

Interviewer Mrs. Bernice Bowden
 Person interviewed Tom Windham
725 Missouri, Pine Bluff, Arkansas
 Age 92

"I was twenty-one years old when the war was settled. My mother and my grandmother kep' my age up and after the death of them I knowed how to handle it myself.

"My old master's name was Butler and he was pretty fair to his darkies. He give em plenty to eat and wear.

"I was born and raised in Indian Territory and emigrated from there to Atlanta, Georgia when I was about twelve or thirteen. We lived right in Atlanta. I cleaned up round the house. Yes ma'm, that's what I followed. When the Yankees come to Atlanta they just forced us into the army. After I got into the army and got used to it, it was fun -- just like meat and bread. Yankees treated me good. I was sorry when it broke up. When the bugle blowed we knowed our business. Sometimes, the age I is now, I wish I was in it. Father Abraham Lincoln was our President. I knowed the war was to free the colored folks. I run away from my white folks is how come I was in the Yankee army. I was in the artillery. That deafened me a whole lot and I lost these two fingers on my left hand -- that's all of my joints that got broke.

"Before the war my white folks was good to us. I had a better time than I got now.

"My father and mother was sold away from me, but old mistress couldn't rest without em and went and got em back.

They stayed right there till they died. Us folks was treated well. I think we should have our liberty cause us ain't hogs or horses -- us is human flesh.

"When I was with the Yankees, I done some livin'.

"I went to school two months in my life. I should a gone longer but I found where I could get next to a dollar so I quit. If I had education now it might a done me some good.

"I used to be in a brass band. I like a brass band, don't make no difference where I hear it.

"There was one song we played when I was in the army. It was:

'Rasslin Jacob, don't weep
Weepin' Mary, don't weep.
Before I'd be a slave
I'd be buried in my grave,
Go home to my father and be saved.'

The Rebels was hot after us then. Another one we used to sing was:

'My old mistress promised me
When she die, she'd set me free.'

"After the war I continued to work around the white folks and yes ma'm, I seen the Ku Klux many a time. They bothered me sometimes but they soon let me alone. They was a few Yankees about and they come together and made the Ku Klux stay in their place.

"One time after the war I went to Ohio and stayed three months but it was too cold for me. Man I worked for was named Harper and as good a man as ever broke a piece of bread.

"I come back South and learned how to farm. I been here in this country of Arkansas a long time. I hoped clean up this place (Pine Bluff) and make a town of it.

"I got a daughter and two sisters alive in Africa today -- in Liberia. I went there after we was free. I liked it. Just the thoughts of bein' where Christ traveled -- that's the good part of it. They furnished us transportation to go to Africa after the war and a lot of the colored folks went. I come back cause I had a lot of kin here, but I sent my daughter and two sisters there and they're alive there today."

FOLKLORE SUBJECTSName of interviewer Martin - BarkerSubject Ex-Slave

Story.

My master was an Indian. Lewis Butler of Oklahoma. I was born and raised in Muskogee, Okla.

All of marse Butler's people were Creek Indians. They owned a large plantation and raised vegetables. They lived in tepees, had floors and were set on a lot and a wall boarded up around them. This was done so that they could hide the slaves they had stolen.

I was twelve or thirteen years old, when the Indians had a small war. They wouldnt allow us to fight. If we did, we were punished. They had a place and made us work. I went to school two months also a little at night. Cant read nor write. I am all alone now here in America.

I have a daughter in Ethiopia, teaching school, also two sisters.

I served in several wars and I have been to Ethiopia. We left Monroe, LA., took water, then went back by gunboat to Galveston. The Government took us over and brought us back. After the Civil war was over the Indians let the slaves go.

Tom Windham

FOLKLORE SUBJECTS

I had an Indian wife and wore Indian dress and when I went to Milford, Tenn., I had to send the outfit home to Okla.

I had long hair until 1931.

My Indians believed in our God. They held their meetings in a large tent. They believed in salvation and damnation, and in Heaven and Hell.

My idea of Heaven is that it is a holy place with God. We will walk in Heaven just as on earth. As in him we believe, so shall we see.

The earth shall burn, and the old earth shall pass away and the new earth will be created. The saints will return and live on, that is the ones who go away now.

The new earth is when Jesus will come to earth and reign. Every one has two spirits. One that God kills and the other an evil spirit. I have had communication with my dead wife twice since I been in Pine Bluff. Her spirit come to me at night, calling me, asking whar wuz baby?

That meant our daughter what is across the water.

My first wifes name was Arla Windham. My second wife was just part Indian. I have seen spirits of friends just as they were put away. I shore believe in ghosts. Their language is different from ours. I knew my wife's voice cause she called me "Tommy".

Information by Tom Windham
 Place of residence 1221 Georgia St. Age 87

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FOLKLORE SUBJECTS

Name of Interviewer Bernice BowdenSUBJECT Apparitions

Story- Information (If not enough space on this page, add page.)

"Yes ma'm , I believe in spirits - you got two spirits - one bad and one good, and when you die your bad spittit here on this earth.

Now my mother comes to see me once in awhile at night. She been dead till her bones is bleached, but she comes and tells me to be a good boy. I always been obedient to old and young. She tell me to be good and she banish from me.

My grandmother been to see me once.

Old Father Abraham Lincoln, I've seen him since he been dead too. I got a gun old Father Abraham give me right out o' his own hand at Vicksburg. I'm goin' to keep it till I die too.

Yes ma'm, I know they is spirits.

This information given by Tom Windham (c)Place of Residence 723 Missouri St. Pine Bluff, Ark.Occupation None (AGE 92)