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Death of George Murray

The sudden death Friday morning of George Murray, the well known and respected colored man, at Valley Falls where he had resided for nearly forty years, came as a surprise to his many friends, white as well as colored.

He was out and at work chopping wood, on Wednesday. Complaining of pains in his chest he fell ill early in the evening and a physician was called. He soon became unconscious, and p acefully passed away. The cause of his death was double lobar pneumonia.

Geogre Murray was born a slave at Platte City, Mo. in 1844, and died at Valley Falls, Kansas January 25,, 1918 aged 74 years.

George was reared in his native town, and since he was a mere boy, the writer has known of George and his master's folks. They were neighbors of our maternal grandparents.

After the freedom of the slaves George who, like others hesitated about leaving his old home, went to Fort Leavenworth, where in August 1864 he enlisted in Capt. Mathias' company.

His company was taken to Fort Gibson and there mustered into service in Company F., 79th Regiment, Colored Infantry. A year later he was honorably discharged, the war having ended several months before.

After the war George came back to Leavenworth, where in 1866 he was married Harriet Jackson.

They moved out to the Scott farm where he worked for Mr. Chadwick and later for Sam Swoyer, near by, out northeast of Winchester.

There again we found George, and met his children. They attended the Thornburg school where we taught in the winter of '74 and '75. In those early days there was some objection to the association of white and colored pupils at school even in Kansas, and it was with no little difficulty that the teacher managed to keep them harmonious.

When we moved from Winchester to Valley Falls in 1880 we found George and his family here. There were Will, alias "Jetney", James, Henry, Nelson alias "Putney", Levi, the boy preacher and known as "Lamb", Malinda, and their step sister Lucinda, all of whom are dead except Henry and his mother, who live in Topeka.

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A number of years ago George and his first wife parted, and on August 9, 1905 he was married to Mrs. Hattie Young of this city, who with their four children Virgil, Freeda, Hattie and Harold, survive. Two of their children, LuElla and Vanetta died in infancy. Thus, according to the count, he was the father of twelve children closely following the Scriptural injunction of multiplying his race.

Before the war George was, perhaps, more a house and chore boy at the home of his master, rather than one who worked in the fields. He, frequently, visited that "old home" where he was welcomed by his young mistress, and but for his family ties here would have ended his days over there.

Of his war stories, and of the several battles he was in George told of being present at the hot battle of Osceola, Mo. That was in August 1861 when he was only 17. He must have been there on a visit or with some of the Platte City folks who had located in that vicinity. Two families of the refugees, H. F. Wooley and McKirby, formerly of Platte City, we remember moved to Winchester, after the Osceola trouble.

Born a slave Uncle George died a free man, having done the best he could and the kindly good old man will not be soon forgotten.

The funeral was held from the Colored Baptist church Sunday afternoon, Rev. Fred Daniels of Topeka conducting the services.

The burial was in the Delaware township cemetery, by the side of some of his children—and the gentle snowflakes falling presently covered his grave in a mantle of white, an emblem of purity for him let us hope.

The sorrowing wife and children have the sympathy of many friends.

Ernest Owen who was kept at home for several days with the measles, is able to be at his post at the meat shop.

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