
Excerpt from Harry H. Cowles’s memoirs, starting on page 234 of the Storytellers book. Harry was born about 1897.
I have no idea how he happened to come here after being freed. I don't believe that he ever learned any trade. He just supported himself as best he could, working for farmers in the vicinity and I never knew him to overindulge in alcohol—if he drank at all.

In the summer months when the soil was fairly warm and dry, if he felt too tired to keep working, he would lie down right where he happened to be, between the rows of crops—his hoe or fork beside him—and go to sleep. When he woke up, he would dust himself off and go back to work.

I remember Isobel telling about one time, while living with the Cobb family, Old Joe told Isobel that he was going to Burnside for some reason. Burnside was about three miles away, and the most direct route was over a dirt road that required crossing a brook on a plank. The previous night had been wet and there were puddles everywhere, so Isobel told Joe to be sure he wore rubbers and keep his feet dry or else he could easily come down with a cold.

Joe walked to Burnside and, on the way back while crossing the brook, had the misfortune to slip and fall in, getting wet all over—except his feet. Somehow his legs from the knees down didn't get into the water. When he got home and Isobel saw him, she said "Whatever happened to you? You're all wet."

"No," Isobel," he replied. "You told me to keep my feet dry and I did. You didn't say anything about the rest of me."

I think old Joe must have been close to or over ninety when he could no longer take care of himself, and Lacy and Isobel took him in and furnished room and board for him, covering the cost themselves. Lacy tried more than once to get the town of Manchester to contribute to his support, without any success. At last, one day Lacy went again to talk to George Waddell, town manager at that time. But this time Lacy asked for nothing from the town. Instead, he told Mr. Waddell, "I just want to tell you that I wouldn't hurt the old man for the world, but early Monday morning, I'm going to bring Mr. Manuel up here to the town hall with a blanket around his shoulders and lunch in a bag and he is going to be your responsibility for a while instead of mine. That's where you're going to find him when you come to your office."

That, at last, got some action and I believe that Lacy was allowed something toward Joe's board. Later, he was put into the town farm where he died at something over one hundred years old.
Entering Lacy's barn with a load of tobacco to hang.