

WPA Slave Narratives
Alabama
Events: Things Seen and Heard Tell Of
John Sepich, ed.

Charlie Aarons AL-1

Uncle Charlie seemed to look off in the distance and said: "You know, Madam, I never saw a slave rebuked until I came to Mississippi," and I just couldn't understand at first, but he grinned and said: "Lordy, Madam, some of those niggers were onery, too, and a nigger driver was a driver sure enough."

Anthony Abercrombie AL-2

"Well," he said, "Marse Jim had 'bout three hundred slaves, and he hed one mighty bad overseer. But he got killed down on de bank of de creek one night. Dey never did find out who killed him, but Marse Jim always b'lieved de field han's done it. 'Fore dat us niggers useta go down to de creek to wash ourselves, but atter de overseer got killed down dar, us jes' leave off dat washin', 'cause some of 'em seed de overseer's ha'nt down dar floatin' over de creek.

Molly Ammond (Ammonds) AL-3

"Nawsuh! I ain't never seed no slave in chains. Massa Lee was a good man. He had a church built called de brush house, dat had a flo' and some seats, an' a top made outen pine boughs, an' massa's pa, Mr. Cato, would preach eve'y Sunday. We sung songs lak 'I Heered De Voice of Jesus Say,' an' 'I'se Gwine to Die no Mo.' We was all babtized in de creek, but none of us was taught to read or write.

Charity Anderson AL-4

Charity Anderson, who believes she is 101 years old, was born at Bell's Landing on the Alabama River, where her owner, Leslie Johnson, operated a wood-yard, which supplied fuel to the river steamers, and a tavern where travelers whiled away the delays of a dubious riverboat schedule.

"But, honey, de good ole days is now gone foreber. De ole days was raily de good times. How I wish I could go back to de days w'en we lived at Johnson's landing on de riber, when de folks would come to ketch de steamboats and we neber knowed how many to put on breakfas', dinner or supper fo', cause de boats mought be behin' times. I ain't neber had to pay a fare to ride a steamboat needer. I was a good lookin' yaller gal in dem days and rid free wherever I wanted to go.

Tom Baker AL-6

"I was a water boy for fifty fiel' han's dat worked in de sun all day long, an' I hadda carry many a bucket from de spring dat was one fiel' ober from where most of dem was workin'. De spring run down between some willow trees an' it was

powerful cool down dere in de shade. I use' to lie on de moss an' let my bare belly git cool an' put my face in de outlet of de spring an' let de water trickle over my haid. Jus' about de time I gits a little rest one of dem niggers would call: 'Water boy! Bring dat bucket!' Den I grab up de bucket an' run back out in de hot sun.

"One day, on my las' trip, I was mighty tired an' I flop down on dat moss wid de sweat a-drippin' from my body, an' 'fo' I knowed it I done fell slap to sleep. When I woke up, it was almos' dark, an' I couldn't hear de slaves a-singing' in de fiel's, so I knowed dat dey had gone home. I shake my haid, an' look about me, an' my eyes came to res' on a little black bear cub a-drinkin' outen de spring. He so was a cute little boogar an' I made up my mind right den to try an' kotch him. I was jus' a little nigger 'bout ten year old an' didn't have no sense, but I sho' wanted dat little bear. He ain't seed me a-settin' dere, so I snuck up real cautious like, an' afore he knowed it I had dat little debil a-squealin' in my han's. I was jus' about to start home wid him, when I hears a rustlin' in de bushes an' afore I went ten feets, here come a big, black bear a-lopin' along right outen dem willow trees. I drop dat little critter 'caze I knowed dat was his mammy an' she was ravin' mad. When I let de little feller fall it must have hurt him somp'n awful caze he howl mo' dan eber, an' went a limpin' up to his mammy. Well, suh, dat ole woman she got so mad she made fo' me lak two bolts of lightnin', but dese here feets of mine begin a-doin' dere stuff. I knowed she was a-gainin' on me so I lets out a whoop for help. She chased me 'cross dat empty field an' 'bout dat time I seen big Jim a-comin' through a row of cawn. 'Hurry Big Jim,' I calls, 'a bear is atter me!' Big Jim was de biggest nigger on our place. He must have weighed as much as half a bale of cotton. I was jus' 'bout gittin' to de aidge of de cawn when dat bear ketched me. He give me a slap wid his paw an' I goes down wid my mouf a-scoopin' up de dus'. My back felt like somebody done put a hot iron on it. Dat bear was a mean one. I was expectin' her to chaw me up an' I drawed my body up in a knot and kivered my haid wid my hands an' waited. But dat bear neber touch me agin'. I kinda snuck my eye aroun' an' I saw big Jim havin' it out wid her. Jim, he had a long knife an' dey was a-tumblin' an' a-rollin' in de dust, while I sot dere wid my eyes a-poppin' outen my haid an' my back feelin' like it was broke. Jim he wrap his legs roun' dat bear an' 'fore you knowed it he had done stuck dat ole critter a dozen times wid dat knife.

