

Rev. Kibby Joe Hocker
(1792-1881)

By Jerry Long

Ohio County, KY Freedmen Declaration of Marriage Book, p.3:

Declaration of Marriage
OF
NEGROES AND MULATTOES.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY.

This day the undersigned *Kibby Joe Hocker*
and *Dicy Ann Hocker* both of color,
personally appeared before the Clerk of the *Ohio*
County Court, and declared that they have lived together as
husband and wife for the past *Twenty Eight* years,
and still desire to continue living together as such, and make this
declaration, that the same may be made a matter of record, and
that a certificate to that effect may be granted them.

This *27th* day of *June* 186*6*

Kibby Joe Hocker
Dicy Ann Hocker

Attest:
Sam Co Deputy
Clerk.

Ohio County, KY 1860 Census, Cromwell Precinct, p.670:

In household of Martin Hocker (59) & Elenor Hocker (52) white –
 Hocker, Dicy 53 Black Kentucky
 Hocker, George 8 Black Kentucky
 [note: this is wife and son of Rev. Kirby Joe Hocker]

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Ohio County, KY 1870 Census, Cromwell Precinct, post office Hartford, p.416B:

191	Hocker Kirby J	74	M	B	Farmer	500	200	Maryland
	— Geo. L	17	M	B	At Home			Kentucky
	— Peter	19	M	B	"			"
	— Joseph	9	M	B	"			"

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Ohio County, KY 1870 Tax List – Negroes list:

Kibby Joe Hocker taxed on 30 acres on Slaty Creek

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Ohio County, KY Negro Marriage Book M, pp.42-43:

Kibby Joe Hocker
 19th
 Nov
 1870.
 Ann Seton

This is to certify that on the 20th day of November 1870 The Rites of matrimony were legally solemnized by me between Kibby Jo. Hocker and Ann Seton at African Church in the County of Ohio in the presence of Hennis, Rose and George, Tall
 Signed
 Peter McComick M^Y

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Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 9 May 1877, p.3:

Rev. Kibby Joe. Hoeker.

This aged colored Divine was born near Montgomery courthouse, in Maryland, in 1792, and came to Ohio county when quite an infant, where he has lived ever since. He was once the property of Philip Hoeker, but was free long before the final proclamation freeing the whole colored race. He has been trying to serve the Lord in the capacity of a Methodist preacher for near forty years. He is still active, and can ride about the country attending meetings, and preaches as well as ever. He looks as though he would last a long time yet. He called to see the sights in the HERALD office last Saturday, and says he still prays for our success.

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Ohio County, KY 1880 Census, Cromwell Precinct, p.567B:

A	Hoeker Kibby Joe	born 1790		t	Farmer
	Anna	b. 1780	wife	t	Keeping house
	Eaton Julia	b. 1740	Daughter	1	
	Mary	b. 175	Granddaughter		
	Ida	b. 172			

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Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 11 August 1880, p.3:

—By invitation of a number of our citizens, Rev. Kibby Jo Hoeker, of color, preached at the Methodist church last Sunday night. Uncle Kibby is in the 91st year of his age, and is as spry and active as most men at 60. A large audience was in attendance to hear this aged divine, who preached a good practical sermon.

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Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 26 October 1881, p.3:

—Kibby Joe Hoeker, a well known colored preacher of Cromwell district, died last week, at the advanced age of 96 years. He had been sick but a few days but his extreme age prevented resistance to the ravages of disease. His wife, who was also very old, died at midnight, six hours before him. Kibby Joe was very much respected by a large number of people.

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Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 2 November 1881, p.2:

Old Uncle Kibby Joe Hoeker and wife were called to try the realities of an unknown world last week. From what I can learn they were poisoned accidentally. She had put arsenic in one cup and soda in another, and, being in a hurry, she got hold of the wrong cup, which soon wound up their earthly career.

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Owensboro Messenger & Examiner,
Owensboro, KY, 2 November 1881, p.2:

Kibby Joe Hoeker, a well-known colored preacher in Ohio county, died near Cromwell a few days ago at the advanced age of ninety-six.

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Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 17 December 1902, p.4:

Master Commissioner's Sale.
OHIO CIRCUIT COURT, KENTUCKY.
Mattie Hoeker, plaintiff, vs. Joe Reed,
&c., defendants.

