgrimage. Upon recollection of his boyhood days, his face brightens but he soon lapses into silence, retiring with the memories which are so sacred to him alone.

Subject - First Negro Church in St. Paul

Submitted by: Mary D. McFarland

Number of Words, 360

461 1.

St. Paul

Ramsey Co.

In 1862 Five Negro slave families escaped from the various plantations of slave-holders in Missouri through the underground railway in St. Louis, Mo. Here they remained in hiding to embark at a convenient time on the steamboat "War Eagle," for St. Paul. They arrived at Fort Snelling the fall of the same year. Later they were transported by wagon to St. Paul, where they obtained homes. Some of the men were barbers; others found work as porters in stores.

History. Soon the little band of pilgrims, as they called themselves, were holding religious services in the home of Robert T. Hickman. In 1863 Pilgrim Baptist church was started with Robert Hickman as preacher. The little church was buffeted ^{buffeted: jellies} from pillow to post, finally ending in the organization and incorporation of the church in 1870. The charter members were: Robert T. Hickman, Freeling Combs, Henry Moffit, John Trotter, and Giles Cranshaw. The ground upon which to erect an edifice was located on Sibley and Morris Streets, which was abandoned for the church on Cedar

and Summit Ave.

The first church was 35x75, built of stone and wood, seating capacity, 300, built at a cost of \$2,400.00 including lot. A portion of the lumber of the First Baptist church (white) of St. Anthony (Minneapolis) which was being razed was given them to be used in the construction of the new church. In 1877 Robert T. Hickman was ordained and installed as pastor, remaining in charge until 1884.

Throughout its existence, the church has had several outstanding ministers, and has grown in membership until today there are 600 active members. Some of the leading Negroes are officers in the church.

As the membership grew, there was an urgent need for a much larger church with accommodation for social activities. In 1929 a new church was built on W. Central Avenue, corner of Grotto St. The church is built of brick and mortar at a cost of \$60,000.00. It has a seating capacity of 650, a large Fellowship hall for social activities, pastor's Study, kitchen, hot water heating plant, pipe organ, and a large vested choir of outstanding popularity. The choir won second place in a city wide contest of all churches in Jan., 1934.

The church was built under the leadership of Rev. L. W. Harris, who is still the pastor.

Pilgrim Baptist church is located in the N.W. part of the city. It is easily reached by taking the Rondo-Maria Street Car on 7th Street going west in the loop district. Get off at Grotto, walk one block north to Central Avenue.

270.

LAURA THOMPSON
Ex-Slave, 84 years.

Laura Thompson, the subject of this story, is a stout woman of about eighty-five. She is medium brown in complexion, has short gray hair, and possesses a jovial disposition. She is able to do a limited amount of housework and cooking, and seems to enjoy the afternoons she spends sitting on the porch in an old fashioned rocker. Shortly after the Civil War, Mrs. Thompson left her home in Kentucky and moved to Indianapolis. She came to Minnesota with the McLaughlin family and settled in Deerwood, moving to St. Paul in 1919 to make her home with her daughter.

"I was born in Greensburg, Kentucky, eighty some odd years ago. My father belonged to the Straders' and my mother belonged to the Blakeman's. My father, his name was Gaines Strader, and my mother's was Annie Strader. I had so many brothers and sisters that I can't remember how many of us there was, but I have three brothers living now and one sister. As children we all played together, black and white - we didn't know nothing 'bout prejudice down in Kentucky when I was a child. When it came time for us to go to bed, my father would take all of the white children up to the Master's house.

"Every Sunday morning we put on our best dress and all us children went barefooted up to the Master's house for church and Sunday school. Every one of us children would get a big sugar cookie after church was over. There were so-o-o many that the niggers looked like gnats.

"One day a week the Master would come to our house to spend the day. My mother would have fried chicken and biscuits.

Master sure did love those biscuits. When he came we children had to be quiet. If we wasn't quiet, we would git a crack on the head.

