

**MRS. BETTY GUWN**  
**1101 East Second Street, Muncie, Indiana**  
**DELAWARE COUNTY**

Mrs. Betty Guwn was born March 25, 1832, as a slave on a tobacco plantation, near Canton, Kentucky. It was a large plantation whose second largest product was corn. She was married while quite young by the slave method which was a form of union customary between the white masters. If the contracting parties were of different plantations the masters of the two estates bargained and the one sold his rights to the one on whose plantation they would live. Her master bought her husband, brought him and set them up in a shack. Betty was the personal attendant of the Mistress. The home was a large Colonial mansion and her duties were many and responsible. However, when her house duties were caught up her mistress sent her immediately to the fields. Discipline was quite stern there and she was "lined up" with the others on several occasions.

Her cabin home began to fill up with children, fifteen in all. The ventilation was ample and the husband would shoot a prowling dog from any of the four sides of the room without opening the door. The cracks between the logs would be used by cats who could step in anywhere. The slaves had "meeting" some nights and her mistress would call her and have her turn a tub against her mansion door to keep out the sound.

Her master was very wealthy. He owned and managed a cotton farm of two thousand acres down in Mississippi, not far from New Orleans. Once a year he spent three months there gathering and marketing his cotton. When he got ready to go there he would call all his slaves about him and give them a chance to volunteer. They had heard awful tales of the slave auction block at New Orleans, and the Master would solemnly promise them that they should not be sold if they went down of their own accord.

My Mistress called me to her and privately told me that when I was asked that question I should say to him: "I will go". The Master had to take much money with him and was afraid of robbers. The day they were to start my Mistress took me into a private room and had me remove most of my clothing; she then opened a strong box and took out a great roll of money in bills; these she

strapped to me in tight bundles, arranging them around my waist in the circle of my body. She put plenty of dresses over this belt and when she was through I wore a bustle of money clear around my belt. I made a funny figure, but no one noticed my odd shape because I was a slave and no one expected a slave to "know better". We always got through safely and I went down with my Mistress every year. Of course, my husband stayed at home to see after the family, and took them to the fields when too young to work under the task master, or overseer. Three months was a long time to be separated.

When the Civil War came on there was great excitement among us slaves. We were watched sharply, especially soldier timber for either army. My husband ran away early and helped Grant to take Fort Donaldson. He said he would free himself, which he did; but when we were finally set free all our family prepared to leave, the Master begged us to stay and offered us five pounds of meal and two pounds of pork jowl each week if we would stay and work. We all went to Burgard, Kentucky, to live. At that time I was about 34 years old. My husband has been dead a long time and I live with my children. If the Good Lord spares me until next March the 25th, I will be 106 years old. I walk all about lively without crutches and eye-glasses and I have never been sick until this year when a tooth gave me trouble; but I had it pulled.