

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

of the

....LIFE AND TRAVELS....

of

John W. Tillman,

Doe Run, Chester County, Penna.

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When he was a boy in slavery in the State of
Delaware, and how he escaped from
bondage, for his liberty, through and
by the Underground Railroad ;
and a brief account of his
travels in the days
of his man-
hood.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

FEBRUARY, 1896.



LIFE AND HISTORY

..of..

JOHN W. TILLMAN.

I was a slave in the sunny South, in Kent county, State of Delaware, where I was born, near Green's Mill, and I was Henry Green's slave. By the laws and jurisdictions of the State, I was born a slave, in Kenton Forest, near my first master's mill. I had a surname there, too; my whole name was Caleb Duff. By the slave-holder's marriage my mother had two husbands, the first was Thomas Tillman, and the second was Thomas Tillman.

ACCOUNT OF MY ANCESTORS.

My grandmother was supposed to be out of the old Indian savage tribe. She is said to be the mother of twenty-four children. My grandmother and my mother, I learned, both belong in the Martha Clark family. There they were

separated. My mother was sold out of that family into the Cloak family, of Smyrna, Delaware. In this family my oldest brother was born. His name was George Henry. After this had taken place they were both sold into the Green family, and old Master Green was like all the rest of his kind, very fond of his whiskey. He would go away, get on his tear, then would come home and raise Cain and run everyone out of the house. But old Master played his trick once too often. On his last round he came home pretty full, and I learned that some time in the night Master Green thought he would take a "smile" out of a bottle that sat on the mantle-piece, but it was not the kind he thought it was. It proved to be a bottle of laudanum, and when old Master got a good drink out of that bottle, both of his eyes went shut, and they never came open again.

After his death, he was so poor everything had to be sold, and we three were put up on the block and sold like the horses and cattle. The things were all sold, excepting a favorite goose. Old Mistress said that it belonged to her. We were bought at the sale by a man named George Commins, from Smyrna, and after he kept us a while he sold my mother away from us to a man

named William Hullock. That made us both very sad, because we had no mother there with us.

OUR BITTER DAYS BEFORE PEACE.

Afterwards we two boys were separated, and my brother George was sold to a man by the name of Anthony Ryabold. Then I was put out on the farm with Samuel Foreacres. Sometimes I would get enough to eat, and very often I did not get enough. He only allowed me five minutes to eat, and I had to stand up to do that. When he had one of his devilish spells, I would not be allowed that much time to eat. Whenever he gave me any work to do, it was always a great task—as much as a man could do—and if I did not get it done he would whip me and give me nothing to eat, and make me lie down on what he called a bed, and in addition to this he would tie me up and whip me until my back was raw. Then he would wash me down in salt and water, and you know that did not feel good.

One hot shiney morning he got on one of his ways, then stripped off all my clothes, tied me to a post, and cut me with the cowhide until the blood ran to my heels. Then he took a recess. He walked off and left me there for two

hours in the hot sun, while he walked around on the farm. Then he came back after a while, and said to me,—I was a small boy then: "Well, old fellow, I have got rested now. I expect you have too." I was still where he left me tied to that post in the hot sun. Then he took his second turn on me, after which he took another recess and sat down close by me in the old shed and read a newspaper. Then he said to me: "I will finish up now." He took the third turn on me with the whip. Then he washed me down again in salt and water. After this cruelty I was very sore and could not lie down.

One day after this, when we were coming in to dinner, he said he would whip me after dinner. Then sun was very hot then. I thought I would change the thing a little for myself, and I jumped into the well. He was in the house when I did this. He hunted from dinner time until nearly dark for me among the neighbors. Of course the water was very low in the well, and I escaped drowning. We had a large dog named Turk. He espied me when I jumped into the well. This dog would go away from the well and bark. Then he would run back to it again, and after keeping this up for some time, Samuel Foreacres came to the well to see what

was down there. I was there right enough. He took me out of the well. I was considered so much money there, and it would not do to leave me down there in the well. This man was the overseer or renter. Anyhow I was there with him, and he knew that if he did not get me out of that well, Master George would make him pay for me, if I had been drowned in there. He knew that he had better get me out as soon as possible before something did happen to me.

