

# Black Kentucky Pioneers:

Noah Salsbury (c1794-after 1870)

14 February 1992

Celeste S. Johnson  
2711 Hunlac Trail  
Round Rock, TX 78681

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Sorry for the delay in answering your letter. Enclosed is the title page from the book, Illustrated Owensboro 1904. There are no limitations on reprinting from this book since it's original copyright limitation has expired and it has not been republished.

Also enclosed are articles pertaining to Black schools and education in Owensboro from the following sources (I thought you might enjoy reading them):

- page on "Colored Schools" from the 1918 Owensboro, Kentucky City Directory,
- Chapter on "Colored Schools" from the book, Sixty Years of Owensboro 1883-1943, by William Foster Hayes, published 1914,
- Chapter on "Owensboro Public Schools" from the book, A History of Owensboro and Daviess County, Kentucky, by Hugh O. Potter,
- Article, "Claybrook V. Owensboro: An Early Victory for Equal Education in Kentucky", by Lee A. Dew, from The Daviess County Historical Quarterly.

Just let us know if we can be of any other help. Have a good day.

Yours truly,  
Jerry Long

Kentucky Room  
Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library  
450 Griffith Avenue  
Owensboro, Kentucky 42301  
Phone 502-684-0211

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May 30, 1992

Mr. Jerry Long  
Kentucky Room  
Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library  
450 Griffith Avenue  
Owensboro, Kentucky 42301

Dear Jerry:

Thank you for your prompt response to my request for information on John Saulsbury. I have already obtained a copy of the John Saulsbury, who died at age 83. He is not my John. That is Newsome Saulsberry's son John. My John is extremely illusive. I have pictures of him. My third cousin attended his funeral in Owensboro when she was about 9 years old and her cousin, William, was a few years older. They both attest to the fact that he is buried in the Greenwood Cemetery next to his wife, Mary and have independently described the "bench" type headstone placed over their graves. But, I cannot find out where he died. I have queried Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Kentucky. He just must have been visiting somewhere else, when he deceased!!! I'll keep on trying.

Thanks for the forms for ordering death certificates. Even though I have completed my Thesis (and received my Masters degree on May 22nd - what a grand day that was), I am still continuing my research. This is a hobby, and an obsession! I'm sure you can relate.

I am enclosing a segment from chapter XI of my thesis, which is pending copyright. But you have full permission to use this segment in any way you wish. I wish I knew more about Noah. I can 'say that because he is listed in the household with "mulatto" persons, but is himself listed as Black, that he probably was of dark complexion. He had other children in addition to Jefferson - they being Milly, Mary, Lewis and William - so there were 5 living children at the time of the Thomas Salsbury Last Will and Testament (copy of which is also enclosed). Being of the age he was, and because of the nature of slavery and conditions of pioneer life in general, I am sure Noah could be considered a pioneer. He would have felled the trees, broken the earth, planted and harvested and done all the things necessary for his and his master's survival. The forgotten "Noahs" of that era turned the wilderness into farms and contributed to the growth of the towns and villages which became the modern cities. He was beloved and surely trusted and was freed upon the death of his master.

I have also enclosed some of the tax records I used to write this section, to spare you the time and effort of pulling the Muhlenberg County court records. I hope you can use this material for one of your articles As soon as the university is through with my Thesis (copyrighting and microfilming) I will send a full copy to you for the Kentucky Room.

In my Thesis, I have a segment on Eda Salsbury, born about 1811 and a slave belonging to Thomas Salsbury. (She is the mother of several of the children listed on the Salsbury will and would have worked daily with Noah.) She and her children, inherited the bulk of his property - about 360-372 acres of the 5-600 acres. A living link to Eda Salsbury is Lois C. Saulsberry Pendleton of Greenville. She told me this past February that Eda had 21 children, which included

seven (7) sets of twins!! One of those sets is mentioned in the Salsbury will. Would you be interested in Eda?

One suggestion for Kentucky pioneers is a man called "Free Frank." You may have already read about him. I used his personal writings and the book written about him as source documentation for my Thesis. The book is: Free Frank, A Black Pioneer on the Antebellum Frontier, Juliet E.K. Walker, University of Kentucky Press 1983. According to page 19 of that book, Free Frank was in Kentucky as early as 1795 and was possibly sent ahead to Kentucky to begin clearing the land by his master, George McWhorter of South Carolina. He and his master were two of the 5,000 or so new settlers who "entered Kentucky by way of the Wilderness Trace during 1795." This is a book full of well-documented information about black and white pioneers. It chronicles his life and his travels and makes for most interesting reading.

If I think of anyone else, I will drop you a line. I wish you much success in your writing and hope to read your articles as they are published.

I hope you understand how grateful I am to you for the continuing assistance you have given-me. You are on my acknowledgement page in the Thesis.

Let, me know if there is anything I can do to help you.