"About fifteen minutes later me an' Jim was a-walkin' back through de cawn fiel' an' I guess we looked a sight, 'caze I was all tore up an' Jim he looked like he done mess up wid a fambly of wildcats. He was bleedin' from haid to foot. When we walked into de big house to git some treatments an' medicine for our hurts, Mistis was a-standin' dere, and when she seed me an' Jim, she almost faint. She say: 'Whut done happen to my niggers?'

"Atter me an' Jim got fixed up I was jus' as happy, kaze I done seed de bes' fight dere eber was, an' I had me a little orphan bear cub."

Oliver Bell AL-9

Oliver Bell says the first thing he remembers was seeing his mother whipped.

"Us lived in de third house frum de big house in de quarter, an' when I was a boy it was my job to set out shade trees. An' one day de Ku Klux come ridin' by an' dey leader was Mister Steve Renfroe. (Alabama bandit of Reconstruction days). He wore

long hair an' he call my pappy out an' ax him a heap of questions. While he sittin' dere his horse pull up nigh 'bout all de trees I done sot out.

"Atter talkin' to my pappy, he rode on 'cross Horn's bridge, 'bout two miles souf of here, an' dere he met Ol' Man Enoch Sledge an' Frank Sledge. Dey was darkies whut b'longed to Marsa Simmy Sledge's father, Ol' Doctor Sledge. Slaves on dat plantation was 'lowed pretty good privilege atter de s'rrender an' was workin' on halvens. Uncle Enoch an' Frank was in town tradin' some, an' Mr. Renfroe didn't want 'em to have anything. When dey lef' town, dey pass de Ku Kluxes raght on de slough bridge. Mister Renfroe ax Enoch to give him a piece of string to fix his saddle wid; den shot him. Frank run to de river, but de Ku Kluxes cotched him an' shot him, too.

"De niggers went down to de river dat night an' got de bodies an' buried 'em in de ol' Travis graveyard. My mammy an' daddy is buried dere, too.

"Didn' nobody do nothin' 'bout Mister Renfroe 'till he went on an' got to messin' wid Marsa Simmy Sledge's things; stole a pair of mules an' de white folks rambled atter him 'till dey foun' him in Linden. Dey got so hot atter him dat he went to his camp in de flat woods down on Bear Creek. Dem was skeery times, 'case dat man never had no mercy for nobody.

"Dey's a cave down by de burial grounds whut de slaves dug when dey run away, an' Mister Renfroe stayed dere. It's on de river bank an' its dug up. You digs an' starts low an' pushes de dirt out an' digs up an' makes a big room up so de water won't git you. I knows whar dey's two of de caves on de place; my cow fell in one yestidy.

Ank Bishop AL-11

"All de women on Lady Liza's place had to go to de fiel' ev'y day an' dem what had suckerlin' babies would come in 'bout nine o'clock in de mawnin' an' when de bell ring at twelve an' suckerlin' 'em. One woman tended to all of 'em in one house. Her name was Ellie Larkin, an' dey call her 'Mammy Larkin.' She all time sarnt me down in de fiel' for to git 'em come suckle de chillen, 'caze dat made hit hard on her when dey gets hongry an' cry.

Martha Bradley AL-15

"One day I was workin' in de field and de overseer he come 'roun and say sumpin' to me he had no bizness say. I took my hoe and knocked him plum down. I knowed I'se done sumpin' bad so I run to de bushes. Marster Lucas come and got me and started whoopin' me. I say to Marster Lucas whut dat overseer sez to me and Marster Lucas didn' hit me no more. Marse Lucas was allus good to us and he wouldn' let nobody run over his niggers. "There was plenty white folks dat was sho bad to de niggers, and specially dem overseers. A nigger whut lived on the plantation jinin' ours shot and killed an overseer; den he run 'way. He come to de river and seed a white man on udder side and say, 'Come and git me.' Well, when dey got him dey found out whut he'd done, and was gwine to burn him 'live. Jedge Clements, the man dat keep law and order, say he wouldn't burn a dog 'live, so he lef'. But dey sho burn dat nigger 'live for I seed him atter he was burned up.

