

summers, Mattie served with her organ and favorite hymns at Bethany Park sessions and was able to collect some \$7,000 all of which was devoted to the construction of the present church structure." Mattie would not accept a federal old-age pension when she became eligible, stating, "Honey, I was born a slave and now I'm going to stay free." Here is her story from the WPA files:

I was born in Kentucky. My father and mother were slaves. There were eight of us children. When we came to Indiana, we crossed the Ohio River. I have always enjoyed music, and on the boat when we came across, someone was picking a banjo. I have never forgotten it.

I was bound out to Dr. Durant. When I was fourteen, I married. The record of my binding out is in the courthouse. The people I was bound to gave me a dollar and told me to build a house. I have been building ever since. Nurre gave me that window because I am such a church worker. It is plate glass. Judge Wilson and Mrs. Wilson gave me that washstand. Lately I decided to build a rag house. When people asked me what I meant by a rag house, I said, "Never you mind; you'll see." I started last Saturday by papering this room.

I went to school in Louisville and learned how to make skin lotion and vanishing cream, which I sold for a living. When anyone asks me my age, I say, "Never you mind," and when they ask me how big a girl I was at the time of the Civil War, I say, "Never you mind."

Once I went to Kentucky to visit old missus. I was told to go to the back door, as colored people were not allowed at the front door. So when I got there, I went to the back door. A colored woman opened the door. She said to old missus, "Here is Mattie, Cassie's daughter, come to visit you." They invited me in, and we had the best dinner I ever tasted. We sat up half the night talking. They told me a lot of things about my father and mother that I never knew before. I stayed two weeks and had a fine time. When I came away, they gave me a lot of things.

I have lived in Bloomington forever. I have played and sang. I have sang myself to death. I have brought in \$12,000 for my church. I would go places and play on my organ and sing. The white folks would crowd around and give me money for my church.

Here is my picture. There's my organ and my cup. There's my dress and my beads and my earrings and my slippers. That dress had a thousand beads on it. Some girls came one day and took my picture. I sell them for my church.

My brothers and sisters lived in Bloomington. They are all dead now. People are good to me. I can't bear to give up my home and liberty. My father and mother were slaves, and I was bound. So I want to stay in my home.