

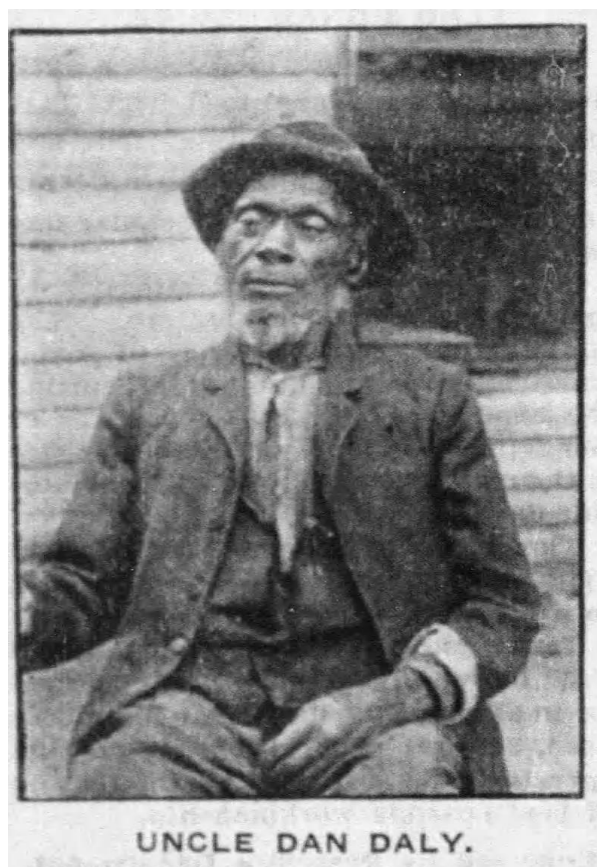
Black Kentucky Pioneers:

Dan Daly (c1820-1903)

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, KY

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 15 June 1902, p15:

Hale and Hearty
Uncle Dan Daly Now
Ninety-Nine Years Old.
Says He Had a Good Master
During the By-Gone Slavery Days.



At 917 Lewis Street, this city, at the home of his son, Amos Daly, the well known colored barber at Hathaway's shop, lives one of the oldest, if not the very oldest, residents of Daviess County, Uncle Daniel Daly. He is a very intelligent old fellow, and is possessed of a splendid memory.

"I know I am at least ninety-nine years old, and I expect 100," said Uncle Dan. "I can distinctly remember the War of 1812, because my young mistress' brother, Mr. Willie, shouldered his gun and went to the front. I was then either eight or nine years old or thereabouts. My age was set down in my old master's Bible, and it makes me about the age I said. I have seen Owensboro grow from a mighty little place to a big city.

"My old massa's name was George Glasscock. He had a big farm up in Breckenridge County, where I was born, about fifteen miles from Hardinsburg, but there was no town there at that time. My master died and my mistress married a Mr. John Daly. He had a young son, and Mrs. Daly gave me to him, and never would allow him to sell me until after I was grown. Several traders had offered \$1,500 for me, but she refused to allow me to be sold. My young master was quite good to me, but he would drink a good deal. He traded up and down the river in flatboats, and every fall would go down the river several times on trading expeditions. There were no steamboats then or steam cars, (railroads), and he would leave for New Orleans with great flatboats full of chickens and hogs, meal, etc. They would sell the boats when they got South and ride horses back home. I remember seeing the first steamboat that came up the Ohio River. I can't remember its name, but it was a big sternwheeler, loaded with people. Well, we heard about its coming a long time before it arrived, and everybody was crazy to see it, and most all our masters let us go to the river to see the boat. Some came as far as twenty-five miles, and the banks were lined with people as far as you could see.

A Wild Region

"Where my old master lived at that time was a wild and unsettled country. Numerous bands of Indians roamed around, but they were for the most part friendlies, and generally behaved themselves if given a drink of whiskey, and we had a cellar full of wines and brandy. Many a time we would set up a stick with a coin stuck in the end, and the Indians would take turn about shooting at it with their arrows. They were generally so skillful with this weapon that they rarely missed. I have seen, many a time, an Indian shoot a deer through and through with his bow and arrow with his horse on the dead run. They would sometimes dance all night, and it was always amusing to us, but you could never induce those Indians to sleep in the house. They would build them a log fire and squat down with their backs to the fire, their blankets drawn up around them, in the very coldest weather.

