

WPA Slave Narratives
Missouri
Events: Things Seen and Heard Tell Of
John Sepich, ed.

James Monroe Abbot MO-23

"One time 'fore dat she puddin near kill young Joe. She wuh hoeing corn in de field an he cum ridin'—I spect he war jes tryin' to be smaht but he tells her to swallow dat tobaccy she got in huh mouth. She don' pay him no mind an' he tell her agin. Den she say, 'You chewing tobaccy? Whyn't yuh swaller dat?' Dat make him mad and he take a double rope en whack her cross de sholders. Den she grab huh fingers roun' his throat, an his face wuh all black es my own 'fore dey pulls her offen him. Den Ole Mastuh try tuh whup her, but he couldn' by hisself, so he sends fo' three nigger-buyers dat's close by. When one o' em tells muthuh to put her han's togedder so he tie em, she grab him by de collar an' de seat o' he's pants an knock's his haid agin a post like a battern' ram. Den Ole Mastuh say, 'Men, yo' better go on home. I don' want my cullud folks to git hurt.' He said it like dat.

W.C. Parson Allen MO-26

"John McWiggin was a son of a Federal. His brother, Keenie, was a Confederate. When de Confederate army come Keenie took de silver goblets down to de creek and gave de soldiers water to drink. Den when de other soldiers come Johnie would help his crowd. De soldiers took Mac's iron-gray saddle hosses to Lexington, and de boss had to pay \$500 to get de hosses back. He got some of his mules back. De bushwackers and nightriders were here. But de boss got 'round it this way. He had de slaves dig trenches 'cross de road and tie grape vines over it. Den have de darkies go up on de hill and sing corn songs. Den de nightriders come a-rushing and sometimes dey would get four or five whites in these raids. It would kill de men and horses too, when dey fell into de trench. On Saturday night we had a shindig. We would eat chicken and pound cake and of course whiskey made in Kentucky. De jail was called de watch-house.

George Bollinger MO-31

"One time day wuz two hundred sojers cum to our place—dey wuz Southerners, an' dey wuz nearly starved. Massa tole 'em _dey_ cud kill dat big steer. Dey shoots him 'en 'fore he drops dey wuz on him; skinnin' him. By dat time udders had a fire built 'en de men pull out dey knives 'en dey cut off hunks; dey puts 'em on a stick 'en hol's 'em ovar de fire a few minutes—didden give 'em time to cook thru fore dey et it. Dat ole steer didden last long. 'En 'Massa' had ten cribs 'er corn. He tole 'em to ——— dey selves. 'Bout dat time a dispatch came, dat de "Yankees" wuz commin'. Dey went up to meet 'em, 'an dey had a battle over at Patton. Long 'bout midnight

sum of 'em came back, wounded. Aunt Polly helped 'em, but she begged 'em not to stay dere, or de "Yankees" cum in, burn de house down.

Harriet Casey MO-38

"I've lived here 'bout 65 years. I was born in slavery on de Hill place in Farmington. My mother's name was Catherine. Father's name was George. A brother and sistah of mine was sold as slaves 'fore I was born. I nevah saw them. My father was sold away from my mother. Our home was not pleasant. The mistress was cruel. Her brother would go down in de orchard and cut de sprouts and pile 'em up under de house so as de mistress could use 'em on us. She also used a bed stick to whip with.

"One day we took de cows to pasture and on de way home I stopped to visit Mrs. Walker and she gave me a goose egg. And den when we got home de old mistress kicked me and stomped on us and broke my goose egg. Did'n mind de whipping but sure hated to break my egg.

"Our cabin was one room, one door and one fire place. Our mistress was a rich woman, and she had three husbands. She had a big square smoke house full of hog, beef, deer, all pickled away. She had 12 cows and lots of butter and a spring-house.

"To eat we had corn meal and fried meat dat had been eaten by bugs. We had some gravy and all ate 'round de pans like pigs eating slop. And we had a tin cup of sour milk to drink. Sometimes we would have gingerbread. Dis was 'bout twice a year.

"One day a Union officer come up and had a saber and said he would cut off de mistress' head. De officer was a Dutchman. The mistress then ran to town for help. De soldier came right in de cabin and said, 'Me no hurt you.' De soldier went in de safe in de house and ate all he wanted and den went to bed in de house. Finally de law come and moved him out of de bed off de place. De soldiers would come at night and rout de slave women out of bed and make 'em cook de soldiers a square meal."

Lula Chambers MO-40

"In Arkansas many of de slave owners would tie dere slaves to a wagon and gallop 'em all over town and would dey be banged up. I saw a strange niggah come to town once and didn't know where he was going and stepped in the door of a white hotel. When he saw all white faces, he was scared most to death. He didn't even turn around he just backed out and don't you know dem white folks kilt him for stepping inside a white man's hotel by mistake, yes they did.

Right after de war dey sent colored teachers through de South to teach colored people and child, do you know, dem white folks just crucified most of 'em.

Peter Corn MO-42

Now, just listen good. Dis master willed 800 acres to his slaves who divided up de farm. Before he died, he put it down in a way dat his daughters and sons-in-laws could not break it 'cepting dey would raise several thousand dollars. De old slaves would sit down and tell us about it. De master turns in and pays de taxes up for 100 years. One of de trustees for de will was a Dr. Herdick and Henry Rozier both of Ste. Genevieve. My uncle's part was 40 acres and it was dis farm where I went when I

come out from under de shelter of de white folks. De colored would sell 2 or 3 acres at a time and all dis farm is now sold. I was 13 when I got free and went to dis farm and there was my home until I was right at a grown man. De only taxes we had to pay was on household goods and stock. Every year when de personal taxes come due I would go into Ste. Genevieve to pay de taxes. As long as Dr. Herdick and Henry Rozier lived as overseers we was well protected on de farm. But Ed Rozier, a lawyer, tried to get us to pay de other kind of taxes.

"As I look back on it, people ought never to have been slaves. Dat was the low downest thing dat ever was. De first startin' of slavery was when a white man would go over to Africa and de people over dere was ignorant and de white man would hold up a pretty red handkerchief and trade it for one of de Negro women's children. De Negroes in Africa was too ignorant to know better and dis is de way slavery started. I always said like dis, when de older ones that knowed de things, dey ought have learned de slaves their names as dey was in Africa. Lots of us don't know what our grandparents was in Africa. Slavery didn't teach you nothin' but how to work and if you didn't work your back would tell it. Slavery taught you how to lie, too. Just like your master would tell you to go over and steal dat hog. Den de other master from who I stole de hog would say, 'Peter, why I've lost a hog; did you ever see him anywhere?' I would say, 'No, suh'. Of course if I did not lie I would get a whippin'.

