

John Deck

Age: 24

Occupation: tenant & basket maker

John & his brother, Peter, immigrated to the United States from Germany several years ago. They became acquainted with Dinsmore in Cincinnati & came to work for him on the farm.

They run the basket factory near Middle Creek and make hundreds of baskets to sell each year.

Rosina Deck

Age: 21

Occupation: tenant wife

Rosina immigrated from Germany & met John Deck, her husband, in Cincinnati. They married and moved to Boone County where he works as a basket maker on the Dinsmore farm. Rosina spends her days cooking, doing the laundry, cleaning the cabin, tending her garden, and caring for her two young children.

Charley Rockwell

Age: 20

Occupation: tenant

Born into a poor Ohio family, Charley moved to Boone County and works for other farmers. Dinsmore has hired him this year to raise corn, wheat, and willows. Charley lives with his wife in a cabin near the spring. With only two months of schooling, Charley cannot write his own name and neither can his wife.

Jane Rockwell

Age: 17

Occupation: tenant wife

A year ago, Jane married Charley Rockwell. Although he is only a poor tenant, Jane appreciates his ability to do hard work and hopes someday he will have enough money to buy a farm of his own. Jane tends to the family's chickens and pig. She also has her own kitchen garden she must keep up. She is expecting her first child soon.

Daniel Koons

Age: 45

Occupation: tenant

Daniel owns a small farm down the road, but is not able to earn enough to feed his family, so he works for Dinsmore when he can. He also has his son work on the Dinsmore farm. They harvest crops, shear the sheep, slaughter the hogs, and get the fruit ready for market.

Hannes Weisickle

Age: 31

Occupation: tenant

Born in Baden, Germany, Hannes emigrated to the United States by himself. He just arrived to work on the Dinsmore farm and boards with the Deck family. Hannes works alongside Coah, John, and Daniel, fixing fences, feeding and caring for the livestock, and raising corn on the small plot Dinsmore lets him use.

Coah

Age: 55

Occupation: slave

Coah was born near the coast in West Africa, was kidnapped, and forced onto a ship that took him to Louisiana.

Eventually he was purchased by Dinsmore and brought to Kentucky. He does the logging to keep the fences mended and he plants. His wife, Winny, lives a mile away, so he sees her once a week.

John Taylor

Age: 18

Occupation: slave

John was brought from Louisiana by Dinsmore, his owner, with his mother & siblings. He shares a crowded cabin with eight other people. John does a lot of the heavy work on the farm with the tenants—plowing, planting, and reaping. He also helps Coah and Jim keep the fences repaired and tends to the farm animals.

Jim

Age: 32

Occupation: slave

Last year, Dinsmore brought Jim up from Louisiana. He stays in a cabin with Coah and does most of the heavy work on the farm with the tenants. We don't know if he ever married. Jim kept the fences in order, raised his own chickens and hogs, and grew grains for James Dinsmore.

Nannie Taylor

Age: 17

Occupation: slave

Nannette was brought from Louisiana with her mother, brothers and sisters by Dinsmore. Although she is close in age to the Dinsmore girls, her life is very different. Instead of going to school, she works. She cleans the Dinsmore house, does the washing and ironing, and helps prepare the main meal of the day for the menfolk on the farm.

David Taylor

Age: 10

Occupation: slave

David was brought with his mother, brothers, and sisters to Kentucky by Dinsmore, their owner. Although he is too young to do most work, he is not too young to do small chores, like gathering wood for the kitchen fires and fetching water. In his free time he is allowed to roam the farm and play with the animals.

Judy Taylor

Age: 8

Occupation: slave

Judy was brought from Louisiana with her mother, brothers, and sisters. She is too young to do any work on the farm so she plays in the yard near the kitchen. Judy likes to watch her mother spin yarn from the sheep's wool and she enjoys playing with the animals. Sometimes the Dinsmore girls will teach her games.

Isaac Sanders  
Age: 14  
Occupation: slave

Isaac was brought to Kentucky with his mother, Sally Taylor, and her other children. He lives with Sally Taylor and her children in a crowded cabin. Six days every week, Isaac tends to the animals on the farm—he is shepherd to the goats and sheep, cleans up after the cattle, hogs, and is hostler to the horses.

Daniel Taylor  
Age: 13  
Occupation: slave

Daniel was brought to Kentucky by James Dinsmore who owns him. He came with his mother, brothers, and sisters. Daniel spends his days running errands for Martha Dinsmore—fetching water, weeding the garden, beating rugs, and more. He also waits on the family at dinner time. Soon he will begin working in the fields.

Nancy Mcgruder  
Age: 35  
Occupation: slave

Nancy was bought by Dinsmore in Mississippi and brought to Kentucky without her husband. She lives in the kitchen cabin and spends most of her time there. She cooks breakfast & supper for the Dinsmores and the enslaved people; and dinner, the main meal, when she must also feed the tenant men. Last year she joined the local Baptist church.

James Dinsmore

Age: 55

Occupation: Gentleman Farmer

James owns 800 acres of land and has tenants and enslaved African Americans raising various products which make a profit for him. When he is not keeping his business accounts and overseeing his laborers, he enjoys reading and being with his wife and daughters. His favorite spot on the farm is his vineyard.

Susan Dinsmore

Age: 10

Occupation: student

Susan and her older sister, Julia, are tutored at home. When she is not studying, she likes to go bowling in the downstairs hall and put on plays with her sisters. Although she enjoys reading, she would rather be exploring in the woods and taking horse rides. She loves riding to Cherry Hill and picking fruit off the trees.

Isabella Dinsmore

Age: 15

Occupation: student

Isabella attends a school for young ladies in Cincinnati. When she is home for vacations, she helps her mother manage the household and mends the family's clothing. She enjoys riding horses, reading, writing poetry, drawing, and playing with her sisters.

Julia Dinsmore

Age: 12

Occupation: student

Julia and her younger sister, Susan, are tutored at home. They both love nature and enjoy hiking around the farm and picking flowers. Julia also likes to play the piano, sing, read, write poetry, and ride horses. When neighbors come to visit, her father insists she entertain them on the piano.

Susan Goodrich

Age: 8

Occupation: Student

Susan is the niece of James and Martha Dinsmore. She was born in 1837 in New York state. Her father died when she was ten and her mother died when she was about thirteen. After her mother's death, she came here to live with the Dinsmore family in Boone County, though she visits relatives in New York every summer.

Isabella Hill

Age: 24

Occupation: Single woman

Isabella Hill was born in Philadelphia. Her mother died soon after she was born and her father lived in Mississippi, so she spent her early life with relatives, visiting her father more often as she grew older. In the 1840s, Isabella began spending about 8 months each year here with the Dinsmores. Her nickname is Hilda because there is already an Isabella.