

FIRST DRAFT

MRS. ELIJAH HINES, 93, HAS SEEN MANY CHANGES IN LIFE; BORN ON PLANTATION IN 1847

Memories of Early Life Indistinct, After She Was Sold Away From Her Slave Parents; Delayed News of Emancipation of Slaves Sent Her to Missouri, and to Colorado Some 40 Years Ago

LEAVING A LEGACY

Two former slaves created an impressive life in Grand Junction

When Elijah Hines died 100 years ago this spring, his life was celebrated in a front-page Daily Sentinel article with a headline that read: "Born a Slave, He Died an Honored Man."

Hines definitely deserved to be honored. He had an impressive resume. He was a leading member of the African Methodist Episcopal church in Grand Junction, and an officer in the Masonic Temple. He was also a Civil War veteran and a member of the John A. Logan Post of the Grand Army of the Republic.

He and his wife Nicey, who was also a former slave, owned a successful fruit orchard at 1300 Orchard Ave..

"There are no better men than Elijah Hines, and he will be sincerely mourned by all who have had the good fortune to become acquainted with him," the Sentinel said in the article announcing his death.

Despite such accolades and their involvement in the community, the Hines family were witnesses to the racism that was clearly evident in the Grand Valley in the 1920s.

A Grand Junction chapter of the Ku Klux Klan was chartered the year before Elijah's death, and three large cross-burnings occurred simultaneously in the city in the summer of 1924. There were Klan members elected to local offices and serving in the police department. Daily Sentinel Publisher Walter Walker was a member briefly, before becoming an outspoken Klan opponent.

Some local participants said later that the Grand Junction Klan was more interested in opposing Eastern European Catholic immigrants and the region's Hispanic population than the small number of African Americans living here.

But Elijah and Nicey Hines both lived in the rural south

during Reconstruction, when the Klan began its attacks on free black people. It's unlikely that they viewed it as a benevolent organization in Grand Junction decades later.

Born around 1847 in Virginia, Nicey Hines didn't remember her first home and had only vague memories of her parents. She was very young when she was sold and taken away.

Nicey talked of her life with Daily Sentinel columnist Merle McClintock a few months before she died in 1941, at the age of 93. She recalled the McDonald plantation, her second slave home, where she was given her maiden name of Nicey McDonald. She worked hard for the McDonalds.

She was the only house slave at the plantation, she said, so she did all the house work and cooking. She also milked three cows and tended to chickens and a garden. In her spare time, Nicey became an expert at spinning and weaving cotton cloth.

When President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, making Nicey and millions of other enslaved people free, Nicey didn't hear of it immediately. It wasn't until months later that she learned she was free. Not long afterward, she set out for Missouri.

It was there that she met Elijah Hines, the war veteran with four children from a previous marriage.

Although Elijah had also been born a slave on a Virginia plantation, when the plantation owner died, his widow moved her family and all her slaves to Missouri. When the Civil War erupted, 18-year-old Elijah ran away to join a Missouri regiment of the Union Army. He served throughout the war and was honorably discharged at the end of the war.

Elijah reportedly had competition from another suitor for Nicey's attention, but he was victorious. They were married in 1887 and had three children, Oreta, Ione and Marcus.

Three of Elijah's sons from his first marriage moved to

EVENING, APRIL 11, 1925

**BORN A SLAVE
HE DIED AN
HONORED MAN**

Elijah Hines Passed Away This Morning At His Home In Fairmont District; Served Through Civil War.

ABOVE LEFT: Nicey Hines gave a brief description of her life in this January 1941, interview with The Daily Sentinel's Merle McClintock. ABOVE RIGHT: This headline appeared in The Daily Sentinel when Elijah Hines died in 1925.

Grand Junction in the 1890s, and Elijah, Nicey and their children followed them early in the new century.

Only Clarke Hines, one of Elijah's sons from his first marriage, is listed in the Grand Junction City Directory for 1904, working as a janitor for Grand Junction Smelting. By 1907, however, Elijah had a listing as well, as a rancher living at 327 Hill Ave. A second son, John was also named, but not his occupation.

By 1910, Elijah was reported as a fruit rancher living on the "Upper Palisade Road, 1 mile east of 12th Street." The city directory didn't mention the address as 1300 Orchard Ave. until 1918. That's also the year that Nicey Hines is first mentioned in the City Directory, as Elijah's wife.

Nicey and Elijah's children were also mentioned in the 1910 listing. Ione and Oreta lived with their parents. Marcus was a porter in Grand Junction, living at 139 Chipeta Ave. A son John, from Elijah's first marriage, was also living in the area. Samuel and Clarke Hines, both from Elijah's first marriage, had died in 1907 and 1908 respectively.

All of the children helped out at the family's 10-acre orchard, Nicey told McClintock in her 1941 interview. But Nicey only did so infrequently. Her husband and sons didn't think it was appropriate for her to work in the orchard.

"So I told 'em all right, if they wanted me to stay in the house I would," Nicey recalled. "But I noticed that when they needed me, they asked me to help."

In addition to the fruit they raised, the Hines family had hogs, chickens, ducks and turkeys. They also purchased one of the first automobiles in their Fairmont neighborhood.

Throughout the first decades of the 20th century, Elijah Hines was active in the community. He managed his son Clarke's estate

after Clarke died. He worked with another black man, John Price, the former operator of Grand Junction's horse-drawn trolley, to raise money to build a sidewalk in front of the AME Church on White Avenue. He was on the church board and he served as chaplain of the Mason's Lodge.

John Hines, the last of Elijah's sons from his first marriage, died in 1920 after falling from a wagon he was driving when the horses spooked. He was run over by the wagon and suffered internal injuries.

Elijah was 84 when he died. He had continued to work in his orchard until near the time of his death, but he became ill in early April of 1925. He died of pneumonia on April 11.

After his death, Nicey sold the orchard because, she said, none of the children were interested in taking over operation of the fruit ranch. She moved in with her son Marcus at his home then on Pitkin Avenue. She died there on Sept. 9, 1941.

But the descendants of the Hines family have continued to live in Grand Junction. Daughter Ione married a man named Wes Taylor, and they were the grandparents of the late Harry Butler, who served on both the Grand Junction City Council and the District 51 Board of Education in the early 2000s. He died in 2013, but a daughter and several grandchildren still live here.

Sources: "Remembering Grand Junction History," by Kathy Jordan, three columns related to the Hines family; "Mrs. Elijah Hines, 93, has seen many changes in life," by Merle M. McClintock, The Daily Sentinel, Jan. 19, 1941; "The Ku Klux Klan in Grand Junction, 1924-1927," by J. Kenneth Baird, Journal of the Western Slope, Winter, 1989; multiple Daily Sentinel articles from www.newspapers.com.

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Elijah Hines' headstone in the Orchard Mesa Cemetery. (Photo by Bob Silbernagel)



Nacey Hines' headstone in the Orchard Mesa Cemetery. (Photo by Bob Silbernagel)



Nacey and Elijah Hines, two former slaves from Virginia, who moved to Grand Junction at the turn of the last century, are buried next to each other in the Orchard Mesa Cemetery. (photo by Bob Silbernagel)