Gus Brown AL-17

"I remember Stonewall Jackson. He was a big man with long whiskers, and very brave. We all fought wid him until his death.

"We wan't beaten, we was starved out! Sometimes we had parched corn to eat and sometimes we didn't have a bite o' nothin', because the Union mens come and tuck all the food for their selves. I can still remember part of my ninety years. I remembers we fought all de way from Virginia and winded up in Manassas Gap.

"In all de years since de war I cannot forget old massa. He was good and kind. He never believed in slavery but his money was tied up in slaves and he didn't want to lose all he had.

Esther King Casey AL-19

Esther remembers well the mobilization of gray-uniformed troops at the courthouse which stood only a block from the King residence. "The town was filled with soldiers for several days," she said. "They assembled about the courthouse and had speakings. One day I passed there with my papa and saw Abraham Lincoln hanging from a noose in the courthouse square. Of course, it was only an effigy of Abraham Lincoln which was used to show what the soldiers thought of him. Papa told me that the soldiers shot the effigy full of bullet holes before they left town.

Amy Chapman AL-20

"Us had a mean oberseer, an' since Marse Reuben warn't never at home, dem oberseers useter treat us somp'n awful. One day Marse Reuben come home an' when he foun' out dat de oberseer was mean to de slaves he commence to give him a lecture, but when Miss Ferlicia tuk a han' in de business, she didn't stop at no lecture, she tol' dat oberseer dis: 'I hear you take my women an' turn dere clothes ober dere haids an' whup 'em. Any man dat's got a family an' would do sich a thing oughter be sham' of hisself, an' iffen Gov. Chapman can't make you leave, I kin, so you see dat road dere? Well, make tracks den.' An' Mistis, he lef' raght den. He didn't wait for no coaxin'. He was de meanes' oberseer us ever had. He tuk my ol'est brother an' had him stretched out jus' lak you see Christ on de cross; had him chained, an' I sot down on de groun' by him an' cried all night lack Mary an' dem done. Dat oberseer was de fus' one dat ever putt me in de fiel', an' he whupped me wid de cat er nine tails when I was stark naked.

"Yassum, I kin tell you things about slavery times dat would make yo' blood bile, but dey's too turrible. I jus' tries to forgit.

"I could tell you 'bout bein' run myself wid dem nigger dogs, but I ain't gwineter do it. I will tell you dough 'bout a mean man who whupped a cullid woman near 'bout to death. She got so mad at him dat she tuk his baby chile what was playin' roun' de yard and grab him up an' th'owed it in a pot of lye dat she was usin' to wash wid. His wife come a-hollin' an' run her arms down in de boilin' lye to git de chile out, an' she near 'bout burnt her arms off, but it didn't do no good 'caze when she jerked de chile out he was daid.

"One day I seed ole Unker Tip Toe all bent over a-comin' down de road an' I ax him whut ail him an' he say: 'I's been in de stocks an' been beat till de blood come. Den ole Massa 'ninted my flesh wid red papper an' turpentine an' I's been most dead

but I is somewhat better now.' Unker Tiptoe belonged to de meanes' ol' marster around here.

"But, honey, I ain't never tol' nobody all dis an' ain't gwine tell you no mo'.

Emma Chapman AL-21

During the war they cooked for the Confederate soldiers encamped nearby and great quantities were prepared. Emma was one of those delegated to carry the food to the camp. All she ever saw of the Yankees were two who stopped at the house and asked for something to eat. Mrs. Montgomery invited them in and served the best she had. One of the men wanted to take the last mule she had and the other said "No, Mrs. Montgomery is a widow and from the appearance of her slaves she has treated them well."

Mrs. Montgomery told them that someone had stolen her saddle horse and the soldier who had remonstrated with the other replied: "Madam, your saddle horse will be returned in three weeks," and sure enoug, one night about midnight they heard a horse whinny and Emma's grandfather said "there is old Spunk," and there was old Spunk waiting outside.

Henry Cheatam AL-22

"In dem days, de slaves done all de work an' carried all de news. De marsters sont notes from one plantation to anudder, an' when dey wanted de niggers to come to de Big House dey would blow an ole cow horn. Dey had certain number of blows for certain niggers. Dat is, de niggers dat was somp'n.