An Abundance of Deer

"Talk about game! Why, deer was as plentiful in those days as cattle. You could see them standing around in the woods most any place, and they were not at all shy, either, and would come right up close to the house, and lift up one foot and lay their ears back, gazing at you. Bears, catamounts, rattlesnakes and panthers, or "painters," as they were called, abounded in the woods, but the wolves were the worst and fiercest, and gave us no end of trouble. These wolves were enormous gray ones and they would snap their teeth like a steel trap. I have seen some wolves in some of our circuses lately, but they ain't nothing like those fierce creatures of over seventy years ago. Why, those wolves got so bad we could hardly raise any sheep. We had sheep pens close up to the house, but the wolves would come up and jump into the pens, and out with a sheep in broad daylight. I have been 'freed' by them a dozen times while away from the house and had some narrow escapes, let me tell you.

"Old master used to set many a wolf-trap. A big steel trap would be hidden in a shallow pool of water, and a stake driven near the trap with a piece of meat tied near the trap. The wolf, on making a spring for the bait, would generally fall down and spring the trap, and we'd have him. The catamounts were bad, too. Did you ever see a catamount? Well, they had a head like a cat and a little, short tail. They were sneaking rascals and could scratch to beat everything. They were big cowards, however, but if you run from them, they'd get you sure. And the panthers. All the animals in those days were much larger and more powerful than the ones you see at the present time with shows. The panther would lay himself along a limb of a tree and wait and watch for you to pass underneath, then he'd spring on you. I've had 'em to follow me, and see their bright eyes shining through the underbrush, and its a mighty unpleasant feeling you have about that time, too. A panther screams very much like a woman, only keener.

"The farm was overrun with venomous snakes, particularly the rattlesnake, and I would never miss a day but what I killed five to ten, many with over twenty rattles.

The Old Slavery Days

"The slaves in those days that had good masters and mistresses were generally happy and well-provided for, and had the best of medical attention when they were sick, for a 'nigger' was worth something in those days. All the money we could make working for other people during Christmas week, we were allowed to keep, but some of our neighboring masters were not so good, and wouldn't even allow their slaves any holiday. So old 'Aunt Fanny,' who belonged to one of these masters would regularly 'run off' every Christmas, and stay a week, to work for some other white folks, cooking, washing, and ironing, and when she came back, what a beating she did get. But, she would do the same thing next year. We lived in log houses, sometimes, with no floor, mud chimneys and a fireplace big enough to take in a bedstead. Our amusements during the holidays consisted in husking bees, quiltings and barbecues. At Christmas time we were sometimes allowed to visit the neighboring farms, but the 'patter-rollers' were everywhere, and it was

'Run, nigger, run, or the patter-roller catch you.'

"I was put to plowing on the farm when I was but nine years old, as I was big and stout for my age. I used an old fashioned wooden-mold plow, with iron point. As I grew older, my strength developed and I became a very powerful young man. My young master noticed this, and though he was good to me, he would often get me to tackle a nigger bigger than myself, and sometimes I had my hands full, but I would whip him good, and this tickled my master, and he thought a heap of me for it. In Cloverport, Ky., I shouldered a barrel of whiskey on the wharf, and in the presence of a large crowd, walked up the levee with it and put it in a wagon. I expect there are people living in that town today that seen me accomplish that feat. In those days whiskey was worth about 25 cents a gallon, and I was presented with the barrel of whiskey for carrying it.

"Campmeetings were a great feature in those days, and sometimes they would run for weeks at a time, and the white folks would come for miles around in wagons, and bring their slaves to cook and wait on them. And all the way we had to make fire in those days was with a piece of flint and linen tow. I have gone out, many a time, early in the morning and walked two miles and 'borrowed' fire of a neighbor, bringing back home with me a lighted torch. There were no matches in those days, and tallow dip candles were our best and only light.

