

JAMES TURNER McLEAN  
Lillington, N. C.  
Route 1

"My name is James Turner McLean. I was born in Harnett County near Cape Fear River in the Buies Creek Section, Feb. 20, 1858. I belonged to Taylor Hugh McLean, and he never was married. The plantation was between Buies Creek and the Cape Fear river; the edge of it is about 75 yards from where I now live. The place where I live belongs to me. 'Way back it belonged to the Bolden's.

"The Boldens came from Scotland, and so did the McLeans. There were about five hundred acres in this plantation and Marster Hugh McLean had about fifty slaves. The slaves lived in quarters and Marster lived in the big house which was his home. Marster took good care o' his darkies. He did not allow anybody to whip 'em either. We had good food, clothes and places to sleep. My father was Jim McLean and my mother was named Charlotta McLean. My grandmother was named Jane. I called my mother 'Sissie' and called my grandmother 'mammy' in slavery time. They did not have me to do any heavy work just tending to the calves, colts, and goin' to the post office.

"The post office was at Mr. Sexton's and we called it Sexton's post office, on the Raleigh and Fayetteville Road. The stage run on this road and brought mail to this place. This post in my yard is part of a stage coach axle. You see it? Yes sir, that's what it is. I got it at Fayetteville when they were selling the old stage coach. We bought the axle and wheels and made a cart. We got that stuff about 1870; my father bought it. He gave twelve dollars for jes' the wheels and axle. This was after we had taken the iron clad oath and become more civilized.

"We were daresome to be caught with a paper book or anything if we were tryin' to learn to read and write. We had to have a pass to go around on, or the patterollers would work on us. I saw a lot of patterollers. Marster gave his Negroes a pass for twelve months. He sent his timber to Wilmington, and worked timber at other places so he gave his slaves yearly passes. Then when the war was about up me and him went to the post office, and he got the paper. All the niggers were free. We stopped on the way home at a large sassafras tree by the side o' the road where he always stopped to read, and he read, and told me I was free.

"I did not know what it was or what it meant. We came on to the house where my mother was and I said, 'Sissie,

we is free.' She said, 'Hush, or I will put the hickory on you.' I then went to grandma, the one I called mammy and threw my arms around her neck and said, 'Mammy we are free, what does it mean?' and mammy, who was grandma, said, 'You hush sich talk, or I will knock you down wid a loom stick.'

"Marster was comin' then, and he had the paper in his hand and was cryin'. He came to the door and called grandma and said, 'You are free, free as I am, but I want you to stay on. If you go off you will perish. If you stay on now the crop is planted and work it, we will divide.' Marster was cryin' and said, 'I do not own you any longer.' He told her to get the horn and blow it. It was a ram's horn. She blew twice for the hands to come to the house.

"They were workin' in the river lowground about a mile or more away. She blew a long blow, then another. Marster told her to keep blowin'. After awhile all the slaves come home; she had called them all in. Marster met them at the gate, and told them to put all the mules up, all the hoes and plows, that they were all free. He invited all to eat dinner. He had five women cooking. He told them all he did not want them to leave, but if they were going they must eat before they left. He said he wanted everybody to eat all he wanted, and I remember the

ham, eggs, chicken, and other good things we had at that dinner. Then after the dinner he spoke to all of us and said, 'You have nowhere to go, nothin' to live on, but go out on my other plantation and build you some shacks.'

"He gave them homes and did not charge any rent. He bought nails and lumber for them, but he would not build the houses. Some stayed with him for fifteen years; some left. He gave them cows to milk. He said the children must not perish.

"Marster was a mighty good man, a feelin' man. He cried when some of his slaves finally left him. Mother and father stayed till they got a place of their own. I waited on him as long as he lived. I loved him as well as I did my daddy. I drove for him and he kept me in his house with him. He taught me to be honest, to tell the truth, and not to steal anything.

"When freedom came marster gave us a place for a school building and furnished nails and gave the lumber for the floors. He instructed them in building the windows. He was goin' to put his sister Jenette McAllister in as teacher. She had married Jim McAllister at the Bluff Church, right at the lower part of the Averysboro Battleground where some of the last fightin' between the North and South was

done, but a man by the name of George Miller of Harnett County told him he knew a nigger who could teach the school. He employed the nigger, whose name was Isaac Brantley, to teach the school. He came from Anderson's Creek in the lower part of Harnett County. We learned very little, as the nigger read, and let us repeat it after him. He would hold the book and spell and let us repeat the words after him without lettin' us see in the book. He stayed there two months, then a man by the name of Matthews, Haywood Matthews, son of Henderson Matthews came. They were white folks, but went for negroes. Haywood teachd there. He got the children started and most of 'em learned to read and write.

"I saw the Yankees come through. Also Wheeler's Cavalry. The Yankees took chickens and things, and they gave us some things, but Wheeler's Cavalry gave us nothin'. They took what they wanted and went on. Marster hid his horses and things in the Pecosin..

"When the Yankees came Marster was hid. They rode up to my mother and asked her where he was. She said, 'I do not know.' They then asked her where was de silver, his money, an' de brandy, an' wine. They got one demijohn full o' brandy. They went into the house, tore up things

got his china pipe, fixed for four people to smoke at one time. You could turn a piece and shett off all de holes but one, when one man wanted to smoke. They threw away his old beaver hat, but before they left they got it and left it in the house. Wheeler's Cavalry stomped things and broke up more den de Yankees.

"Daddy hid marster's money, a lot of it, in the jam o' de fence. He covered it with sand that he threw out of a ditch that ran along near the fence. The Yankees stopped and sat on the sand to eat their dinner and never found the money.

"I have never seen a slave sold, and none never ran away from marster's plantation. When any of his men went to visit their wives he let them ride the stock, and give them rations to carry. There was a jail for slaves at Summerville. I saw it.

"We went to the white folks church at Neill's Creek. Mother used herbs to give us when we were sick. Dr. Turner, Dr. John Turner, looked after us. We were bled every year in the spring and in the fall. He had a little lance. He corded your arm and popped it in, and the blood would fly. He took nearly a quart of blood from grandma. He bled according to size and age.

"We ought to think a lot o' Abraham Lincoln and the other great men such as Booker T. Washington. Lincoln set us free. Slavery was a bad thing and unjust.