

REV. I. W. L. ROUNDTREE HAS RISEN FROM SLAVERY'S ESTATE

Well-known Jersey Leader of
Negro Race Has Had Re-
markable and Interest-
ing Career—Worked
His Way Through
College.

The Rev. I. W. L. Roundtree of this city is one of the most unique figures in New Jersey. His uniqueness is not due, as is often the case, to eccentricity, for the Rev. Mr. Roundtree is not only not eccentric, but he is a bright example of the stable and intelligent colored American citizen. His uniqueness lies in the fact that, born in slavery, he has by his own efforts raised himself until he is today one of the most conspicuous figures among the colored people of New Jersey.

It would be only natural to suppose that a life that had gone through these widely separated grades would not be without much that is interesting, and so a Times reporter found it in the course of a talk he had with the colored preacher the other day.

The Rev. Mr. Roundtree is modest. With him facts are facts, and so the fact that he was born in slavery in Georgia during the Civil war, and that he is now a minister of the African Methodist Episcopal church and a potent factor in political affairs in New Jersey, are to him incidents in a career that has been full of incidents. In his talk with the reporter Mr. Roundtree assumed to himself no special credit for what he has done for himself. He seemed rather to dwell on the betterment of his race as the most important thing in his life, with himself as the ambitious and untiring worker in the cause.

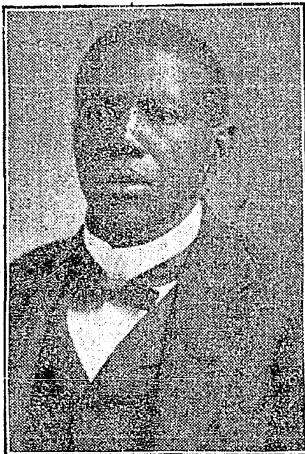
"DOMINIE" WELL KNOWN.

Every political leader and state official in New Jersey during the past ten years has known "Dominie" Roundtree, and to the credit of a career which combined the political leadership of his race with ministering to their spiritual wants, there are none to say that the "Dominie" ever was false in either capacity.

"I remember but little of my early life," said Mr. Roundtree, "except the fact that I was a slave, and the incident of my freedom, which was celebrated by the singing of old plantation songs and hand-shaking, accompanied by prayer. My father being a preacher, led in the songs and prayer. Some two or three years afterwards I was sent to a three months' country school taught by a colored Union soldier, who had been employed by the colored people as their teacher, but the distance from my father's log cabin to the school soon proved to be too far for me to walk because of my youth, thereby preventing me from deriving much benefit from the school, but this was supplemented by a Sunday school taught by the Rev. John Sharpe. I was given lessons in Webster's old blue speller and in the catechism of the Methodist church. I learned to spell and read by these meagre school facilities. When my former teacher closed his school the colored people found another teacher, but the location of the school was still further away, being some six miles from my father's cabin.

"But my father said I had to go to school, so early every school day for three months I attended that school. The name of the teacher was Hutchinson. My studies were arithmetic, geography, history, English grammar, Webster's speller and writing. As years came on, I was compelled to stop schooling and help my father on the farm.

"At this period I began to look into the future, to a time when I hoped to complete my education, as my religious life was forming with tendencies to the ministry. This was ever present. Inquiries rose in my mind as to the abode of God. Finally the time came when I could follow up the desire for an education by my removal from Georgia to Live Oak, Fla. To do this I entered



THE REV. I. W. L. ROUNDTREE.
(Who has risen from slavery cabin to
place of prominence among his
People.)

the timber woods and engaged in felling trees and giving them their measurements for the saw mill. Following this I engaged in "cross ties" work for railroad. By this means I found myself with enough money to go on with my studies.

"In the fall of 1876 I entered Cookman Institute, in Jacksonville, Fla., under the Rev. S. P. Darnell, who had been educated at Drew Seminary and sent south under the auspices of the M. E. church to organize Cookman Institute to train teachers and ministers for the colored people of the south.

TAUGHT SCHOOL.

"I remained here a part of two school years, and when my money gave out I had, however, learned enough to begin teaching in the country districts among my people. Being moved in that direction, I applied to the school board for a commission and succeeded in getting it and entered upon the career as a school teacher. After the close of my school I had saved enough money to resume my studies. In the mean time the Home Missionary Baptists had organized a school in my home town of Live Oak, and finding that it would be less expensive for me to attend that school, I concluded not to return to Cookman, and entered the Baptist school. I remained here for two years. During this period I was licensed to preach by the African Methodist Episcopal church. From this school in question I was carried to Howard University by Congressman Bisbee, who represented the First Congressional district of Florida. My health failed here and I was compelled to return to Florida after a short stay at Cape May.

"In 1882 I entered Lincoln University in Chester county, Pa., with Lawyer H. S. Cummings of Baltimore and thirty others, and finished my college course. I supported myself while in college by waiting at hotels and blacking shoes.

"After my graduation I went to Farmville, Va., and taught in the high school, and pastored the colored Methodist church of that town for two years.

"In 1888 I entered Drew Theological Seminary at Madison, N. J., and graduated in theology. In 1892, while pastor of the Methodist church in Princeton I pursued a post graduate course in Princeton University under Professor Ormand, in philosophy, taking the master's degree. During this period much of my time was spent in the theological department.

"I have been a member of the General Conference of my church since 1892. At that time it met in Philadelphia, 1896 in Wilmington, N. C., in 1900 Columbus, Ohio, 1904 Chicago, Ill. I have been identified with the Industrial School at Bordentown for several years as one of its friends. I believe an industrial education is the kind of education the masses of my race need for the present. This will go a long way in solving the difficulties which estrange the two races.

A. M'A. P.