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Clark County, District #6

I was very young when freedom came; still I can remember lots of things. And then, too, my family has been in slavery for such a long time, that they often talked and told us so much about things that happened.

I was born in Bath County, Kentucky, just twelve miles from Mt. Sterling. Father and Mother was owned by a Mr. Preston of Lexington. They had been given to him when he got married - in fact, his folks gave him twenty of us slaves. Mr. Preston lived in Lexington, and had a fine place and several house servants. Then too, he had the farm near Mt. Sterling, of about 200 acres, and twenty of us - or thereabouts - lived on that place.

There were five of us children; Will, Lewis, Lucinda, Harriet and me. Our mother died when we were very young, and our grandmother looked after us. Grandmother and my aunt Nancy were very fine seamstresses, and they would go in town to the Preston home, and sew for weeks at a time making clothes for the whole family. The children's clothes were well made and we had much more than some slaves, because my grandmother and aunt saw to it that we had things, and they made some of the things they made for the Preston girls. We did have to go barefoot in summertime, but when the weather got cool, we began to wear shoes.

Mr. Preston would come out once in a while, and I remember him giving us all nickels, and some of the older ones a good little bit of money. We had a church about three miles from us, and a preacher called Uncle Willis, who later was a schoolteacher, and we went to school with him.

A lot of men from our place went to war. I had two uncles who went. It was nothing to see soldiers in our neighborhood. When the war was over, Mr. Preston gave all his slaves deeds for so much land, and built them each a little four-room cottage. Some of them folks are still on that piece of land.

We moved to Lexington after a few years, and later to Georgetown. I married Mr. Robert Beaumont, from Orange County, Virginia, and we went to Cincinnati. We moved from Cincinnati to Springfield about twenty-five years ago.

When we lived on the Preston farm something happened that raised a lot of talk. One of the Preston girls fell in love with the Negro coachman and ran off and married him in Canada. Said she never wanted to marry a white man. She never did have white beaux as a girl. Her father was so hurt, and he said he was going to disown her. But he did give them \$10,000, then he said he never wanted them to come back to visit him or his folks, but his folks could go up to Canada and visit with her and her family. Before, the Prestons threatened to kill the man, but the girl said if they killed him, she would kill some of them and herself, too. She told them that she persuaded him to take her, and that she had been in love with him for years, and had tried ever so long to get him to run off with her and marry her. Ole Miss like to died, but she got over it, and took trips up to Canada when she wanted to see her daughter. But the girl and her husband, they never came back to her old home. They had a family, so we heard, and he was doing well and had some kind of business, and later, it was said he made a lot of money. He was a nice-looking man; dark, but fine featured.

Preston's slaves were the same as free in those times. The ones on his farm, they tended their own land and was their own boss. Folks said he let his darkies be free, and some of them talked a lot and said that when his daughter married.

I know they didn't call a doctor for every little thing in the old days, like they do now; they used home remedies, and I learned to be a midwife and nurse when I grew up. I can't think of some of the things used in those days. I know we used ground ivy for measles, and watermelon seed tea to make young babies' kidneys act. Cucumber rinds were always good to rub on the face to remove freckles, and some people do that now.

When we went to church, we sang lots of them good ole hymns, like; 'I want Jesus to Walk With Me'; 'Every Day and Every Hour'; 'Take my Burdens To The Lord'; and 'Bells Done Rung and I'm Going' Home'.

Me and my two daughters are all that is left. I go up to the Pentecostal Church, on South Yellow Springs Street, and both my girls go to the Second Baptist Church.

Interviewed at her residence, 802, Innisfallen Avenue.