

LUCY ANN WARFIELD
South Limestone Street
117 years old

Lordy child, I've been old so long that the affliction of years makes me forget lots and lots I might tell you. I was born in Jessamine County, Kentucky, but I can't say what year, because white folks didn't keep count of their slaves' ages. They were just like chickens- like so many chickens.

I know I was a married woman when the war came, and they say I am more than a hundred, Nannie says I'm about 117. But I just don't know. Anyhow, I know that God's been awful good to me.

My mother was Betsy Hawkins, and my father was Milo Hawkins. How we came to have the name of Hawkins, I can't say; because the only slave owners I knew were Scotts and Perrys. They owned all our family, my grandmother, my mother and father, Mary, Fannie, Sophia, Marcie, Harvey, Charles and John - Jack they called him. You see the Scott girl married into the Perry family, and they just gave them a lot of slaves, and so all our family was their property.

They never did give me a whipping, but they sure worked me hard. I did a man's work on the place; putting' up stone fences and rail fences, splitting' rails, breaking hemp, plowing fields, doing corn planting', and anything the men were supposed to do, and I was supposed to say nothing. The good Lord only knows just what I've been through.

I remember when one of my mother's sisters ran off and got safe into Canada. She was a fine woman and she didn't care for anything except to be free. She did what more of them ought to have done - me, too, because I was grown in size long time before we were free- but they were just afraid.

I married Gilbert Burns before the war broke out. He went off to war and came back home safe. We had one son, little Justice, but he died when he was just a little feller. When folks got sick they didn't call doctors, except once in a while. There ain't no use anybody saying just colored folks use herbs, because I know better. White folks used them the same as anybody else. They

use to use catnip tea, horehound, and lots of roots cut up and put in whiskey for use in case of sickness.

I didn't go to school, but I learnt to read the Bible. I got me a license to be an evangelist. God just gives me songs and words. I sure believe in that old song, 'Where You Go I'll Go With You, Open Your Mouth and I'll Speak For You', because that's what He's done for me.

I've been all around these parts preaching God's words. But, honey, back in them days, when we didn't go to church much, and didn't have much enjoyment, but I sure loved dancing, and that was just about all the enjoyment we had. But I learnt to praise God harder than I learnt To serve the devil, and if it wasn't for His power I wouldn't be here right now.

When I moved out here in this part of town it was nothing but woods. Me and Mr. Warfield had a cabin just across the street here. It's been torn down for years, because I've lived in this house for about fifty years. I wish I could remember more, because I been through alot. I don't remember much anymore.

I still sing, 'I'm Climbing Jacob's Ladder', and I know I'm going to sit down beside my Saviour some of these days.

Interviewed at her residence: On East side of South Limestone Street, three doors north of Johnson Ave.

Editor's note: Lucy Ann Warfield is allegedly 117 years old and very feeble from the infirmities of her great age. She is light brown in color, her eyes a faded grey, and her eyebrows and hair the color and texture of cotton. Unable because of her advanced age to do any of the actual housework in her home, she supervises its care and keeps it in clean and cheerful condition.