

**JOSEPH MOSLEY**

**2637 Boulevard Place, District #6, Marion County**

**Interviewed by Anna Pritchett**

**1200 Kentucky Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana**

Joseph Mosley, one of twelve children, was born March 15, 1853, fourteen miles from Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

His master, Tim Mosley, was a slave trader. He was supposed to have bought and sold 10,000 slaves. He would go from one state to another buying slaves, bringing in as many as 75 or 80 slaves at one time.

The slaves would be handcuffed to a chain, each chain would link 16 slaves. The slaves would walk from Virginia to Kentucky and some from Mississippi to Virginia.

In front of the chained slaves would be an overseer on horseback with a gun and dogs. In the back of the chained slaves would be another overseer on horseback with a gun and dogs. They would see that no slave escaped.

Joseph's father was the shoemaker for all the farmhands and all adult workers. He would start in September making shoes for the year. First the shoes for the folks in the house, then the workers.

No slave child ever wore shoes, summer or winter.

The father, mother, and all the children were slaves in the same family, but not in the same house. Some with the daughters, some with the sons, and so on. No one brother or sister would be allowed to visit with the others.

After the death of Tim Moseley, little Joseph was given to a daughter. He was seven years old; he had to pick up chips, tend the cows, and do small jobs around the house; he wore no clothing except a shirt.

Little Joseph did not see his mother after he was taken to the home of the daughter until he was set free at the age of 13.

The master was very unkind to the slaves; they sometimes would have nothing to eat and would eat from the garbage.

On Christmas morning Joseph was told he could go see his mother; he did not know he was free, and couldn't understand why he was given the first suit of clothes he had ever owned and a pair of shoes. He dressed in his new finery and was started out on his six-mile journey to his mother.

He was so proud of his new shoes; after he had gotten out of sight, he stopped and took his shoes off as he did not want them dirty before his mother had seen them, and walked the rest of the way in his bare feet.

After their freedom, the family came to Indiana.

The mother died here, in Indianapolis, at the age of 105.

### **Interviewer's Comment**

Mr. Moseley, who has been in Indianapolis for 35 years, has been paralyzed for the last four years. He and a daughter room with a Mrs. Turner.

He has a very nice clean room; a very pleasant old man was very glad to talk of his past life.

He gets a pension of \$18.00 a month, and said it was not easy to get along on that little amount, and wondered if the government was ever going to increase his pension.

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Indianapolis, Indiana