"We slept on corded beds made out of ropes. There were no mattresses in those days - jes' straw ticks. No chairs - jes' stools made out of benches and boards, and no carpets. We had to scrub the floors 'til they were white as biscuit boards.

"White and colored children played together, but colored knowed their place. We played stick horse nearly all day until we were big enough to work in the fields. Master would thrash us quicker than our mother would or father, so we had to obey. My grandmother took white domestic and dyed it blue and yellow for our Sunday dresses.

"When I was 'bout fifteen I nursed one of my Master's children that was ill, and after we were living in Indianapolis, he came to our house one day and asked for Laura. He said when he got married he was coming back to see me again with his wife and bring me something, but I never saw him again at all, 'cause after that we were all separated.

"I wasn't big enough to pick any cotton until after slavery days were over. I remember seeing big fields and fields of cotton and sugar cane when I was a child. My old grandmother would spin all day making goods and thread. Master's children and his wife would have white cotton suits made, and after they got tired of them they would give them to us. I git to studdying 'bout them old times and jus' wonder. After slavery days was over, my father stayed on Master's plantation until he got money enough to buy a place of his own.

"My mother cooked all the time for the hands. My father stayed at Straders and my mother at Blakeman's. When folks married then (in slavery days) they had to live with the Master that owned them. I can remember 'jus as well when Abe Lincoln got killed. The Master called all his niggers together and said, 'Well, Abe Lincoln freed you all now, and you can go to yourselves.' We all got our things together right away and went over to the Straders where our father was. Master Strader gave our father some land and a shack, and he farmed and gave the Master about half what he made to pay for the land.

"We didn't have no stoves in those days. We cooked at the fireplace. On Easter we had Easter eggs, and on Christmas we had apples, dolls, and candy. Never knew what money was. We use to eat possums, rabbits, chickens, coons, and fresh fish out of the river. We had our own gardens with vegetables, and mother always made big biscuits. Master had hundreds and hundreds of acres of land and hundreds of slaves.

"The Master had church for the white people on Sunday morning and for the slaves in the afternoon. We were all up in the morning by time the sun was up - about five o'clock. Everybody quit work at sundown. The horses would git a rest, but the slaves never did. They had to work all day. We used to hear how they beat slaves and tied them to whipping posts, but that never happened on our plantation. The younger Masters were more lenient on the slaves than the older ones were.

"One time a slave woman named Merica killed three other slaves, and she was hung. I remember the day we all went to her funeral. On the way we saw a big black snake on a fence, and everybody said it was Merica's spirit. We watched for that snake,

but it disappeared in the ground, we never saw it no more.

"After slavery days were over, we all went to school in Kentucky to learn to read and write. I was married in Kentucky, and my mother made me a white dress. I wasn't no little girl when I was married, I was 'bout thirty years old. The niggers never had no babies by each other unless they were married, but they had them by the Masters.

"We used to play hide-and-seek and stick horse all the time. We don't sing any of the songs now that we sung then. I can't remember any of those that we sung. We were baptized in the Green River down in old Kentucky. We went to our quarters at sundown and went straight to bed. None of us slaves worked after noon on Saturday until sun up Monday morning except for the chores. We didn't know nothing 'bout any holidays except Saturday afternoons and Sundays. We had doctors when we got sick, but can't remember having hospitals, and I never heard of any operations in those days.

"After slavery days we moved to Greensboro, Kentucky, and I worked for the Lewis's. They were good people, but they were tight on you. Never allowed you to stay out after dark. I can remember when my father went away to the war to fight for freedom. Remember seein' so many soldiers. One regiment they told me was the Jeff Davis regiment.

"Sometimes I think it's still slavery times. All you git you work hard for it, and you don't get what you deserve at that. I think we're jus' naturally religious, 'cause we were oppressed so long that we were always praying and looking to God for help. People weren't mean to one another like they are today.

If you get along too good nowadays somebody will tell a lie on you.

