

## The Life of Barney stone

### Federal Writers project box

#### Barney stone

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Hamilton County's FWP (Federal Writers Project) box provides a unique insight into the county's past and rich history. For history lovers and everyday Hamilton County citizens alike, the uniqueness of the box's contents draws interest as it is part of the federal writer's project. Upon sorting through the contents of the box, one of the most important stories to remember appears in File 2675, or slave narratives.

Among these narratives, Barney Stone's interview with Rober C. Irvin stands out. Barney spent sixteen years of his life as an enslaved man but did something that would change his life forever: he escaped from his enslaver, leaving his family and friends behind. Barney opted to take advantage of his newfound freedom by serving those who weren't as fortunate as he was, joining the Union army in the 108th USCT for the remainder of the war. When the war ended, Barney spent some time in Kentucky, looking for his family and spending time as a student. He served as a colored Baptist reverend for over 69 years after receiving his education to become a preacher. His revered work throughout Tennessee, Kentucky, and Indiana earned him great respect and influenced the fight for freedom and equality.

As a result of increased prejudice in his home state, Barney moved to Noblesville in the 1890s, a period during which he became deeply rooted in a community. During the year Barney spent in Hamilton County, he became a valued community member and helped create a local G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic). By the time he was interviewed, he was the only living member and the only African American member ever in the local branch. Barney lived life to the fullest, despite all he had been through. The third page of the artifact makes numerous statements about the beautiful garden and well-maintained farmland Barney managed on his own, even at 91.