One day Master George came riding out to the farm, and I went to him and told him how badly I had been treated there. After that he took me to his home in town, to be a waiter in the house. Master George's wife was a Quaker, and was not so rough, but for all that she could use the cat-o'-nine-tails, too, without much relaxation, and Master George was very rough with me.

MY FIRST ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE.

I took particular notice of everything I saw and heard, and prepared to run away. I concluded not to be a slave any longer and stand their brutal punishment, and so one day I started away. After I got several miles on my journey, I became very hungry, but was afraid to go to

anyone's house to get anything to eat. During my travels I found some turnip peelings lying along the road, and my hunger was so great that I piked them up and ate them. They tasted very sweet to me. I travelled along a few miles farther and came to a house along the road where a colored woman named Betsy Lockman lived, and she asked me where I was going. She saw I was a strange boy, and I told her I was hunting Master's oxen for him. I then travelled on, and after a while came to a town called Canton's Bridge. The first man I met along the street was a colored man named Philip Bennson, and he knew me right away. He was a free man from the same part of the country I was from, and this man proved to be a nigger to me. He asked me where I was going to. I told him I was running away, and he said that was right and for me to come and go home with him. It was nearly night then, and I felt very glad of that, thinking to myself that I had found a friend. While I was under his shelter he gave me something to eat, and I was put to bed. While I was sleeping happy, this old nigger slipped out doors and went to a Quaker gentleman in the town by the name of Daniel Corbett. This gentleman was acquainted with my master, George

Commins, and visited him often while I was there a waiter boy. This old nigger told Corbett that George Commins' boy was at his house, and that he intended to run away. When Corbett learned this he sent word that night to my master. (Please excuse the word nigger here; you might know how I felt trying to get my liberty, and have one of my own people betray me.)

The next morning Bennson had me up early, and told me to go out across the fields and he would come around the other way and meet me to help me off; but to my surprise when I got there I met the constable, and he captured me and took me back again to my master. When he was taking me back we passed by old Betsy's house, and she was at the door looking, and called out to the constable: "You got the rascal. I saw him going by here yesterday, and asked him where he was going. He told me that he was hunting his master's oxen." When they got me home, Master George stripped my clothes off and gave me a terrible whipping with the cow-hide until I was sore.

I WAS SOLD TO PAY A BET.

Some months after this was Presidential election. James K. Polk and Dallas were to run.

My master and William Rophwell made a bet on the election, and William Rophwell won the bet, and I was sold to him for that bet. My home at William Rophwell's was very rough indeed. He was a hard master with me. He was a great church man, too—a Sunday Presbyterian Christian. This was the kind of ration their slave-holder fed us on: some corn bread and a little blind fish, and some old rye coffee without sweetening. In regard to my clothes, they were a scarce article. I got one suit of clothes a year and a pair of shoes, at Christmas, and we got no more until the next Christmas. I had no change of clothes and had to work out in all kinds of weather, from early morning until late at night. My bed consisted of a pine board, and you know there is nothing soft about that kind of a bed. It was very hard to lay on after working hard all day with wet clothes on.

He got very angry with me while I was there. He beat one of my ears nearly off. You might know how I suffered, for some time after this he gave me another whipping. I thought this should be the last clubbing he would give me. He got very good to me after this, and said to me blandly that he liked me, and I was a good boy. I watched him for all that he pretended

to be good to me. He gave me some honey tobacco to make friends with me, but I did not do it. I was watching him. I hadn't forgot his cruelty to me, and I was watching my chance to go away again. I was determined to get my freedom from under the hands of a hard task-master.

MY ESCAPE FROM SLAVERY.