Laura Clark AL-23

"I was born on Mr. Pleasant Powell's place in North Ca'lina, and when I was 'bout six or seven years ole I reckon hit 'twas, Mr. Garret from right up yonder in de bend, 'bout eight miles from Livingston gwine no'th on de Livingston and Epes road, bought ten of us chillun in North Ca'lina and sont two white men, and one was Mr. Skinner, to fotch us back in waggins. En he fotch ole Julie Powell and Henry to look atter us. Wa'n't none of dem ten chillun no kin to me, and he never bought my mammy, so I had to leave her behine.

"I recollect Mammy said to old Julie, 'Take keer my baby chile (dat was me) an' iffen I never sees her no mo' raise her for God.' Den she fell off de waggin where us was all settin' and roll over on de groun' jes' acryin'. But us was eatin' candy what dey done give us for to keep us quiet, and I didn't have sense 'nuff for to know what ailed Mammy, but I knows now and I never seed her no mo' in dis life. When I heered from her atter S'render she done dead and buried. Her name was Rachel Powell. My pappy's name I don't know ca'se he done been sole to somewhars else when I was too little to recollect. But my mammy was de mother of twenty-two chillun and she had twins in her lap when us driv' off. My gran'mammy said when I lef', 'Pray, Laura, and be er good gal, and min' bofe white and black. Ev'body will lack you and iffen you never see me no mo' pray to meet me in heaven.' Den she cried. Her name was Rose Powell.

"Us all started den for Mr. Garrett's plantation down yonder in de bend, ten chillun and two ole uns, and two white men, and us was travellin' solid a month. Fuss thing Ole Marsa say was 'Now be good ter dese motherless chillun.' Den he

went to war, and de overseers forgot all 'bout dey promise. When Ole Marsa come back he done got his arm shot off, but he let bofe dem overseers go, ca'se dey done whupped dat ole 'oman what come wid us to deaf. She brought her two little boys, Colvin and 'Lias, but Joe, dey pappy, didn't come—he was sole 'fo 'Lias was bawn. Joe never seed 'Lias.

"I can't say Marse Garrett wa'n't good to us motherless chillun but de overseer, Mr. Woodson Tucker, was mean as anybody. He'd whup you nigh 'bout to deaf, and had a whuppin' log what he strip 'em buck naked and lay 'em on de log. He whup 'em wid a wide strop, wider'n my han', den he pop de blisters what he raise and 'nint 'em wid red pepper, salt, and vinegar. Den he put 'em in de house dey call de pest house and have a 'oman stay dere to keep de flys offen 'em 'twell dey get able to move. Den dey had reg'lar men in de fields wid spades, and iffen you didn't do what you git tole, de overseer would wrop dat strap 'roun' his han' and hit you in de haid wid de wooden handle 'til he kilt you. Den de mens would dig a hole wid de spades and throw 'em in hit right dere in de fiel' jes' lack dey was cows—didn't have no funeral nor nothin'.

Hattie Clayton AL-24

"Ole massa had his hosses an' mules hid down in de swamp but my uncle Tom went and got 'em an' brung 'em to de Yankees at de big gate. He didn't had to do it. He was jes' mean. He hadn't been much good to massa since de war commenced; lay off in de swamp mos' of de time. Arter he brung massa's hosses an' mules to de Yankees he went wid dem into massa's bedroom and dey jes' throwed massa and mistis close all outa' de closet and wardrobe and he give em' mistis gold yearings and bracelets and dey took de yearings and put dem on de hosses' years and put de bracelets on de hosses' ankles.

"Massa had 'bout thutty fattening hogs and de Yankees jes' went in de pen and cut dem hogs in two. He had jes' lots of turkeys and guineas an' de Yankees shot dem down. He had thutty hives of bees in one long row an' one Yankee run up to de firs' hive an' jump in it head first, and de bees stung him till he died. De udders pull him out and took him to de well and poured water over him but he stayed dead so dey just dug a hole down by the side of the road and bury him in it. Yessir, dat's de trufe!

William Colbert AL-26

"Well, Uncle Will, tell me something about the slave days. Was your master good to you?"

"Nawsuh, he warn't good to none of us niggers. All de niggers 'roun' hated to be bought by him kaze he was so mean. When he was too tired to whup us he had de oberseer do it; and de overseer was meaner dan de massa. But, Mister, de peoples was de same as dey is now. Dere was good uns and bad uns. I jus' happened to belong to a bad un. One day I remembers my brother, January was cotched ober seein' a gal on de next plantation. He had a pass but de time on it done gib out. Well suh, when de massa found out dat he was a hour late, he got as mad as a hive of bees. So when brother January he come home, de massa took down his long mule skinner and tied him wid a rope to a pine tree. He strip' his shirt off and said:

"'Now, nigger, I'm goin' to teach you some sense.'

