

MOSE HURSEY believes he is about eighty-two years old. He was born in slavery on a plantation in Louisiana, and was brought to Texas by his parents after they were freed. Mose has been a preacher most of his life, and now believes he is appointed by God to be "Head Prophet of the World." He lives with his daughter at 1120 Tenth St., Dallas, Texas.

"I was born somewhere in Louisiana, but can't recollect the place exact, 'cause I was such a little chap when we left there. But I heard my mother and father say they belonged to Marse Morris, a fine gentleman, with everything fine. He sold them to Marse Jim Boling, of Red River County, in Texas. So they changes their name from Morris to Boling, Liza Boling and Charlie Boling, they was. Marse Boling didn't buy my brother and sister, so that made me the oldest child and the earliest one.

"The Bolings had a 'nermous big house and a 'nermous big piece of land. The house was the finest I ever seen, white and two-story. He had about sixty slaves, and he thought a powerful lot of my folks, 'cause they was good workers. My mother, special, was a powerful 'ligious woman.

"We lived right well, considerin'. We had a little log house like the rest of the niggers and I played round the place. Eatin' time come, my mother brung a pot of peas or beans and cornbread or side meat. I had 'nother brother and sister comin' 'long then, and we had tin plates and cups and knives and speens, and allus set to our feed.

"We had 'nough of clothes, sich as they was. I wore shirttails out of duckings till I was a big boy. All the little niggers were shirttails. My mother had fair to middlin' cotten dresses.

"All week the niggers worked plantin' and hoein' and carin' for the livestock. They raised cotton and corn and veg'tables, and mules and horses and haws and sheep. On Sundays they had meetin', sometimes at our house, sometimes at 'nether house. Right fine meetin's, too. They'd preach and pray and sing -- shout, too. I heard them git up with a powerful force of the spirit, clappin' they hands and walkin' round the place. They'd shout, 'I got the glory. I got that old time 'ligion in my heart.' I seen some powerful 'figurations of the spirit in them days. Uncle Billy preached to us and he was right good at preachin' and nat'rally a good man, anyways. We'd sing:

"Sisters, won't you help me bear my cross,
Help me bear my cross,
I been done wear my cross.
I been done with all things here,
'Cause I reach over Zion's Hill.
Sisters, won't you please help bear my cross,
Up ever Zion's hill? "

"I seed a smart number of wagons and mules a-passin' along and some camp along the woods by our place. I heard they was a war and folks was goin' with 'visions and livestock. I wasn't much bigger'n a minute and I was seared clean to my wits.

"Then they's a time when paw says we'll be a-searchin' a place to stay and work on a pay way. They was a consider'ble many niggers left the Belings. The day we went away, which was 'cause 'twas the breakin' up of slavery, we went in the wagen, out the carriage gate in front the Beling's place. As we was leavin', Mr. Beling called me and give me a cup sweet coffee. He thought sensid'ble plenty of me.

"We went to a place called Mantua, or somethin' like that. My paw says he'll make a man of me, and he puts me to breakin' ground and choppin' weed.

Them was bad times. Money was scarce and our feedin' was pore.

"My paw died and maw and me and the children, Nancy and Margina and Jessie and George, moves to a little place right outside Sherman. Maw took in washin' and ironin'. I went one week to school and the teacher said I learned fastest of any boy she ever see. She was a nice, white lady. Maw took me out of school 'cause she needed me at home to tend the other children, so's she could work. I had a powerful yearnin' to read and write, and I studied out'n my books by myself and my friends helped me with the cipherin'.

"I did whatever work I could find to do, but my maw said I was a different meed to the other children. I was allus of a'ligious and serious turn of mind. I was baptised when I was fifteen and then when I was about twenty-five I heard a clear call to preach the Gospel-ward. I went to preachin' the word of Gawd. I get married and raised a family of children, and I farmed and preached.

"I was just a preacher till about thirty years ago, and then Gawd started makin' a prophet out of me. Today I am Mose Hursey, Head Prophet to the World. They is lesser prophets, but I is the main one. I become a great prephet by fastin' and prayin'. I fast Mondays and Wednesdays and Fridays. I know Gawd is feedin' the people through me. I see him in visions and he speaks to me. In 1936 I saw him at Commerce and Jefferson Streets(Dallas) and he had a great banner, sayin', 'All needs a pension.' In August this year I had a great vision of war in the eastern corner of the world. I seen miles of men marchin' and big guns and trenches filled with dead men. Gawd tells me to tell the people to be prepared, 'cause the tides of war is rollin' this way, and all the thousands of millions of dollars they spend agin it ain't goin' to stop it. I live to tell people the word Gawd speaks through me.