

**AMY ELIZABETH PATTERSON**  
**District #5, Vanderburgh County**  
**Lauana Creel**

The slave mart, separation from a dearly beloved mother and little sisters are among the earliest memories recalled by Amy Elizabeth Patterson, a resident of Evansville, Indiana.

Amy Elizabeth, now known as "Grandmother Patterson" resides with her daughter Lula B. Morton at 512 Linwood Avenue near Cherry Street. Her birth occurred on July 12, 1850, at Cadiz, Trigg County, Kentucky. Her mother was Louisa Street, slave of John Street, a merchant of Cadiz, Kentucky.

"John Street was never unkind to his slaves" is the testimony of Grandmother Patterson, as she recalls and relates stories of the long ago. "Our sorrow began when slave traders, came to Cadiz and bought such slaves as he took a fancy to and separated us from our families!"

John Street ran a sort of agency where he collected slaves and yearly sold them to dealers in human flesh. Those he did not sell he hired out to other families. Some were hired or indentured to farmers, some to stock raisers, some to merchants and some to captains of boats, and the hire of all these slaves went into the coffers of John Street, yearly increasing his wealth.

Louisa Street, the mother of Amy Elizabeth Patterson, was a housemaid at the Street home and her firstborn daughter was fair with gold-brown hair and amber eyes. Mr. and Mrs. Street always promised Louisa they would never sell her as they did not want to part with the child, so Louisa was given a small cabin near the master's house. The mistress had a child near the age of the little mulatto and Louisa was a wet nurse for both children as well as a maid to Mrs. Street. Two years after the birth of Amy Elizabeth, Louisa became the mother of twin daughters, Fannie and Martha Street, then John Street decided to sell all his slaves as he contemplated moving into another territory.

The slaves were auctioned to the highest bidder and Louisa and the twins were bought by a man living near Cadiz but Mr. Street refused to sell Amy Elizabeth. She showed promise of growing into an excellent housemaid and seamstress and was already a splendid playmate and nurse to the little Street boy and girl. So Louisa lost her child but such grief was shown by both mother and child that the mother was unable to perform her tasks and the child cried continually. Then Mr. Street consented to sell the little girl to the mother's new master.

Louisa Street became the mother of seventeen children. Three were almost white. Amy Elizabeth was the daughter of John Street and half-sister of his children by his lawful wife. Mrs. Street knew the facts and respected Louisa and her child and, says grandmother Patterson, "That was the greatest crime ever visited on the United States. It was worse than the cruelty of the overseers, worse than hunger, for many slaves were well fed and well cared for; but when a father can sell his own child, humiliate his own daughter by auctioning her on the slave block, what good could be expected where such practices were allowed?"

Grandmother Patterson remembers superstitions of slavery days and how many slaves were afraid of ghosts and evil spirits but she never believed in supernatural appearances until three years ago when she received a message, through a medium, from the spirit land; now she is a firm believer, not in ghosts and evil visitations, but in true communication with the departed ones who still love and long to protect those who remain on earth.

Several years ago a young grandson of the old woman was drowned. The little boy was Stokes Morton, a very popular child rating high averages in school studies and beloved by his teachers and friends. The mother, Lulu B. Morton, and the grandmother both gave up to grief, in fact, they both have declined in health and were unable to carry on their regular duties.

Grandmother Patterson began suffering from a dental ailment and was compelled to visit a dental surgeon. The dental surgeon suggested that she visit a medium and seek some comforting message from the child.

She at once visited a medium and received a message. "Stokes answered me. In fact, he was waiting to communicate with us. He said 'Grandmother! you and mother must stop staying at the cemetery and grieving for me. Send the flowers to your sick friends and put in more time with the other children. I am happy here, I am in a beautiful field, The sky is blue and the field is full of beautiful white lambs that play with me.'"

The message comforted the aged woman. She began occupying her time with other members of the family and again began to visit with her neighbors.

She felt a call two years later and again consulted the medium. That time she received a message from the child, his father, and a little girl that had died in infancy. Grandmother Patterson said she would not recall the ones who had gone on to the land of promise. She is a Christian and a believer in the Word of God.

Grandmother Patterson, in spite of her 87 years of life (fifteen of which were passed in slavery) is useful in her daughter's home. Her children and grandchildren are fond of her as indeed they well may be. She is a refined woman, gracious to every person she encounters. She is hoping for better opportunities for her race. She admonishes the younger relatives to live in the fear and love of the Lord that no evil days overtake them.

"Yes, slavery was a curse to this nation" she declares, "A curse which still shows itself in hundreds of homes where mulatto's faces are evidence of a heinous sin and proof that there has been a time when American fathers sold their children at the slave marts of America." She is glad the curse has been erased even if by the bloodshed of heroes.