Green family members have spent the week preparing for the reunion activities. Folding hundreds of napkins for the various meals are Lottie Wilson, Mardie Walker, Josephine McRant, Bertha Breazeale, Mildred Blocker and Dorothy Clinton.

Photos/Barbara Ball

Family of freed Fairfield slave reunites in Blythewood

Barbara Ball
Publisher

BLYTHEWOOD – "Harry Green was born a slave in lower Fairfield County between 1858 and 1860 according to U. S. Federal Census records," recalled his great granddaughter Josephine McRant of Blythewood. "He labored as a farmhand and, at age 20, married Lucy, a cook on the plantation where he worked. Harry and Lucy produced 10 children and when he became a free man later in life, he apparently taught himself to read and was well thought of by everyone, including his descendants."

This weekend, more than 160 of the descendants of Harry and Lucy and of Harry's great nephew Jim and his wife Mary, will gather in Blythewood to honor their ancestors.

"It will be the first time in 30 years that our extended family has reunited," said McRant who is also chairperson of the reunion. "Each of us descended from either Harry's family or Jim's family. And while some of us have moved away over the years, we are all still very close and keep in touch, and we are so looking forward to this reunion. It's how we honor our lineage." She lamented that it's difficult to find information from the 1800s, especially for slaves for whom there weren't a lot of records kept. "But it has been a joy.

Reunion chairwoman Josephine McRant of Blythewood holds a photo of her great grandparents, Harry and Lucy Green.

annexed into Richland County and is now part of Blythewood. He and his family were faithful members of Bethel Baptist Church," McRant said, "and Harry died at age 60." She said he left a legacy of hard work and devout faith.

James 'Jim' Green was born in 1875 in Blythewood as a free man. He married Mary Turnipseed and they had seven children. He died in 1983, well over the age of 100.

Green

From page 6

-stons, Barbers, Beltons, Canzaters, Greens, Palmers, Wilsons and more. A proclamation was read by Blythewood Mayor J. Michael Ross at Monday night's Town Council meeting declaring 'the affirmation of the importance and commitment to family and ancestors who paved the way for their descendants.' That proclamation recognized that the unions of Harry and Lucy Green and Jim and Mary Green produced entrepreneurs, teachers, medical professionals, administrators, carpenters and other productive citizens who, for more than a century and a half, have contributed to the political and financial growth and development of Blythewood, noting that the Green family is one of the largest in the community.

McRant said family members will converge on Blythewood this week from as far away as New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

"The hotels in town will be overflowing with Greens," McRant said, laughing.

The three-day event will begin on Friday at 1 p.m. with registration and a fish fry at Purity Lodge in Ridgeway. On Saturday, the party will move to the Blythewood Recreation Center on Boney Road where there will be a banquet in the gymnasium at 4 p.m. That evening there will be a social with dancing and visiting in Columbia. Sunday the family will worship together at their ancestral church, Bethel Baptist Church in downtown Blythewood. Following services, they will meet in the fellowship hall for a reception before departing, and many of them will gather once more around the grave of their ancestors and, with family pride, read again the epitaph on Harry's headstone: 'Harry Green born into slavery. Died November 28, 1918 as a free man. Highly respected by both races. Was faithful unto death.'