By virtue of a judgment and order of sale of the Ohio Circuit Court rendered at the November term 1902, in the above cause for the purpose of settling the estate of “Kibby” Joe Hocker, deceased and costs herein, I will offer for sale by public auction, at the courthouse door in Hartford on Monday the 5th day of January, 1903, about one o’clock p. m., upon a credit of six month, the following described proper property, to-wit:

A tract of land in Ohio county Kentucky on the waters of Slaty Creek, containing about 32 acres bounded as follows: On the North by the lands of Nelson Jarnagin; on the East by the lands of Sip Swain; on the South by the lands of Weaver H. Barnes and on the West by the lands of W. H. Southard

The purchaser will be required to execute bond with approved security immediately after sale.

This, the 6th day of December 1902.

ROWAN HOLBROOK.

Master Commissioner of the Ohio Circuit Court
G. B. LIKENS attorney.



The first of the Hocker family to settle in Ohio County, Kentucky was Philip Hocker, who was born 1750-1753 in Maryland. He was the son of Philip Hocker & Margaret Snowden. The will of Philip, Sr. was recorded in Frederick County, MD in 1774. Philip, Jr. married Dorcas Barnes, circa 1773. Dorcas, daughter of Weaver Barnes & Elizabeth Waters, was born about 1754 in Montgomery County, MD. Philip Hocker is listed in the 1790 census of Montgomery County, MD.

During 1792-1799 Philip & Dorcas Hocker migrated to Kentucky. They were residents of Ohio County, KY when it was created in 1799 from Hardin County, KY. Family biographies published in the book, Kentucky: A History of the State (1885) report that the family came to Kentucky about 1792. In the first tax list of Ohio County in 1799 Philip Hocker is listed as being the owner of 890 acres on Muddy Creek. He is also reported to be the owner of five slaves. They settled in the neighborhood where the Goshen Methodist Church is located two miles south of Hartford, the county seat. The Goshen Methodist Church was the first church of that denomination that was established in Ohio County. When the church was organized in 1804 members of the Hocker family were among the founding members. It was a family characteristic to belong to the Methodist Church.

Dorcas Barnes Hocker died on 16 June 1814 and Philip Hocker died during 1820-1821. He died between 25 June 1820, when he wrote his will, and 13 August 1821, when it was recorded (Ohio County, KY Will Book A, p.256).

Philip Hocker began his will by writing:

“First, I give and bequeath to my Negro man, Harry, his freedom to commence immediately after my decease”...” I also give and bequeath to my Negro woman, Viney, her freedom to commence immediately after my decease and provided that she should have any children at that time I will that all of them either one or more shall have their freedom at the age of twenty-five years.”

Fannie Ouida (Davis) Schwartz in her article, “The Generation Bridge: A Story of the Hocker-Davis-Barnes Families of Maryland and Ohio County, Kentucky” wrote:

“This was forty years ahead of the Civil War. It was a forerunner of traits that have appeared in every generation of Hockers since; a sense of justice and compassion, but even more, a far-sighted sensitivity, an awareness of what was happening in the general political-social structure and then, incisive logic applied to it. This is part of the reason for the generation bridge of understanding. It is not surprising that a son of this man, another, Philip, would one day in his will, that his slaves were to be treated humanely and not to be sold out of the family.”

Philip Hocker and Dorcas Barnes were the parents of : Nicholas (wife Hester Pender), Richard, Weaver (wife Sarah Coleman), Philip (married Harriet Redman), Delilah (wife of Henry Coleman), Dorcas (wife of Joseph Barnard), Polly (wife of Felix Redman), Betsy and Sarah (wife of Loderick Davis). The will of Philip Hocker, III (1786-1851), son of Philip & Dorcas, was recorded in Ohio County, KY Will Book C, p.114. In it he named slaves – Catherine, Amandy, Sam and Henry.



Kibby Joe Hocker was born about 1792 in Montgomery County, MD. As a child he was brought to Ohio County, KY by his slave master, Philip Hocker. Philip in the 1799 tax list of Ohio County was taxed on five slaves and the 1810 census of Ohio County reported that he was the owner of six slaves.

Rev. Kibby Joe Hocker was a Methodist minister for over forty years. Members of the Philip Hocker family had been among the founding members of the Goshen Methodist Church in 1804 – the first Methodist Church established in Ohio County. Kibby married numerous Black couples in Ohio County.

