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Article Title: The Diaries and Writings of George A Maston, Black Citizen of Lincoln, Nebraska, 1901-1913

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Article Summary: John Maston was born into slavery, February 3, 1849, in West Virginia. Young George escaped to Ohio in 1862 with Union Army Captain Israel B Murdock. He was taught the barber trade at 14 and supported himself through the Civil War in Ohio River towns. He became a Methodist Episcopal preacher and, in 1901, the Rev George A Maston transferred to Newman Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Among his memorabilia are scrapbooks, photographs, and from his own pen a privately-printed brochure describing his ministry in Lincoln. He also wrote in longhand a 95-page "History of My life," only the last 28 pages of which survive. During 1883-1886 he kept a diary which has been preserved. For this article excerpts from his writings have been chosen to illustrate his sensitive thinking, his compassion, but also his despair rooted in the obstacles facing African Americans.

#### Cataloging Information:

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Photographs / Images: The Maston family (c. 1895) including father, mother, and children George Lemuel and Ida May; Lincoln, population about 50,000, O Street in 1905; 1901, Lincoln: 112 South 14th Street; mother of the Rev George A Maston lived in Greenbrier County, West Virginia; one of George A Maston's first clergyman's passes issued by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in 1878

THE DIARIES AND WRITINGS  
OF GEORGE A. MASTON, BLACK CITIZEN  
OF LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, 1901-1913

Edited by LILA GRAVATT SCRIMSHER

**I**N 1901 the Rev. George A. Maston requested of Bishop E. G. Andrews a transfer from his Methodist Episcopal charge at Sturgeon, Boone County Missouri, to Newman Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. His hope was that he would find greater opportunity for his children in an area with a free-state heritage than that existing in "Little Dixie" of central Missouri.<sup>1</sup>

His reassignment was made at a church assembly of the Central Missouri Conference at Fort Scott, Kansas, on March 27, 1901, and three days later he was in Lincoln. His wife, Eliza, and two children, Ida May and George Lemuel, arrived soon afterward. The Mastons first roomed with a Charles Lucas, a plasterer (and also apparently a part-time pastor) at 112 South 14th Street, but by the next year the family had moved to a house at 820 B Street.<sup>2</sup>

When Mr. Maston came to Lincoln there were "149 [Negro] families [totaling] 521 persons, centered around their four churches and scattered throughout the city, with slight segregations in different parts of town." He shared ministerial and "missionary" duties with at least five other men. They, like himself, were forced to work at more than one occupation to make a livelihood. His son soon obtained a

job as an elevator operator and became self-supporting. Through barbering, his second occupation, Mr. Maston might have earned as much as \$100 a month by working full time, but probably it was more like half that amount. Lincoln colored clergymen were then earning \$40 or less per month.<sup>3</sup>

Negroes had in small numbers lived in Nebraska since the earliest years of settlement. They first moved into Lincoln in 1868. Though primarily agricultural in background, they arrived in Nebraska, with few exceptions, lacking the capital or equipment to farm. Hence, they congregated in the cities where jobs were more plentiful but seldom adequate to permit improvement in their standard of living.<sup>4</sup>

By the early 1900's Negroes supported four churches in Lincoln: Mount Zion Baptist, 104 members; African Methodist Episcopal, 79 members; Christian, 46 members; and Mr. Maston's church, the Newman Methodist Episcopal, 32 members. The Newman Church, then located at 733 J Street, was a frame structure which had been purchased in 1898 from the Mount Zion congregation for \$500 when the latter group moved to its present location at 12th and F Streets. The church was modestly furnished: no pews, but chairs divided by an aisle in the center; a pot-bellied stove; and a bannister dividing the congregation area from the altar. The building served as a meeting place until 1929, when the church at 2273 S Street was built. Newman Church had first been established in 1892 by a faction of the Quinn Chapel (A.M.E.) congregation which "wished a broader viewpoint."<sup>5</sup>

At the time of Maston's move to Lincoln there were probably no other men of his race there who could match him in education (Oberlin, Ohio, College Preparatory School and Garrison University, St. Louis); teaching experience (Ohio and Missouri towns); political experience (Republican delegate in Missouri); or in professional service (clergyman, West Virginia, Ohio, Missouri, and a presiding elder in the latter state.)<sup>6</sup> But by 1904, at 55 years of age, all these were behind him. He left the ministry due mainly to the Methodist church practice which periodically rotated pastors. He then owned property in Lincoln and was reluctant to accept a pastorate elsewhere. Henceforth he supported his family by barbering.

It is doubtful that he had bettered himself financially by moving from the strongly Negro section of Missouri to Lincoln, where Negroes comprised but 1.12 per cent of a population of about 50,000.<sup>7</sup>

The major segregation in Lincoln occurred in the churches, though the Negroes suffered indignities and were relegated to the poorly-paid jobs. Here Mr. Maston found fewer of the opportunities and amenities the Negro community of Missouri afforded him. There were no jobs here for Negro school teachers, and though the Negroes were almost to a man Republicans, their acceptance into party councils was less likely because of their unimportance politically.<sup>8</sup>

Mary Emily Davies and Genevieve Marsh make this evaluation of the Negro population during Mr. Maston's ministry in Lincoln:

The attitude of the white and Negro populations to each other is not personally antagonistic, but rather indifferent. There is considerable respect for individuals and an evident inclination on the part of the whites to let the Negroes have whatever they are able to obtain, without much hindrance and without much help.<sup>9</sup>

Charlie Smith, one of the few members of Mr. Maston's congregation still living in 1971, says this of his pastor:

"We young people liked him; we understood he did not approve of playing marbles for keeps, baseball on the Lord's Day, and the like, but he never dwelled or harped on the subject; we respected his feelings and felt he was one of God's chosen people. He had the type of voice that carried well; he was a good speaker and we enjoyed listening to him." <sup>10</sup>

Mr. Maston was of slight build, a dapper dresser, and of even temperament. His wife, also small of stature, served in her husband's Sunday Schools but seldom accompanied him on his professional trips. Her domestic duties, gardening, poultry culture, and sewing, occupied her time. In Missouri she was known as an accomplished seamstress and sewed for wealthy clients. The clothing she wore in photographs attest to her skill. She resented the cast-off clothing that a struggling minister's wife often had thrust upon her, declaring privately they were not welcome. Mr. Maston died in September, 1913; his wife in January, 1922; and his son in 1942. They are buried in Wyuka Cemetery in Lincoln. His daughter, Mrs. Luther Allen, in 1971, is living in Lincoln.

Born into slavery, February 3, 1849, on the John Mastin (altered later by the youth to Maston) plantation, Greenbrier County, West Virginia, young George escaped to Ohio in 1862 with Union Army Captain Israel B. Murdock.<sup>11</sup> Arriving delirious with fever, he was placed in the care of an aged black woman, who was paid by Capt. Murdock to nurse him through a near-fatal siege of typhoid. Taught the barber trade at 14 by black Gabe Johnson, he supported himself through the Civil War and until 1869 in Ohio River towns.<sup>12</sup> He lived with other footloose black boys, swam in the Ohio, and became interested in amateur singing and acting groups. When his friends urged him to go to St. Louis with them, he refused, feeling he should first seek out his people in West Virginia. Later he did move to Missouri.

Among his memorabilia are scrapbooks, photographs, and from his own pen a privately-printed brochure describing his ministry in Lincoln. He also wrote in longhand a 95-page "History of My Life," only the last 28 pages of which survive. During 1883-1886 he kept a "Diary," which has been preserved. For this article excerpts from his writings have been chosen to illustrate his sensitive thinking, his compassion, but also his despair rooted in the black man's massive problems. It will be noted that for a time he looked to the government for relief of his people through benevolent legislation. He demonstrated his own dedication to them and to his religion by serving for many years as a minister, often without pay, and trusted his own future, as he said, "to the hands of Providence."