My second start for freedom was on a Sunday morning. Before I started my master, whom I said pretended to be so good to me, asked me that morning if I would like to take a walk out with him to the peach orchard, and while we were there he pulled some nice peaches and gave some of them to me to eat, and said that he did not want to be fighting with me. He wanted me to go walking farther with him, but I refused by saying I guessed I would go back to the house, and then he left me in the orchard and walked off to the other part of the place. I stood there a few moments and watched his movements, and when I thought I had a good chance, I went quietly and quickly back to the house and gathered up what few things I had to take. What clothing I had didn't amount to much; in short, I did not have much trouble in

getting my little bundle together. As soon as I got my things in good shape I went down stairs to the kitchen with what few clothes I had on my back. I was starting out to go when my mistress by chance came out in the kitchen and saw me going out. She asked me if I was going away, and I replied, "No, ma'am, I am only going out to the woods to walk around." She told me to be a good boy and not run off like the others have done.

I saw that I had a good chance this time to go. This was in the month of August, and I knew that my people were having a camp meeting at Fort Penn, and this was in my favor, because that anyone that met me outside of my owners on the road would not mistrust me, but would think I was going to camp. After mistress was done talking to me, she went in the room, and then I started off. When I got out I ran very fast, and when I got a good distance from the house I looked back, and saw the top of my master's head as he was just going into the house. The land there was level, and you can see a long distance. When I saw my master going into the house, and knew that he didn't see me, I ran very fast to get out of their sight. I travelled on to Fort Penn camp, and arrived

there between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. I stayed around there until one or two o'clock that night. A terrible thunder storm came up before I left, but I left in it and started out on the road to Wilmington. As the reader may judge, my master hunted for me as soon as he was satisfied that I had left him.

While he was searching around the neighborhood for me I was going in the direction of the city of Wilmington. On my way to the city I came to a railroad, and then I was puzzled to know what kind of a "rigging" this was. I often heard them talking about the railroad and the cars at my owners' homes. In regards to the cars, when I got to the track and happened to gaze around, to my surprise there came the great train of cars, and right there and then I was frightened nearly to death, and just made my escape from being killed by the cars. I had never seen a train of cars before, and I wondered what kind of a horse this was. Then I travelled on until I came to a colored man's house, and after I stopped to talk a little with the man, I told him that I had seen a big black horse running along, whooping and hollowing and blowing, and great smoke coming out of his mouth and eyes, and a lot of little wagons running after

him. After I was done telling the man this, it amused him so much that he lay down and laughed heartily over my ignorance, and advised me not to tell anyone else about my scare, for if I did they would know that I was a runaway and I would be in danger of getting taken up.

I travelled on towards Wilmington, and arrived within quarter a mile of town at sun-down. I knew that I could not cross the bridge that early anyhow. There was a grass field on the roadside not far from the bridge. I got over there and laid down in the grass out of sight for a while. The old saying that "Where there is a will there is a way," proved true. I was lucky at this point, for the Lord caused a way here for me. While I lay there studying what to do, the dusk of evening came on, and during the time I lay there in the field two boys came along, one white and the other colored, driving a cow to pasture for the evening, and turned her into the field I was laying in. After they had put up the bars I thought this would be a chance for me, so after the boys had started back I thought I would put on a bold front and come out from my grassy bed and walk towards the boys. When I got up to them and spoke to them, and after the boys saw that I was a stranger, and

they knew that I did not belong in town, they began to whisper to each other, and one of them turned around to me and said that I was a runaway. Of course I told them no. They said to me right away that I had better tell them; if I did not that I could not get across the bridge. Then I told them, and the boys fixed a way for me to walk in between them. A light of joy burned within me. The business was planned by them and I followed their example. They commenced talking about the boys up-town and I pretended to know them all. This made things lively, and I crossed the bridge and told them that I wanted to go to a colored man by the name of Benjamin Medford, and the boys piloted me there. I was concealed away for a little while, and then put on board of Mr. Thomas Garrett's wagon—an underground coach for our people during those times—and was brought to Hamorton Village and landed at Doctor Fussel's. I was directed to John Bernard's, another underground place, and then to Richard Darlington's.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD.