"I remember when the poor white folks would come to our door begging, and my mother would give them some of our meal and flour. I kin remember seein' the soldiers on horses and the commander riding by the side. I used to remember lots of things 'bout them old days, but since my head's been bad, I don't seem to remember so well. I used to could name every president we had since the war.

"We were always taught and always believed in tellin' the truth. There ain't a person in this world or nobody I knows of that I got anything against. I always was taught to tell the truth because when judgment day comes you got to answer. Always went to church and Sunday school every since I was fifteen. I can remember yet how we went to Sunday school barefooted and in our cotton dresses. We young ones didn't have shoes, but the older ones did. As long as the old Master lived he always seen to it that the older ones had shoes. My father was taken away from his mother and sold when he was a little boy, but he always said he could remember that his name was Craddock before he was sold to the Straders.

E. L. B.

270 1.

NELSON DORSEY
Ex-Slave, 88 years.

Nelson Dorsey is an interesting character. He can be seen shuffling along the halls at the Crispus Attucks Home most any time of the day. His voice has become very soft, his hair quite gray, and his health has begun to fail. He is of medium build and has a dark complexion. He came to St. Paul in 1908 from Arkansas, and was able to support himself up until about eight years ago when he was forced to move to the home for the aged. The farming lands of Minnesota was what attracted Mr. Dorsey to St. Paul.

"I was born in Hines County, Mississippi, on December 3, 1848, and I was about twelve years old when Abraham Lincoln was elected president. Left home and went to Arkansas when I was about 22 years old. I married my first wife the first year I came home from the War. We lived together about five years and six months. I married the second time in Arkansas.

"I was in slavery in Hines County and my Master's name was Ackler. We worked all week up to Friday sundown and didn't work any more until the following Monday. My father's name was Louis Dorsey and my mother's was Palina Dorsey. They lived on a plantation at Fort Gibson, Mississippi. When my Master bought my mother, he only owned three slaves, and was running a hotel. My mother was a fine cook and she did all the cooking in the master's hotel.

"I was in the Civil War for eight months. They came out to our place one October and picked me up and made a soldier out of me. My regiment fought all over the South, but I can re-

member best when we were fighting in Nashville and around in Tennessee. The last battle we fought was at Richmond, Virginia, or rather we started for Richmond and got as far as Mobile, Alabama, when freedom for the slaves was declared. I went back to my Master's plantation after the war and worked on the place for three years. My mother died in 1867 and then I left there, because my father and older brothers didn't treat me right. They took all the money a way from me that I had made in the three years I worked there after the war, which was about \$150.

"When I came home from the war I had \$750 coming to me for fighting. I gave all that money to my mother. When I first left, I went to my former mistress's house, and at that time she was living in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

"There were about 75 slaves on our plantation. My Master he had several places and my father was in charge of the slaves on all of them. I remember one Christmas Day when I was little my mother was very sick, and the mistress came to our shack and took me up to the big house because my mother was too sick to take care of me. My mistress had a little girl that was just three weeks older than I was, and she raised us together.

"I got married in Old Town Ridge, Arkansas. We lived about a mile from church and we all went every Sunday. We had services in the afternoon, and the white people had services in the morning. A colored man preached most of the time for us.

"The slaves on our plantation jus' had a long row of houses. Some of our beds were made of rope and some of steel. All the plantations had a lot of chickens and corn patches. When the corn was picked we put it in the cribs.

"On Christmas day we all had firecrackers, and we didn't have to do any work except the necessary chores until after New Year's Day.

"I have never learned how to read and write, but I know everything that's in the Bible from what I was taught about it. I came to St. Paul in 1908, and have lived here ever since. I haven't got any people living that I know about, and have been living here at the Home for a long time."

E.L.B.

SOME OF THE THINGS MOTHER ALLEN TOLD ME.

Bradley G.
St Paul

From notes gathered, May 1903.