The spelling of the original manuscripts is maintained, except that proper names are standardized to prevent confusion. Excerpts from the "History of My Life," beginning with page 67, follow. It is 1869 and Mr. Maston had just arrived in St. Louis:<sup>13</sup>

I was informed by a man sitting near me that he was in need of a bootblack and barber. . . . I informed him that I followed the latter business but not the former — After being informed by my interrogator J. Hunter, that I could make about twelve dollars a week and get board cheap I promised him faithfully to come to the Laclede Hotel next day and see

the Boss which I did and was employed to work in Chair No. 5. I next seek the cheap boarding house as they called it, and was informed by the hostess, Mrs. Brooks, that her terms were six dollars a week in advance! Not being accustomed to pay over three dollars a week for my board, you may imagine how cheap I thought it was! However . . . I concluded to give all parties a fair trial before leaving the city; for leave I intended to, if I failed to meet with financial success. Under these circumstances, I go to work and soon find that by industry, I can more than earn my board, so I settle down to business and my ability as a barber is soon recognized by my employer, E. H. Nahar, and the rest of the employees . . . Therefore at the end of eight months I am very unexpectedly appointed to the responsible position of Cashier. Twelve months after this our foreman leaves and I take charge of Chair No. 2, and assume the heavy duties of foreman! . . . In the meantime I was also forming social relations and growing in favor with the Fair Sex. Hence I am often solicited to attend this entertainment, and that; to join this society and that; to call upon first one young lady, and then another till I became so confused that I knew not what to accept, when, nor where to go. An opportunity now presents itself for me to teach a class in the Baptist Sunday School<sup>14</sup> and gladly accept and thus find employment in the Lord's Nursery on Sunday evenings. I am next induced to join the M. E. Church, having been awakened to a sense of my duty, and forceably reminded of my calling in life<sup>15</sup> by a sermon which I heard preached by Rev. Peck, P.E. I am next called upon to help organize a society which [is] very popular under the name of the "Young Men's Social Circle."<sup>16</sup> At our organization I was appointed secretary and held the position until I left the city.

Owing to temperate habits and economy I was able to make a weekly deposit in the Freedman's Bank. These deposits amounted to about a hundred dollars a year which I saved clear of all expenses. I find that it will cost in the long run at least fifty per cent more to live in a city than in a town. . . . An opportunity now presents itself for me to attend a school which was projected by J. A. Higgins, I gladly accept the chance and put in 20 months as member of Garrison



*The Maston family (c. 1895) included the father, mother, and children George Lemuel and Ida May. They lived in Bowling Green, Missouri, at the time this photograph was made.*

University,<sup>17</sup> which had a great deal to do with shaping my future course.

For in this school I was shown how little I knew and how much I had to learn before I could occupy the position I aspired to.

Jan. 1, 1873 finds me still in a prosperous condition with many warm friends, but contemplating my departure from the city in August. Now comes the tug of war, between money and education, for at this time I was in the possession of a portion of both. . . .

Hence, in spite of all my friends could say or do, I made preparations to leave, . . . with a fixed purpose to visit my father at White Sulphur Springs, W. Va. and then to go to Oberlin College.<sup>18</sup>

Accordingly, I procured a . . . ticket over the Ohio and Mississippi to Cincinnati where I had free transportation to the Steamer *Bostonia* of the O. & B. P. C.; by this means I was conveyed to Huntington, the western terminus of the Chesapeake & O. R.R., here I take the cars for White Sulphur, and in a few hours I am sweetly reposing in my father's house, whom I had not seen since my mother's death which occurred seven years previous to that time [1866]. I found Father comfortably situated in his own home and very proud of the manly appearance of his son. He also introduced me to my "New Mama," as he called the woman whom I afterwards found to be his second wife, and well worthy to be called Mamma.

During the time I was visiting my father an opportunity presented itself and I was permitted to visit the scenes of my childhood but alas! when I reached them, how changed the aspect; how different the customs and manners of the people. First I begin to inquire for my playmates whom I left but mere lads when I left Union, West Va., eleven years ago [1862], but I am informed that the most of them have grown to manhood and womanhood, and have become the mothers and fathers of a new generation. Secondly, I ask for the Masters and Mistresses who used to possess the land and the Cattle upon a thousand hills; but I am informed that they

have several years since gone to that bourn whence no traveler returns. In many cases their lands were owned by their ex-slaves. Thus we have the fulfillment of the following passage of Scripture: "I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: Yea, I sought him and he could not be found." Ps. XXXVII—35,36.

Because of the dilapidated condition of the buildings and fences around my former home; because of the ill progress of some of my playmates; and on account of their mental and moral condition I did not enjoy myself as well as I anticipated I would; for I found that the "old home was not what it use to be" and that I was a stranger in my own land! Hence I soon became wearied with the monotony of the place and bid it and my friends a long farewell and return to White Sulphur and from there I soon start for Oberlin College where I put in two years in the Preparatory Department. While on my way to Oberlin and sailing as passenger on the *Bostonia* I raised quite an excitement and got in considerable trouble by attempting to exercise the Rights of an American Citizen which at that time (1873) was against the Law of America, "the home of the brave and the land of the free."<sup>19</sup> But now, 1878, I have all the Rights and immunities of an American Citizen. All thanks to Him who holds the destinies of nations in his hands. I arrived at Oberlin College Sept. 16, 1873, and had my trunk immediately conveyed to the hotel until I could find a better place. There I registered (with a dubious hand) my name for the first time as a hotel guest, but I was soon to feel that I was then in a place where the color line was never known; where a man was estimated according to his moral and intellectual worth and not according to his dress, his wealth or his color. In an hour or two I had engaged boarding with the Widow Morris, and had also found a roommate . . . Being thus provided, I meet with my classes at their respective recitation rooms and I am doubly assured there is indeed "No excellence without great labor, and I accordingly adopt as my motto: "Omnis labor vincit." I soon begin to drink copiously from the Fountain of Knowledge, and to feel that manly inspiration which lifts us above the brute creation.

During my stay at Oberlin I had the glorious privilege of taking part in the "Young People's meetings" in which I often availed myself of the blessed privilege of speaking, singing and praying. While in Oberlin I also had an opportunity of helping to organize a Sabbath School in the lower part of town for the benefit of a number of children in destitute circumstances. . . . At the close of the second term, Aug. 6, 1875, I find myself about out of money and clothes. Therefore I am compelled to abandon the idea of returning in the Fall and conclude to try school teaching instead of barbering as a means of replenishing my purse. I also conclude to deliver a lecture upon the Subj. of "Education and Civil Rights" while I am on my way home and in search of a school. (I have two hundred handbills printed, announcing the Subject and purpose of my lecture and also have a chance to enjoy (?) my "Civil Rights" at the rate of two dollars per day, but I soon found that these things were luxuries which none but the rich could enjoy. Therefore I was compelled to abandon the idea of taking any more Civil Rights between there and home.

[In 1876 and 1877, George A. Maston taught Negro schools in Macedonia, Ohio; on Patterson Creek, Grant County, and in Moorfield, Hardy County, the latter two in West Virginia near where his older brother, Lemuel Maston was preaching. During this period George had delivered his lecture, "The Centennial, and Original History of the Negro Race (1876)," in the Moorfield Courthouse to a large audience of both White and Colored.<sup>20</sup>

Before concluding this chapter I want to relate my experience in Hardy and Grant counties, especially in Moorfield, Hardy Co. . . . I am compelled to say I met some of the most ignorant, the most prejudiced and the meanest White people I ever met; for I could scarcely go on the streets without being hooted at, called hard names, threatened and otherwise grossly insulted. Nay, they did not stop at threatening me, but upon one or two occasions, rocks were actually thrown at me for resenting an insult. Now you may want to know the Chief Cause of all this. My Answer is: envy, jealousy and prejudice. In the first place they envied my social position in the Community, respectable appearance, and Education. Secondly, they were jealous because I dared assert

my Rights as an American Citizen and upon several occasions I wrote articles for the Examiner, the Moorfield paper. Of course, they were prejudiced against me on account of my Color and politics. The above I assert as the only cause or provocation. But among the bitter I found some little sweet which arose from the Consciousness of desiring to do good instead of evil; from my efforts for the Church and the Sabbath School and for the benefit of my race in general. . . . I failed to say in connection with my History at Oberlin that I was licensed as an Exhorter by Rev. Jewett of Oberlin Station M. E. Church. I served the Church as an Exhorter about three years before I secured my Local License. The following are the words from which I delivered my first Exhortation: "This I say then — walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Gal. V, 16. This Exhortation was delivered at Washington C. H., [Court House, Ohio] in the A.M.E. Church. . . . In April, 1877, I received my first License as Local preacher from the hands of J. W. Dansbury, our beloved P. E. [Presiding Elder] who renewed my license during his farewell visit . . . Oct., '78.<sup>21</sup>

April, 1877. I will at this point pay a compliment to the Citizens of Maysville, Grant Co. For it affords me much pleasure to say that while I was attending Teachers Institute at Maysville, I was treated like a man and a brother, and was invited by the Supt. E. Vossler to take part in the public exercises, which were held in the Courthouse every night during the Institute. I accordingly read an essay upon the subject of the Free School System before the Institute, and was accepted as a Boarder by a White family while I was there.

