

"WILD MAN" ONCE SLAVE

Joe Reddig, Inmate of County
Infirmary, Has Experienced
a Varied Life.

SCALDED FOR LIFE IN STEAMBOAT EXPLOSION.

Received Blotches on Face and
Hands When Steamboat
Boiler Blew Up—Has Played
Part of "Wild Man" in For-
eign Countries.

Into the life of Joe Reddig, 73 years old, colored, there has been crowded more peculiar experiences than in the existence of half a dozen people. A slave during his youth, a deck hand on steamboats, a pioneer of Evansville, he is ending the days of his varied career as a "wild man" in summer and an inmate of the county infirmary in the winter.

Reddig before the Civil war was a slave on a big plantation in North Carolina and worked with 100 others of his race. "They owned us body and soul," he said Saturday. After he was given his liberty he stayed at the plantation until things had quieted somewhat and then he came to Evansville.

He worked on steamboats running into the local harbor, he says.

While he was working on a steamboat the boiler exploded and the boat was sunk near New Orleans. He was scalded over his entire body, face and hands.

Has Been Abroad.

Reddig has traveled many hundreds of miles with the show companies and has even been in foreign countries. He takes the part of the "wild man" and has drawn as many as 30,000 people to one performance in Canada. This happened last year, he says, and it was the largest crowd he had worked before since he has been in the "game."

With the white blotches on his face, his head clean-shaven, wearing a large bear skin or lion skin with a ring in his nose, a large hunk of raw beef and he is ready to play the part of the "wild man" anywhere, he says.

It is also quite essential that he be given plenty of raw beef daily so that he can snarl like the "wild man" he pretends to be, he says. He boasts that while he was with the shows he ate as much raw beef as any lion.

Unless his condition prevents, Reddig says he will again go with the show companies next year and will leave the poor farm in the early spring to again become the "wild man."

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