

William Curry (abt)1825-1892 Enslaved at Ripa Villa

1822 (abt) William Henry Curry was born in Nashville, TN to Robert B. Curry and his slave Sallie.¹

1840 Here is an example of the U.S. Census in 1840. Only the free head of household was listed by name. All other people living at the location were enumerated as slash marks by race, gender and age. William Henry would have been one of the four 10 to 24 year old male slaves listed.

No. 4.) SCHEDULE of the whole number of persons within the division allotted to

NAMES OF HEADS OF FAMILIES	FREE WHITE PERSONS, INCLUDING HEADS OF FAMILIES																				FREE COLORED PERSONS															
	MALES										FEMALES										MALES						FEMALES									
	Under 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	100 and over	Under 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	100 and over	Under 10	10-24	25-49	50-100	Under 10	10-24	25-49	50-100		
Wendell Williams	1													2																						
Mathew John B.	2																																			
Mathew Elizabeth																																				
Mathew John M. Gwynne																																				
Brother William	3													2																						
Ray Proctor	2	2																																		
Abner Humphrey																																				
Hopeworth M.	2																																			
Alphonsus		2	2	1																																
Ally Smith			1	1																																
Henry Daniel														2	3																					
William Henry					1																															
James Matthew																																				
Cooper James	1		1												2	1																				
Cooper Robert B.	1	2	3	4																																
Smith Samuel P.	1	1	1											2																						
Levy																																				
Brother John T.																																				
Blunkett Robert		1	2																																	
Mage John of color																																				
John S. of color																																				
Max Archibald																																				
Byron John M.	1	2	2											2	5	1																				
Scott Henry			1																																	
Chandler James	1	1	1																																	
Kays Charles B.	1	1	1																																	
Mathew Thomas	1	1	1																																	
Smith J.	2																																			
William Joseph B.	1	2		2										2	2	1																				
Brother John B.																																				
TOTAL	16	10	9	12	14	7	4	7	3				13	9	22	13	4	8	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1		

¹ Parents names taken from Freedmen Bank application.
² 1840 U.S. Federal Census, (accessed ancestry.com)

1849 William's father and owner, Robert died. The following mention that eighteen-year-old Henry was given to his son Richard in 1841. Henry's value was given as \$700.00.

My son Richard O. Curry
 To expenses attending Med. Lectures
 at Lexington & Philadelphia paying
 debts & for other purposes I have
 advanced him \$1193.00
 To one negro boy Henry given in
 1841 aged then 18 years 700.00
 To one Mare worth \$60.00 }
 To one other Mare worth 40.00 } 100.00
 To saddle Bridle & Martingales 30.00 3

***Between 1841 1849, Nat Cheairs became the owner of William Henry Curry. We know that Henry's daughter Ellen was born about 1849, so William had to be at Ripa Villa by that time. Margaret McKissack was owned by Nat's wife Susan. It can be assumed that Henry and Margaret were married during this time. Margaret was not Ellen's mother.

1873 June 22: William Henry Curry opened a Freedmen's Bank account. His application listed his parents, siblings, spouse and his child. He also listed his occupation and employer. He was a steward on "Ella Hughes" and he was employed by Dix and Company. Interestingly the previous year, his wife Margaret had opened her own Freedman's bank account and she listed she was a chambermaid and she lived on "Ella Hughes." Her employer was listed as Wm. Dix. *Ella Hughes* was a steamship that was launched in 1867 and captained by William Dix. The absence of William and Margaret on the 1870 US Federal Census is most likely due to the fact that they lived on the steamship and weren't enumerated.

³ Tennessee, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1779-2008(accessed ancestry.com)

"The Ella Hughes is the name of a new boat which has recently entered the Louisville and Nashville trade. She is commanded by Captain William Dix, of Nashville. The Ella Hughes was built at Paducah, has excellent passenger accommodations, and has in Captain Dix a commander who can make you as comfortable while lying up on a sandbar as any other steamboatman on the river. Her First Clerk is Mr. F. A. Dodd, who is known all along the shore, from Louisville to Nashville, as a tip-top fellow, catch him where you will, while her second officer at the desk, Capt. W. H. Wood, is a man so clever on all occasions, and to everybody, that to travel with him is always worth double the price he ordinarily charges. The Ella Hughes is now at Portland, taking on freight for the City of Rocks, and all intermediate ports."

RECORD for *William Henry Curry*

Date *Jan 22 1873*

Where born *Nashville Tenn*

Where bought up *UP*

Residence *South Spruce street*

Age *27* Complexion *Brown*

Occupation *Steward on Ella Hughes*

Works for *Stewart Company*

Wife or Husband *Margaret*

Children *Ella*

Father *Robert* (Dead)

Mother *Lucy* ("")

Brothers and Sisters *Amos, Juba Maria*

Remarks *to draw out myself Margaret*

made by Margaret

Margaret Curry

Signature

***William Henry and Margaret gave up steamboat life and moved to Spring Hill, near her family. William worked as a carpenter.

