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241 - John Archie Moseley, Ex-slave, Marshall Co.
FC
Netty Fant Thompson

the rest of the time.

"I have been farming all my life. I own 160 acres seven miles from Holly Springs. The Government is going to sell sixty acres and then I'll own the other 100 acres clear."

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Foiklore

Charlie Moses, age 84, residing in North negro quarters of Brookhaven, is an exceptionally intelligent old negro, possessing the eloquence and abundant vocabulary of all negro preachers, to which vocation he was called. At present, confined to his bed because of the many ailments of old age, his mind is nevertheless clear and his speech intelligible. Emaciated in form his weight appears to be about 140 pounds, height 6 feet 1 inch. He lives in a neat, five room cabin and is lovingly waited on by his daughter, Ceilia. The civil war and slavery days are not pleasant topics to him. His story unfurls the bitterness that lies in many an old slaves' heart.

"When I gets ta' thinkin' back on them days I feels like risin' out o' this heah' bed an' tellin' everybody 'bout the harsh treatment us colored folks was given. My Marster was mean an' cruel an' I hates him, hates him. The God Almighty has condemned him to eternal fiah', of that I is certain. Even the cows and horses on his plantation wuz scaired out o' their minds when he comes' neah' to them. Oh Lordy! I can tell you plenty 'bout the things he done to us po' niggahs.

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We wuz no better than one of his hound dawgs to him. An' sometimes he didn't treat us as good as he did them.

His name wuz Jim Rankin an' he lived out on a plantation ovah' in Marion county. I wuz born an' raised on his place an' I specks I wuz 'bout 12 yeah' oid at the time of the wah.

Ole' man Rankin wuked us like animals. He had a right smart plantation an' he kep' all his niggahs out in the fiel a 'wukin', ceptin' one house boy. He say-----

'Niggahs is ment to wuk'. Dats' what I paid my good money for 'em ta' do.'

He had two daughters an' two sons an' them an' his po' wife had all the wuk' in the house ta' do, 'cause he won't waste no niggah on 'em to help out. His family wuz as scaired o' him as we wuz an' they live all their lives under his whip. No suh! No suh! There warn't no meaner man in the world than ole' man Rankin.

We had our separate cabins an at sunset all of us would go in an shet' the door an pray the Lord, Marster Jim don' call us out.

Iffen one o' the niggahs done some thin' ta' displease the Marster, which wuz mos' ever' day, he whip 'em till they

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mos' die an' then he'd kick 'em 'roun in the dust. He even take his gun and before the niggah have to time to open his mouth he'd jest stan' there an' shoot him down.

We'd get up at dawn to go to the fiels and we'd take our pails of food wid us an' hang 'em up in a row long by the fence. Many a time when noon come an' we go ta eat our vittals the Marster ud' come walkin' t rough the fiels wid 10 or 12 o' his houn' dawgs an' iffen he looks in de pails an' is displeased wid' what he sees in 'em he takes 'em an' dumps 'em out before our very eyes an' lets the dawgs grap it up. We don' gets nothin' to eat then till we comes home late in the evening. After he leaves we pick up bits o' the food that the dawgs leaves an' eats it. Hongry- hongry- we wuz hongry.

When the wah' came, Marster wuz a Captain of a regiment an' he went away an' staid for a year. When he comes back he even meaner than before. An' now I tells you how he died.

When he comes home, from the wah he staid fuh' two weeks. The night fore he leaves to go back he came out on his front porch to smoke his pipe an' he wuz a 'standin' leanin' up agin the railing, when somebody sneak up in the darkness an' shoot him three times. Oh my Lord! He died the nex' mawmin'. We nevah knowed who done it.

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Sometimes the calvary come stay at the house an' the Missus 'ud have to tend to 'em an see they gets plenty food an' fresh horses.

The Missus come to us an' told us one day, we is free. My Pappy wuz Allen Rankin, an' my Mammy wuz Caine. There wuz twelve o' us chillun. Nine boys an' 3 girls. When we free, our Pappy wuz daid. Soon after that my Mammy pak' all us chillun up an' we travel on a cotton wagon to Covington La. We all wuk on a farm there for 'bout a year. Then we move to Mandeville, La. an' wuk on a farm there, all cept me. I hired out to Mr. Charlie Duson, a baker. Then we move to a farm above Baton Rouge an' wuk' for Mr. Abe Manning. We jest travel all ovah frum one place to the other.

Then I gets a letter from a fren' o' mine in Gainesville Miss. sayin' he has a job for me on a boat, haulin lumber up the coast to Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Gulfport, an' all them coast towns. So I wuked out of Gainesville on dis boat for bout two years. I lost tract of my family then an' nevah sees them anymo'.

In the year 1870 I gets the call from the Lord to go out an' preach. So I left Gainesville an' traveled to Summit,

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Miss. where another fren' o' mine lives. I preached the words o' the Lord an' traveled all over frum one place to 'nother.

In 1873 I got married an' decided to settle in Brookhaven. I preached an' all my flock believe in me. I bought up this house an' the other two on each side of it, an' heah' I raise my 7 chillun in the way of the Lord. They is all in different pahts o' the country now, but I sees one o' em every now an' then.

Las' April de' Lord sees fit to put me a' bed an' I been aillin with the misery ever since.

Slavery days wuz bitter, bitter, an' I shall never fo'git the sufferin'. The young 'uns now a 'days is happy an' don' know 'bout wah' times, but I does, an' I want to tell you now I pray the Lord to let us be free always. God Almighty nevah ment human beings to be lak animals. Us niggahs has a soul, an' a heart, an' a mine an we is'nt lak a dawg or a horse. I didn't spec' nothin' outten freedom septin' peace an' happiness an' the right to go my way as I please. An' that is the way the Almighty wants it.

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