

**GEORGE MORRISON**

**25 East 5th St., New Albany, Ind.**

**Interviewed by: Iris Cook**

**District 4, Floyd County**

**Observation of the writer**

This old negro, known as "Uncle George" by the neighbors, is very particular about propriety. He allows no woman in his house unless accompanied by a man. He says "It just aint the proper thing to do", but he came to a neighbor's for a little talk.

"I was born in Union County, Kentucky, near Morganfield. My master was Mr. Ray, he made me call him Mr. Ray, wouldn't let me call him Master. He said I was his little free negro."

When asked if there were many slaves on Mr. Ray's farm, he said, "Yes ma'am, there were seven cabins of us. I was the oldest child in our family. Mr. Ray said he didn't want me in the tobacco, so I stayed at the house and waited on the women folk and went after the cows when I was big enough. I carried my stick over my shoulder, for I was afraid of snakes.

Mr. Ray was always very good to me, he liked to play with me, cause I was so full of tricks and so mischievous. He gave me a pair of boots with brass toes. I shined them up every day, til you could see your face in them.

There were two ladies at the house, the Missus and her daughter, who was old enough to keep company when I was a little boy. They used to have me drive them to church. I'd drive the horses. They'd say, 'George, you come in here to church.' But I always slipped off with the other boys who were standing around outside waiting for their folks, and played marbles.

Yes, ma'am, the War sure did affect my family. My father fought for the north. He got shot in his side, but it finally got all right. He saved his money and came north after the war and got a good job. But, I saw them fellows from the south take my Uncle. They put his clothes on him right in the yard and took him with them to fight. And even the white folks, they all cried. But he came back, he wasn't hurt but he wasn't happy in his mind like my pappy was.

Yes ma'am, I would rather live in the North. The South's all right but some ways I just don't feel down there like I do up here.

No ma'am, I was never married. I don't believe in getting married unless you have plenty of money. So many married folks don't do anything but fuss and fight. Even my father and mother always spatted and I never liked that and so I said to myself - what do I want to get married for? I'm happier just living by myself.

Yes Ma'am. I remember when people used to take wagon loads of corn to the market in Louisville, and they would bring back home lots of groceries and things. A colored man told me he had come north to the market in Louisville with his master, and was working hard unloading the corn when a white man walks up to him, shows him some money and asks him if he wanted

to be free? He said he stopped right then and went with the man, who hid him in his wagon under the provisions and they crossed the Ohio River right on the ferry. That's the way lots of them got across here.

Did I ever hear of any ghosts? Yes ma'am I have. I hear noises and I saw something once that I never could figure out. I was going through the woods one day, and came up suddenly in a clear patch of ground. There sat a little boy on a stump, all by himself, there in the woods. I asked him who he was & was he lost, and he never answered me. Just sat there, looking at me. All of a sudden he ups and runs, and I took out after him. He ran behind a big tree, and when I got up to where I last saw him, he was gone. And there sits a great big brown man twice as big as me, on another stump. He never says a word, just looks at me. And then I got away from there, yes ma'am I really did.

A man I knew saw a ghost once and he hit at it. He always said he 'wasn't afraid of no ghost', but that ghost hit him, and hit him so hard it knocked his face to one side and the last time I saw him it was still that way. No ma'am, I don't really believe in ghosts, but you know how it is, I live by myself and I don't like to talk about them, for you never can tell what they might do.

Lady you ought to hear me rattle bones, when I was young. I can't do it much now for my wrists are too stiff. When they played Turkey in the Straw how we all used to dance and cut up. We'd cut the pigeon wing, and buck the wind [HW: wing?], and all. But I got rheumatism in my feet now and ain't much good anymore, but I sure have done lots of things and had lots of fun in my time.