But in Moorefield [West Virginia] I was informed by the Supt. that he would have to hold a separate institute for us (three colored teachers), as some of them (the White teachers) objected to our attending their institute. Why this difference in adjoining counties? Ans. — one is Democratic, the other Republican.

The yellow fever panic spread, and was threatening St. Louis daily with a visitation.<sup>22</sup> Well, it is now Aug. 26th [1878] . . . and my time of departure for the "Future Great City of the World" is at hand . . . and I embark for Cincinnati

on the steamer Telegraph where I safely land. . . . Having procured my ticket for St. Louis and having ascertained the time for my train to leave I concluded to put in the intervening time at the Zoological Garden which I did to great advantage. . . .<sup>23</sup> On way to and from the Garden I enjoyed the novelty of a ride up and down the Incline plain which I found to be exciting. "The Incline Plain" may be considered a wonderful piece of modern civilization. At 7 P.M. I boarded the train at the Ohio and Mississippi depot, and was soon moving at a quick rate towards St. Louis where I arrive on the morning of the 7th (Sept.) filled with hopes and high expectations of soon being in the presence of my betrothed. In short time I was conveyed to my old boarding house 817 Christy Avenue where I met Mrs. Brooks, who received me with a smile and kiss, and thus welcomed and re-welcomed me back as a guest to her house. After getting dinner and rearranging my wardrobe . . . I repaired to 1425 Morgan St., the residence of my betrothed, where I met with a heart that beat in sympathy with mine. The excitement of the first visit subsided, I began and continued to visit her residence frequently till Oct. 28th when I left to take charge of the Colored School at S. Union, Missouri.<sup>24</sup> During the intervening time at St. Louis I worked at my trade in C. H. Parker's shop, 1410 Market St. Before leaving the city presented my license to the Quarterly Conference and had it renewed by F. H. Small, P. E. Hence I thus reunited with the M. E. Church, and with permission to sow the good seed trusting some will fall in good ground and bring forth abundantly. My school opened at Union, Nov. 4th where I taught a successful term of five months, and labored in various ways for the good of the community, the colored portion of which I found to incline towards the A. M. E. . . . I became a member of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle and I am now (1878) pursuing a four year course of study as a member of the Class of 1882 which has a membership of about eight hundred.

Soon after the closing of my school I returned to the City [St. Louis] . . . I was soon to realize my fondest hopes for the time of my marriage was near at hand. April 24th, 1879 being fixed as the day, I began to fix up for housekeeping at 1215

Morgan St. In due time the room was neatly carpeted and furnished, the preacher Rev. S.R. Anderson of the 2nd Baptist Church engaged. The Guests, of whom there were but few invited, the Wedding suits donned, The Ceremony said, and Miss Eliza Dulan becomes Mrs. G.A. Maston to the great Satisfaction of all concerned. We passed the Honeymoon in each other's embrace Sipping ever and anon from Cupid's spring and enjoying life as only Young Married Couples can, but alas the poetic period is over and the stubborn facts in the case appear simultaneously with the demand for the first month's Rent, the buying of Meat and Bread, and various other domestic implements too numerous to mention. . . . The rules of the shop required the Barbers to wear White Aprons and Jackets and to work till 12 noon Sunday; for this and several reasons I looked forward anxiously to the day when I will find regular employment in some other field. . . . Yet I must say that it is owing to the Barber's trade that I stand where I do today, for every cent of the money I educated myself with came from that source. . . . Aug. 27th the Colored Wing of the Missouri District Conference [heard] Bishop Isac Bowman, who gave us an interesting Lecture on the Missions of India . . . how the heathen converts sometimes contributed willingly from their spare means of only five cents a day. What a grand Example for the Well fed and Well paid Civilized Christian to go by!

The city is now [1879] somewhat agitated by influx of thousands of Colored Reffugees from the South, who are making their escape from that accursed land into Kansas and other Northern States where they hope to enjoy life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

To read the History of these much abused people, as written in their appearance, and on their hazard [haggard] Countenances, is enough to make the Cheeks of a Civilized Nation blush with shame and to bring down the wrath of heaven upon their heads. Well we may sing: "If you cannot cross the Ocean and the heathen Land explore / You can find a heathen nearer / You can help them at your door / Let none then hear you idly saying / There is naught for me to do / While sons of men are dying (Being Killed) / And the Savior calls for You.

Sept. 8th I arrived at Washington, Missouri,<sup>25</sup> and succeeded in passing an examination for the First Grade Certificate on a General Average of 78 per cent. . . . So with this recommendation, I resumed my duties as teacher in Union on the 15th, to the expressed satisfaction of the parents . . . for the previous term had taught them to appreciate the services of a "good teacher." I am now so well pleased and highly flattered by my surroundings that I am thinking strongly of buying property and becoming a citizen of Union. . . . It is now approaching 12 M and hence I am on the Eve of my Thirty-First Birthday which I propose to meet in prayer and returning thanks to God for having spared me to see thirty-one years. O if there are thirty-one more left, may they be spent in serving God and doing good to my fellow man. Well it is approaching 12, and I am to enter on my thirty-sec. Year which I do feeling thankful and on My Knees—February 3rd, A.D. 1881.

[Mr. Maston's life story is continued with excerpts from his "Diary," which was started in 1883 while the Maston family lived in Union, Missouri. In it he speaks more intimately of his family affairs, of his effort to provide well for his family, and of his aspirations. He tells of his personal quest for knowledge and of his selection of reading matter, which included frequent borrowed copies of the *New York Globe*, the *New York Independent*, and the *Atlantic Monthly*. He studied textbooks on teaching by Johannot, Page, Phelps, and he delved deeply into geometry and zoology. His wife accused him of "always going round with his nose in a book." He purchased standard reading material for the libraries of the schools he taught, and entered writing contests (without much success), and he sent contributions to numerous daily and weekly newspapers (some of which published his material). Selected entries from his "Diary" of 1883 follow:]

#### DIARY

*Jan. 3.* Read my article in the *Record*.<sup>26</sup> Two men in the shop liked to have [had] a fight over it.



*Lincoln, population about 50,000, had become a prairie metropolis by the end of the Nineteenth Century. This is O Street in 1905 looking east from 11th Street.*

*Jan. 5.* Read an article in the *Cincinnati Advocate* on the "Color Line." Concluded to answer. I was so inspired . . . I concluded that some time not far in the distant future I would go somewhere and be somebody.

*Jan. 6.* Was complimented by several parties on the piece I wrote for the *Record*. Sent a copy of the *Record* to the following: . . . William Maston [brother] and Gabriel Johnson.<sup>27</sup>

*Jan. 19.* Writing up a second communication for the *Record*.<sup>28</sup>

*Feb. 1.* Sent papers as follows to . . . Capt. I.B. Murdock.

*Feb. 3.* Passed my thirty-fourth birthday quietly at the shop. Felt thankful and enjoyed my thoughts. Have not much of anything to regret. Wife made me a cake, etc. Treated myself to a couple of shirts and a pair of suspenders.

*Feb. 13.* Saw a local notice in the *Ironton [Ohio] Register* of my article in the *Record*. Two boys fought at the schoolhouse, one of them got his head cut by a stick which made the blood run freely. Had trouble to get them to stop fighting.

*Feb. 15.* Got Valentine—subject false teeth. Bought my little boy birthday presents as follows: shoes, cap and chair, it being his third birthday.<sup>29</sup>

*Feb. 25.* Attended service at the Catholic Church, it being the third Sunday in Lent. The priest, "Father Bill," gave instructions in regard to the Sacrament of Penance.

[Maston was appearing before the Union Methodist church congregation or the Sunday School at least once a week, and usually several times, other weeks making trips to nearby Washington on church business or for services.]

*Mar. 1.* Lectured to the young people [at Union] at night, subject, Good Gifts, Prov. XVIII, 16. "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men."

