

MRS. PARTHENA ROLLINS
848 Camp Street (Rear)
District #6, Marion County, Indiana
Interviewed by Anna Pritchett
1200 Kentucky Avenue

Mrs. Parthena Rollins was born in Scott County, Kentucky, in 1853, a slave of Ed Duvalle, who was always very kind to all of his slaves, never whipping any of the adults, but often whipped the children to correct them, never beating them. They all had to work, but never overworked, and always had plenty to eat.

She remembers so many slaves, who were not as fortunate as they were.

Once when the "nigger traders" came through, there was a girl, the mother of a young baby; the traders wanted the girl, but would not buy her because she had the child. Her owner took her away, took the baby from her, and beat it to death right before the mother's eyes, then brought the girl back to the sale without the baby, and she was bought immediately.

Her new master was so pleased to get such a strong girl who could work so well and so fast.

The thoughts of the cruel way of putting her baby to death preyed on her mind to such an extent, she developed epilepsy. This angered her new master, and he sent her back to her old master and forced him to refund the money he had paid for her.

Another slave had displeased his master for some reason, he was taken to the barn and killed and was buried right in the barn. No one knew of this until they were set free, as the slaves who knew about it were afraid to tell for fear of the same fate befalling on them.

Parthena also remembers slaves being beaten until their backs were blistered. The overseers would then open the blisters and sprinkle salt and pepper in the open blisters, so their backs would smart and hurt all the more.

Many times, slaves would be beaten to death, thrown into sinkholes, and left for the buzzards to swarm and feast on their bodies.

So many of the slaves she knew were half-fed and half-clothed, and treated so cruelly, that it "would make your hair stand on ends."

Interviewer's Comment

Mrs. Rollins is in poor health all broken up with rheumatiz.

She lives with a daughter and grandson and said she could hardly talk of the happenings of the early days, because of the awful things her folks had to go through

Submitted December 21, 1937

Anatolia, Indiana