

## WILLIAM CARTER COLE

### OLDEST 1972 KENTON RESIDENT BORN IN KENTON

Kenton's oldest 1972 resident born in Kenton is also Kenton's oldest Black citizen. William Carter Cole's life seems to go much farther back in history than his ninety-three years suggest with the revelation that he is the grandson of slaves.

On October 21, 1879, William Carter Cole was born to Monroe and Laura Cole. His mother's parents, Robert and Harriet Williams, were slaves who had migrated from Culpepper, Virginia, to the Rehoboth Community northwest of Kenton (Rehoboth Church became Concord Church a short time after the Civil War). It was in that community that Laura was born in 1860 and that Harriet was later buried. At the time of William Carter Cole's birth, Monroe and Laura Cole lived on the Kenton road that became College Street, and they worked in a white home near the 1972 Shatz home west of Kenton School.

Mr. Cole attended the public school in Kenton and began the busy life which he led until the years forced him to slow down. Before undertakers came into existence in Kenton, he bathed and dressed bodies for burial. And for over forty years, he worked for the Shatz family as a clerk at Shatz Produce House in Kenton; he retired in 1945.

Mr. Cole married Sophie Brown on February 22, 1905, and became the father of seven children. His son, William Carter Cole, Jr., of Kenton died several years ago; both he and Mrs. Sophie Brown Cole were buried in Rosson Cemetery. The six

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### 1972 Senior Citizens

living children of Mr. Cole are daughters: Mrs. Louise Williams; Mrs. Ellouise Fisher; Mrs. Josie Lee Taylor; Mrs. Willie James Moore; Mrs. Helen Berges, and Mrs. Kizye Crawford, with whom Mr. Cole lives during the winter months. All of the daughters live in the St. Louis area, except Mrs. Moore, who lives in Indianapolis, Indiana. In addition to his daughters and sons-in-law, Mr. Cole's family consists of fifteen grandchildren, thirty-eight great-grandchildren, and twelve great-great-grandchildren.

A member of St. Paul Baptist Church, Mr. Cole has served as church clerk, deacon, member of the choir, adult Sunday School teacher, and prayer meeting leader. In addition to his participating in church activities, he has remained active in his lodge and scout work.

One of the outstanding features of Mr. Cole's ninety-three years has been his kindness to his neighbors -- he has always fed anyone who has been hungry. Too, he has long been a favorite of many of the town's men because of his having been the one responsible for teaching them how to drive. "Will," as he is called by his close friends, does have many friends in Kenton. During the winter months when he is in the St. Louis suburb, Rock Hill, Missouri, he looks forward to the arrival of spring so that he can return "home" to Kenton. Living at 305 South Poplar Street in Kenton, he continues to enjoy talking with people, both young and old, and he has remained quite mentally alert and physically spry. In the words of his daughter Mrs. Willie J. Moore, "God has blessed him wonderfully."

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