Smoky Eulenberg MO-50

"Many a time we seen soldiers pass on de road but dey never molested us none, 'cept to come in and eat everything that was cooked—and sometime have de women cook up some more. One Sunday morning a bunch of 'em come by—dey had been over to Burfordville and burned de mill. Another Sunday a bunch of Rebs come by and camped 'bout a mile from our place. Dat night de Blue Coats ran onto 'em. Dey killed about thirty. Next morning us boys went over there and what we saw didn't suit me none. Some of de cullud men helped to bury 'em.

Ann Ulrich Evans MO-51

When freedom come I asked my old owner to please let me stay on wid dem, I didn't have no whar to go no how. So he just up and said, 'Ann, you can stay here if you want to, but I ain't goin' to give you nothing but your victuals and clothes enough to cover your hide, not a penny in money, do no nigger get from me.' So I up and said, 'Why boss, dey tells me dat since freedom we git a little change', and he cursed me to all de low names he could think of and drove me out like a dog. I didn't know what to do, or where to go, so I sauntered off to a nearby plantation where a colored slave kept house for her bachelor slave owner and she let me stay with her, and her boss drove me off after two days, because I kept company with a nigger who worked for a man he didn't like. I was barefooted, so I asked Moses Evans, to please buy me some shoes, my feet was so sore and I didn't have no money nor no home neither. So he said for me to wait till Saturday night and he'd buy me some shoes. Sure 'nough when Saturday night come, he buyed me some shoes, and handkerchiefs and a pretty string of beads and got an old man neighbor named Rochel to let me stay at his house. Den in a few weeks me and him got married, and I was mighty glad to marry him to git a place to stay. Yes I was. 'Cause I had said, hard times as I was having if I seed a man walking with two sticks and he wanted me for a wife I'd

marry him to git a place to stay. Yes I did and I meant just dat. In all my born days I never knowed of a white man giving a black man nothing, no I ain't.

[D]em Ku Klux just come all around our house at night time and shoot in de doors and windows. Dey never bothered nobody in de day time. Den some time dey come on in de house, tear up everything on de place, claim dey was looking for somebody, and tell us dey hungry 'cause dey ain't had nothin' to eat since de battle of Shiloh. Maybe twenty of 'em at a time make us cook up everything we got, and dey had false pockets made in dere shirt, and take up de skillet with de meat and hot grease piping hot and pour it every bit down de front of dem shirts inside de false pockets and drop de hot bread right down dere, behind de meat and go on.

James Goings MO-52

"De dead wuz laying all long de road an' dey stayed dere, too. In dem days it wuzn't nuthin' to fin' a dead man in de woods. De 'Yankees' took 'Old Massa' 'en all de udder men in to Cape Girardeau 'en made 'um help build de forte.

"We often seed sojers on de roads, but dey didden bother us much, but de bushwackers, 'de wuz bad. One day, Bill Norman 'en his step-mother, fum White water Station, cum up to our place. She had on a print dress 'en a sunbonnet, 'en dat wuz all she had left in de world. Dey had burned up everything for 'um—dey house, dey grist mill—everything. But sumtimes de sojers got de Bushwackers—Dere wuz one fella named 'Bolen' dey got him 'en tuck him to de Cape. Dere dey hung him on a high gate-post, jest outside 'er town.

Rachael Goings MO-53

"My full name wuz Rachael Exelina Mayberry (Mabrey) an' my mammy's name wuz Cynthy Minerva Jane Logan.

Masta had three sons, Dosh, his wife wuz Roberta, Alf his wife wuz Malissa and Byrd, his wife wuz Cully. In dem days we called 'em all by dere first name. We honored de ole Masta', but de younger folks, we didden call Masta' Dosh, or Masta' Byrd—or Missus Cully. It wuz jes Dosh, Byrd or Cully. I didden' know de ole Missus. Dey tole me she went crazy and kilt herself shortly after I wuz borned 'cause she thought I was white. We wuz de only slave famly Masta' had en he wuz good to us. We all liked him, all o' us but Cynthy, dat's my mammy I allus called her Cynthy till after de war wuz over. Cynthy always called him "Ole Damn"—she hated him 'cause he brought her fum Arkansas and left her twins an' dey poppy down dere. Cynthy's daddy was a full Cherrokee. She wuz always mad and had a mean look in her eye. When she got her Indian up de white folks let her alone. She usta run off to de woods till she git over it. One time she tuk me and went to de woods an' it was nigh a month fore dey found her—and I wuz nigh dead.

Sarah Frances Shaw Graves (Aunt Sally) MO-54

"When I was growin' up an' wanted a nice wool dress, we would shear the sheep, wash the wool, card it, spin it and weave it. If we wanted it striped, we used two threads. We would color one by using herbs or barks. Sometimes we had it carded at a mill, an' sometimes we carded it ourselves. But when we did it, the threads were short, which caused us to have to tie the thread often, makin' too many knots in the

dress. I have gathered the wool off the fences where it had been caught off the sheep, an' washed it, an' used it to make mittens.

"Yes'm. I worked in the fields, and I worked hard too. Plantin' and harvestin' in those days was really work. They used oxen to break up the ground for corn, an' for plowin' it too. They hoed the corn with a hoe, and cut the stalks with a hoe and shocked 'em. They cut the grain with the cradle and bound it with their hands, and shocked it. They threshed the grain with a hickory stick. Beating it out.

"I carried water for the field hands. I've carried three big buckets of water from one field to another, from one place to another; one in each hand and one balanced on my head.

Emily Camster Green MO-55

"I fell to young Missie Janie an' wuz her maid an' when Missie Janie married Mista Bradley I went with 'em down to Cha'leston in Mississippi County.

"Missie Janie an' her Mista Bradley rode in a buggy an' I sits behind. I 'member de fust time I seed de big ribber. Dar wuz a boat on it. I ain't nebber seed a boat befo' an' I says, 'Oh! Miss Janie dat house gonna sink.' She laf at me an' say dat a boat. Pore Miss Janie—dat Mista Bradley made her believe he had a big plantation an lots o' money an when we gits dar he warn't nuthin' but a overseer on de Joe Moore place. Pore Missie Janie! she wuz so purty an' she had lotsa beaux—she coulda' married rich but she jes tuk de wrong one.