*Apr. 8.* Visited the Presbyterian S. S. Was agreeably surprised to see the improved appearance of the school under the management of E. A. Bridges.

*Apr. 10.* Made beds in the garden. Bought rake and spade. Now for the summer campaign!

*Apr. 14.* Dug post holes and built cross fence on upper end of lot. Where there is a will there is a way—so by using

material from line fence and doing work myself I got my cross fence up for thirty-five cents. Bravo, my good man, do you say? Went to bed feeling good over my day's work—*Omnis Labor Vincit*.

*Apr. 15.* Sat. Whew, April showers. . . . Tried on new pants made by Wife!

*May 1.* Buried stepping stones in the yard. Attended a meeting of the Town Council, was considerably surprised and greatly amused, if not disgusted, at their manner of doing business. The subject before the Honorable body was the hog law.<sup>30</sup>

*May 2.* Adjourned school in the afternoon to meet for closing examination to be held in the White schoolhouse Thursday night. Children all aglow for the contest.<sup>31</sup>

*May 3.* Visited Mr. Allen's school,<sup>32</sup> heard the examination of several of his classes. Made preparation in the afternoon for the examination of my school. After considerable trouble I got things in order and got through the examination with moderate success. After the examination we remained at the schoolhouse and had a good time eating cake and ice cream, etc. We cleared about \$3 for the S.S. and had a good time.

*May 10.* Visited Writing School at night. After looking on quietly till the exercises closed I spoke privately to the teacher, Prof. Sturtvesant, about becoming a member but as he was afraid that some of his scholars would object he refused to admit me to the Fold!

*May 13.* Made a second visit to the Writing School, caught a few new ideas, bought in new Copy Book No. 1, and started in with a new resolution. I can and will succeed in improving my handwriting, notwithstanding the envy and prejudice which kept me from joining the Writing School. Hoed the the potatoes . . . <sup>33</sup>

*June 3.* Led Class. Sisters became happy and shouted for joy. Saw a picture of Hon. J. Williard Menard of Florida, first Colored Congressman. . . . [The Mastons attended a summer-time church convention in St. Louis.]

*June 19.* Was very much pleased at a clock on 6th Street which gives a concert every 15 minutes by throwing open a door and presenting two musicians who play a lively tune on their horns. . . . Visited the Levee where found oceans of dirt

and water, all business suspended on Front Street. During my rounds on the levee and in other parts of the city I got a good chance to see the dark side of the picture of human life. Oh, what a dreadful thing it is to be poor and destitute! . . . Everything was flooded out on Front Street as we could see. When the Father of Waters raises in his majesty he is mightier than an army with banners whose onward march the skill of man cannot stop.

[They brought home a pair of guinea pigs as pets for their little boy, George, and the neighbors came in to see them. Soon the diary records, his wife was distressed about the guinea pigs, which a cat appropriated to her own use!]

*Jul. 4.* Not much of a Fourth in Union—drunks, fights and fighting.

*Sept. 13.* Got up early and left for Washington to attend the W.W. Coles Circus. Arrived about 8 o'clock A.M. Found the town alive with people looking for the arrival of the train and especially for Sampson, the large Asiatic elephant. Well, in due time the train arrived and the curiosity of the crowd was satisfied by seeing one of the largest elephants they ever saw. The parade was a very good one but no better than I had seen before. The performance of the animals was good, especially that of the elephants. I was well pleased with the trapeze performance and the velocipedists, etc. . . . Among the rare animals were the hypotamus, the two-horned rhinoceros and the white buffalo. While contemplating the control which the showmen had over the wild beasts which they had on exhibition, the thought: what a wonderful power God has delegated to man! Well may he be called Lord of Creation!

*Oct. 2.* Sent my first letters through the mail with two cent stamps. Well, I suppose Uncle Sam wants to give the poor man a chance.<sup>34</sup>

*Oct. 5.* Made an official call upon Sister Ming to inquire about her non-attendance of Class, payment of dues, etc. She gave the reasonable excuse—Drunken and wicked husband, etc.<sup>35</sup> . . . Card from Hardy O Jones.<sup>36</sup>

*Oct. 19.* Met Hardy O. Jones of St. Louis, who went before our County Commissioners and passed a good exam on an average of nearly 9[0]. Our County Commissioner expressed

himself as being astonished and delighted to find a Negro so well accomplished.

*Oct. 23.* Was greatly surprised when I got home from school at dinner time to find a summons waiting for me stating that a suit had been entered against me in the Circuit Court for back taxes on my property for 1881. But as I have a receipt for the year I can have the case dismissed. So, so the first poke they made at me as a property holder has failed to stick.

[Mr. Maston preached in the revival meetings in the fall of 1883, and a number of his scholars were among those "on the mourner's bench, which caused me to feel happy and to believe my labor for the past five years has not been in vain. The Lord is good for his mercy endureth forever." Sometimes he had trouble with bad boys: "Not wishing to have a rough and tumble fight, I threw him out of doors and informed the board that he was not a fit subject for school." On Thanksgiving Day he "got up early, sawed wood till noon about which time our invited guests began to come and of course I entertained them to the best of my ability." There were five adults, including the Elder at the meal.]

*Dec. 15.* Excitement in town over a Bar room row which a Negro caused by being ordered out. So, so this is a starter for Christmas rows.

*Dec. 17.* Killed hogs which netted me about 475 lbs. [meat], 15 gallons of lard, etc. Thus I have made another step in the right direction. The Lord is my Shepherd and I shall not want. Mourners still crying for mercy.

*Dec. 20.* Snow, first of the season. Preached from II Cor. V-1. Endeavoring to carry on the meeting.

*Dec. 21.* Closed school for the holidays.

*Dec. 24.* Worked at the shop. About 7:30 my attention was attracted by a man in the street and on going out I found a Colored man lying in the street dying from a wound which had been inflicted by a white man. Upon looking at the man I found it to be James Brown who had been cut and who died in a short time after I got to him. The Doctor after putting Brown's intrels back took a couple of stitches to keep them in and we carried him home on a litter. The murder which was done by one Aaron Leitwein was given up to be

one of the most cold blooded and deliberate that had been heard of for a long time. Result, heart-broken Miss and children, and a soul hurried into Eternity unprepared. After a coroner's inquest, the warrant was sworn out and the party was put into the hands of the sheriff.<sup>37</sup>

*Tues. Dec. 25.* Christmas, Christmas once more but sadness seems to hover about the brow of everybody while the crowds stood in the streets looking at the blood which had run from the veins of the victim the night before. The Colored people feeling that justice would not be done, etc. Put in considerable time counseling with Colored friends and planning to have a post mortem examination held. All looking forward anxiously for the preliminary trial which was set for the 26th. The festival which was intended to be held was put off.

*Wed. Dec. 26.* Pleasant. Witnessed the Post Mortem examination of James Brown who was killed on the night of Dec. 24 by Aaron Leitwein. The doctors found that the bowels were cut in several places and that the aorta was also cut half in two, thus establishing the fact the immediate cause of death was the severing of the main artery. So, so, the defendant's lawyers are now left almost without a plea. Now for the preliminary trial which will come up in the morning.

*Thursday, 27.* Cold. Put in a good deal of time listening to the evidence in the murder case. Attended the funeral of James Brown, victim of the murderous knife.

*Friday 28.* Put in a good deal of time listening to the evidence in the murder case which is all very positive and to the point disclosing the fact that the murder was cold blooded and unprovoked.

*Sat. 29.* Heard the closing remarks of the Counsel in the murder case. Leitwein was admitted to bail, sum \$5000.

*1884 January 3.* Was pleased with a piece I read in the N.Y. Globe from Rev. Embra who counseled Colored Men to not listen so much to the fight cry of the Demogues, but to go on accumulating wealth and Knowledge.

*Jan. 7.* Commenced an Art[icle] for the N.Y. Globe. Thought considerable during the day about the condition of the Negroes of the U.S. The future seems to be our only hope.



*When the Mastons arrived in Lincoln in 1901, they lived briefly at 112 South 14th Street to the rear of Byer's grocery on the edge of the business district. A stationery company included this view of the 14th and O intersection (southeast corner) in its penny postcard stock c. 1900.*

*Jan. 9.* Sent Communication to the Globe. Considerably annoyed because of the indifferent way the children are coming to school. Oh how different the Negroes are! in regards to their Education, when so much of their Future depends upon their Future usefulness as Citizens.