"Wid dat he started layin' on de lashes. January was a big, fine lookin' nigger; de finest I ever seed. He was jus' four years older dan me, an' when de massa begin a beatin' him, January neber said a word. De massa got madder and madder kaze he couldn't make January holla.

"What's de matter wid you, nigger' he say. 'Don't it hurt?'"

"January, he neber said nothin', and de massa keep a beatin' till little streams of blood started flowin' down January's chest, but he neber holler. His lips was a quiverin' and his body was a shakin', but his mouf it neber open; and all de while I sat on my mammy's and pappy's steps a cryin'. De niggers was all gathered about and some uv 'em couldn't stand it; dey hadda go inside dere cabins. Atter while, January, he couldn't stand it no longer hissself, and he say in a hoarse, loud whisper:

"Massa! Massa! have mercy on dis poor nigger."

Will's eyes narrowed down to fine creases as his thick lips came together in smacking noises, and the loose skin beneath his chin, and jaws seemed to shake with the impact of dread memories.

"Den," he continued, after a brief pause in which time there was no sound except the constant drop of a bead of water in a lard bucket, "de war came. De Yankees come in and dey pulled de fruit off de trees and et it. Dey et de hams and cawn, but dey neber burned de houses. Seem to me lak dey jes' stay aroun' long enough to git plenty somp'n t'eat, kaze dey lef' in two or three days, an' we neber seed 'em since. De massa had three boys to go to war, but dere wasn't one to come home. All the chillun he had was killed. Massa, he los' all his money and de house soon begin droppin' away to nothin'. Us niggers one by one lef' de ole place and de las' time I seed de home plantation I was a standin' on a hill. I looked back on it for de las' time through a patch of scrub pines and it look' so lonely. Dere warn't but one person in sight, de massa. He was a-settin' in a wicker chair in de yard lookin' out ober a small field of cotton and cawn. Dere was fo' crosses in de graveyard in de side lawn where he was a-settin'. De fo'th one was his wife. I lost my ole woman too 37 years ago, and all dis time, I's been a carrin' on like de massa—all alone."

Tildy Collins AL-27

Us chilluns hate to see Sunday come, 'caze Mammy an' Granmammy dey wash us an' near 'bout rub de skin off gittin' us clean for Sunday school, an' dey comb our heads wid a jimcrow. You ain't neber seed a jimcrow? Hit mos' lak a card what you card wool wid. What a card look lak? Humph! Missy, whar you been raise—ain't neber seed a card? Dat jimcrow sho' did hurt, but us hadder stan' hit, an' sometimes atter all dat, Mammy she wrap our kinky hair wid t'read an' twis' so tight us's eyes couldn't hardly shet.

Sara Colquitt AL-28

"Miss Mary was good to us, but us had to work hard and late. I worked in de fields every day from 'fore daylight to almost plumb dark. I usta take my littlest baby wid me. I had two chilluns, and I'd tie hit up to a tree limb to keep off de ants and bugs whilst I hoed and worked de furrow.

"Next to our dances, de most fun was corn-shucking. Marsa would have de corn hauled up to de cribs and piled as a house. Den he would invite de hands 'round to come and ho'p shuck it. Us had two leaders or generals and choose up two sides.

Den us see which side would win first and holler and sing. I disremembers the hollers jest now. My mind is sorter missing. Marsa would pass de jug 'round, too. Den dey sho' could work and dat pile'd just vanish.

Mandy McCullough Cosby AL-29

"Mist' McCullough, he raised niggahs to sell—an' the little black chillen play aroun' until 'bout sundown, dey is give dey supper. A long trough out in a cool place in the bak yard is filled wif good, cold buttermilk an' cornbread crumbed in, an' dey each is give a spoon, an' dey eats dey fill. Den dey is ready fo' bed. Some of dem jes' fall ovah on de groun', asleep, and is picked up, and put on dey pallet in de big chillens room. Dey was old woman called de nurse, look after 'em. Dey git good care fo' de master expects dey will bring good money.

"One woman, on a plantation not so far from us, was expectin', an' they tied her up under a hack-a-berry tree, an' whipped her until she died. Mos' any time at night ef you go 'roun' that tree, you could hear that baby cry. I 'spect you could hear it yet.

"Everybody said that was murder, an' that something ought to be done about it, but nothin' ever was.