"'Bout dat time my daddy die too an my mammy marry Levi Wilson. He belong to Nelson Ellis an' when Ole Massa Ellis's daughter married Beverly Parrot dey went to Texas an' tuk my step-daddy along. 'Cose he never 'spected to see my mammy again an' he married a young woman down dar. Atter de war, dey comes back up dar an' he seed my mammy but she says, 'Go way. I libbed wid you sebben year an' nebber had no chillun by you. Now you got a young woman an' she got chillun. You stay with her. I won't bother you none.'

Fil Hancock MO-58

"In '61, I see General Lyons, when he passed right by our house. All de Union sojers had to pass by our house time of de war. We lived on the main wagon road from Rolla to Springfield. Well child, Lordy me! dat's funny for me to tell you how General Lyon look. It was a sight to see him with them 'purties'! And we asked old missus what dat was, them 'purties' he had on his shoulders. She says to us chillun: 'He is de general. All dem odder men got to mind him'. He was killed in dat battle of Wilson Creek. Dey kept him in an icehouse in a spring, owned by a man named Phelps. He lived west of Springfield. Dey keep General Lyon two weeks, 'fore they brung him down dis-a-way. Dey shipped him out of Rolla to Connecticut—dat's what I hear de ol folks says. Dat man Phelps was our neighbor and later he got to be governor of Missouri in 1876. Crittenden was first de Democratic governor in '73.

"Old missus called us little darkies all up—and carried us down to de wagon General Lyon's body was in, when dey was bringin' him back here. And we looked at him and asked what was de matter. Old missus said 'He was killed.' He was packed in ice in de wagon and de wagon had four mules hitched to it. I wanted to know if he was de man who had dem 'purties' on his shoulders. She said 'Yes'.

"I said, 'Did marse Bill and marse George and marse Jeff Hancock hep kill him?' She said: 'Yes'. Marse Bill, marse George an' marse Jeff was my young bosses, my old master's sons. Old missus didn't seem glad or anything, jes' looked kinda sad. We asked her would he ever fight again. She said, 'No'. I won't ever forget how General Lyon looked. He rode a kinda gray-white horse when I first see him and looked so tall and proud like.

"I don't 'member how dey was dressed, but dey all had on sumpin' blue. Uniforms I guess. Me and four more little darkies was one-half mile offen de big road when dey passed, and got scared and run back to old missus house and hid in de old barn loft all dat night. Old missus asked us what we did for sumpin' to eat. We told her we bent de rye down in de field and rubbed de grain out wid our hands and eat dat. She took us to de house and give us sompin' to eat. De sojers was still passing de house den.

Dave Harper MO-59

"We was fed just moderate. Dere was fifteen hands. When dey come in at noon, dey ate from de big old kettle where de old colored woman had cooked de food. De next morning after he bought me, de boss carried me to de old woman and told her to take care of me. Dat morning de kettle was full of spare ribs and de people fished dem out with sticks. I didn't see no knives or forks. When dey asked me why I didn't get something to eat, I asked 'bout dem and a table where I could eat. De overseer just cried.

One time de bushwhackers came to burn de depot but Col. Harper had it full of tobacco and wheat so dey didn't burn it.

Joe Higgerson MO-61

"Jes before Christmas lots of people came to de store to buy and de groun' was all covered wid snow. An de man what run de store was getting ready to close up, cause it was getting dark, and close at dark a man come and wanted in and de store keeper wouldn't let him in. An it got later and later, and by an by Joseph, dats me, was sent to de store to find why de storekeeper ain't come home yet and Joseph went to de store, and looked in and saw de old man on his back, his throat cut wid de blood runnin' all over de floor and \$1,400 dey knowed he had—gone. Dere was whiskey and blood runnin' all over de floor. Whiskey was cheap dem days; good whiskey, too.

Delia Hill MO-62

I was raised up hard, honey. I can count de winters I ever even had shoes on my poor feet. When Marse Dave bought my mother he only bought her and 6 us chillun. He was fairly nice to niggahs, but he didn't have as big a drove of 'em as de other plantation owners, but child we could hear niggahs hollen' every night on different plantations all around us from lashings dey gittin' from dere old overseers and masters too, for dat matter.

"Dey sent us to church reglar and de preacher say to us, any you all see anybody stealin' old Miss chickens or eggs, go straight to old Miss and tell her who 'tis and all about it. Any one steal old Marse hogs or anything belong to old Marse, go straight to him and tell him all about it. Den he ask us, what your daddy bring home to you

when he come, and what he feed you chillun at night. We scared to death to tell anything 'cause, honey, if we did de niggah get a killin, and our mammy tie up our feet and hang us upside down by our feet, build a fire under us and smoke us, scare us plum to death. We swear mammy goin' to burn us up. Lord, child, dat was an awful scare. Yes, mam, it was. De old preacher told us go on work hard, tell old Miss and old Master de truth and when we die God going let us in heaven's kitchen and sit down and rest from all dis work we doin' down here.

"We believe dat den. We didn't know no better, honest we didn't, honey. Our old Miss used to tell us, I want all my niggers to always tell de truth. If dey kill you, die telling de truth. But bless your soul, our mammy done smoked 'nough of us up side down, to not tell dem white folks nothin', a lie, nor the truth. No sir'ree. Who want to get smoked up likely to burn up hanging there as not. Now ain't dat so? No, sir, tell dem white folks, dey find out anything, they jes' find out by themselves, dat's it.

Louis Hill MO-63

"The ole lady, the wife ob da Boss was da devil's sister. Her name was 'Whip'. She beat da ole folks mor'n tha kids. She used tha cowhide an we got a lickin' whether we did anythin' or not.