*January 17.* Kept door at a Church Festival. Got a good chance to study human nature in its Lower form. What is man without Cultivation, but an animal?

*January 19.* Shaved a Colored man in the Shop and was warned by the Prop. of the Hotel to quit or an opposition Shop would be opened. Oh what a terrible thing Prejudice is!

*Febr. 22.* Birthday of the father of his Country. No particular demonstration made by anyone in Union. My client Hannah Roberts got a Notice from the Pention Dept. that her claim for a Pention was allowed and there was now due her \$1845.73 for which amount she would soon be sent a check. *Omnis Labor Vincit!* After laboring and waiting for over five years, I have succeeded in securing the pention of \$8 a month which my client should have had 19 years ago. Yet it is better late than never! My diligence I hope will be rewarded by a liberal donation from my client who almost at the last hour of Life has come suddenly into possession of some of this world's goods. Should I receive a reasonable allowance I will turn my attention to my Debtors.<sup>38</sup>

*Mar. 11.* As good luck would have it My Client drew her Pention money in town and we did not have to make a trip to St. Louis as we expected. So, so, we are all lucky, and I was well paid for my trouble. . . Baby quite sick. . . Went to bed feeling quite thankful for the Blessing which the Lord has bestowed upon me.

*Mar. 19.* Negotiations for a \$100 organ nearly closed.

*Mar. 21.* Made out inventory and Petition and had Bill Williams a tramp prisoner out of Jail. So! So! I have begun to dabble with Lawyer's Business also. My reason for doing so was simply a charitable act. Not that I want to be a lawyer. First Fee acting in the Capacity of a Lawyer! Seventy five cts! Go it boots, while you are young.

*Mar. 22.* Voted at a Primary Meeting for Delegates to a Republican Convention to be held in Washington, Mo. *Mar. 29.* Got new Pention Claim Nathan Shores alias Nathaniel

Maine. You bet I am a Claim agent at least I am recognized as such. Closed bargain for an organ with D.L. McFarland, Story and Camp.

*Apr. 2.* Had a chat with D.S. McFarland., Music Teacher. Organ at the Depot.

*Apr. 3.* No organ yet. Screw loose some place.

*Apr. 7.* The long looked for organ at last in Washington. Expect to go down for it this week.

*Apr. 8.* Attended the funeral of Charley Chiles [one of his pupils]. Took an active part. Was caused to feel sorry on account of the Indifferent way in which the parties concerned acted. The Negroes of Union are yet far behind in respect to the dead. Engaged wagon to go after the organ. . . . Heard of a Nigger back biting me in regard to the School. One of my friends who was present was about to smack him in the mouth etc.<sup>39</sup>

*Apr. 9.* Cloudy and chilly rain at night. Left about Eight o'clock and went to Washington after the Organ. Bought Several things that I have been wanting. Chief among them was a panell door, some lumber, oil cloth pants for my little boy and Sundries . . . Got home about 3:30. Opened the Organ found it in good trim. Heard several tunes played on it, and was well pleased with its expression. Well, we now have a musical Instrument in the house and will do all that we can to Play and Sing P.N. to the Lord on it. Bought Suit for Georgia. Intend to dress him up and surprise Wife. Several parties came in to see the organ.

*Apr. 10.* Put pants on Georgia. Oh how happy and proud he is of his first pants! First pants at 4 years and 2 months old.<sup>40</sup> . . . Pluck most of the day on the New Organ. Friends coming in to see the wonderful instrument more wonderful because in a Colored man's house. Niggers trying to dig dirt.

*Apr. 11.* Bought Musical Curriculum and hired a music teacher to Instruct Wife.

*Apr. 15.* Put in Considerable time Practising on the organ. 1-2-3-4 Seems to be All the Go at our house now.

*Apr. 16.* 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, etc.

*Apr. 24.* Celebrated in a quiet way the Anniversary of my Wedding. I congratulate myself on the fact that I have nothing to regret for I now find after five years of experience

that I married the right woman at the right time, did the right thing, have treated her right, lived right and hope to die right. May the Lord keep me right.

*May 24.* The Grand Jury found verdict of murder in the First Degree against Aaron Leitwein for kill[ing] Jas. Brown on Christmas Eve, Dec. 1883.

*June 4.* Everybody on the lookout for News from the National Republican Convention.

*June 5.* Put in some time at the Court listening to the Examination of Jurors for the Trial of Aaron Leitwein.

*June 6.* Hurrah for Jas. Blaine the Nominee of the Republican Party 4th Ballot 543 [votes] hurrah hurrah!<sup>41</sup>

*June 7.* Mr. Burton a blind man of Kirksville came to my house and stopped. His intention is to give an entertainment to the Public on the 9th, Panorama and a Musical Show. Mr. Burton Played and Sang several pieces on the Organ and entertained a large crowd in front of the house for several hours.<sup>42</sup> Put in a great deal of time listening to Evidence in the murder case of Aaron Leitwein.

*June 12.* Put in most of the day Listening to the arguments of the Council in the murder of Aaron Leitwein. Was somewhat amused and more or less disgusted at the Sophistry and ingenuity of the defendant's Council. They were conspicuous for their glaring Misrepresentations of the facts and Evidence.

*June 13.* Heard the closing Speeches of the council for both sides in the murder case of Leitwein. Mr. J. W. Booth made a fine speech for the defendant and was followed by Prosecuting Attorney Kirkadan in a telling Speech for the State. Jury out since 5 o'clock trying for the last 6 hours to arrive at a verdict. . . I go to bed anxious to hear the verdict with but little hope there will be one given by this jury.

*June 14.* Jury in the Leitwein Case Disagreed on the Degree of Punishment and was discharged after being in their rooms 24 hours.

*June 15.* Mr. John Reinhard called to see the organ. [Mr. Reinhard was the white store-keeper.]

*June 18.* Paid off Note No.1, which I gave two years ago when I bought my property and thereby involved myself in debt amounting to \$200. Yet as Providence has willed I have

succeeded in paying the most of the Debt that I paid out for Repairs, etc. And I am in a fair way to Cancel the whole indebtedness on the property which is now worth 7 to 8 hundred dollars, during the Coming year if the Lord is willing.

*June 20.* Pulled weeds in the garden. Had a boss time getting one of my pigs back in the Pen. etc.

*June 23.* Got acquainted with J. W. Mason Esq. of Sedalia [County seat of Pettis, Mo.] who came out to get Leitwein to Marry Miss Maggie Conaway.

*July 14.* White Teachers Institute in Session. Feeling unwelcome I did not go up today. Among them are some narrow contracted souls that are so blinded by prejudice that they object to Colored teachers being present at the Institute. Oh well we must try to live so that we live it down. Prejudice is bound to quail before wealth and intelligence in possession of both of which the Negroes of this county are coming up fast. Time is fast removing those old Johnnies that are married to their idol and god—Prejudice. The Negro is irrepressible and is bound to come to the top.

*July 15.* Fury, fury, a tremendous thunderstorm before daybreak, horses killed, houses struck. Cloudy and rainy during the day. Attended the Teachers Institute during the morning session, was pleased with some of the instruction given to the class although to me some of it was not new. Felt more or less unwelcome but saw no particular indication that anyone objected to my being present as long as I remained a mere spectator. oh ho! Ha ha!

*July 17.* Attended the teachers institute all day. Was very much interested and instructed by the discussions Especially in Elocution. In the Lecture on Physiology Prof. Norton exhibited and described the bones of the human body. He seemed to handle the bones with a great deal of familiarity, taking up alternately a leg or arm, a vertebra, etc., and dwelling upon their nature and use, . . .

*July 18.* Attended the Institute. Was very much interested in the Discussions by Prof. Norton. Had a short talk with Prof. Norton. Almost got a promise from him to Lecture to the Colored Citizens. Left the Institute full of good thought.

*July 21. (Monday)* Good session of the Institute. Heard discussed many interesting Subjects. Was well pleased with the

Exercises at the Church. Prof. Norton read two pieces, one a pathetic narrative which grew more and more pathetic till the Audience felt like crying. The story related the History of an Irishman who was saving means to bring his wife and children to America. The other piece was to illustrate that there was sometimes more in sound than sense. Then he told the story of the dog and woodchuck in the Lane. The piece was illustrative of the peculiar way that the old-time Colored preacher narrated the stories of the Bible. Mr. Smith had a dog.