Cheney Cross AL-31

"I was brung up right in de house wid my white folks. Yessum, I slep' on de little trundler bed what pushed up under de big bed, in durinst de day. I watched over dem chillun day an' night. I washed 'em an' fed 'em an' played wid 'em. One of de babies had to take goat's milk. When she cry, my mistis say, 'Cheney, go on an' git dat goat.' Yes Lawd! An' dat goat sho' did talk sweet to dat baby! Jes' lack it was her own. She look at it an' wag her tail so fas' an' say: "Ma-a-a-a!" Den she lay down on de flo' whilst us holes her feets an' let de baby suck de milk. All de time dat goat bees talkin', 'Ma-a-a-a-a,' twell dat baby got satchified.

"Directly atter de surrender, de Ku Kluxes sho' was bad atter de Yankees. Dey do all sorts of things to aggivate 'em. Dey's continual' tyin' grape vines crost de road, to git 'em tangled up an' make 'em trip up an' break dey own necks. Dat was bad too, 'cause dem poor Yankees never s'pcioned no better'n dat dem vines jes' blowed down or somepin.

Carrie Davis AL-33

Us walked to de white church an' set in de back. Mr. Davey Snell preach and baptize, and dey had foot-washin's. Sometimes de niggers'd git so happy dey would shout. Den dey would keep shoutin' in de fields next day and git a whipping. And if marster wanted to mix his stock of slaves wid a strong stock on 'nother plantation, dey would do de mens an' women jest lak horses.

Clara Davis AL-34

"White folks, you can have your automobiles an' paved streets an' electric lights. I don't want 'em. You can have de busses an' street cars an' hot pavements an' high buildin' 'caze I ain't got no use for 'em no way. But I'll tell you what I does want. I wants my ole cotton bed an' de moonlight nights a shinin' through de willow trees an' de cool grass under my feets as I runned aroun' ketchin' lightnin' bugs. I wants to hear de sound of de hounds in de woods atter de 'possum, an' de smell of fresh

mowed hay. I wants to feel de sway of de ol' wagon a-goin' down de red, dusty road an' listen to de wheels groanin' as dey rolls along. I wants to sink my teeth into some of dat good ol' ash cake, an' smack de good ol' sorghum offen my mouth. White folks, I wants to see de boats a passin' up an' down de Alabamy ribber an' hear de slaves a singin' at dere work. I wants to see de dawn break over de black ridge an' de twilight settle over de place spreadin' a sort of orange hue over de place. I wants to walk de paths th'ew de woods an' see de rabbits an' watch de birds an' listen to frogs at night. But dey tuk me away f'om dat a long time ago. 'Twern't long befo' I ma'ied an' had chilluns, but don't none of 'em 'tribute to my suppote now. One of 'em was killed in de big war wid Germany and de res' is all scattered out ... eight of 'em. Now I jus' live f'om han' to mouth; here one day, somewhere else de nex'.

Katherine Eppes AL-38

"My mammy wukked in de Big House, aspinnin' an' anussin' de white chillun. All of dem called her 'mammy.' Ah 'members one thing jes' lack it was yestiddy. Miss Sarah went to 'Mopolis (Demopolis) to visit wid her sister, an' whilst she were gone de oberseer, what go by de name of Allen, whupped my Mammy crost her back 'twell de blood runned out.

"When Miss Sarah comed back an' foun' it out, she was de maddes white lady I eber seed. She sont for de oberseer, an' she say: 'Allen, what you mean by whupping Mammy? You know I don't allow you to tech my house servants.' She jerk her dress down an' stan' dere lookin' like a sojer wid her white shoulders shinin' lack a snow bank, an' she say: 'I 'druther see dem marks on my own shoulders dan to see 'em on Mammy's. Dey wouldn't hurt me no wuss.' Den she say: 'Allen, teck your fambly an' git offen my place. Don't you let sundown ketch you here. 'So he lef'. He wasn't nothin' but white trash nohow."

Heywood Ford AL-40

"White folks," said Heywood Ford, "I'se gonna tell you a story 'bout a mean oberseer an' whut happened to him durin' de slabery days. It all commenced when a nigger named Jake Williams got a whuppin' for stayin' out atter de time on his pass done gib out. All de niggers on de place hated de oberseer wuss dan pizen, 'caze he was so mean an' useta try to think up things to whup us for.

"One mornin' de slaves was lined up ready to eat dere breakfas' an' Jake Williams was a pettin' his ole red-bone houn'. 'Bout dat time de oberseer come up an' seed Jake a pettin' his houn' an' he say: 'Nigger you ain't got time to be a-foolin' 'long dat dog. Now make him git.' Jake tried to make de dog go home, but de dog didn't want to leave Jake. Den de oberseer pick up a rock an' slam de dog in de back. De dog he den went a-howlin' off.