Sincerely,  
Celeste Johnson

2711 Hunlac Trail  
Round Rock, TX 78681

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August 9, 1992

Mr. Jerry Long  
Genealogical Librarian  
Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library  
Kentucky Room  
450 Griffith Street  
Owensboro, Kentucky 42301

Dear Jerry:

Well, here it is! I am enclosing a copy of my Master's Thesis – Searching for the Roots, Grafting the Branches: The Saulsbury Family of Kentucky, A Black History of Roots Lost in Slavery.

This copy is being presented to the Kentucky Room for use by the public. It is my fondest wish that it will assist others in locating ancestors or adding pieces of history to their research. It is important to me to be able to add documented information on a Black family whose toil and

perseverance contributed, even if only in a small part, to the development of early rural Kentucky.

California State University-Dominguez Hills (through University Microfilms, Inc.) is having several copies bound, the copyright will be registered with the Library of Congress and the abstract will soon be included in Masters Abstracts International. But I did not want to wait months to provide the Kentucky Room with a copy. (When the other copies arrive, I will send one to the Muhlenberg County Library in Center City.)

Please know that I feel privileged to contribute to your wonderful store of genealogical data and look forward to continued contact with the Kentucky Room and the West Central Kentucky Family Research Association as I add to my work.

I am grateful to you and the staff at the Kentucky Room for all of your help, without which this thesis would have been much less complete.

Sincerely,  
Celeste Stanton Johnson

2711 Hunlac Trail  
Round Rock, TX 78681

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KENTUCKY FAMILY RECORDS, Volume 21, (1997, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, McDowell Publications, Utica, KY), p1:

ELIZABETH ELLEN SAULSBERRY - MUHLENBERG CO, KY: Ex-Slave

Submitted by Celeste Beatrice Stanton  
927 Peggotty Place  
Austin, Texas 78753

June 19, 1996 was the anniversary of the date that slaves in Louisiana and Texas received word that they were free. I share the origin of another of the Salsbury slaves, owned by Thomas and Rebecca Salsbury of Greenville, Muhlenberg County Kentucky.

Elizabeth Ellen Saulsberry departed this life on January 5, 1937 at the age of 91 years, three months and 19 days. She died of complications arising from diabetes mellitis. She is listed on the death certificate (#9903) as a widowed, Negro woman. Dr. J. C. Woodburn of Greenville signed her death certificate.

Though Elizabeth Ellen is not a relative, by blood or marriage, to the line of Saulsberrys from which I come, she was a member of the slave "family" which resided on the farm of Thomas and Rebecca Salsbury from whence my ancestors can be traced. Elizabeth Ellen is mentioned in the will of Thomas Salsbury, dated the 30th of May, 1844, along with my great-great-great

grandfather, Lewis (Louis) Richard Saulsberry. She is one of the slaves to be automatically freed upon reaching the age of 25. Thomas Salsbury lists her as the "daughter of Milly," born October 26, 1840. Milly is described earlier in the will as the daughter of Noah and Betsy, Mr. Salsbury's oldest slaves. Elizabeth Ellen, then, would have been four years old at the time of the Salsbury will.

Her grandfather Noah is the oldest known Salsbury slave and was freed well before Emancipation. In fact, Noah and his wife were given 155 acres of Salsbury land to farm. Elizabeth Ellen, was listed among those who were to inherit the remainder of the Salsbury property after his and Rebecca's death.

Noah was listed as age 66 on the 1860 census, meaning that he was born in 1794 approximately. With Thomas Salsbury arriving in Muhlenberg County as early as 1799, it is possible that Noah is bequeathed his 155 acres of land certainly for good and faithful service. Therefore, Noah is possibly one of the real pioneers of Muhlenberg County and Elizabeth Ellen, who lived to see many generations come after her, was a member of one of the oldest families in Muhlenberg County, no matter that it was a slave family.

(For more information on Noah Salsbury/Sallisbury, see the book at the Owensboro-Daviess county Genealogical Library entitled "Searching for the Roots, Grafting the Branches: The Saulsbury Family of Kentucky, A Black History of Roots Lost in Slavery." This is my Thesis completed in the spring of 1992. It discusses lands owned by Thomas and Rebecca Salsbury, their slaves and the eight traceable generations since, including those slave children listed in the will. This document can also be found at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, the Filson Club in Louisville, and the main library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints - Mormons - in Salt Lake, City. It would be listed under Celeste Stanton Johnson.)

If anyone in Muhlenberg County can shed any additional light on Elizabeth Ellen, her life and her lineage, I would be most appreciative if they would contact me at the above address.

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The owners of Noah Salsbury & his family were Thomas Salsbury (c1773 – 25 March 1848) and Rebecah Dennis (4 March 1776 – 16 January 1860), who were married in Logan County, KY on 31 December 1796. Thomas is listed in the Muhlenberg County 1800 tax list, 1810, 1820, 1830 and 1840 federal censuses. Rebecca was listed in the 1850 census of Muhlenberg County, KY. Thomas & Rebecah were buried in the Salsbury Cemetery in Muhlenberg County, KY. The last will and testament of Thomas Salsbury deceased was exhibited into court and proven in the April 1848 Muhlenberg County Court; his will provided for the emancipation of Noah Salsbury's children.