"I member when Price's army kum thro here in '64 or '65 on their way ta Pilot Knob. I wuz 'bout six or seven years ole. I an ma sister had bin down ta the white childr'n school ta take them dinner. We had ta bring tha basket bak an we sat down in tha corner ob da graveyard ta eat whut wuz left in da basket. Da graveyard was nex to da Fredericktown road and jus across frum our house. All at onc't I heard the mos' turrible noise an saw soldiers kum up da road. We war sure scared. We jumped up, ran cross da road, jumped over da fence an begun ta tak out fur da house. Da soldiers laughed an said somethin. One soldier on a horse kum up ta de fence, tore off da top rail, an with his horse jumped ober da fence, an took out after us, but he nebber cud catch us. We wuz sho runnin'. I wuz carryin' da basket and if I had a throwed it down we would a showed that soldier some runnin'. Da soldier turned his horse round but we went straight to da house to da Missus. She say dat dey was only havin' a good time an would not hurt us. We stood at da house an looked, an it took 'bout all afternoon fur da soldiers to pass. Thar war horses, wagons and cannons. Da soldiers durin' da war took all da Boss' horses away an he had only a yoke ob oxen lef.

"I piddled around and hired out for first one and den another and did what a kid could do. When you earned any money dem days you had to give it to your mother and didn't know what she done with it. About de first work I done was for Mr. Boyer, a Frenchman, up in Valle Mines in de diggin's. I dug mineral, zinc, etc. I got 50 cents a day. He did all de diggin and I 'coached' it from de head of the drift to de shaft. I had a little car on wheels dat run on a wooden track. I reckon I worked for him 'bout two years. My mother would go out to de big dirt pile called 'scrappin' and would pick out de zinc and lead chunks and little pieces.

"Purt near every Saturday we would take de ore down to Furnace Town and get it weighed and get a check for it. Den we come back to Farmington after several years and lived with my sister's husband and worked around at a little bit of everything. I was gettin' to be a pretty good sized boy and went to Mine La Motte and worked on de furnace. My first work at dat place was at \$2 a day and later on I became a

'charger' and got \$2.50 a day. I stayed with dem six or seven years. After I left dere I went to Bonne Terre and got married and got mine sickness or lead colic from workin' in de furnace and had to quit. I come back to Farmington and is been here ever since. Den I worked at sawing wood, chopping wood, and at a soda factory and beer depot and peddled ice and delivered soda and beer to Knob Lick, Syenite, Graniteville and Bonne Terre. I worked here for a long time.

Rhody Holsell MO-64

"Abraham Lincoln done put a piece in de paper saying dat all de slaves was free and if dey whipped any of de slaves after dey was set free dey would prosecute them. Me and another little old woman done some shoutin' and hollerin' when we heard 'bout de freedom. We tore up some corn down in de field. De old missus was right there on de fence but wouldn't dare touch us den. Once de mistress struck me after we was freed and I grabbed her leg and would have broke her neck. She wanted to apologize with me de way she had treated me but I would not let her. They thought it was awful dat dey could not whip de slaves any longer.

I was never turned off from any of my work. I would just work 'till I got tired and quit. Talk about bein' happy! We was sure 'nough some happy people when dey done took dat yoke offen our necks. Before I was free we had to shuck three wagon loads of corn a day. De wagon would hold 40 bushels. I'd come home and my fingers would be twisted from so much work. De oxen would slobber all over de corn before we picked it. It was cold out dere in de field an' I would wrap my feet up in my dress and wait till de wagon would drive up. I had no shoes on. Man, I don't know how I'm here today. It just was de mercy of God that took care of me. When my mother was dying she done asked God to look over us and it must have been her prayer dat helped me to still be here.

"Lord, people nowadays don't know nothing 'bout nothin'. Child, I spun backwards and forwards to de wheel till I wore my feet out till de balls of my feet was wore to de blood.

"Once during de war de soldiers was around me very thick. I was coming back from carryin' de dinner out in de woods to Sam Hildebrand. I took him a table cloth, napkins and everything first class. I went down to de house and hid de basket in a hollow log and crossed de creek and dey hollered, 'Halt!' De soldiers was cussin' me like a bay steer. Dey said, 'I'll kill you right here and blow your brains out if you don't tell.' I told dem I had been up dere to water de calves so dey give me my pass and let me go on to de house. I would not tell dem nothin' 'bout Sam Hildebrand nor where he was hiding. While Sam et his meal I would stand 'round and watch in de woods. I was de oldest one on de place and I was de only one what had to carry his meals to him.

Dey was about 500 and de men laid out on de ground under a government wagon and in some houses around about. Dese soldiers would go out with sabers and whack de heads off of de sheep, hogs, and calves and in about five minutes would have dat yearlin' skinned and dash it into de boilin' kettle. Den dey would take a long knife and cut off a big piece of meat with the blood runnin' out. Dey did not cook de meat done and did not put much salt on it. It sure was funny, seein' dem soldiers eatin' a big hunk of meat with de blood runnin' out. Dey always had bread but don't know

where dey got it. They was so tired and wore out and their feet was sore and de infantry was almost barefooted. Dey was always dressed in blue.

"I ain't never heard de Bible read till I was free in Fredericktown. When we was slaves we did not have much time to get out and sin much.

Henry Johnson MO-65

When I got a little bigger, I had to take a little hoe and dig weeds out of de crop. If our white boss see a little grass we overlooked he would handcuff our feet to a whipping post, den chain the slave around de stomach to de post and strap de chin over de top of de post and place your hands in front of you.

"In de start de slave has been stripped naked, and lashed, often to death. Dey would be left strapped after from twenty-five to fifty lashes every two or three hours to stand dere all night. De next day, de overseer would be back with a heavy paddle full of holes that had been dipped in boiling water and beat until de whole body was full of blisters. Den he'd take a cat-o'-nine-tails dipped in hot salt water to draw out de bruised blood and would open everyone of dem blisters with dat. If de slave did not die from dat torture, he would be unfastened from de whipping post, and made go to de field just as he was. Often times he would die shortly after. Dey did the women de same."

"Dey would take a great string of slaves in de road on Sunday and make us walk to church. Buggies with de white folks in would be in front of us, in de midst of us, and all betwixt and behind us. When we got dat four or five miles we had to sit on a log in de broiling sun, while a white man preached to us. All dey evah would say would be niggers obey your masters and mistress and don't steal from 'em. And lo and behold, honey, de masters would make us slaves steal from each of the slave owners. Our master would make us surround a herd of his neighbor's cattle, round dem up at night, and make us slaves stay up all night long and kill and skin every one of dem critters, salt the skins down in layers in de master's cellar, and put de cattle piled ceilin' high in de smoke house so nobody could identify skinned cattle.

