

**Ohio Guide, Special  
Ex-Slave Stories  
August 16, 1937**

"I was born at Goldsboro, N.C., July 25, 1847. I never knew who owned my father, but my mother's master's name was Lifich Pamer. My mother did not live on the plantation but had a little cabin in town. You see, she worked as a cook in the hotel and her master wanted her to live close to her work. I was born in the cabin in town.

"No, I never went to school, but I was taught a little by my master's daughter, and can read and write a little. As a slave boy I had to work in the military school in Goldsboro. I waited on tables and washed dishes, but my wages went to my master the same as my mother's.

"I was about fourteen when the war broke out, and remember when the Yankees came through our town. There was a Yankee soldier by the name of Kuhns who took charge of a Government Store. He would sell tobacco and such like to the soldiers. He was the man who told me I was free and then give me a job working in the store.

"I had some brothers and sisters but I do not remember them—can't tell you anything about them.

"Our beds were homemade out of poplar lumber and we slept on straw ticks. We had good things to eat and a lot of corn cakes and sweet potatoes. I had pretty good clothes, shoes, pants and a shirt, the same winter and summer.

"I don't know anything about the plantation as I had to work in town and did not go out there very much. No, I don't know how big it was or how many slaves there was. I never heard of any uprisings either.

"Our overseer was 'poor white-trash', hired by the master. I remember the master lived in a big white house and he was always kind to his slaves, so was his wife and children, but we didn't like the overseer. I heard of some slaves being whipped, but I

never was and I did not see any of the others get punished. Yes, there was a jail on the plantation where slaves had to go if they wouldn't behave. I never saw a slave in chains but I have seen colored men in the chain gang since the war.

"We had a negro church in town and slaves that could be trusted could go to church. It was a Methodist Church and we sang negro spirituals.

"We could go to the funeral of a relative and quit work until it was over and then went back to work. There was a graveyard on the plantation.

"A lot of slaves ran away and if they were caught they were brought back and put in the stocks until they were sold. The master would never keep a runaway slave. We used to have fights with the 'white trash' sometimes and once I was hit by a rock thrown by a white boy and that's what this lump on my head is.

"Yes, we had to work every day but Sunday. The slaves did not have any holidays. I did not have time to play games but used to watch the slaves sing and dance after dark. I don't remember any stories.

"When the slaves heard they had been set free, I remember a lot of them were sorry and did not want to leave the plantation. No, I never heard of any in our section getting any mules or land.

"I do remember the 'night riders' that come through our country after the war. They put the horse shoes on the horses backwards and wrapped the horses feet in burlap so we couldn't hear them coming. The colored folks were deathly afraid of these men and would all run and hide when they heard they were coming. These 'night riders' used to steal everything the colored people had—even their beds and straw ticks.

"Right after the war I was brought north by Mr. Kuhns I spoke of, and for a short while I worked at the milling trade in Tiffin and came to Canton in 1866. Mr. Kuhns owned a part in the old flour mill here (now the Ohio Builders and Milling Co.) and he give me a job as a miller. I worked there until the end of last year, 70 years, and I am sure this is a record in Canton. No, I never worked any other place.

"I was married July 4, 1871 to Jennie Scott in Massillon. We had four children but they are all dead except one boy. Our first baby—a girl named Mary Jane, born February 21, 1872, was the first colored child born in Canton. My wife died in 1926. No, I do not know when she was born, but I do know she was not a slave.

"I started to vote after I came north but did not ever vote in the south. I do not like the way the young people of today live; they are too fast and drink too much. Yes, I think this is true of the white children the same as the colored.

"I saved my money when I worked and when I quit I had three properties. I sold one of these, gave one to my son, and I am living in the other. No, I have never had to ask for charity. I also get a pension check from, the mill where I worked so long.

"I joined church simply because I thought it would make me a better man and I think every one should belong. I have been a member of St. Paul's A.M.E. church here in Canton for 54 years. Yesterday (Sunday, August 15, 1937) our church celebrated by burning the mortgage. As I was the oldest member I was one of the three who lit it, the other two are the only living charter members. My church friends made me a present yesterday of \$100.00 which was a birthday gift. I was 90 years old the 25th of last month."

Hall resides at 1225 High Ave., S.W., Canton, Ohio