



PRIMUS PARSONS MASON

Our Aged Colored Citizen who Left most of his Property for Charity.

It was a surprise to everybody that Primus Mason, who died last week, left a property, mostly in real estate, worth some \$40,000. It was a greater surprise that in his will he has bequeathed the greater part of it, besides \$2000 left to the Union Relief fund for aged couples, to found a home for aged men. He had no children and his other relatives were remembered with small bequests. It is safe to say that there will be no color line in the Mason home.

Primus Mason, was in some respects remarkable among his race. That he left his fortune for the benefit of the public is interesting, but his own character as he passes off the stage, is worthy of analysis. As a business man, he was always to depended on, industrious and thrifty when so many were idle and slack, temperate and honest, but shrewd and calculating. No old denizen of the "Hill" who remembers him or "Old Samanth" or Mary Sands, would deny that the colored race, when northern bred, can produce characters forcible and imperative, and in many ways Primus Mason easily led them all. With no education, unable to write his own name till he learned by the aid of a piece of chalk when past his fortieth year, he used his opportunities to the utmost, and while his fortune owed much to the rise in values of real estate, the basis was laid in hard work and the whole conserved by a prudent judgment. He was born in the remote part of Monson, according to the record of the old family bible, carefully preserved, on February 5, 1817. Before he left that town he nearly lost his life while felling a tree, whose trunk as it went down swung around in an unexpected manner and

passed over the prostrate body of Primus who had caught his toe in a huckleberry bush and fallen to the ground. But for his fall he would have inevitably have been killed. Primus Mason had no style, his function of undertaker to dead horses was not calculated to give him a place in fashionable society, but his somewhat noble features, his good nature and business sense made him pass acceptably among men and there were many good deeds that he did which will have no record. Many a poor colored man's funeral expenses were quietly paid by Primus. His latter years were lonely, without intimates of his own family, and this perhaps led him to feel that it was his duty to found as he has done in his will, a home for worthy old men, "a place," as he expressed it, "where old men that are worthy may feel at home." Broad and catholic during his life, he made no discrimination in race or color in this his principal charity.