Mother Allen was the off spring of a slave woman and her white master. She is perfectly white, with hair that was alight brown, but is now white and perfectly straight. She has blue eyes, And the only way the one could come to suspect her of having Negro or southern blood in her veins would be to hear her talk. She has a fairly good education, as far as reading and writing is concerned, and can talk ^{well} good if she wants to, though most of the time she simply slaughters the English language. And yet, though I have known her ~~an~~ ^a ~~awful~~ long time, I've never known her to have any trouble making one understand her every meaning.

In relating the facts concerning her birth and origin, she says:

"People look at me an' say 'aint you white?' I tell 'em naw. My mother was a slave, an' me daddy, the ol' devil was, her ol' white master. My mammy didn' ^(any) have a more to say about what they did with her then the rest of the slaves in them days.

An' when I was boan, they kept mu mammy and me 'til I was 'bout three years old, an' then when they saw i was goan 'a be much whiter and even better lookin' then his own chilern by his own wife, they sold me and my mammy, an' got rid of us for good.

"Ah tell you, there was some mighty funny things done them days, an' twas n't all the white masters that was mea to their slaves.

" I used to know a family of brothers and sisters down there in Missouri, that was awful mixed up. There was nine of 'em. Two of the boys an' three of the girls was childern of a slave, an' one boy an' three girls was from his own wife.

The way it happened, ya see, in those days, they use to have auction blocks where one day they would come to buy the slaves and then the next day they would come an' hire 'em. So, as I was saying t his man used to come ever' spring o' the year, and hire a certain girl, an' keep her all summer, then let her go

back in the fall. He started doing that when she was about nine years old.

When she was seventeen, she had a baby by 'im, then the next year he bought her and the baby too. He put her in a house an' kep' her there workin' and bearin' children, 'til as I say, she had five. Then right after that he went to California; that was when gold minin' was a boom in' out there. An' his people, I reckon, not likin' her any to well, make her work hard an' in all kinds of weather til she took sick, I think she musta had pneumonia, an' died. He came back a week before she died, an' my mammy said he sat right by her bed side all the time 'til she went.

He promised her then, he'd take care of the childern, and he KEPT that promise.

His own wife died that same year, an' he saw ev'ry one of them nine childern grown up an' on farms of their own. But the ones he had by his wife never had nothin' to do with the others, 'though they was no better. All o' the colored ones was fair.

One o' the boys from his slave wife, wanted to marry me, an' he tol' my mammy he'd give me riches but I tol' 'im I wasn't a marryin' for money, I was a marryin' for love

Mother (Ruth) Allen

259 Rondo Street, St Paul, Minn.

"I cna remember when we didin have no stove, but we didin' miss 'em 'cause we had ev'ry thing mighty handy. We had great big fire places, an' iorn pieces across the inside top, then iron rods hung form them, an' iorn pots an' kettles hung on them. We thought that was somethin'!

I saw my first stove after I was quite a big girl. 'Twas in the white folks Kitchen. I tell you, it was grand to see that stuff frying and boiling on that stove. Then fin'ly my mamma got one, an' one day while she was at the wite folks, I slipped and tried to make some biscuits, While she was at teh white folks. 'Course I didin know nothin' about it, an' you ought saw the mess I made up an' burnt up. An' you ought seen me gettin rid o' it.

"The ash cakes we used to make, before we got the stoves, was mighty good. They was made with jus' coan meal an' water an' salt, an' made jus' ~~st~~ stiff enough to pat together with your hands. An' when you fixed it right w/
with them finger prints where they belonged, ah! ah tell you 'twas good.

During slavery if they wanted to get married and had permission from their masters, they jus' went an' did it.

All southern people, white and black alike liked possums, rabbits and squirrels, same as they do now, an' etiev'rything too. In our cabin we had a big fire place, an' we used iorn pots an' skilletts with feet on 'em. The folks used to have to get down on the floor, but boy, they sho' did do wonders with them things. 'Course the white folks had stoves to cook on.