*Aug. 19.* Was greatly surprised and amused at a Drunken Infidel who threatened Vengeance on me and Brother Rev. Chenoweth if we did not stop disturbing him by our Loud preaching and Shouting in the Church for which he claimed we were fools and that he would take it upon himself to Kick the preacher out. Oh well, when the Whisky dies in him I hope that he will think better.<sup>43</sup>

*Aug. 24.* Got up early. Went [to] Washington, preached for Eld. Chenoweth morning and evening . . . The Stewards took up a Collection . . . succeeded in raising \$1.50 which is the first money I have ever had raised for me as a preacher. . . . I simply requested them to pay my \$1.50 horse hire. . . . Left for home about 9:30, caught up with the BB [baseball] Club Who had been to Washington to play a match game and Desecrating the Sabbath. The game was played with the "Eagles." Got home about 11:30 P.M. quite chilled from my long ride in the Night air.

*Aug. 30.* Attended a Republican Primary. Voted for the Candidates of my Choice. . . . Agitated the subject of sending a Colored Delegate to the Republican County Convention. Got put off with the promise that we should have a Delegate to the State Convention—Said Delegate Monday at the County Convention. Well, well it is to be seen now whet[her] or not it will be done.

*Sept. 1.* Attended the Republican County Convention, was appointed as one of the Delegates to the State Convention—Hip, hip hurrah, for the first recognition of the Colored Voters of Franklin County! May this be the beginning of many other recognitions of the fidelity of the race. I now feel like that manhood and intelligence will assert itself. A half

loaf is better than no loaf at all—the Convention is appointed to meet at Moberly in Randolph County on the 9th of Sept.

*Sept. 6.* All aglow for Jeff City for the Convention.

*Sept. 8.* Pleasant. Got up early and prepared to leave for Jeff City on my grand mission as a Delegate from the 7th Dist. Congressional. Left Union per hack at 7 A.M. . . . Arrived at Jeff City at 1 P.M. Met my old friend and associate, T. L. Capelton, who welcomed me to his house and made my stay as pleasant as possible while I remained. Got a good look at Gov. Crittenden and son who were at the Depot. I consider the Gov. a handsome looking man if not quite a Dude! The first thing that attracted my attention after the Gov. was the Executive Mansion and the Convicts from the Pen at work on the streets with their striped pants. Visited Lincoln Institute [Negro college] . . . Lost Eye Glasses . . . bought a new pair. Met Colored Delegates the first day as follows: Station, of Farmington, St. Francis Co., Mo., and Rev. Sexton, pastor of Columbia A.M.E. Church. In the family of my friend T. L. Capelton was Grandmama Cotton which age at her last birthday was 100 years. The old lady seemed to be enjoying life first rate.

*Sept. 9.* Pleasant. Had a good time getting acquainted with the Delegates and Seeing the sights through my new Eye glasses. Saw many things which inspired in me Sublime thoughts and made me feel like Climbing higher, etc. Oh, how presumptuously the Colored Delegates played their p[ar]ts. Rev. J. S. Furgerson opened the Convention with prayer. The Rev's prayer was short and pointed. I very much admired the Sight when I saw 5 or 6 hundred people Reverently rise to their feet and stand while the prayer was being delivered. Chairman Warner said in his Speech that a large Element of the people of the Democracy was reduced to hewers of Wood and Drawers of water and that there was a general uprising against Frank Jas. Democracy.<sup>44</sup> He advocated also equal rights for all men. Hon. Gotschalk, Ex-Lieutenant Gov., Gen. Prentiss, ex-Gen. of the Federal Army who said in his Speech that he thought that they would do God's service to beat the Dem. in the state. J. M. Turner made an interesting Speech in which he referred to the Scenes in the Capital Building in the year 1870, the Bolt and the Grand Mistake the Republican



*The mother of the Rev. George A. Maston lived in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. Her maiden name has not been preserved, but she married a slave who had assumed the surname of his owner, John Mastin (sic). She became the mother of two ministers and was the wife of a devout man who led religious services after he was freed, if not before. She lived only a short time as a free woman, dying in 1866.*

Party made at that time. Judge Forest of Sedalia said, "We can Say to Dem. in the Fall, Surrender in the name of God the Executive to Lafal [lawful] people. We made in this state 155,000 Chattle Freemen that decided that a working man was a person in the eyes of the law." A. J. Seay, Our County Judge, was called upon but declined. Samuel Hayes, ex-Postmaster of St. Louis, made appropriate remarks. The name of Dr. Varcoff of Carondelet being offered for Lieutenant Governor and after hearing several speeches I felt inspired. Got the attention of the Chairman and in a neat little speech seconded the nomination of Dr. H. M. Varkoff, being my maiden speech in a Convention of that Kind. Of course, it was rather tame—you bet! I went as Representative of the 7th Cong. Dist. of Mo. . . . The Convention despatched its business in the afternoon by 5 o'clock and adjourned Sinie die — —

*Sept. 10.* Got up early, finished writing up Diary for Tuesday. Bid my friend's family Goodby about ten and left for a short visit to the Public Schools . . . Where I visited about an hour. . . . Pupils enrolled in Miss Drake's room, 92. Oh my how is she to manage so many. . . . Found family well but wife somewhat agitated over some rowdiness which had occurred at the church and disturbed the Society meeting—a warrant had been sworn out for him and he had skipped. Footing up the expenses [to Jefferson City] I found them to be \$10.50—\$5.90 of which was fare. Well, taking all things into consideration I consider that the trip has well paid me for my outlay. The effect will be to improve my manhood and tone my thoughts for the future.

*Oct. 6.* Attended a meeting for the Organization of a Logan, Blaine and Ford Club. Heard an interesting Speech by J. C. Kirkadan and also by Judge A. J. Seay.

*Oct. 10.* Helped to organize a Colored Blaine and Logan Club in the County Ct. Room. Accepted the office of Secretary. Addresses are now in Order and I am now booked for one on the 17th.

*Oct. 11.* Commenced writing Speech.

*Oct. 13.* Had an interview with [Judge] K. C. Kirkadan. Agreed to go to Washington [Missouri] on the 22nd for the purpose of delivering an address to the Colored Citizens and

organizing a Blaine and Logan Club. . . . Writing up an address to be delivered before the Club on the 17.

*Oct. 17.* Address all ready, everything booming. Hurrah for Ohio. 19,000 majority Republican.

*Oct. 18.* Met the Colored Blaine and Logan Club and delivered a speech to them on the issues of the day. There were a good many Democrats present.

*Oct. 19.* Republican Clubs turned out Colored and White, over a hundred boys and men were in line with torches.

*Oct. 20.* Pleasant. Ordered caps etc. for the Colored Blaine and Logan Club. Had a meeting of the Club at Night—Thirty names enrolled. Prospects for a good club fine.

*Oct. 21.* Promised to go to Washington [Missouri] on the 23rd [to speak].

*Oct. 22.* Got dispatch from U. S. Unex Fire Works Co. St. Louis Stating that the Caps and goods we ordered for the club was shipped to Washington. Yet the club was sadly disappointed by them not arriving in time for use . . . [at the] Grand Torch light Procession of the White Club in honor of M. G. Reynolds, Candidate for Cong. from the 7th Dist., who made an able Speech on the issues of the day showing the Grand advantage the Republican party had over the Dem. etc. We also had short speeches from Judge Martin and J. C. Kirkadan.

*Oct. 23.* Got goods and caps as ordered from St. Louis for the B and L Club. Left about 5 o'clock for Washington. My object in going was for the purpose of Delivering a speech to the Colored voters. Arrived about 7:20. Got warmed up, took a cup of tea and soon found my way to Liberty Hall where I met only a few on the lookout for me. Among them was my old friend Hardy O. Jones. I delivered a short speech to those who were present and quite a pleasant chat. Left for home about 11:30 found it quite cold on the road home. Got home about 1 o'clock. . . . Sent a Telephone Dispatch to W. M. Palmer.

*Sat. 24.* Got letter inviting me to the Colored B. & L. Club to participate in a Grand torch Procession at Washington on the 31st. The Political Coldren is beginning to Bubble sure enough.

*Oct. 27.* Attended a meeting of the B. L. Club Transacted business of importance.

