

SAMUEL LYONS

726 Dibert Ave

Age about 90

I was almost a young man when the war broke out, but I don't know my exact age because the book that had our ages written in it got burnt up when Evall's house was burnt. I was born in Sawhill Station, Bourbon County, Kaintucky. was my mother's name , and my father was Sam Lyons, but he died and my mother got married again to George Conley.

Evall had about 200 slaves on a big plantation and fine race horses. He raised cane, wheat, and corn, and he had a big stillhouse to make his own whiskey, and he made it to sell, too.

We did our cooking in our cabin, and it wasn't much except jowl bacon, cornbread, and syrup. I and part of our family were sold once, and ole Miss Evall's mother brought us back the same day.

I saw slaves whipped at the whipping post in Paris, Kentucky, until their backs bled. And then they sprinkled the cuts with salty water.

Different slave owners would take their slaves to help other slave owners cut their winter's wood, or husk corn, or shear their sheep. We got good food then and sometimes they used to let their slaves have dances together whilst they were working to get the work done.

Evall bought our shoes in Paris, (Kentucky) and if they were too big, we wore them, and if they were too little we wore them just the same, But sometimes we cut the toes out of the shoes to make them long enough.

When the war broke out some of the folks from our plantation went off to it. About that time Evall gave us our freedom papers, but Mother had to go into Paris and get the papers herself. We children made out the papers with him.

We went to Covington, Kentucky, and worked in the tobacco factory and did whatever work we could get. I stayed there for about six months, and then I moved to Goes Station station and worked in the powder mills. After 12 years there, we moved to Springfield.

I remember when all this west end town was nothing but woods. I remember when all the land between Lowry and Race Streets, from Fair to Pleasant Street, was only a big Orchard.

Folks used to be afraid of hoodoo and being witched. They used to carry the bone of a cat leg, flint stones, and dried Dogwood blossoms for good luck. They used to take bittersweet and put it in a pan with a little grease and after it was hot, pour off the grease and use it to form salve to cure rheumatism. Now folks don't use such things like that.

I attend Wiley M. E. Church. I'm the only one of my family left. My wife has been dead about eight years. I used to know Asberry Whiteman well. He was one of the early preachers in this town and he used to preach at North Street Church.

If I were talking to some old timer like myself lots of things would just come back to me, clear like, but I forget so much now because it's been so long ago.

Editor's note: Interviewed at his residence, 726 Dibert Ave.

Samuel Lyons, exact age unknown, but allegedly almost grown when the Civil War started in 1861, 76 years ago, is short, dark, and grey haired, with a full unwrinkled face, and walks with a cane.