

Charlie Richmond
FLOYD CO.
Written by John I. Sturgill

We are unable to interview ex-slaves in Floyd County, so far as anyone we are able to contact knows, there are no living ex-slaves in the County. There are several colored people. The majority of them reside at Tram, Kentucky, Floyd County, in a kind of colored colony, having been placed there just after the Civil War. A small number of colored people live in the vicinity of Wayland, Kentucky, the original being the remains of a wealthy farmer of Civil War days, by name of Martin. The colored people were identified as "Martin's Niggers."

The last ex-slave of Floyd County, says Mr. W.S. Wallen of Prestonsburg, Kentucky, was "Uncle" Charlie Richmond, of Prestonsburg. Uncle Charlie was brought to the county by old Judge Richmond, father of I. Richmond of the Richmond Dept. Stores of Prestonsburg, about the time of the Civil War. When the war was over "Uncle" Charlie worked at Richmond's for hire and lived as a member of the family. While working on a Prestonsburg newspaper, Mr. Wallen interviewed this old ex-slave and worked him into a feature story for his paper. These old paper files were destroyed by fire about 1928.

Mr. Wallen remembers that "Uncle" Charlie Richmond, as the old ex-slave was called, died in 1910, was buried in Prestonsburg, and that he, W.S. Wallen, wrote up the old Darkey's death and funeral for his newspaper. This is the same paper whose files were destroyed by fire and which papers do not now exist.

Old Judge Richmond brought this old slave, from Virginia about 1862, along with a number of other slaves. "Uncle" Charlie was the only slave that remained in the family as a servant after the Emancipation Proclamation.

Mr. Wallen is a lawyer in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, a member of the James and Wallen Law Firm, located in the Lane Bldg., on Court St. He was born at Goodlow, Kentucky in Floyd County, March 15, 1866. He taught school in Floyd County thirteen years, took his L.L.B. at Law School in Valparaiso, Ind., in 1910, and later served as representative to the Kentucky General Assembly from the 93rd District, the 1922-24 and 26 Sessions.

The List of People who owned Slaves in Floyd County include:

Sophia Lane, Lanesville.

Jim Lane, Lanesville

Gilbert Higgins, Wilson's Creek

George May, Maytown

Hi Morgan, Prestonsburg

Penny J. Sizemore, Prestonsburg

Samuel P. Davidson, Prestonsburg

I. Richmond, Prestonsburg

Valentine Mayo, Prestonsburg

---- Lanes, Prestonsburg

Kennie Hatcher, Lanesville

Morgan Clark, John's Creek

Daniel Hager, Hager Shoals near what is Auxier, Kentucky

Adam Gayheart, Prestonsburg

John P. Martin, Prestonsburg

Jacob Mayo, Sr., Prestonsburg

Wm. Mayo, Jr., Prestonsburg

Johnny Martin, Wayland, Kentucky

Thomas Johns, Dwale, Kentucky

Isom Slone, Beaver Creek

John Bud Harris, Emma, Kentucky

Billy Slone, Caney Fork, Right Beaver, Kentucky.

This list is as remembered by the oldest citizens, and one T.J. "Uncle" Jeff Sizemore, 94 years old Civil War Veteran and citizen of Prestonsburg, Kentucky, dictated then to the writer in just this order.

The nearest auction blocks were Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, and Gladdville, Virginia. Most slaves from the present Floyd County Territory were bought and sold through auction in southwest Virginia. Other auction blocks were at Abington and Bristol, Virginia.

The negro dialect of this county is a combination of the dialect white folk use plus that of the negro of the South. The colored population is continually moving back and forth from Alabama, Georgia, and North and South Carolinas. They visit a lot. Colored teachers so far have all been from Ohio. Most visiting colored preachers come from Alabama and the Carolinas. The negroes leave out their R's use an't han't gwin, su' for sir, yea for yes, dah for there and such expressions as, "I's Ye?"

The wealthiest families o' white folk still retain colored servants. In Prestonsburg, Kentucky one may see on the streets neat looking colored gals leading or wheeling young white children along. Folks say this is why so many southerners leave out their R's and hold on to the old superstitions, they've had a colored mama for a nurse-maid.

Adam Gearheart was a sportsman and used negro Jockeys. His best jockey, Dennis, was sold to Morg. Clark, John's Creek. The old race track took in part of the east end of the present Prestonsburg—from Gearheart's home East in Mayo's bottom one mile to Kelse Hollow—Jimmie Davidson now lives at the beginning of the old track, near Maple Street. Mike Tarter of Tennessee, Gearheart's son-in-law brought horses from Tennessee and ran them here. Tarter was a promoter and book-maker also. Penny J. Sizemore and Morg. Clark were other sportsmen. This was as early as 1840 up to the Civil War.

Slaves were traded, bought, and sold between owners just as domestic animals are today. Where one owned only a few servants with no families they lived in the big house—otherwise in Slave quarters, little cabins nearby.

Billy Slone just had two female servants, he bought them in Virginia 15 years old, for \$1,000.00 sound.

Many folks went over to Mt. Sterling or Lexington to auctions for trading servants. (The same manner is used trading stock today).

Slave traders came into the county to buy up slaves for the Southern plantations, and cotton or sugar fields—Slave families were very frequently separated, some remember mean, thieving or running-away niggers were sold (first) down the river. Sometimes good servants were sold for the price, the master being in a financial strait or dire need of money. Traders handcuffed their servants purchased and took them by boat or horse-back down the river or over in Virginia and Carolina tobacco fields.

Good servants were usually well treated and not over-worked. Mean or contrary servants were whipped, or punished in other ways. Runaways were hunted—dogs being used to track them at times.