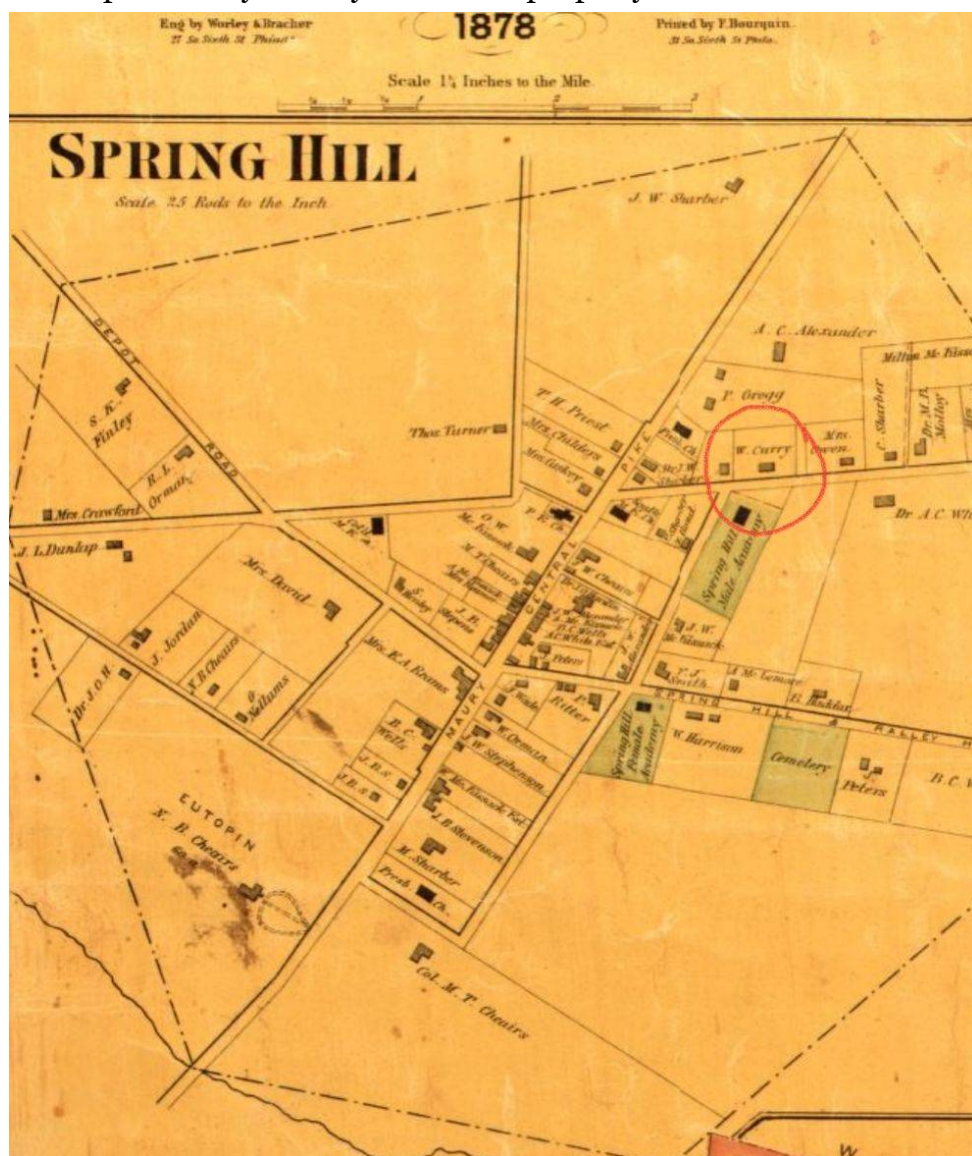
1878 January 22: N.F. Cheairs sold a plot of land to William Curry in the town of Spring Hill on Mt. Carmel Rd.⁶

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⁵ Curry, William Henry, U.S. Freedman's Bank Records, 1865-1874 (accessed ancestry.com)

⁶ Curry, William, Land Deed, Book C-3, pg 411, Deed #1250, Maury County Archives

Beers Map of Maury County: William's property is circled.



1880 June 3: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Spring Hill, Maury County, TN showed William Curry, a carpenter, and his wife Margaret living in their own home. Neither William nor Margaret could read or write.

1883 February: William Curry provided a witness account for Nancy Cheairs. Her son Richard Foster had been a US soldier who died in service. She was applying for a pension, as a dependent. William Curry stated: *"I was the slave of Maj Nat Cheairs at the time of the breaking out of the rebellion whose residence is near Spring Hill, Maury Co, Tennessee. I am well acquainted with the claimant"*

⁷ <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3963m.la000876/>

Nancy Cheairs, have known her for about 22 years, who was also a slave of Maj Nat Cheairs.”⁸

1892 March 7: William’s will, written on February 16, 1886 was probated. He left his estate to his wife Margaret, his daughter Ellen and his great granddaughter Julia Stanley. Ellen and Julia would split their inheritance after Margaret died. His nephew Milton McKissack⁹

⁸ Foster, Richard-Nancy Cheairs, US Pension Application, NARA

⁹ Milton was the son of Margaret’s sister Malinda.