"Den when de sheriff would come around lookin' for all dem stolen critters, our boss would say, 'Sheriff, just go right on down to dem niggahs' cabins and search dem good, I know my niggers don't steal.' Course de sheriff come to our cabins and search, sure we didn't have nothin' didn't belong to us, but de boss had plenty. After de sheriff's search, we had to salt and smoke all dat stolen meat and hang it in old marse smoke house for him. Den dey tell us, don't steal. Dey raised turkeys in de 500 lots and never did give us one. So we wanted one so bad once, I put corn underneath de cabin and a turkey, a great big one, would come under our cabin to eat dat corn. One day when I got a chance I caught dat old gobbler by de neck and him and me went round and round under dat old cabin house. He was de biggest strongest bird I ever see, I was only a boy but finally I beat. I twisted his neck till he died. Den I took out up to de big house, fast as anything, to tell my old miss one of our finest turkeys dead. She said stop cryin' Henry and throw him under de hill. I was satisfied. I run back, picked dat ole bird, taken all his feathers to de river and throwed dem in. Dat night we cooked him, and didn't we eat somethin' good. I had to tell her 'bout dat missin' bird 'cause when dey check up it all had to tally so dat fixed dat.

Hannah Jones MO-66

Old Marse Ben died and after dat Tom carried us all back down der to New Orleans wid him and opened up a nigger pen. Dat's a place like a stock yard where dey auction us off. De old ones was de ones dey was anxious to get shet of. We only know our ages by known' we is born in corn plantin' and cotton pickin' time. We never even knowed de days of de week.

"I had three aunts to die in all dat huddle of niggers. De doctors make us go walking every day 'cause dat was de only exercise we git. One of dem aunts dropped dead on de street while walking. De other two died in de slave pen. My grandmother was a fine seamstress. She sewed all de sewing for de white folks. Three days after her first baby was born dey made her git up and make twelve stiff-front, tucked white shirts for her old mistress' boy who be goin' off to college and she was so sick and weak, some of de stitches was crooked. Old Miss ordered de overseer to take her out and beat her 'bout it. Before he did de doctor looked at her and said 'tain't no use beatin' her she won't do you no more good. She's stone blind, but she can have chillun right on. So dey kept her for dat and she bore twelve more head of chillun after dat.

Harriet Lee MO-68

"One time a man come an' wanna buy mammy an me. Miss Coon wuz gonna sell us unbeknownst to ole Massa. Ole Massa wouldn' sell none o' his people, but Miss Coon ahways try to put things ovuh on him an' he couldn' do nuthin 'bout it but go git drunk. Ole Miss Coon put de price on us a way up high—'cause mammy sech a fine seamstress an' ah wuz ahways a buxum chile, nevuh sick er nuthin. But he say dat too much an' he go on home. Aftuh while wen dey so much talk 'bout freein' de niggers Miss Coon sont him word dat she come way down on de price but he sont back word dat he got ez much sense as she got.

Mattie Lee [HW: Head] MO-69

"I can 'member de home place. De county road went close to de front gate. Mrs. Eliza Baker had a beautiful yard and after de war she would have us come and stay in de yard to be protected from de jay-hawkers. De high water would come past de fence and we would play in de water. One time a jay-hawker come and git one of de children in a skiff and den we yelled and de mastah come out with his pistol and hit de jay-hawker over de head. So de jay-hawker turned de child over again. So we did not play down in de water no more.

Wes Lee MO-70

"I was just a little feller during de war, but I can remember dat when de Rebel sojers come by our place old mastuh had de table set for 'em, and treat 'em fine—'cause he's a rebel—den when de 'Yankees' come along he give dem de bes' he had, and treat 'em fine 'cause he's a 'Yankee'. Old Jedge Ranney live on de next place and he and old mastuh was good friends—but he was such a hot southerner he couldn't stand old mastuh to act like dat. In a way I guess old mastuh was right for none of de sojers never bother nuthin' on de place.

Drucilla and Richard Martin MO-74

Although Drucilla does not have any education, she can quote verse after verse from the Bible. She told some gruesome stories of how some of the masters treated their slaves. She said there never was a book printed that really told how some, or in fact the majority of the slaves were beaten and abused. To most masters they were not any more than stock. She said some of the young girls were beaten until they would die. Some of the little colored babies that were born out in the field or on the road were left to starve or be eaten up by the hogs.

Drucilla said some times their master would rent them out to other white men to work them if he didn't have anything for them to do. Some masters would put their feed out in troughs for them just as they were feeding cattle. Some would give them cotton seed to eat. She said they would go home and cry and tell their master how they were treated and their master would tell them they wouldn't have to go work for any one that did them like that.

Malinda Murphy MO-79

"When de soldiers came we had a good meal. De soldiers had on blue coats, and when dey came we would be switching off de flies with a long pole with paper on the end. De soldiers would then say 'We don' need that, come on and eat with us.'

After we had gone to Valle Mines, Overton Hill, de son of de Hills, came up dere and asked mother where she had hid de money and silver during de war. She told him but after three weeks he came back in a buggy and took mother with him to de plantation and she showed Overton where to dig close to a cedar tree to find de money and silver."

Margaret Nickens MO-80

"My father come from Virginia and my mother from Kentucky when dey was little. Dey never seen dere parents no more. Dey watched for a long time among de colored people and asked who dey was when dey thought some body looked like dere parents, but never could find dem. Dey was so small when dey left, dey didn't even remember dere names.

Eliza Overton MO-81

'Ole man Coffman' wuz a mean ole slave hol'er. He war afraid of his slaves an' had some one else ta do da whippin'. They war rougher on ma aunt Eleanor, cause she war stubborn. They wud punish de slaves severely fur 'membrance. They whoop'd with a rawhide whop an' trace chains. Wilson Harris wuz whooped at a tree onc't an' when dey got thro' he say he wud fight. They whop him some mor' 'til he was weak an' bleedin'. The other slaves had to grease his shirt ta take it off his back ta keep frum tearin' off de flesh. We can go down thar now and pick out trees whar the slaves war tied an' whipp'd. The trees died on de side whar de slaves war tied. There are three trees on de Coffman farm that I seen dead on one side, an' sum' war in the yard. Thar is one clos' to the Houck Railroad Station thar.

"A Mr. Jones bought our aunt an' tok' her ta Shelby County, Missouri. Our aunt had two children by Mr. Jones. One of 'em wuz so white dat Mr. Jones couldn't sell him fur a slave.