I was routed from these parts by the slaveholders. Then I went to John Vicker's, at

Lionville, and got my dinner. Then I started to the Yellow Springs, and went from here to Norris Mayorses, and from there to William Fussell's. Then I went to the Maid Lewis'. There were three of these—Mary Ann Lewis, Elizabeth Lewis and Grace Anna Lewis—in the family. They lived not far from Kimberton. The hired girl's name was Ellen Bechtel. They were all underground people, and I was with them a little over a month.

I went from here to Phoenixville, and then to Mohawk Village, and from there to Paul's Bridge copper mines, and then to Valley Forge. There I remained about five or six months with Isaac White, who had the farm where General Washington and his army were encamped during the same winter that the English were encamped in Philadelphia. I helped to plough the first furrow in the Valley Forge encampment. The ground was so rough and stony that I had to bear on the plow-beam to keep the point in the ground.

I will here give the reader a brief idea of how the tents were made in Washington's time. They had round pits dug out in the ground, with canvas stretched over them to protect the men from the weather. During the time that I was

helping to plough this camp ground many old war relics were turned out, such as cannon balls (chain balls those days), swords, shovels, picks, axes, and many other things I helped to handle that are not stated here. When I was engaged at this was in the year 1854, and as near as I can tell, I suppose there were about six or seven acres in this camp ground. The breast-works were of great size, built of dirt and stone. On the north side, at the entrance, was a large fort. This piece of ground was noted for its height. There was only one place to get water here, and that was by a great well they had dug on this hill. I learned from the inhabitants of this place that the depth of this well was 135 feet. This well was a great one; it was so far to the bottom that when you look down into it, the darkness was so intense that at mid-day when you look down at the water you could see the stars in the sky. This was the only well on this hill.

After I stayed there a while I left and went to Norristown to live. After I was there a short time, I and another man was walking down Market street of this place, and on looking around over the baskets of produce to my surprise I saw some peach baskets which I was informed had Master Ryabold's name on them. My

brother had belonged to that man, and I thought maybe some of them might be around looking for some of us, so I fled from there and went to Philadelphia to live. I stayed there all winter in 1856. Then I came back to my old neighborhood in Chester county—the place I first landed when I came north—and married the lady that I had left behind after I came back.

TAKE UNTO MYSELF A WIFE.

We were married on the 15th day of October, 1856. Then I thought I would try to settle down. In 1857, I went to housekeeping. I was getting along nicely, when some time in the fall I was surprised one morning. As a general thing I was always looking out for my owners to come upon me. On the morning I speak of, I went out and was looking around, and on looking down the road from my house I saw a man standing out there. He seemed to be looking toward my house. He stood there a good while and I watched him for some time. I began to suspect him, thinking he was after no good, so I watched him a while longer. Then I went in and told my wife about this matter. I fixed a plan for myself and went out again. He was still down there, so I went to the woods, keeping

the house between him and me. I thought by doing this he could not see me. After I got to the woods I watched his movements. It was not long before I saw a carriage go down the road to this man. Then I saw another man get out and hitch his horse. The two men came up to my house. My sister-in-law happened to be there with us at the time. The men asked my wife for me, and she told them that there was no man lived there by that name. They went away, and after I saw them go I went around and notified some of my people, among whom was Brinton Miller and many others. We armed ourselves with clubs and guns and went on the hunt of these men, but could not find them, for they had fled. This happened in 1857.

A MIDNIGHT ATTACK.