Prior to 1860 Kibby had been freed from the bonds of slavery. Philip Hocker by his will in 1820 had liberated his slaves, Harry & Viney. Former slaves who had been freed by the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 were not listed in the US Federal censuses until the census of 1870. In previous census reports only free Blacks appeared. In the 1860 census of Ohio County Kibby Joe Hocker was not found, however, his wife, Dicy, and son, George Hocker, were listed, indicating they were then no longer slaves. They were listed in the home of Martin Hocker (1800-1889), a grandson of Philip & Dorcas (Barnes) Hocker.

Kibby Joe Hocker was one of the first Blacks in Ohio County, KY to become a land owner. On 15 February 1868 he purchased 30 acres on Slaty Creek from J. S. & Sophia Taylor (Ohio County, KY Deed Book 9, p.11). He paid \$270. Slaty Creek is in the southern part of Ohio County near the East Providence Cemetery and the community of Prentiss. The creek runs near the east side of Highway 269 about three miles southwest of Cromwell. He still owned the same land at the time of his death and it was still owned by members of his family in 1903.

Kibby Joe Hocker is listed as a resident of the Cromwell Precinct in the 1870 and 1880 Ohio County censuses. In both his occupation was reported to be that of a farmer. He died in October 1881 in the Cromwell Precinct. One account reported he had been accidentally poisoned.

Prior to the Emancipation Proclamation marriages of the vast majority of African Americans were not recorded. After Emancipation many Black couples wanted to make their marriages legal, and many applied to the state for marriage licenses. In many states after Emancipation any couple who appeared before a Justice of the Peace or Clerk of the Court and stated when they began living together as husband and wife, would be issued a certificate and would be considered lawfully married. Freedmen’s Bureau officers worked to make all freedmen

in their districts aware of the new rules and of the deadlines for complying with them. In Ohio County 45 couples registered their marriages. They were recorded in a book entitled: "Freedmen's Declaration of Marriage", also labeled as – Book L. On page 3 of this volume it is recorded that Kibby Joe Hocker and his wife, Dicy Ann Hocker appeared in court on 27 June 1866 and certified their marriage. They testified that they have been living as man and wife for 28 years. This suggests their initial union was about 1838.

Dicy Ann Hocker, wife of Kibby Joe, died in the Cromwell Precinct in August 1869. Her death was recorded in the 1870 Federal Census Mortality Schedule for Ohio County, KY. Her cause of death was given as consumption. This record reported she was born Kentucky, was married and was a resident of household #191 in the Cromwell Precinct in the 1870 Federal Census of Ohio County. Household #191 was that of Kibby Joe Hocker, who was reported to be widowed.

Kibby Joe Hocker married Ann Acton on 20 November 1870. They were married at the African Church in Ohio County (Ohio County Negro Marriage Register M, pp.42-43). Ann was born about 1820 in Maryland. Kibby Joe and Ann are listed together in the 1880 Ohio County census.

At the time of the 1870 census living with Kibby Joe Hocker were – Peter Hocker (age 19, born KY), George L. Hocker (age 17 born KY) and Joseph Hocker (age 9, born KY). These were possibly sons of Kibby Joe & Dicy Ann.

Two of the children of Kibby Joe & Dicy Ann Hocker were probably – George Hocker, born c1852, and LaVega Hocker (also listed as Vega and Vig), born 1 January 1857. At the time of the 1880 census of Ohio County George & Lavega were living together and were enumerated thirteen households from Kibby Joe Hocker. In Ohio County, KY Deed Book 14 (p353) it is recorded that on 1 July 1893 George Hocker (& wife, Millie); LaVega Hocker (& wife Martha E.), T. Reese Rowe; and James Render (& wife Catharine) transferred one acre of land to John J. Bracken & A. L. Westerfield, trustees for school district 61, for the sum of \$15. The one acre was near the East Providence Church and was part of the Kibby Joe Hocker tract conveyed to him by J. S. Taylor & wife.

George Hocker married Millie Henderson, in Ohio County, KY on 30 April 1872 (Ohio County Negro Marriage Book K, p.197) and he died after 1893. Lavega (Vega) Hocker married Martha ('Mattie') Peay (1865-1912) on 28 February 1882, in Ohio County, KY (Ohio County, KY Negro Marriage Book K, p.431). Lavega (listed as Vig) Hocker died at McHenry in Ohio County, KY on 22 May 1929. His death certificate reported that he was born 1 January 1857 KY, he was a retired miner and his parents were unknown. He was buried at the McHenry Cemetery.

