

Joseph Ringo  
Ex-Slave  
86 Years

Minnick  
District # 6  
Clark County  
Racial Group  
File Copied 1-15-41  
b.w.

"I was bawn en Mason County, Kaintucky, en my father en mother wuz Isaac en Ann Ringo."

"Us belonged ter John French, en he didn' have many slaves. He jes' had Eran Smith, en mother en six of us chillun, me, Bill, Harriet, Henry, Eddie, en Milford."

"Father was give his freedom, en he try ter git us en slip us away, but dey caught on ter him, en would'nt let him come a near any more."

"French had a fair plantation; I reckon dey wuz bout 300 acres. He raised tobacker, wheat en cawn, en all de vegetables us used, en hogs en some cattle."

"His house wuz er eight room, weather boarded log cabin. He had two girls en one boy."

"Our cabin didn' set fur fum de house, en Eran's cabin wuz right close ter our'n. Dat cabin wuzn't comfu'table a tall."

"I'd up at four in de mornin's, and when de weather wuz good fer de cows ter sleep out en er pasture, I'd go drive em in fer ter milk. Many de time I'd stan' en er cow bed ter wahm my feet. Us didn' git but one pair of shoes er year, en dey had ter las' us when de winter set en."

"I member when de Yankee sojers wuz campin' roun Minerva,

Kaintucky, six of em come up ter de big house one day, en put dey hosses en er stable, en feeds em, en den dey lays roun' on er grass. Finely, dey got up offen er groun' en goes en de house en ask fer somethin' ter eat. Ole Miss seed ter dey gittin' food, kaze she wuz feared dey'd do some damage ef dey didn' get it."

"I member Marse John callin' us one mornin' en he set on er stile en tole us all wuz free, en he says, "Now what air you all goin' ter do. He offer Eran \$ 150.00 a year en close en board, Bill en me he offers \$25.00 a year en board en keep, en mother she is to git \$1.50 a week en er place fer her en de chillun, en close en er home fer em."

"Us all stayed fer one year, den mother en all of em goes 'way cept me. I stayed on fer eleven years after dat. Marse John French he raised my wages ebber year, en I done save all I earns, or mos' of it."

"Mother en de chillun done settle en Aberdeen, Ohio. I went up ter Decater, Ohio, atter quittin' French's. I lived en Decater er short time, en finely I married en 1899. My wife she been daid fer years. I lived here en Springfield 25 years.

"I knows folks seem ter b'lieve lots er strange tales, but me I nebber did b'lieve dat stuff. Brown County, Ohio, is er place where folks b'lieve all kines er superstitions."

"Dey used to mel all kines er home remdies fer ailmen's;

red pepper tea fer colds, en oak bark en hickory bark fer stomnick ails, en but, oh, chile, I cant member all sech home doctorin'."

"I nebber went ter church till after freedom, en nebber seen no baptizin's till den."

"I spose mos' folks heerd of Linum en mos' all er de great men, kaze folks does lots er readin'. I done heerd o' lots of em, en I dont eben know how ter read."

"I tell you its great ter see how my folks has progressed en de time sence freedom; jus' startin' off wid no learnin' nur nothin', en den 'complish t'ings like dey's did. But dey got lots more ter do, yet."

Interviewed at his residence, 812 Diebert Avenue

Editor's note:

Joseph Ringo is 86, very dark in color, short and heavy set. He is bald, with a smooth plump face, has a hearty laugh and speaks with a slow Kentucky drawl. He walks with the aid of a cane.