

2306 Magazine Street
Louisville, Kentucky
Aug. 27, 1934

Mr. James Tandy Ellis

My Dear Sir:

I have your kind letter and offer. Many thanks.

Here is an incident from my life:

When I was about seventeen years old my mother hired me to a prominent white man in Louisville. It ~~often~~ happened that I had to work all night. On such occasions I would cook my night-dinner and work the while.

One night while my dinner was cooking I sat looking at a picture of Henry Clay in an old history of Kentucky.

My boss came in and said: "Joe, what are you doing?"

I said: "Mr. Ross, I am cooking my night-dinner."

"Is that all?" he asked.

"No sir, I am looking at the picture of the great Henry Clay. I would like to be in Kentucky history."

"Come into my library and bring my book with you. Leave your coat here in the kitchen."

When I reached his library he was seated with a long rattan in his hand. He motioned to a chair across the room and to a spot just in front of him. I placed the chair over the spot and started to stretch out across it. (My mother had told him to thrash me if I did not work faithfully.) He laughed and ordered me to stand on the chair and use the rattan to make space between books on a shelf for the book in question.

Years after I took him a copy of John Wilson Townsend's "Kentucky in American Letters" and showed him a page and a half devoted to me.

He laughed and said: "Find me the history you were reading that night."

I found it where I had placed it.

He congratulated me and was my friend thereafter.

Yours truly,

Joseph A. Carter