"Dat night Jake he come to my cabin an' he say to me: 'Heywood, I is gonna run away to a free State. I ain't a-gonna put up wid dis treatment no longer. I can't stand much mo'. I gibs him my han' an' I say: 'Jake, I hopes you gits dere. Maybe I'll see you ag'in sometime.'

"'Heywood,' he says, 'I wish you'd look atter my houn', Belle. Feed her an' keep her de bes' you kin. She a mighty good possum an' coon dog. I hates to part wid her, but I knows dat you is de bes' pusson I could leave her wid.' An' wid dat Jake slip out de do' an' I seed him a-walkin' toward de swamp down de long furrows of cawn.

"It didn't take dat oberseer long to fin' out dat Jake done run away, an', when he did, he got out de blood houn's an' started off atter him. It warn't long afore Jake heered dem houn's a-howlin' in de distance. Jake he was too tired to go any further. He circled 'roun' an' doubled on his tracks so as to confuse de houn's an' den he clumb a tree. T'warn't long afore he seed de light of de oberseer comin' th'ough de woods and de dogs was a-gittin' closer an' closer. Finally dey smelled de tree dat Jake was in an' dey started barkin' 'roun' it. De oberseer lif' his lighted pine knot in de air so's he could see Jake. He say: 'Nigger, come on down fum dere. You done wasted 'nuff of our time.' But Jake, he neber move nor make a sound an' all de time de dogs keppa howlin' an' de oberseer keppa swearin'. 'Come on down,' he say ag'in; 'iffen you don't I'se comin' up an' knock you outen de tree wid a stick.' Jake still he neber moved an' de oberseer den began to climb de tree. When he got where he could almos' reach Jake he swung dat stick an' it come down on Jake's leg an' hurt him tur'ble. Jake, he raised his foot an' kicked de oberseer raght in de mouf, an' dat white man went a tumblin' to de groun'. When he hit de earth dem houn's pounced on him. Jake he den lowered hissself to de bottom limbs so's he could see what had happened. He saw de dogs a-tearin' at de man an' he holla: 'Hol' 'im, Belle! Hol' 'im, gal!' De leader of dat pack of houn's, white folks, warn't no blood houn'. She was a plain old red-bone possum an' coon dog, an' de res' done jus' lak she done, tearin' at de oberseer's th'oat. All de while, Jake he a-hollerin' f'um de tree fer dem dogs to git 'im. 'Twarn't long afore dem dogs to' dat man all to pieces. He died raght under dat maple tree dat he run Jake up. Jake he an' dat coon houn' struck off through de woods. De res' of de pack come home.

"I seed Jake atter us niggers was freed. Dat's how come I knowed all 'bout it. It musta been six years atter dey killed de oberseer. It was in Kentucky dat I run across Jake. He was a-sittin' on some steps of a nigger cabin. A houn' dog was a-sittin' at his side. I tells him how glad I is to see him, an' den I look at de dog. 'Dat ain't Belle,' I says. 'Naw,' Jake answers, 'Dis her puppy.' Den he tol' me de whole story. I always did want to know what happen to 'em."

Delia Garlic AL-42

"No'm, dey warn't no good times at his house. He was a widower an' his daughter kept house for him. I nursed for her, an' one day I was playin' wid de baby. It hurt its li'l han' an' commenced to cry, an' she whirl on me, pick up a hot iron an' run it all down my arm an' han'. It took off de flesh when she done it.

"Atter awhile, marster married ag'in; but things warn't no better. I seed his wife blackin' her eyebrows wid smut one day, so I thought I'd black mine jes' for fun. I rubbed some smut on my eyebrows an' forgot to rub it off, an' she koted me. She was powerful mad an' yelled: 'You black devil, I'll show you how to mock your betters.'

"Den she pick up a stick of stovewood an' flails it ag'in' my head. I didn't know nothin' more 'till I come to, lyin' on de floor. I heard de mistus say to one of de girls: 'I thought her thick skull and cap of wool could take it better than that.'

"I kept on stayin' dere, an' one night de marster come in drunk an' set at de table wid his head lollin' aroun'. I was waitin' on de table, an' he look up an' see me. I was skeered, an' dat made him awful mad. He called an overseer an' tol' him: 'Take her out an' beat some sense in her.'

"I begin to cry an' run an' run in de night; but finally I run back by de quarters an' heard mammy callin' me. I went in, an' raght away dey come for me. A horse was standin' in front of de house, an' I was took dat very night to Richmon' an' sold to a speculator ag'in. I never seed my mammy any more.