After this I thought it best to change my position, so I moved away from this house, after which time I rested very well for a while. Another excitement took place in 1859, in harvest time. One dark, rainy night, about the twelfth hour, we heard a noise outside of the house. There was another man who made his home with me at this time, by name of Henry Rumsey and he was a runaway too. He heard the men out-

side, and getting my gun, fired at them in the dark. I always kept my door well barred, so that no one could break in on me very handy. We also kept ourselves well armed all the time, and were ready any time that the enemy came upon us. After we heard the noise, the time I speak of, we laid very quiet waiting for the suspected men to break in. On the other side of the road stood another house, in which lived a man named Henry Riley. He was also ready to help me whenever I was attacked. I gave him the alarm, but notwithstanding I think the noise makers were afraid to attempt to break in on us. All at once things quieted down, and we could not hear them. As these men did not attack us on the inside of the house, we thought it was time to make one on them. Then we slipped the bar from across the door quietly and fired a volley toward the road and then closed the door and barred it. We heard no more of them that night.

We took a nice sleep afterward, and the next morning arose and thought we would go out to look around and inspect things a little, and see what had been going on during the night. We went down to the road to see what had taken place there, and to our surprise found that horses

and carriages had been hitched there. Marks of great scrambling were visible, and from the looks of things it appeared that some of them had gotten badly tangled up. We did not see the gentlemen, anyhow, and after this happened I thought it would be better to move away from there and go to New Jersey.

I landed in Gloucester county in a little settlement of my people. Here I thought I would be safe. Things seemed safe here for me. I learned the little settlement was called Little Gloucester. The inhabitants were all colored, and here I settled down again. I leased a small farm and got along nicely. I stayed there during 1861 and 1862. I moved back to Chester county, Pennsylvania, (my old neighborhood), and in the spring of 1862 I moved to Woodville. They call it Lamborntown. I know well this was a great place. In the heart of this village, at the time I came there, on Broadway stood three mansions, on the north side a fine brick, on the south side a fine log dwelling and an old fancy tavern, with fancy old-time knockers on the front doors. I lived in this house very comfortably for five years.

MY WAR CAREER.

In 1863, there was a call for colored soldiers to go and fight for their country and liberty, so I shouldered my musket with the rest for to fight for the same cause, and it made me glad when the time came for me to help to save the country and get my equal liberty. While we colored men were on the battlefield helping to fight bravely for the peace of the nation, the news came swiftly through our camps that our father, Abraham Lincoln, had issued a proclamation that all colored people shall be set free from the bondage of slavery. When we heard this it made our hearts leap with joy to think that this cruelty was buried.

Not long after our joys over the proclamation, a change of sudden grief came to us all, and the sad result was that the head of the nation had been assassinated, who was a friend to the colored people and wanted peace in the hearts of us all and have the royal Stars and Stripes to float, and this was our friend, Abraham Lincoln.

In regards to my war life, it was like the rest of our comrades, very rugged, but I am thankful to my Creator that He spared my life from being cut down, and I landed safely at my home on July 15th, 1865, at Woodville, Chester county,

where I could rest happy. I knew for myself that the time for slaveholders hunting for me and my race, and laying claims to me, was done with now. The victory was won, and peace was made in order that every man could worship under his own vine and fig tree, regardless of color.

Here I wish to call the reader's attention to a particular point of view, and that is in regard to my voting, and all the others of my people—I mean the colored race. It was simply this: After we all came home from the war, and for a good while afterwards, we had not been given the right to vote. A new light sprang up within me when I had learned about the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment, and it gave we colored people a right to vote and to have a legal claim to be free citizens of the United States, and to enjoy the privileges which we as men of color earned on the battlefield, and my ancestors earned a part of these rights with labor and hardships before me, of which I am more than proud.

FINDING MY MOTHER.

After several years of many changes in my life here, I was lucky enough to find my mother on Colonel Joseph Lightner's farm, between

Soudersburg and Paradise, Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, where she had been living for forty years, and had spent the most of her life from the time she ran away from the South. Now, my reader, the old proverb has been taught us all: "There is a way of finding everything that is possible to be found." I will state here briefly how it came around to me to find my dear mother, of whom I had been away from so long, and hoped that I would see her on the Northern lands of peace before we both parted this life here. As luck would have it, I was coming along the road past one of our neighboring tenement houses, and a newcomer came to the door and spoke to me, and I stopped a little while with him and we talked for some time together. Through our conversation he told me his name and I told him mine and where I came from. He said that I looked like people he knew down in Delaware. As he was from there himself, I was anxious to learn more information from this new neighbor that might lead me to the finding of my people. I here give due credit to the ones who put me on the trace of finding my people—Benjamin Augustus and Samuel Henson and wife.

