

Henry Long

Home 112 East Grand

Age: c. 71

Interviewer: Mary D. Hudgins

Yes, ma'am, I own my own home--and what's more, it's on the same street with the Mayor's house. Yes, I own a good home, have my own chickens and my flowers and I have a pension of \$50 a month.

Just the other day I got a letter. It wanted me to join the National Association of Retired Federal Workers. I took the letter to the boss and he told me not to bother. Guess I'd better spend my money on myself.

I got some oil stock too. Been paying pretty good dividends since I've had it. Didn't pay any this year. They are digging a new well. That'll maybe mean more money. It's paid pretty good up to now. Yes, me and my wife, we're getting along pretty good. Nothing to worry about.

Where was I born--it was in Kentucky, Russellville it was, just a few miles from Bowling Green. Yes, Kentucky was a regular slave state - a genuine slave state. Lots of them there.

The man we belonged to----his name was Gabe Long. I remember hearing them tell how they put him up on one block and sold him. They put his wife up on another and sold her too. Only they both went in different directions. They didn't see each other again for 30 years. By that time he had married again twice. My mother was his third wife. She lived to be 102 and he lived to be 99. Yes, I comes from a long lived family. There's four of us still living. I got two brothers and one sister. They all live back in Kentucky----pretty close to where we were all born.

One time, when I had a vacation----you know they give you a vacation with pay----30 days vacation it was. Well one time on my vacation I went back to see my sister. She is living with her daughter. She is 78. One brother is living with his son. He's 73. My youngest brother owns his own farm. He is 64. All of them back in Kentucky, they've been farmers. I'm the only one who has worked in town.

I never worked in town until I come to Arkansas. Been in Hot Springs for over 50 years. Lord, when I first came there wasn't any Eastman hotel. There wasn't any Park hotel. I don't mean that Park Hotel up in Happy Hollow. The one I mean was down on Malvern. It burned in the fire of 1913. When I come there wasn't anything but mule street cars. Hot Springs has seen lots of changes.

Back in Kentucky I'd been working around where I was born. Worked around the houses mostly. They paid me wages and wanted me to go on working for them. But I decided I wanted to get away. So I went to Little Rock. But didn't find nothing much to do there. Then I went on up Cedar Glades way. Then I come to Hot Springs. First I worked for a man who had a big garden---it's out where South Hot Springs is now----oh you know what the man's name was----he was

named---he was named--name was Barker, that's it, Barker. (The Barker Place has been divided up into lots and blocks and is one of the more popular residential districts.) Then I got a job at the Park hotel. No ma'am. I didn't work in the yard. I worked in the refrigerators and the pantry. Then about meal times I served the fruit. You know how a big, fashionable hotel is-- there's lots of things that has to be done around 'em.

Finally, I got rheumatism and I had to quit that kind of work. So I got a job firing the furnace at the electric light plant. It was down on Malvern then. That was before the fire of 1913. I was working right there when the fire come. It was pretty awful. It burned just about everything out there on Malvern---and places on lots of other streets too. After that I got a job at the Eastman hotel. I fired the furnace and worked on the boilers. Worked there a long time. Then they sent me to the Arlington. You know at that time the same company owned both the Eastman and the Arlington. It wasn't this new Arlington---it was the second one--the red brick one. Built that second one while I was here. The first one was wood. Back in the time when I come, there was a creek running through most of the town. There wasn't any Great Northern hotel. There was just a big creek there. But how-some-ever, to go on. After I worked at the Arlington on the boilers and the furnace--I got a job at the Army and Navy Hospital. Now that wasn't the new hospital either. It was the old one--it was red brick too. Next, I worked at the LaMar Bath house. I was there a long time---for years and years. Then they got to building over the bath houses. One by one they tore down the old ones and put new ones up. I worked on at the LaMar until they tore the old one down to build the new one. Then I went up to the Quapaw to work. Worked there for quite some time.

Finally, they sent for me to come on down and work for the government. I've worked under a lot of the Superintendents. I started working for the government when... Dr. Warring was his name. He was a nice man. Then there was Dr. Bolton. I worked for him too. Then there was---there was--oh, what was his name--DeValin--that's it. Then there was Dr. Collins. He was the last of the Doctors. Then there was Mr. Allen and now Mr. Libbey. Yes, I worked for a lot of them and made a HOME RUN with all of them. Every one of them liked me. I always did good work. All of them liked the way I worked.

Yes. I been married 41 years--20 years to the first woman--21 to this one. The first one come from Mississippi. Her name was Ula. This one's name is Charlotte. She come from Magnolia-- that's in Arkansas.

You know ma'am, I come from Kentucky where they raise fine race horses. I worked around them a lot. But I ain't seen many races. We lived out in the country. We had good horses, but they didn't race them. I worked with the horses around the place, but we didn't go in town to see the races.

What did we raise? Well tobacco and wheat and the usual things. All my folks, but me are still working on farms.

No, I didn't rightly know how old I was. I was working along, not thinking much about what I was doing. Then the men down at the office (Hot Springs National Park) started asking me how old I was. I couldn't tell them. But I thought I was born the year the slaves was freed. They said I ought to be retired. So they wrote back--or somebody stopped over while he was on his vacation--can't quite remember which. Anyhow they found I was old enough to retire--ought to have retired several years ago. So now I got my home, got my pension and got my time to do what I wants to do.