

Name: Rev. Thomas Henry

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From this place [*Ringgold's Manor*] I went to a place called Red Hill, in Pleasant Valley, in Washington county, Md.; there I found true friends, as Mr. Jacob Snavely and wife, who took me in and cared for me and my horse for at least nine years. This is a sample of the olden friends. My appointment was at the school house on Red Hill for nine years in succession, and I could always find a good congregation of good Christians. From this place I moved on to a place called Brinn's Antietam Iron Works, in Washington county. This Mr. Brinn was a long and tried friend of mine; his father made me a present of a church on his place before he died, and when Mr. Brinn moved from his works at Catoclin; he left the doors open for me, the same as his father left them. I had long wanted to see Mr. Brinn, and he had told his servants that he had wanted to see me as long as I had wanted to see him. I had always made it a practice to start out early in the morning, and for this reason had never seen him. On one of these occasions I had left something behind---I cannot think what it was--- but I had to return for it, and in doing so I met him at his gate for the first time. He asked me if I was Thomas Henry. I answered in the affirmative. He then told me that he had long wanted to see me, and I told him that such was my case about him exactly; he then said that he wanted to have a conversation with me; and said that he had been told by a young man who was at that time a clerk for him, that I was not a safe man to be among slave servants, and that he was sorry to hear such a report about me. I told him that such a report about me was unfounded, and that the young man who circulated such a report about me was a member of the M.E. Church, and it was because I had left that connection that he had so arranged matters to harm me. He told me that he saw through the whole matter, and that they had lost their interest in me when I left their Church. I told Mr. Brinn that he could perceive very readily that such charges against my character were unfounded, and that I had been among his father's servants for at least seven years, and none had ever been misled or run away in that time. He told me that all I said was the truth.

Having gone so far about Mr. Brinn's Antietam Iron Works, I had forgotten to mention one fact. This place was said to be one of the wickedest places in Washington county prior to my taking charge of the Circuit, which takes in this place. Mr. Brinn told me that he had a very fine set of young men there to work and attend to his business, and said he, "I am very glad that you have come among them to teach them the way to live." He further said that he did not wish any of his men to marry slave women, and he would rather they should marry free women and bring them on the place, and he would have them there with him, that he might do and care for them as he liked; he stated further, that he had plenty of land and timber to build them houses, just as they wished to have them built; he further gave them more privileges than any white man had on his place; he also offered the men all the refuse from his mills, which was an immense quantity

of fuel, which no white man on the premises could disturb----and at any time that his white employees wanted any work done, it should be done by his men's wives, that they might make all the extra money that could possibly be made, and to encourage his own slaves, he gave them their tasks----all over their tasks they were paid for, just as free men were paid for their labor, and on Saturday night every man would be seen waiting for his pay, just as all the other hands were paid. He told me that he allowed them their board and clothing, and they all had their book accounts at his store, which accounts were properly adjusted every Saturday night, and at the end of each year there was a general settlement.

The good man told me that the white help had a spirit of animosity against his servants because they were so well treated. He had occasion to leave home for several days, and while he was gone the agent and some of the white hands had some work with the colored servants; they wanted to catch them and tie them and whip them. Mr. Brinn exclaimed: "good God! Thomas, they could never do that, as I had never whipped them myself." This caused a young insurrection. He had a colored man they called Stuttering Pete, who caught one of the white men and threw him across the mill race. He then told me that his men could not be taken----and well might he say this, for a more powerful set of men I have never seen. The agent then went up to Sharpsburg to bring down the militia, and when they arrived the boys had fled to the hills and mountains, and could not be seen. They stayed away from the forge and watched for the return of Mr. Brinn, their master, and when he returned he said to me, "Thomas, here comes my boys from the mountains and hills, all coming to me like wild cattle." He told the agent that no man had authority to strike any of his hands, and if they have done anything that conflicts with the law, I will settle that myself. He told me that he called his men together and settled with them as he thought best. The first cause of this outbreak was, that Mr. Brinn had a very faithful colored man named James Reeder, who dealt out all the stuff that the puddlers used, and this was a great saving to Mr. Brinn. The white employees did not like this colored man dealing out their stuff. Hence the animosity. He said that all his men were very fine men; but as to young James Reeder, the money was never made to buy him. Mr. Brinn then told me that was his place, and that I could come as often and stay as long as I pleased, at any and all times. He said that he had given orders to old James Reeder that, if any of the men misbehaved in my meetings, he would hoop-polp them. From this time I had no trouble during my stay at the Antietam Iron Works.