I found my mother in the spring of 1876, and

we had a grand time together at her home in Lancaster county, the place that I have already spoken of. I also had the pleasure of having my mother visit me at my home, and we had a joyful time there together, after being away from each other for several years. It certainly was a comfort to us both to know that we were in a land of freedom, where we could talk of the past and enjoy the present—and where peace abounds. My mother was a very aged woman, and according to nature she did not live many years after we met. A good part of her life was spent before we met, and she died April 6th, 1885, and was buried in Soudersburg Burying Ground. I felt the loss of her very much.

FINDING MY BROTHERS.

In December, 1891, I took a trip down in Delaware, the State in which I was born, to find one of my brothers, whom I had learned of from my friends here that had lived down there and knew where he lived. I am glad to say I found him and family living in a small comfortable village called Friendship, owned by the colored people. It was a long time that I had been away from there, and we spent our holidays together very happily. He owns his home there and is comfortably fixed.

While I was visiting this brother I learned from him about another brother, who lives in Franklinville, Gloucester county, New Jersey. The reader can judge for himself about our past condition of life, which the colored people had to undergo. It caused much scattering among us, and changes of names. We could live here within common distance of each other and travel close by and not know where our people lived. This was my case. During the time of my visit at Friendship with my brother, I had the pleasure of viewing the ground of my birth-place. Things had changed so much down there that the comforts of the place was like going out of the kitchen into the parlor. I mean in a literal sense of speaking, because there was humanity flourishing among the people, and in conclusion, everything went off well.

In August, 1892, I concluded that my wife and I would take a visit to New Jersey and see my other brother and family. The weather was very nice, and we arrived there all right. We had learned of the place before we started, and we had exchanged letters, and you may know that we two boys and our wives and the family in general had a grand time.

FINDING MY SISTER.

In January, 1896, I was very fortunate in learning of my sister and where she lived, by going to Wilmington. Our people have their great Yearly Meeting there, and it is a great place to go, because a meeting like that brings many friends together by visiting this city. I found one of my dear aunts living there in a very comfortable home of her own, and after I found my aunt I visited her very often, which was of great joy to us both. I learned from her about my sister and many others I had forgotten. My aunt was a very old woman. She had lived there a long time and died there. My wife and myself went to Wilmington to spent New Year's with my long-lost sister in 1896, and we had a happy time together with my sister and her family and her friends, at a place called Post Pen.

I am compelled to say here that I am surprised to find so many colored people in the sunny South who own their own homes. With all the disadvantages they labor under, it seems strange to say, but it is a fact, that this part of the country has prospered the colored race wonderfully since I came away from there. The progress of these people down there is more than grati-

ying, and it shows a great spark of humanity in them.

A COLORED POLITICAL MEETING.

A little point of political affairs of which I was engaged in, in 1884, was: I thought we colored people ought to show our colors by raising a pole for the Stars and Stripes to wave in the breeze for Blaine and Logan. As far as I was concerned about the matter, I was determined to try and push my efforts through. If I could find enough help to assist me in it, I would have a pole raised on the ground of my home. After thinking over this matter, I made it known to my fellow-citizens, to see what steps they would take toward helping me out. After we consulted among ourselves, my people gave their consent to help me in having a political meeting and a pole raising at my home, to show that we colored people could do something in this direction, if we tried. When I found I could get help enough to make preparations, I went to West Chester and bought a flag to put on the pole. I had the time set for our meeting, and had what you might call a committee. I was first, as I was the one who proposed having a political meeting at my home. Second on arrangements

was Walter Darlington, who gave me a pole out of his woods and helped me to cut it down, and he also loaned me a horse to help haul it home. Third was Comrade Samuel S. Miller, who helped me to build a stage for the speakers. We had a supper of sandwiches and coffee for the speakers and paraders who helped to do the cheering in favor of this grand work. Credit is due the women for their part in the work of this matter, of whom I will name here myself and wife and James Dorsey and wife, the four of us on table arrangements. To make this a little plainer—Mr. John W. Tillman, Mrs. Margaret J. Tillman, Mr. James Dorsey, Mrs. Amy Dorsey.