"I hear a woman stan' up an' say we would be bettah off today in slavery. I say, 'Why?' She say: 'You would hab ta look aftah nothin' of your welfare.' 'If that's what she wuz talkin' 'bout', I said, 'ma fauthuh wuz ten years ole fore he put on a pair of pants. He had ta wear wooden shoes an' a tow shirt.' I wud not liv' twenty-four hours, bein' a slave now. I wud' not habe stood it with ma temper."

Delicia Ann Wiley Patterson (Lucinda) MO-82

Old Judge Miller from my county was there. I knew him well because he was one of the wealthiest slave owners in the county, and the meanest one. He was so cruel all the slaves and many owners hated him because of it. He saw me on the block for sale, and he knew I was a good worker so when he bid for me, I spoke right out on the auction block and told him: 'Old Judge Miller don't you bid for me, 'cause if you do, I would not live on your plantation, I will take a knife and cut my own throat from ear to ear before I would be owned by you.'

Marilda Pethy MO-83

"De Ku Klux Klan come out and run de colored people away from home. Many a colored woman came to mother's house in de middle of de night with clothes covered with ice and snow to de waist and carrying her baby in her arms 'cause dey ran her away from home.

"We knowed who de men was. We'd hear dem say, 'Are you going out tonight?' 'Yas', I'se got a little cluckin' to do.' Goin' cluckin'! Huh! (Marilda fairly snorted with indignation and in some subtle way gave the impression that she did not approve of Klansmen.) Dose men would bus' de door down and run de people out. Run some of dem clean away.

Susan Rhodes MO-84

I 'member well when de war first broke out de slave owners taken the little niggers from dere mammys, and hide 'em in all kind of places from de Yankees, so when de old niggers git der freedom, de white folks would have de children for slaves and dey wouldn't know nothing 'bout freedom. But de Yankees was smart 'nough to find out 'bout dat and freed us children and all. "Den my old Miss told my sister dat all de niggers was free now, go for herself, but she was going to keep de two youngest niggers. Dat was me and my baby sister, I don't know how old I was but I was big 'nough to do any kind of work most.

"But my sister stole us away. A white woman in another county hired my sister and gave her railroad fare to come to her place. My sister rolled up 3 of our baby sisters like a bundle in a quilt and told 'em don't move or cry and as soon as she could unroll 'em and let 'em have some air she would. So she got on de train with them three little niggers in a bundle and toted 'em up under her arms like dey was her clothes and belongings, and put 'em under her seat on de train. De bundle was so big every time de conductor passed it was in de way and he would kick it out of his way. Sister protected dem de best she could. Soon as he pass, she opened it and let 'em have some air. When she see him coming back, she wrap 'em up again. Dey was all sure glad to git off dat train. Dey had been kicked so much and dasn't holler. So de white lady was mighty nice. She let us all stay dere till we could do better. Sister

didn't have money 'nough to pay all us fare and she didn't want to leave us and we didn't want her to leave us. So dat was de best she could do.

Charlie Richardson MO-85

"We has coffee some time, but it ware made of burned corn meal. Once in awhile the slaves while makin' coffee for Marster Mat out of the wheat would burn a pan purposely and he would give it to them to make coffee with. That was purtty good coffee. Some time they got whupped for burnin' it, 'cause he knowed they burned it too much for his coffee, on purpose—jest so they'd git it."

Madison Frederick Ross MO-86

"Fethuh beds? Whew! Yessir! We hed the bigges' fethuh beds! You shoulda seen the big flock o' geese we hed. Hey, hey, hey—I'se thinkin' 'bout how us children a'ways crawled undah the house to gathuh the goose aigs. The geese a'ways laid undah th' house, an we'd crawl aroun' unduh there an git um an' when we's backin' out, the ole gander ud ketch us an' flog us. Many's the time he's wahmed the seat o' ouah pants.

"My gran'fathuh was mos'ly Indian an he usta go out into the woods an' stay for days at a time. Ole Mastuh always called him Ole Yaller Abe—But one time he ran away—crossed the rivuh ovah heah an' went up tuh Canada. He usta write tuh Ole Mastuh an' he'd read the lettuh tuh us.

"When the wah came on', 'cose we heared lots about it an sometime we'd see sojers. One time Gen'ral Grant come thru Commerce with about 40,000 men. They come down the rivuh in boats, an' camped here. The sojers 'ud come foragin' round ouah place but they nevah bothered much. They'd grind they swords on ouah grindstones an' show us how sharp they was by cuttin' the cahn stalks.

"We was stationed down in Helena, Arkansas, aftuh the fightin was ovah an' the officers sent up no'th fo' some teachers, to have school fo' us. They call it the Norman Institute an we each paid fifty cents a month to go. The teachers was Quakers an they never laughed or smiled. They a'ways seemed tuh be thinkin—seemed tuh think it was a sin to have fun. 'Ah kin still heah em—how they usta say, 'Thou shall get thy lessons ovah.' We was mustered out in St. Louis in 1866.

"One time the Ku Klux come aroun. They knock on the doah, then they say 'Please give me a drink, Ah ain't had a drink since the battle o' Shiloh.' What fo' they say that? Why, you see, they wants us tuh think they's the spirits a' the sojers killed at Shiloh an they been in hell so long they drinks all the water they kin git. This one man make us carry him five buckets of water, an' it look like he drink em but nex mahnin' theys a big mud puddle side thu doah."

Alice Sewell MO-87

I recollect three of my overseers. The first one's name Elik Clayton, the second one named Mofield and the third one named Pierson. I was 13 years old time de third one got me and de war had started, so we had to pack all de cotton up in bales, and in sun face houses and sun face cribs to be out of the weather. The seed cotton was kept in de gin house, 'cause dey didn't had no time to fool wid dat. Den dey up and bought spinning wheels and cards, so us women could spin it to make cloth, and make clothes at home, and would not have to go to de factory to buy clothes.

"Dey had to keep de money to care for de families de soldiers left behind, and send corn by de loads to de battlefield to feed de horses. Dey stopped raising cotton after de war started, and just raised food stuff 'cause dey had to send food to de battlefield for de soldiers. De poor white folks what lived up in de hilly country, too poor to own slaves, while de war was going on, had to come down out of de hilly country. Dey lived on government land and dey had to have food for dem and der children. Der men folks was taken away from dem to war. Dey was called counterscript soldiers, and if dey refused to go to war dey got shot down like a dog. So de most of 'em rather go on and take chances of de war missing 'em dan get shot widout a doubt. Dey use to say dey had to go and fight a rich man's war but dey couldn't help demselves no better'n us slaves could.

