

Interview with Mr. John W. Fields, Ex-Slave of Civil War Period
September 17, 1937

Interviewer: Cecil C. Miller

Link: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snvoices01.html>

My name is John W. Fields and I'm eighty-nine (89) years old. I was born March 27, 1848 in Owensburg, Ky. That's 115 miles below Louisville, Ky. There was 11 other children besides myself in my family. When I was six years old, all of us children were taken from my parents, because my master died and his estate had to be settled. We slaves were divided by this method. Three disinterested persons were chosen to come to the plantation and together they wrote the names of the different heirs on a few slips of paper. These slips were put in a hat and passed among us slaves. Each one took a slip and the name on the slip was the new owner. I happened to draw the name of a relative of my master who was a widow. I can't describe the heartbreak and horror of that separation. I was only six years old and it was the last time I ever saw my mother for longer than one night. Twelve children taken from my mother in one day. Five sisters and two brothers went to Charleston, Virginia, one brother and one sister went to Lexington, Ky., one sister went to Hartford, Ky., and one brother and myself stayed in Owensburg, Ky. My mother was later allowed to visit among us children for one week ob each year, so she could only remain a short time at each place.

Observe	Reflect	Question
Briefly summarize this interview.	List something new you learned from this interview.	List three questions this interview raised for you. 1. 2.
List any unfamiliar words or concepts.	How did this interview make you feel?	3.

Ex-Slave Stories (Texas)

July 24, 1937

Link: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snvoices06.html>

The white chillun tries teach me to read and write but I didn' larn much, 'cause I allus workin'. Mother was workin' in the house, and she cooked too. She say she used to hide in the chimney corner and listen to what the white folks say. When freedom was 'clared, marster wouldn' tell 'em, but mother she hear him tellin' mistus that the slaves was free but they didn' know it and he's not gwineter tell 'em till he makes another crop or two. When mother hear that she say she slip out the chimney corner and crack her heels together four times and shouts, 'I's free, I's free.' Then she runs to the field, 'gainst marster's will and tol' all the other slaves and they quit work. Then she run away and in the night she slip into a big ravine near the house and have them bring me to her. Marster, he come out with his gun and shot at mother but she run down the ravine and gits away with me.

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