

Born a Slave - Yet Served Under the Confederate Flag.

Photo caption: Junius P. Lewis, a Denver resident for 44 years, served as a valet and orderly to four famous Confederate generals.



Denver (Man) Recalls Serving Rebel Generals

Junius P. Lewis Says He Was Forced to Go Thru War With Confederate Army Though He Wanted to Go North.

Born into slavery, escaped only to be captured by the "rebels" and forced to serve Confederate generals throughout the Civil War, Junius P. Lewis, a kindly, white-haired Negro, sat in the living room of his home Monday and told of his experiences.

"I don't know just how old I am," he said. "The old-age pension people say I'm 89, but I think I'm older than that."

Lewis has lived in Colorado for the last 44 years. During that time he has worked in mines, as a Pullman porter and at other jobs with the railroads.

Now he has to be content with doing chores and odd jobs around his home at 2427 Williams St.

Tried to Flee North

"I was just a youngster when I decided to leave the plantation in Mississippi," he reminisced. "My mother had been sold and I wanted to get to the North where I would be free."

"It was the spring of 1862, I think," he continued. "I had gotten into Kentucky when a neighbor of my owner saw me. He was an officer in the Confederate army and had me arrested."

He was turned over to Gen. William Wing Loring, who was commanding the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Kentucky regiments, as an orderly.

After a few months he was transferred to be orderly and valet for Gen. John Buford, whom he recalled, was a big man, weighing more than 300 pounds!

He chuckled as his days with the portly general were recalled.

Kept on the Jump

About all he had to do, he said, was to keep the general supplied with fresh horses.

"The general was so heavy he would wear out a horse in about an hour, and he sure kept me busy bringing up fresh horses."

It wasn't long until the (short) orderly was sent to Gen. Joseph E. Johnson, one of the most famous of the Confederate officers.

"I liked General Johnson," he said. "There was a real soldier and also a real man, he treated his men right."

He served the "Rebel" commander for several months and was present at the battle of Seven Pines where Johnson was wounded.

Lewis again was transferred, this time to serve Gen. John Bell Hood.

He was with Hood when Sherman conquered him in Georgia. In November and December of 1864 Hood suffered heavy losses in Tennessee and retired to Mississippi to establish winter quarters.

In April General Hood took his small command and, accompanied by his faithful, yet reluctant, (Junius the) valet, and marched to join forces with Gen. Robert E. Lee. Together they surrendered at the Appomattox Courthouse, April 9, 1865.

As the former valet recited the story of his army life the dates and names rolled off his tongue as though they had happened only recently, instead of more than 70 years ago.

Although he was listed as a Confederate soldier, he was emphatic in his statements he was not an enlisted soldier but really a prisoner.

Locates His Mother

At the end of the war he was furnished transportation back to his home near Jackson, Miss. After a long search he located his old mother, free but unable to find work.

Lewis drifted into Texas where he worked in hotels and at odd jobs. He told of meeting General Johnson in a small town in Texas and how the general had offered to send him as an orderly with the army of the khedive of Egypt.

He refused, he said, as he wanted to help his mother.

Obtaining a position as a porter with the old Denver, Texas & Fort Worth Railroad, he arrived in Denver in the fall of 1882.

A few years ago he was told he was eligible for a pension in Mississippi, but decided to forgo the small amount in order to remain in the West.

He has never married and has no living relatives. He has for many years made his home with James W. Jackson, custodian of the state capitol.

Image caption: relevant excerpt of the scanned page 7 of Feb 4, 1936 Rocky Mountain News containing the article.

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(One instance of antiquated language intentionally left in by transcriber for historical context purpose.)

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Denver Negro Recalls Serving Rebel Generals

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