He never even 'lowed overseers on his plantation what had grown boys, to be runnin' round 'mongst his slaves neither, no he didn't. He didn't believe in dat intermingling, 'deed he didn't.\

"Dey did 'low us to go to church on Sunday about two miles down de public road, and dey hired a white preacher to preach to us. He never did tell us nothing but be good servants, pick up old marse and old misses' things about de place, and don't steal no chickens or pigs and don't lie 'bout nothing. Den dey baptize you and call dat, you got religion

Jane Simpson MO-91

I 'member well when I was a child how dey wouldn't 'low us chillun nothin' to eat but pumpkin and mush. We didn't own no clocks dem days. We just told de time by de sun in de day and de stars at night. If it was clouded we didn't know what time it was. De white folks didn't want to let de slaves have no time for der self, so de old folks used to let us chillun run and play at night, while de white folks sleep and dey watch de stars to tell about what time to call us in and put us to bed, 'fore de white folks know we was out.

My first old master never was married and he only bought 2 slaves in his whole life and had between 50 and 100 slaves, all kin folks. Dey raised children on his plantation worse dan flies. I never had a child in my life but I raised a host of other folks' chillun.

"Old master was a drunkard. He got drunk one night and fell off a rock and broke his hip. He died from dat fall. Before he died he told papa, he knew he was goin' to die, and he had been so mean to his old slaves dat he wanted to do somethin' for 'em, and no one never knew where he kept his money. My grandpapa, Meridie and grandmother, Juda, was de only 2 slaves he ever bought and all de rest come from dem 2. Old marse Chris told grandfather before he died, there was a keg buried at de foot of de cliff with all his money in it, for he was very rich. My old grandfather told de overseer 'bout it. Dey wouldn't dare to dig and find anything on de owner's plantation without de overseer let em, specially when de boss is dead, and de overseer of course said he looked for de keg and didn't find nothing.

Gus Smith MO-93

"My master's father, before he died, told his chillun, dat at his death he wanted each child to put their slaves out to work until dey earned \$800 a piece, to earn their own freedom, in dat way each slave paid it dem selves. He did not believe it was

right to keep dem in slavery all their lives. But de war came and dey were free without having to work it out.

"I remember my father shooting so many pigeons at once that my mother just fed dem to de hogs. Just shoot the game from our back yard. I have seen de wild pigeons so thick dey looked like storm clouds coming. I've seen dem so thick dey broke tree limbs down. Ducks and geese de same way. We could kill dem by tow sacks full, with clubs. White folks and colored folks came to these gatherings, from miles around, sat up all night dancin', eatin', and drinkin'. People kept whiskey by de barrel in those days. You see, Miss, in those days dey just loaded up ten or twelve bushel of corn, took it to de 'still-house' and traded it for a barrel of whiskey. Not much selling in those days, everything was traded, even to labor. Our folks would tell us to go and help so-and-so and we done it.

De Thorntons did not feed their slaves, dey was nearly starved. One night that ol' woman was so hungry she stole a chicken from her master, ol' Thornton, and was cooking it in her cabin. He found it out some way and started to her cabin, and caught her, while she had it on boiling. He was so mad, he told her to get a spoon and eat every bite before she stopped. It was scalding hot but he made her do it. She died right away; her insides were burned.

"Why, ol' Thornton was dat mean dat he killed his own son. He just beat him to death with de whip-stock of dat cowhide, a whip made of buckskin. It was like dis. De boy had a girl he was courtin' in another town. He started to see her on Saturday noon. His daddy told him to be back by Sunday night. But de boy did not get back before Monday morning, ten o'clock. His father was in de field working and saw him coming down de road. He went to meet him and met him at de gate. He asked why he did not get back sooner and lit into beating him with de whip stock, de part dat should be de whip handle. He beat him so hard dat de boy died in about ten hours. It aroused de neighborhood and dey began to plan a lynching party. He got wind of it some way and got all his slaves together and pulled out. He left dat place and no one ever knowed where he went. Dat happened before de end of de war.

"My grandad, Godfry, owned a place called de old Potter's place, near Vichy Springs, Vichy, Missouri, not far from where we lived. He bought it from a man who used to make pottery. Grandfather made his own mill to grind grain for bread. In dose days there was no steam operated mills and few water mills. Sometimes we had to go as much as twenty miles to grind corn a bushel of corn. So grandfather made his own burr to grind corn and wheat. It was as big as any burr in de large mills, but it was turned by hand power. It was made of limestone rock, a great big stone about two and a half foot across. De top burr would probably weigh about three or four hundred pounds. Da bottom case would weigh a thousand pounds or more. There was a hole in de top stone, where de grain flowed freely to de bottom and ground out on the big thick stone below. I ground many a bushel of meal on it myself. I don't know how grandfather got de large stones in place, for it was there as long as I could remember. I just wonder if it isn't some place there yet. I would love to go and find out and see de old burr again.

"People call these hard times, shucks, they don't know what hard times is. Those were hard days, when folks had to go on foot twenty miles to mill. I remember in my early days, we used cattle for teams to haul, start at four o'clock in de morning, drive

all day, stay over night and grind de next day. Sometimes de crowd ahead of us was so big we had to stay over for three or four days. Sometimes we would be until eleven or twelve at night getting home. Gone at least two days and one night. I had to make trips like dis many times.

"Sometimes we could take a couple of bushel of corn and go horseback, but twice a year, Spring and Fall, we would take eight or ten bushel of wheat, six and eight bushel of corn or according to what we needed and take de cattle and a old wooden axle wagon, walking and driving de cattle all de way there and back. We drove or led dem with only a rope around dem.

"De last trip I made millin', I drove for Bill Fannins, a yoke of young three-year old cattle. Wasn't even broke. Went twenty-five miles, drove all de way, walking, while he sat up in de wagon. Sometimes de wagon dragged in de mud, de old wooden axle burying so deep we couldn't hardly get it out, going through timber and dodging brush. Some folks went even further dan dat. Sometimes a mill might be four or five miles from you but dey got out of fix and you would have to go to another one. Maybe twenty-five miles or more.