I don't know much about how much about how the cooked this stuff I only know as I have said, it was mighty good. I always could eat everything, an' I sho like fat meat.

We had our own gardens, that we all had to tend but that didn't mean that we could take what we wanted out of. The white folks o' course had the most of it.

They got whipped for anyhing they done that wasn't right. I can't remember seeing an awful lot 'cepting o' course most every one o' the slaves got it at some time or other, 'ceptin where they had good white folks.

They didn't have no jail for us But you bet not do nothin' They had 'en for all them white trash though and the jail was full of 'em.

Talk about the black man stealing; they made us do it. An' after stealing for them if we took out one of them same chickens for ourselves, we'd better burn them feathers, or they'd burn us.

And they never had lots of trouble with us, yet they fight us and knowk, and try their best to keep us down.

The white folks had a great big house, I don't know just how many

rooms. In them days it seems to me that all the white women wore
 yhoos skitts. Even the little girls were flyin' 'round there in
 balloon dresses.

I don't remember ever hearing how many acres of land there was
 on our plantation, nor the slave they had either.

Nobody woke us up at any time on our place. 'Most of 'em got up
 'fore day light and they better get up too. Wasn't no foolin' round
 calling 'em two three times.

Sure they worked hard and late at night. Course 'twasn't so
 hard with us, 'cause as I said the man that owned us wasn't as bad
 as most o' the others.

Like I said, we didn't have any overseer but those that did
 sometimes got beat unmercifully by them, an' the slaves bet not con-
 plain to their masters. Most of 'em worked hard of day and late at
 nights.

If any of the white folks did try to teach our people how to write
 I din't know anything about it.

Some of them that had sense enough to know ~~that~~ they could get
 away with it did runaway. I don't know whether any of them went
 north or not, but I do know that some of them went over into Indiana.
 Theres wher my father escaped too.

The partrollers in those days could make plenty of trouble for
 you, and they ^{did} that plenty of times too. Always got you going an'
 commin'. Lots of times twas alright, if you had permissions from
 your masters and you could prove that. But then again sometimes
 they'd beat you any way.

What Mr Norris Told Me!

"But there was something worse than Patrollers in those days. That was the guerillas. The white man was just a scared of them, as the black man was of the patrollas. They was outlaws like Jessie James and the Dawson boys you read about. They'd come along and make the whites give up their horses or cook a meal for 'em. Most often they wouldn't make us folks do anything. I reckon that was because they was from the north and felt sorry for us. A drove of 'em came by our place one night, late, , and made our old "mis" cook up everything they saw in sight.

"We was talking about the churches the other day/an' I didn't think to tell you thet, eile the slaves didn't have churches of their own, they could profess religion, and then join what ever denomination they wanted to by going to one another's house. We held most of our meetings at one anothers house any how. None of us could read the Bible but we knew what was in it.

After the days work was done, we used to go to one anothers house and sit around and talk. We worked od Saturdays same as other days. but our folks didn't make us work on undays or holidays. we had wholes weeks btween New Years and Christmas. O' course that wasn't the case with all of 'em, cause the further south you got the meaner the white folks was to their slaves.

The slave owners in those day used to do pretty much like the farmers do today. When they picked cotton, and husked corn, one would help the other.

An' 'bout our eatens, I for got to tell you when we was talking 'bout that. When we killed hogs, the white folks got all the good part, least they thought that, and we got the neck bones an' ears, an' snoots, an' tails, an' feet, an' (entrails) the intrils; what they called the chitlings(chitterlings). The white folks didn't eat any of that stuff, 'til the last years, when hard times begin to hit 'em and they seen how we fared, now you can't get to the counters to get them things for the whites.

MARY SELLERS
Ex-Slave, 82 years.

Mary Sellers, a 200-pound woman of about eighty-two, came to Minneapolis about fifteen years ago from her home in Tennessee. She lived with her son until about five years ago when circumstances sent her to the Crispus Attucks Home for the aged. She is dark in complexion, wears her hair in rolls on top of her head, and loves to sit in her rocker while someone reads to her. Her favorite book is the Bible.

