

GEORGE THOMPSON
651 North Young St., Franklin, IN
Interviewed by William R. Mays
Dist. No. 4, Johnson Co.
Aug. 2, 1937

My name is George Thompson, I was born in Monroe County, Kentucky near the Cumberland River Oct. 8, 1854, on the Manfred Furgeson plantation, who owned about 50 slaves. Mister Furgerson [TR: before, Furgeson] was a preacher and had three daughters and was kind to his slaves.

I was quite a small boy when our family, which included an older sister, was sold to Ed. Thompson in Metcalfe Co. Kentucky, who owned about 50 other slaves, and as was the custom then we were given the name of our new master, "Thompson".

I was hardly twelve years old when slavery was abolished, yet I can remember at this late date most of the happenings as they existed at that time.

I was so young and inexperienced when freed I remained on the Thompson plantation for four years after the war and worked for my board and clothes as coach boy and any other odd jobs around the plantation.

I have no education, I can neither read nor write, as a slave I was not allowed to have books. On Sundays, I would go into the woods and gather ginseng which I would sell to the doctors for from 10¢ to 15¢ a pound, and with this money, I would buy a book that was called the Blue Back Speller. Our master would not allow us to have any books and when we were lucky enough to own a book we would have to keep it hidden, for if our master would find us with a book he would whip us and take the book from us. After receiving three severe whippings I gave up and never again tried for any learning, and to this day I can neither read nor write.

Slaves were never allowed off of their plantation without a written pass, and if caught away from their plantation without a pass by the Paddyrollers or guerillas (who were a band of ruffians) they were whipped.

As there were no oil lamps or candles, another black boy and I were stationed at the dining table to hold grease lamps for the white folks to see to eat. And we would use brushes to shoo away the flies.

In 1869 I left the plantation to go on my own. I landed in Hartt County, Ky. and went to work for Mr. George Parish in the tobacco fields at \$25.00 per year and two suits of clothes; after working two years for Mr. Parish I left. I drifted from place to place in Alabama and Mississippi, working first at one place and then another, and finally drifted into Franklin in 1912 and went to

work on the Fred Murry farm on Hurricane road for 10 years. I afterward worked for Ashy Furgerson, a house mover.

I have lived at my present address, 651 North Young St. since coming to Franklin.

(Can furnish photograph if wanted) [TR: no photograph found.]