The time for the meeting came, and it was called to order, and Samuel S. Miller was made chairman and gave an address; also George Walker and myself. The names of the white speakers who took part with us were Comrade John Gilliss, Comrade Doctor John Nicholas, and Mr. Walter Darlington. The meeting was closed in good order. In conclusion, I here state that I am given the credit by my fellow-citizens that I was the first colored man that had been known of to raise a flag-pole in Chester county.

VISITING CHILDHOOD SCENES.

Dear reader, in regard to my Southern life, I here relate some more important facts of interest. After years of many changes, I concluded to visit my old home in the sunny South, the old State of Delaware, and view the ground of my boyhood days. I found that some of the houses were still standing on the old plantation.

While visiting my brother at Friendship, I thought I would go and see the family that I belonged in once—George Commins' widow, Mrs. Evaline Commins, and her two daughters, Miss Sallie Ann and Louisa. When I went to the door and inquired if that was the place the family lived that I was looking for, they replied yes, and then asked who I was. I told them, and after learning who I was they admitted me into the grand castle and treated me nicely, and said they were much pleased that I thought enough of them to come and see them. It was Christmas time, and they gave me a share of their luxuries, of which I had the pleasure of bringing some of the cakes home to my wife and children.

Reader, in old times down there a slave boy could smell those good victuals cooking, and our eyes could behold some of it, but we could not

get any of the eatables in those days. They thought the good things were too rich for us to eat. They had thorny hearts, and they would not give us fancy food to eat. Before they were converted they showed a feeling that they had souls and we had none. Since that time they have been constrained to see better and to acknowledge the black race as human, and their brothers, and God the Creator of us all. I was glad to see these changes down in the South where I was born. I went to see Mr. George Commins, a son of Mrs. Commins, and he seemed glad to see me and treated me very kindly. He gave me a nice necktie for a Christmas present and told me to come again to see him.

During the visit to my old birth-place, the old mansion and plantation looked as in the days of old. I entered the castle and looked around. It was occupied by one of our people. You can see how things will change. Those who formerly lived in the old cabins can now dwell in the houses that belonged to the ones who oppressed us from our Christian rights.

I had the pleasure of viewing the old mansion thoroughly, the old pot closet, the garret, and some of the rooms were still the same, and many other things looked natural. The old mill-stone

that served for a step in my boyhood days was still in front of the old mansion. The gentleman who lived there knocked a piece of that stone off and gave it to me, and I have it now to show to my friends in the North.

In regards to keepsakes, I enjoy the sight of two apple trees that grew from the seed of apples that were given to me there. They are growing nicely in my orchard now at Mount Olive, Chester county, Pennsylvania. I am in possession of an old relic which I highly prize—Master John Green's pipe.

In the fore part of this book I spoke of the Underground Railroad conductors who help to cheer the hearts of many living souls on to the Northern clime of free soil and happiness. I here add some names to the list that belong with the other men of that day who helped our people to escape from the land of brutality and come to the land of peace. The names of those who helped were: Thomas Whitson, of Atglen, Chester county, Pa.; Nathan Evans, of Willistown, Chester county, Pa., and Benjamin West, of near Kimberton, Chester county, Pa.

In conclusion, I am glad that I lived to see the day when no man can have a legal right to claim me as his property. I am free from the

perils of that cursed law of our land. I am proud to say that I can worship the Lord under my own vine and fig tree, and exclaim in the language of the poet: "This is the land of the brave and the home of the free."