"When the Civil War ended I was about 10 years old. My Master was a Cudgeville and we lived in ^[Fayetteville?] Fadeville, Tennessee. My father's name was Dickson, and my mother's Millie Dickson. After we were free, we went by the name of Dickson instead of Cudgeville. I was just a little girl when the war began, but I can remember when the Yankees came in and told us we were all free.

"My Master he didn't whip his colored people so we all didn't get no whippings. Some of the white masters and overseers would cut the colored people all to pieces with whips on their bare backs, but he didn't do it. He always said he didn't believe in it. The soldiers came to our house and carried all our chickens and things away, and afterwards my Master got tired of being a Rebel and joined up with the Yankees.

"We didn't know anything about any church. We would go in the woods and sing and pray by ourselves, and our father would always talk to us.

"We ate beef and pork meat, chickens, possums, biscuits, corn bread, and plenty of milk and butter. The slaves got up and got out to work as soon as the sun was up, and quit at sundown.

I remember seeing long lines of slaves handcuffed together passing our plantation. Some even had balls and chains on their legs; these were the unruly ones - mostly the men. None of the slaves on the Cudgevillie plantation ever run away up north because the master was always so kind to all of us.

"The older ones worked in the cotton fields and the master gave the cotton to the boys who had families and no way to support them. I have seen slaves whipped by what they call a "nigger trader" until they didn't have any skin on their backs. If our master's slaves didn't behave or became unruly, he would give them a few lashes - maybe 500 or so, but the "nigger trader" would give them about 900. All of them didn't do that - jus' some of them. They took women away from their husbands and children away from their mothers and fathers, and shipped them off, and sometimes they would never see each other again. Some of them got together after the war, but most of them didn't even know where their people were or what their right names was.

"We knowed nothing about no Bible or school until we were set free. My master was a lawyer, and we all played with the master's children. The master's boys would go into the field and work with us especially when we thinned the corn.

"My grandmother weaved all the time so that we had cotton dresses to wear. We went barefooted all the time except when it was too cold then the master would get shoes and stockings for us. The men wore big boots. We had rope beds with shucks in the ticks for mattresses and plenty of cover to cover up with in cold weather.

Sellers

"When the slaves got sick the doctor looked after them. We went and got medicine at the drug store like they do not. We got herbs out of the woods, and then some old man or woman would make what we called bitters, and we would take that sometimes.

"After we were free, we stayed on our same plantation because we didn't have any other place to go. I stayed there until I got to be a grown woman, then I married and left. I have raised fourteen children, and now they are all dead but one who lives over in Minneapolis. I never had any grandchildren."

E.L.B.

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John F. Coquire, 320 St. Anthony Ave., interviewed by
Mary D. McFarland on Masons, Nov. 13, 1935.

Jose F. Sherwood, 971 St. Anthony Ave., interviewed by
Mary D. McFarland on Masons, Nov. 14, 1935.

John F. Coquire, 320 St. Anthony Ave., interviewed by
Mary D. McFarland on Masons, Nov. 15, 1935.

Mrs. Birdie High, 674 St. Anthony Ave., interviewed by
Mary D. McFarland on Pilgrim Baptist Church, Nov. 13, 1935.

John H. Hickman, Sr., 766 St. Anthony Ave., interviewed
by Mary D. McFarland on Pilgrim Baptist Church, Nov. 14,
1935.

Andrew Jackson, 603 St. Anthony Ave., interviewed
by Mary D. McFarland on Odd Fellows, Nov. 19, 1935.

John F. Coquire, 320 St. Anthony Ave., interviewed by
Mary D. McFarland on Odd Fellows, Nov. 20, 1935.

John F. Coquire, 320 St. Anthony Ave., interviewed by
Mary D. McFarland on Elks, Nov. 22, 1935.

Submitted by