

**THOMAS MCINTIRE**  
**803 Piqua Place**  
**Clark County District #6**  
**90 years old, 1-15-41**

I was born in Bath County, Kentucky, Jan. 17, 1847. My father was Bryant McIntire, and my mother was Sally McIntire. Father was taken by slave traders from Africa, and they brought him to Norfolk, Virginia, and put him on the block and sold him to Jim Lane of Bath County, Kentucky. Lane made the first cooking stove manufactured in the United States west of New York. It was made in Ashland, Kentucky, and it burned wood.

Lane and the people who owned mother were friends, and betwixt them they gave father and mother in order so they could be man and wife. You see, in those days all they did was to give an order in writing for a man and woman to be man and wife. Lane was a little more human than some of the slave owners back in those times, so he allowed Mother and Father to go by the name of McIntire as the married name. There were ten of us children: Hannah, Lomie, Melvinie, Sally, Williams, Georgia, Wash, Tannar, John, and me.

Jim Lane owned 550 slaves and about 2,000 acres of good land. He was one of the big rich men in those days, and I reckon he's the same now. He had a big, red brick house with 24 rooms, and he needed them, for he had sixteen children, and he was always having company and lots of it.

The slave quarters were about 300 yards from the big house, and every family had their own cabin and eight acres of land for themselves, and all the vegetables and garden truck they needed. They raised their own chickens and turkeys. But the hogs and cattle were butchered and shared with all the different families, and so was the milk. But I remember hearing my folks talking and it wasn't just eats they wanted. They wanted to be free, and educate their children, like Master Jim's children, so they could grow up and have something for themselves. I'd often hear them saying "Never mind, children, for your auntie is sure coming." That was just a blind for saying, "Freedom's coming". We children soon learnt what it meant, but the white folks never did learn.

We had a ladder next to the side of the cabin, and we children climbed up in the loft and slept on straw ticks laid on the floor. Many was the time I woke up and found snow all on our bed, sifted through the cracks in the ceiling.

Our clothes were jeans pants and coarse hickory shirts, and big hard shoes made by the shoemakers on the plantation. There were three or four of them, and they made the harnesses for the horses. We had just one pair of shoes a year, and my mother, she'd sew up moccasins for us to protect our feet before it was time to begin wearing shoes. Most times it was nearly Christmas before shoes were worn.

I never saw a Lane slave whipped nor treated cruel, and he never allowed any of his families to be separated. That was the reason he had so many slaves, because when he went to sales, he'd just buy a whole family before he'd allow them to all be separated. Then when his children married he'd give them four or five families, but he never gave it in writing to them. So, they couldn't sell them.

My grandmother was a weaver, and there were several other weavers. My mother was a cook and a midwife.

There was a log church right on our plantation for us to attend, and other slaves from other plantations came and had meetings with us. They used to sing lots of good old fashioned songs, but I just can't think of them right now. Lane and some of his friends had a little church they built for themselves, and they always walked from our plantation because he was quite religious, and didn't allow any work on Sundays. No horses were hitched up for them, and the only work done was just milk the cows. The cooking was done Friday and Saturday, but one or two of the slaves that worked at the cooking and setting of the tables had to kind of stick around, but got home in time to go to meeting. When there were weddings, or funerals on holidays, there wasn't work done except what couldn't be got around doing.

I remember all the slaves that could get out from the quarters coming to meetings in the woods to talk about getting away to freedom or going off to war. Some from our place did go off. We all knew the Underground Railroad through the whole country. Because lots of Quakers had come and bought property on those parts and they were teaching the slaves to not be afraid of their rights.

The folks that owned the next plantation to ours, the Bigstaffs, were cruel to their slaves, and some the Bigstaffs boys would know the patrollers and help to catch slaves and whip them if they couldn't show a pass from their masters.

I saw them driving long lines of slaves chained together, with the little ones pitched up in an ox cart, and I don't know how many men on horseback with long whips slashing them and driving them along the road. The slave traders went all around and bought up men and women, some of them right from the field; no time for them to say goodbye to the families, buying and selling them worse than cattle.

The slave traders took them to a halfway house on the Tennessee highway close to us, owned by Billy Wurtz. He had a big cellar where they put the slaves till they were going to sell them or else take them further south. They used to make a big sale day at Mt. Sterling and auction off the slaves. They'd whip them on the block to make them holler. I saw all that, and more.

When the war came on, lots of the Lane slaves went in. My father and brother Wash went, and Wash was in the battle, between General Morgan and General Burden around Mt. Sterling. Lots of women and children went into Camp Nelson and lived at what they called the Woman's Hall. The men who cared to go there went to the barracks at Camp Nelson.

When the war was over Father and Wash both came home. Jim Lane freed us before the war was over and gave us all a little money or paid some if they were staying on till the war was over. Those that stayed after the war he gave ten acres of land and built them a little place to live in.

We went to Nicholasville, and worked around, some of us on farms. Father did blacksmithing. Mother saved money from selling chickens and eggs, and pretty soon we had enough to buy and build a nice six-room house. That was right after the war.

Way back then we used molasses to sweeten almost everything, and I remember the first sugar we had. It wasn't white like it is now but was more like that light brown sugar.

I lived in Springfield for 55 years, and I've seen a lot of changes. I married both my wives here in Springfield. They are both dead now. There are three of my family left, two brothers living in Cincinnati, and me here.

I've always been a Methodist, and Wiley is my church. I thank the Lord for all the blessings he's allowed me to have.

I knew Ben Arnett personally and heard him speak lots of times; and too I heard Booker T. Washington, and Douglas, and almost all the big men among Negro folks. I read a little, and I read lots about most of the ones I ain't heard.

Interviewed at his residence; 803 Piqua Place.

Editor's note: Thomas McIntire, 90 years old, is a tall, thin, full blooded Negro whose father was brought from the African jungles by slave traders. He is bald and wears a long moustache, and his physical condition is above the average for his advanced age.