

Dark Merit



by
Kathrynne
Favors

SLAVERY

During slavery, many Negroes made independent efforts to establish business and to become independent. An epoch of the American Negro came during the American Revolutionary War. Many schools were opened for Negroes and various churches gave them opportunity to put their ideas into practice.

Soon there appeared many Negro teachers. These teachers taught not only members of their race but also members of the white race. At that time there was caste discrimination more than race or color discrimination. A negro teacher was in the same class as a white teacher. "In 1773, according to Jonathan Boucher, two-thirds of the school teachers in Maryland were the brought from Europe to serve here as indentured servants."

In 1740, there was a Negro in Pennsylvania advertised as qualified to bleed and draw teeth, "pretending to be a great doctor." In 1797, there was another in South Carolina who served as a doctor there. James Derham learned the medical profession from his master by helping him compound medicines and assist with the patients. He was sold as a slave to another doctor and he developed still further in the medical profession, then he was sold to Dr. Robert Dove of New Orleans and soon he built up a business in New Orleans paying him \$3,000 a year. Of him Dr. Benjamin said: "I have conversed with him most of the acute and epidemic diseases of the country where he lives and was pleased to find him perfectly acquainted with the modern simple mode of practice on those diseases. I expected to have suggested some new medicines to him; but he suggested many more to me. He is very modest and engaging in his manners. He speaks French fluently and has some knowledge of the Spanish language."

Then Negroes became interested in fraternal organizations. Prince Hall was the pioneer in developing Masonry among the Negroes in North America.

In the religious world, many

PEOPLE OF NEBRASKA



The Mason Family of
Nehawka, Nebraska

The late Thomas Mason and wife were married in Nebraska City, Nebraska in 1887. To this union were born two children, Ella and Thomas Jr.

In 1891 the family moved to Nehawka, where in 1917 Miss Ella Mason and Boyd Francisco of Omaha were united in marriage. To this couple one son was born, who is living now at Nehawka. His mother passed away in 1928.

Thomas was married in Kansas City, Kansas in 1932 to Miss Thelma Robbins, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Robbins of that city. She had been a teacher at the Grant School in Kansas City for eight years prior to her marriage. To this couple were born two children, Elizabeth, 8, and Thomas 6.

Mr. Mason has carried mail in Nehawka since 1914 and received his 33rd Masonic Degree in 1936.

The Masons are well known to many Lincolniters.

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Negroes had a chance to develop their ability as leaders and pastors of churches. "clergy of the sects dominant during the colonial period were either inaccessible or unsympathetic toward the Negro. The Anglicans, succeeded by the Protestant Episcopalians, would not countenance such a thought as that of a Negro rector; Catholics, more kindly disposed to the race, did not work in that direction; and neither did the Presbyterians nor the Quakers make sufficient inroads among them to justify the elevation of Negroes to commanding positions in these respective circles. In the case of the Methodist and Baptist churches, however, the Negro had a better chance."

—Woodson, Carter G. The Negro in Our History

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