

**ALEX WOODSON**  
**905 E. 4th St. New Albany, Ind.**  
**Interviewed by Iris Cook**  
**Dist 4 Floyd Co.**

Observation of Writer

Alex Woodson is an old light skinned darkey, he looks to be between 80 and 85, it is hard to tell his age, and colored folks hardly ever do know their correct age. I visited him in his little cottage and had a long talk with him and his wife (his second). "Planted the first one." They run a little grocery in the front room of the cottage. But the stock was sadly run down. Together with the little store and his pension these old folks manage to get along.

Alex Woodson was born at Woodsonville, in Hart County, Kentucky, just across Green River from Munfordville. He was a good-sized boy, possibly 7 years or more when Freedom was declared. His master was "Old Master" Sterrett who had about a 200-acre place and whose son in law Tom Williams ran a store on this place. When Williams married Sterrett's daughter he was given Uncle Alex and his mother and brother as a present. Williams was then known as "Young Master."

When war came Old Master gave his (Woodson's) mother a big roll of bills, "greenbacks as big as your arm", to keep for him, and was forced to leave the neighborhood. After the war the old darkey returned the money to him intact.

Uncle Alex remembers his mother taking him and other children and running down the river bank and hiding in the woods all night when the soldiers came. They were Morgan's men and took all available cattle and horses in the vicinity and beat the woods looking for Yankee soldiers. Uncle Alex said he saw Morgan at a distance on his big horse and he "was sure a mighty fine looker."

Sometimes the Yankee soldiers would come riding along and they took things too.

When the War was over old Master came back home and the negroes continued to live on at the place as usual, except for a few that wanted to go North. Old Master lived in a great big house with all his family and the Negroes lived in another good sized house or quarters, all together. There were a few cabins.

Barbecues! My, we sure used to have them, yes ma'am, we did! Folks would come for miles around. Would roast whole hogs and cows, and folks would sing, and eat and drink whiskey. The white folks had them but we helped and had fun too. Sometimes we would have one ourselves.

Used to have rail splitting and wood chopping. The men would work all day, and get a pile of wood as big as a house. At noon they'd stop and eat a big meal that the women folks had fixed up for them. Those were some times, I've spent too many a one.

I remember we used to go to revivals sometimes, down near Horse Cave. Everybody got religion and we sure had some times. We don't have that kind of time anymore. I remember I went back down to one of those revivals years afterward. Most of the folks I used to know was dead or gone. The preacher made me sit up front with him, and he asked me to preach to the folks. But I said that no, God hadn't made me that away and I wouldn't do it.

I've seen Abraham Lincoln's cabin many a time when I was young. It set up on a high hill, and I've been to the spring under the hill lots of times. The house was on the Old National Road then. I hear they've fixed it all up now. I haven't been there for years.

After the war when I grew up, I married and settled on the old place. I remember the only time I got beat in a horse trade. A sneaking nigger from down near Horse Cave sold me a mule. That mule was just naturally no count. He would lay right down in the plow. One day after I had worked with him and tried to get him to work right, I got mad. I said to my wife, Belle, I'm going to get rid of that mule if I have to trade him for a cat. And I led him off. When I came back I had another mule and \$15 to boot. This mule she was sure skinny but when I fattened her up you wouldn't have known her.

Finally, I left the old place and we come north to Indiana. We settled here and I've been here for 50 years about. I worked in the old Rolling Mill. And I've been an officer in the Baptist Church at 3rd and Main for 41 years.

Do I believe in ghosts? (Here his second wife gave a sniff) Well ma'am I don't believe in ghosts but I do in spirits. (another disgusted sniff from the second wife) I remember one time just after my first wife died I was sitting right in that chair you're sitting in now. The front door opened and in came a big old grey mule, and I didn't have any grey mule. In she came just as easy like, put one foot down slowly, and then the other, and then the other I said 'Mule get out here, you are going through that floor, sure as you're born. Get out that door.' Mule looked at me sad-like and then just disappeared. And in its place was my first wife, in the clothes she was buried in. She came up to me and I put my arms around her, but I couldn't feel anything (another sniff from the second wife) and I said, 'Babe, what you want?' Then she started to get littler and littler and lower and finally went right away through the floor. It was her spirit that's what it was. (Rats said the second wife.)

Another time she came to me by three knocks and made me get up and sleep on another bed where it was better sleeping'.

I like to go back down in Kentucky on visits as the folks there won't take a thing for bed and vittles. Here they are so selfish, won't even give a drink of water away.

Yes, ma'am, the flood got us. Me and my wife here, we went away and stayed for two months. Was 5 feet in this house, and if it ever gets in here again, we're going down in Kentucky and never coming back no more.

The old man and his wife bowed me out the front door and asked me to come back again and we'd talk some more about old times.