*Oct. 29.* Anticipating a trip to Washington.

*Oct. 30.* Closed school at 3 P.M. Prepared to go to Washington for the purpose of taking a p[ar]t in the torch light Procession. Left about 4, in company of several members of the B. & L. Club, arrived at Washington about 6:30, found the town full of life. We passed down to Head 2 amid the booming of Cannon and the firing of Rockets, etc. The procession of about 450 torches headed by one or two Good Brass bands started about 8 o'clock and marched through the Principal Streets thence to the hall where we listened to a grand speech by M. G. Reynolds, Cand. for Congress. We left for home about 12:15. Arrived safe about 2 P.M.

*Nov. 1.* The B. & L. Club turned out.

*Nov. 3.* Rain, rain . . . Dismissed school till Wed. on account of the Election on the 4th when we hope to elect B & L President and Vice-President of the U. S.

*Nov. 4.* Pleasant, cool, a great many voted as they felt disposed to do. Voted for my first Dem. Joseph Eckert.

*Nov. 5.* Election news coming in slow, indications in favor of the Dem. C. & L. [Cleveland was the Democratic victor for President in 1884; L. may refer to a Missouri candidate] may be the men yet. Our County ticket safe with a few exceptions.

*Nov. 6.* Election news coming in slow.

*Nov. 18.* Election of Cleveland Conceded by the Republicans. So, so we must for the next four years live under a Democratic Admins.

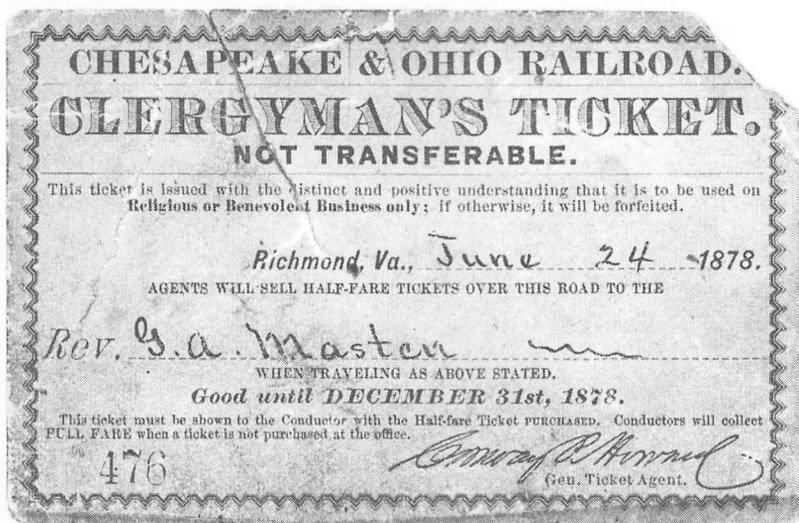
*Nov. 22.* Rain, rain, oh rain. Democrats sadly disappointed owing to the fact that they intend to have a grand Ratification meeting at Washington to celebrate the Election of Cleveland as President of the U. S. this being the first President they have had for 24 years. Yet the weather was against them.

*Nov. 27.* Pleasant Thanksgiving Day. Worked in the Shop. Saw a man wheel another around the Courthouse square having agreed so to do on an election bet . . . having lost his bet he paid it like a man having wheeled the victor around the Square amid "flying banners and martial music." The

wheelbarrow was tastfully decorated and Procession was rather imposing.

*Dec. 9.* Read an Address of Thos. T. Fortune, Editor of the *Freeman* and Ex-Ed of the *N. Y. Globe*. The Address was to the Colored men of America and was a Logical Discussion of their present Political Status and he closed showing from the Logic of events that they, the Colored Citizens, must look out for themselves and organize for self-protection. Look not to Washington and the Republican party for the Protection of their Rights but to the Several States and themselves. Recognize their best men as leaders. Well, taking the Address as a whole it is full of truth. The Republican party is to blame for their defeat, having abandoned the black Republicans of the South, etc.

*Jan. 1, 1885.* Got things in shape for the Festival which was held at night for the Church Pastor. We had a large but very rough crowd, several of whom came near getting into a row. Several of them were very Profane boisterous and sometimes obscene. Paying no regards to decency, etc. Well at



One of George A. Maston's first clergyman's passes was issued by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in 1878.

least we got through without blood shed and without any material damage being done to the great relief of the Respectable portion Present. Cleared 8.25. Closed out at 12 and got to bed about 1 A.M.

*June 1.* Leitwein Case for Killing Brown Commences next week. Now for another hung Jury or an acquittal.

*June 2.* Gave a little private assistance in the Leitwein case on behalf of the State. Was somewhat surprised at the Superstition displayed by several Colored men who I desired to take into my Confidence. I finally got things to work the way I wanted them.

*June 3.* Heard the testimony on Several Witnesses in the Leitwein Case.

*June 4.* Put in considerable time hearing Evidence in the murder Case of Aaron Leitwein. Met with the misfortune to get a considerable of a flesh wound on my head by the breaking of a swing. After bleeding profusely it stopped and the Doctor put something on it to heal it up and went on the even tenure of my way.

*June 5.* Verdict of the Jury in the Leitwein Case Man-slaughter in the 4th Degree, 3 mons. in the County Jail and \$400 fine.

*June 11.* Leitwein was lodged in Jail on the 10th under a cost of \$100 and 3 months Jail, a feeble effort of the court to mete out justice to a murderer—

[After six years in Union, Missouri, Maston, by then referred to in the *Franklin County Record* as Professor, felt it time to move, and through the spring months of 1885 he began searching for another school.]

*June 30.* A card from Kirkwood stating that the Board had reelected Hudlin to teach the Col[ored] School, so I must now look out elsewhere for a school. . . . *Where shall I get a school?* is the question with me now. . . . Well I and all of [my] affairs are in the hands of Providence—

[In August, 1885, Maston moved his family to Ironton, Iron County, Missouri. In the intervening years (1885-1901), he taught school, preached, and barbered at Bowling Green, Pike County; Arrow Rock, Saline County; New Franklin, Howard County; Sturgeon, Boone County, all in Missouri. Then followed his move to Lincoln, Nebraska.]

## NOTES

1. George A. Maston, *An Historical Poem* (Lincoln: Pamphlet, privately printed, 1904); *Daily Tribune* (Fort Scott, Kansas), March 27, 1901; Otherwise unsubstantiated statements by the editor throughout this paper result from her numerous interviews between 1968 and 1971 with Mrs. Luther Allen, 824 B Street, Lincoln, a daughter of Mr. Maston.

2. Maston, *An Historical Poem*; *Hoyle's City Directory of Lincoln, 1902*, (Lincoln: State Journal Co., 1902), 389.

3. Mary Emily Davies and Genevieve Marsh, "A Study of the Negro in Lincoln," (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1904), 2, 103-118, 143-144; *Hoyle's City Directory of Lincoln, 1903*, 415.

4. *The Negroes of Nebraska*, compiled by WPA Writers' Project (Lincoln: Omaha Urban League, 1940), 8-12.

5. Davies and Marsh, 143-144; Percy Logan et al., *Newman Methodist Church, 67th Anniversary, April 15-19, 1959*, (Lincoln: Methodist Historical Society, 1959), 1.

6. Maston Scrapbook No. 2, page 2: receipt for church insurance, Sturgeon, Missouri, January 4, 1901; Davies and Marsh, 96-107.

7. *Ibid.*, 2.

8. *Ibid.*, 145-146.

9. *Ibid.*, 150.

10. Statement, Charlie Smith to editor, March 25, 1969. It is interesting that Mr. Smith should remember Maston's campaign against marbles. He considered the game evil on the Lord's Day and when played "for keeps." See "Diary" entry of Feb. 17, 1884.

11. Military Service Record, Capt. Israel B. Murdock, National Archives, Washington, D. C.: Murdock, whom he contacted in later life, was born in Preston Co., Virginia. A 29 year-old clerk, he enlisted at Ironton, Ohio, in the 2nd West Virginia Cavalry. Maston told his children he remained with the 2nd Cavalry on its 100-mile march from Greenbrier County, W. Va., to the Ohio River.

12. Gabe Johnson is referred to in Maston's "History of My Life," in 1878 as "My old friend and guardian . . . who welcomed me into his home and exchanged many jokes with me concerning my experience in Ironton [Ohio] when a boy."

