

Slave Narrative

State: Missouri **Interviewee:** Mundy, Lewis

Lewis Mundy, now living on West Center Street, Hannibal, Missouri, was born in slavery on the farm of John Wright, five miles north of La Belle, Lewis County, Missouri. He has lived in Hannibal more than thirty years, and has a wide acquaintance among both whites and colored people. The following is his story of his life.

"Mr. Wright had eleven slaves, my mother and ten of us children. Mr. Wright had eight children. My father was owned by Billy Graves, whose farm was joined to de master's farm. I don't know where he come from, but mother was brought here by de Wrights from Virginia. Our master and mistress was good to us, but of course my own mother had to whip me often. She used a whip made from twisted buckbrush twigs and did it sting!

"I worked in de fields most generally. When I was small I rode one of de oxen and harrowed de fields. When I was about ten or eleven I plowed with oxen. I've plowed many times with a moldboard plow with an iron share on it.

"We never wanted for clothes very bad. We wore long shirts Dem reached to de knees until we was twelve or fourteen years old. Dem wool shirts sure was warm. We had one pair of shoes a year.

Many times I done went after de cows barefoot when dere was more dan a foot of snow on de ground. It didn't seem to hurt me. I was toughened to it.

"After we was freed mother stayed with master for about a year, den she moved over toward Newark and wrked out till she got straightened out so she could keep house for herself. I stayed dere for a while longer until I got work on a farm at fity cents a dey. After a while dey paid me seventy-five cents a day. We didn't get nothin' from our master after de war. I 'member de Bowans, though, give dere slaves eighty acres of land.

"I 'members dere was a Ku Klux Klan in de county, but dey never bothered me none. I tended to my own business and never bothered nobody. I never was arrested in my life and I never gives de policemen no trouble.

"I got married when I was about twenty and settled in Jetto in Knox County and worked on a farm. We had two children. One of dem died years ago, and I am living here with my other daughter. After a while we moved to Palmyra. I worked 'round on farms until about 1903, den we moved hera to Hannibal. I worked in de Burlington shops for seventeen years, till dey told me I was too old to work any more. I is getting a pension now for more dan a year. Dat sure 'nough helps a lot.

"I has voted ever since I was old enough. Dey used to tell me how to vote. I always belonged to de Baptist Church and belongs to de Nelping Nand Paptist now. My mistress belonged to de old time Christian Church and I used to drive her to church with a hey mare she had.

"We used to sing, 'I Am Bound for the Fromised Land', and 'Heart (Hark) From The Tombs Lcurnful Sound', My mother used to sing, 'You All cught To Have Been There,' 'Roll, Jordan, Roll', and 'Do, Lord, Do Remember Me.' Dey don't sing them old songs no more.

"Mankind! De young folks now days ain't like we used to be. Why, in Monticello dey used to have a log jail, but now dey is got one made of stone and iron. Dey just can't hold 'em no more. I guess it's right dat dis world is growing weaker and wiser. But de young folks has a better chance. Look at de big fine schools dey has now. Dey ought to get along better dan dey do."