Ann Stokes MO-94

"I learnt my alphabet in de middle ob a field unnerneath a 'simmon tree. My cousin teached me, you know we weren't 'lowed to hab books in dem days. They didn't want us to know nothin'".

Edward Taylor MO-95

"I was born in Cheneyville, Louisiana. I guess around 1812. But I don't know. I do know, I was owned by Marse William Chaney. He was a rich old slave owner. I thought in dem days white folks was God, didn't know no better.

"I 'member well when de stars fell, I saw 'em twixt midnight and day and tried to ketch some of 'em. I was grown, too, most. I wasn't scared 'cause I thought long as I staid where de white folks was, dey would protect me from all harm, even de stars in de elements, storms, or what not, just stay near de white folks and I had nothing to worry about. I thought white folks made de stars, sun and everything on de earth. I knowed nothing but to be driven and beat all de time. I seed em take de bottom rail out of de rail fences and stick de nigger's head in de hole den jam de balance of de fence down on his neck, and beat him till he's stiff. Den I seed 'em put 40 or 50 slaves in stock and as high as 300 at a time and punish 'em, till some of 'em died. It was terrible. Chaney done his slaves so bad when he taken down sick, he just suffered till de skin dropped off his bones. Nobody do any thing for him but me, everybody, even his own folks was scared of him, didn't want to touch him he looked and smelt so bad. But I just stuck hard by him till he died. I took care of Jeff Davis for years, long fore he ever got president of des United States. Yes sir, I did. When de stars fell people all runnin' and hollerin' judgment done come. I didn't see no need in all dat 'citement, as long as de white folks livin' I thought they could keep us niggers livin'.

My slave owners would make de blacksmith make buck horns and fasten 'em like a crown on de slave women's heads and brad 'em on dere so dey would know 'em by dat mark. Dey was so tight and heavy for dem women to carry around dey often times swell up dere head so dey couldn't hardly see out dere eyes.

"I worked naked most my time I didn't know nothing 'bout pride.

I never kin forgit when old Marse William Chaney died. We fell to his brother Marse George Chaney. De wife I married belonged to de same people owned me. Marse George chained a host of dem niggers together and sold 'em, and bought some more. He bought four wid my wife at one time but he sold 'em in droves. Marse William owned us by de hundreds.

Tishey Taylor MO-96

"Mammy used to card wool and cotton and spin, then she would weave goods. I 'member one time, I was little, I played 'rat under de loom'. I would crawl up and grab mammy and say 'e-e-e-k', and pinch her. She say, 'I'll puts a stop to that "rat" bothering me when I got work to do!' That didn' stop me but she sho' make me wish it had the nex' time I do it.

"When some one died we didn't know what wus don' with 'em but sometime they wus took out in the night and I heard some wus hauled off in a little push-thing and throwed in the river and some wus put in a hole with their clothes on.

Louis Thomas MO-97

In March 1868 dey sent to de field for all us hands to come up to de house to sign a contract. We all went. We was so used to minding old Marse when he sent for us we just mind right on like it was still slavery. So I had always been mighty handy 'bout most things so he wanted me 'bove de others, so he took my hand, put it on his pen and held it right dere and signed my name hisself. I got mad as a wet hen 'bout dat agreement he read to me. So he tried to make me feel good saying he was goin' to give me half. I knowed better.

"I felt dere was going to be some trouble up to de house, so I had a pistol in my pocket, that had been dropped by the Yankees on purpose to help us slaves shoot our way out. So I just told my old boss I ain't goin' to do it, and when he raised up at me I just whipped out dat pistol and everything in sight got out of my way. I was mad a plenty, and I already always had plenty of temper. So while I had everybody scared and excited I left and never did go back.

Sarah Waggoner MO-99

"My, but the Indians was thick when I fust come here. And there was buffalo; and there was deer; and there was quail jes' thick. I wasn't skeered none of de Indians, and I ain't skeered of nothin' now.

Slaves wasn't hardly ever allowed to look in de door of de school house, so we couldn't learn to read and write. When I was freed Pap tried to learn me evenin's to count my fingers. He made me sit by the fireplace and learn to count and learn about money so's de white folks couldn't cheat me after I was free. After I was free one of Mr. Howard's boys taught me my letters and helped me learn to read some.

James Wilson MO-101

"I was born in Charleston, South Carolina, December 25, 1850. John Wilson was my owner. He owned more than 700 slaves and a terrible big plantation where he raised cotton, rice, corn, and cattle. Bless your soul, daughter, he was a hard task master, yes he was. He owned big ships, both kinds, for freight and passengers. He

kept me running on dem boats from de time I was 10 years old till I was 16. We sailed everywhere. From New York to Rome, Jerusalem, Sweden, France and everywhere under de sun transporting passengers, clothing, cotton, and everything from one country to another. I handled de sails. It certainly was hard work for me because I was so young, but I was an expert wid dem sails just de same. Yes, I was.

Mintie Gilbert Wood MO-102

I 'member when Marse Gilbert's daughter Miss Rebecca married Marse Maples, they lived 'bout 8 or 10 miles from her daddy's farm, and she use to come home ever so often to visit. She looked so fine de slaves working in de field see her coming dey all stop and rest on der hoe to look at her pass by on her way to see her mamma, and she would tell 'em, you niggers better pray my father never die. Cause if he died, I wouldn't 'low none you niggers to lift your heads from de time you go to work till you quit. My niggers work and never stop. Marse Gilbert gave her 4 slaves as a wedding present, and they had a hard time, but her parents was mighty fine.

None of us never cared for Miss Rebecca. She made her slaves eat wid de hogs, even poured der milk in the hog trough and de hogs and slaves ate and drink together. She was worse dan de whole family of Gilberts.

Sim Younger MO-104

"My father," he replied in answer to my question, "was Charles Younger, the originator of the Younger family in Missouri, and grand father of Cole, Bob, and Jim Younger. My father was my mother's master. She was a Simpson. I knew Cole Younger well."

Cole, Bob, and Jim Younger, known as "The Younger Brothers", were notorious outlaws. It is recorded that Sim's father was the Younger who operated a canoe ferry across the Missouri River from Randolph Bluffs, in 1821, to what is now Kansas City, then known as Chouteau's Landing.

"My father died when I was five years old, and left mother a farm on which my brothers and sisters are still living.

"If I could choose my weapons for the next war, I would choose doughnuts, to be thrown at each other across the Atlantic."