Has Seen Ghosts

"Yes, I know there are mighty few folks, white or black these days, that believe in ghosts, but I have seen them, and in many different places. I was coming home one night and had a big hollow to go through. It was heavily wooded. It was very dark, and when I got to the foot of the hill I seen the form of a beautiful young lady standing just before me. I spoke to it several times, but it did not answer. I then advanced on it and reached out my hands, when it vanished in the air, making a kind of whirring sound. I did not know whether there had been any one killed on that spot or not, but there had been several massacres of women and children in that neighborhood by Indians."

Uncle Dan, notwithstanding his age, is a well-preserved old man yet. His eyesight is poor, and a short time ago he fell in a hole that had been dug by the water company, while he was walking around, and is somewhat crippled up from the effects of it.

"Tell all the white folks," said Uncle Dan, "that I 'spects to live a good many years yet, but when the Old Master above calls me, that I am ready and willing to go. I have done seen so many folks, younger than I, called away, that I am glad to be here."

Uncle Dan's wife, Aunt Joycie Daly, died only a short time since. She was one year older than he, and bore him thirteen children, six of whom are now living.

I left the old man seated on his favorite seat, a bench under shade of some trees, with a contented look on his face, seamed with the age of years.

JOHN T. HIGDON

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Additional notes by Jerry Long:

The former owner of Dan Daly, John H. Dailey (53) & Charlotte Glasscock Dailey (44) are listed in the 1850 census of Breckinridge County, KY.

In the 1870 census of Owensboro, Daviess County, KY were listed – Dailey, Daniel (47 KY, farmer), Joicy (40 KY), Annie (27), Amos (20), Manda (17), Jimmie (15), Mollie (12) and Charles (8). In the 1880 census of Owensboro his family was enumerated as – Dailey, Daniel (65 KY), Joice (64 KY, wife) and William (23). The following marriages of Dan & Joicy's children were recorded in Daviess County, KY – Amos to Mollie Howard, 14 June 1883; Amanda to Henry Parks, 19 September 1878; James to Mollie Owen, 14 July 1885; and Mollie to George A. Johnson, 3 July 1878.

At the time of the 1900 census of Owensboro Daniel Daly (born January 1820) & wife, Joicye (born February 1818, married 50 years) were living in the home of their daughter, Amanda (born January 1864) & her husband, Henry Parks (born October 1860); they were residing at 917 Lewis Street. Anna Duncan, a daughter of Dan & Joicy Daley, died in Owensboro on 11 June 1913 and was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Owensboro. Amos Dailey, son of Dan & Joicy, died at his home on Lewis Street in Owensboro on 3 November 1905; his obituary reported he had been a barber in Owensboro for a quarter of a century. James Dailey, son of Daniel & Joicy, died in Owensboro on 17 February 1925.

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UNCLE DAN NO MORE

NEGRO OVER 100 YEARS OLD
PASSES AWAY.

Distinctly Remembered the War of
1812, Being Nine Years of Age
at That Time.

Bent and stooped by the weight of a century, or more, on his shoulders, Uncle Daniel Daly, one of the best known negroes in the city, died of infirmities incidental to old age at his home, on Lewis street, Saturday morning. Uncle Dan was one of the oldest, if not the oldest, residents of the county.

Uncle Dan was the father of Amos Daly, the well known barber of this city. As far back as the memory of man runneth, he had been a familiar character about Owensboro. The latter part of his days was feebly spent. He enjoyed sunning himself on a bench in front of his little home during the past summer months and relating, in his pe-



UNCLE DANIEL DALY

gular style, the stories of the plantation. He was known to hundreds of young people who made an "Uncle Remus" of him and listened to his stories of "times fo' de wah" with their intense, child-like interest.

"I know I am at least ninety-nine years old, and I expect a hundred," said Uncle Dan, about a year ago. "I can distinctly remember the war of 1812, because my young mistress' brother, Mr. Willie, shouldered his gun and went to the front. I was then either eight or nine years old, or thereabouts. My age was set down in my old master's bible, and it makes be 'bout a hundred. I have seen Owensboro grow from a mighty little place to a big city."

Uncle Dan was born in Breckenridge county on the plantation of George Glasseock. When his master died his mistress married a Mr. John Daly. The Daly family was always kind to him and never allowed him to be sold. After the war he came to Yellow Banks and settled with his wife and children. His wife, "Aunt Joycie," died a few years ago. Six of their thirteen children are now living.