13. Maston arrived in St. Louis in 1869, aged 20; deduced from various entries in his "Diary."

14. Among the Baptists was Miss Eliza Dulan, whom he later married.

15. Maston had previously joined the Methodist Episcopal Church before 1869 in Charleston, W. Va. Maston "Diary," Sept. 9, 1883.

16. Similar to Young Men's Christian Association, which, though not new, in the early 1870's was facing increased popularity.

17. Garrison University for blacks opened in Sept. 1871 in St. Louis, Mo. Tuition ranged from \$11 to \$15 per quarter. "Students entering here will find no obsolete ideas of feudal times." Brochure, *Garrison University*, (St. Louis, 1874).

*St. Louis Daily Globe*, Nov. 25, 1872, reported 102 students enrolled in 1871. An E. Pitts was appealing for funds: "With 30,000 children of school age in our state, there was not accommodation for more than 3 [thousand] and that while all other classes [whites] had access to the best Grammar and High Schools, Colleges and

Universities; we, not possessing the proper color qualifications, were expected to be satisfied with a few primary schools. . . . We cannot speak too highly of the noble self-sacrifice of our principal teacher, Professor [and President] Higgins . . . teaching not less than 12 hours a day and receiving less than \$25 a month compensation. . . . It was all we had to give."

18. Oberlin (Ohio) College was founded in 1833 by New Englanders. Oberlin became the western terminus of the Underground Slave System by which fugitives were channelled to Canada. Anti-slavery enthusiasts gained admittance for Negroes in Oberlin and at the same time the trustees admitted women. Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio*, (C. H. Krehbiel & Sons: Cincinnati, 1908) Vol. II, 126-128.

*The Oberlin Catalog, 1871-1872* says: "No arrangement is made for those who have not sufficient maturity to study profitably in their rooms. It is not a school for children." The school stood for temperance. Tobacco was forbidden and users were expected to resign. Pre-ministerial students paid no tuition, room rent, or library fees. Others spent about \$250 a year, besides clothing. The imprint of this school's influence is evident in Maston's outlook on life.

19. Maston in "assuming his civil rights" in 1873 was relying on bills passed by Congress in 1866. By the time he wrote his "History" the Civil Rights Act of 1875 had been passed "securing to Negroes equal rights in hotels, theatres, railroad carriages, and other public utilities." The Act was declared unconstitutional in 1883 on grounds it dealt with social, not civil, rights. John Spencer Bassett, *A Short History of the United States, 1492-1920* (New York: MacMillan, 1923), 606, 614.

20. Maston's other lectures were: "Education and Civil Rights," "An Essay on the Free School System" "Future Retribution." Maston, "History of My Life," *passim*.

21. Maston was issued a "Clergyman's Ticket" by the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway June 24, 1878. It entitled him to half fare passage. Ticket in Archives, Nebraska State Historical Society.

22. Yellow fever was widespread along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Ernest Krischten, *Catfish and Crystal*, (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 242.

23. In 1878, Cincinnati's Zoological Gardens were on Mt. Evans, reached by an inclined plane. Cars loaded with hundreds of persons ascended while other cars descended. Howe, Vol. II, 784.

24. Union, Franklin county seat, is about 50 miles west of St. Louis. S[outh]. Union may have referred to a section of the town inhabited by Negroes.

25. Washington, about eight miles north, was on the Missouri River and the nearest railroad, the Missouri Pacific.

26. *Franklin County Record* (Union, Mo.) files are incomplete for 1882-1883 and this article is unavailable.

27. The following undated clipping from Maston Scrapbook No. 2 was presumably printed in the *Ironton* (Ohio) *Register*, which had received it from Gabe Johnson: "George A. Maston writes a long and interesting article in the *Franklin County Record* of Union, Mo., on the capabilities and achievements of the Negro, which we have been permitted to read. George is himself an example of intelligence of the colored man. He came out of the War with Capt. I. B. Murdock

when a boy, learned the barber's trade with Gabe Johnson, and upon his own resources entered college and graduated [not the full course] from Oberlin."

28. The entire text was printed in the *Franklin County Record*, Feb. 1, 1883. Excerpts to indicate Maston's style of formal writing follow:

"What has the Negro done since the war or within one hundred years to show his susceptibility? Has he made any progress in the field of Art? or Literature? Is he known in the Commercial world? Is he making a history & has he a future? . . .

"The first blood spilt for liberty during the war for independence was from the veins of Christopher Atax, the Negro who fell during the Boston Massacre, Mar. 5, 1770. Next in order I will mention Salem, the Negro, who shot the gallant Pitcairn as he mounted the parapet. . . .

"Statistics show that the Negroes of the South have accumulated since the war \$77,000,000 worth of real estate. Jeff Davis' farm in Mississippi which is estimated to be worth \$75,000, is owned by an ex-slave. There is also a firm run by Colored men in Mississippi which does business amounting to \$50,000 a year and is considered in New York to be solvent and reliable. . . .

"In conclusion, bow in silence while I quote from a speech of the 'Old Man Eloquent'—Frederick Douglass: 'No man entered the portals of freedom under circumstances more unpropitious than the American freedman. They were flung overboard in an unknown sea, in the midst of a storm without planks, ropes, oars or life preservers, and told to swim or perish. They were without money, without friends, without shelter, and without bread. The land which they had watered with their tears, enriched with their blood, tilled with their hands, was owned by their enemies. They were told to leave their old quarters and seek food and shelter elsewhere. . . ."

29. The son, George Lemuel, was sometimes affectionately called "Georgia" by his parents.

30. *Franklin County Record*, May 8, 1883. The town meeting discussed hogs running free. Someone stated hogs were permitted at large in New York cities, and another demanded, "Does that make it reasonable the streets of Union should be made into hog pastures?"

31. The closing exercises of the two schools in the "Brick" schoolhouse are reported in the *Franklin County Record*, May 8, 1883.

32. Prof. Allen is sometimes referred to as W. S. Allen. As county commissioner he frequently presided over courthouse examinations, awarded Maston his certificates, and assisted him in geometry and square root. Maston "Diary," May 4, July 12, July 20, 1883.

33. For some days diary entries are in a loose Spencerian scrawl, after which they revert to Maston's characteristically spidery handwriting.

34. Oct. 1, 1883, letter postage dropped from 3 cents to 2 cents for the first half ounce. *Scott's U. S. Stamp Catalog, Specialized, 1971*. (New York: Scott Publishing Co., 1971).

35. One of Maston's duties was as Sunday School superintendent and class leader. Sister Ming may have been the wife of Jack Ming and a slave relict of the white Ming family referred to in *Franklin Co. Record*, Dec. 27, 1883.

36. There are repeated references to his friend, Hardy O. Jones, a school teacher colleague.

37. "The person killed was Jim Brown, colored, son-in-law of Jack Ming. . . . Stabbing is charged to Aaron Leitwein, guard of the chain gang for some time past under Sheriff Terry. . . . A dozen were rotating round the body while the doctor was operating and two (Clay and Osborn) had a quarrel, the former charging the latter of being accessory after the fact, which the latter denied and was struck in face by Clay. George James who had just finished a year on the rock pile pulled off his coat and ordered everybody to be quiet and was quivering for some enterprize so he could try out his muscles—Clay demanded the arrest of Leitwein—Sheriff Terry proceeded to his house where he found him bombarding against an imaginary mob of infuriated Colored people. To their great credit there has yet been no demonstration. . . . We could give the inciting causes pretty accurately, but wait until after trial that we may not anticipate justice and thereby prejudice trail. . . . This is a very sad affair and without any mitigating excuse developed up to this time." *Franklin County Record*, Dec. 27, 1883.

38. "Diary," *passim*. Maston assisted others in applying for government pensions; henceforth he did a great deal of such work.

39. Nigger is a term Negroes dislike to hear. When they use it themselves, it has especially low connotations.

40. Small boys, as well as girls, then wore long, loose, shirt-like garments that came to their knees. Abraham Lincoln was known as "a shirt-tail boy" when he was older than Maston's son.

41. James G. Blaine was Republican nominee for President in 1884.

42. A favorite form of entertainment in small towns for years was provided by transient blind Negro musicians.

43. Elder Chenoweth was the regular minister of Maston's church.

44. Probably this is a reference to the Missouri banditry of Frank and Jesse James.