"I has thought many times through all dese years how mammy looked dat night. She pressed my han' in bofe of hers an' said: 'Be good an' trus' in de Lawd.'

"Trustin' was de only hope of de pore black critters in dem days. Us jest prayed fer strength to endure it to de end. We didn't 'spect nothin' but to stay in bondage 'till we died.

Angie Garrett AL-43

"Us would git up 'fo' daylight. 'Twus dark when go out, dark when come in. Us make a little fire in de fiel' some mawnin's, hit beeze so cold; dan us let it go out 'fo' de overseer come. Ef he seed you he'd make yer lay down flat on yo' belly, foots tied out and han's tied out and whoop yer wid slapper leather strap wid a handle. But I was laid 'cross a cheer. I been whooped 'tel I tell lies on myself to make 'em quit. Say dey whoop 'till I'd tell de troof, so I had ter lie 'bout myse'f keep 'em from killin' me. Dis here race is mo' lac de chillun uv Isreal, 'cept dey didn't have ter shoot no gun ter set um free.

"But dey was a coal black free born nigger name George Wright, had a floatin' mill right here on de 'Bigbee River, stayed at de p'int of de woods jes' 'bove de spring branch, and hit did a good service. But he got in debt and he sole his five boys. Dey was his own chillun, and he could sell 'em under de law. De names was Eber, Eli, Ezekiel, Enoch, and Ezra, an' he sole 'em ter de highes' bidder right yonder 'front of de Pos' Office for cash. And Jack Tom was another free nigger here and he bought some of 'em, and dey others de white folks bought, and I never heerd no complaint and I seed 'em long as dey lived. Dey was a heap of things went on. Some I lac's to remember, some I doan'. But I'd rather be free now.

Georgia AL-45

"'Bout all I know of de wawh is when dey said—'de Yankees is comin', de Yankees is comin'.'

"Us sho' was skeerd, an' dere'd be some fas' doin's about de place. All de cattle an' hawgs an hosses we driv' to de swamp on de nawth creek, an' de feather beds down dere too an' hid 'em in de brush an' leaves. My Mistis tied her trinkets in sacks an' put 'em in outlandish places lak de hen-house an de hay lof'. An' de silver, dey planted in de fiel."

Mary Ella Grandberry AL-49

"De folks now'days is allus complainin' 'bout how dey is havin' sech hard times, but dey jes' don' know nothin'. Dey should hab come up when I did an' dey'd see now dey is libin' jes' lack kings an' queens. Dey don' have to git up 'fo' day when hit's so dark you kin jes' see your han's 'fo' your eyes. Dey don' know what it's lack to have to keep up wid de leader. You know dey was allus somebody what could wuk faster dan de res' of de folks an' dis fellow was allus de leader, an' ever'body else was s'pose to keep up wid him or her whatsoever hit was. Iffen you didn' keep up wid de leader you got a good thrashin' when you gits home at night. Hit was allus

good dark when de han's got in from de fiel'. Co'se iffen dar was a lady what had a baby at home, she could leave jes' a little 'fo' de sun sot.

"Younguns now'days don' know what it is to be punish'; dey thank iffen dey gits a li'l whuppin' from dey mammy now dat dey is punish' terrible. Dey should of had to follow de leader for one day an' see how dey'd be punish' iffen dey gits too far behin'. De bigges' thang dat us was punish' for was not keepin' up. Dey'd whup us iffen we was caught talkin' 'bout de free states, too. Iffen you wan't whupped, you was put in de 'nigger box' an' fed cornbread what was made widouten salt an' wid plain water. De box was jes' big 'nough for you to stan' up in, but hit had air holes in hit to keep you from suffocatin'. Dere was plenty turnin' 'roun' room in hit to 'low you to change your position ever' oncet in a while. Iffen you had done a bigger 'nough thang you was kep' in de 'nigger box' for months at de time, an' when you got out you was nothin' but skin an' bones an' scurcely able to walk.

"Dere was no po' white trash in our 'munity; dey was kep' back in de mountains."

Esther Green AL-50

"My Grandma, Melinda, and ole Ben and his wife was three ole people Massa freed long time before de war. When all de niggers was freed, Massa called em up to de house and tole dem dat dey was loose to go wherever suited dem, but mos' of dem stayed on de place two or three weeks, and den one mornin' I woke up and all of dem had left durin' de night. I was de only nigger left on de place and I jus' cried and cried, mostly because I was jus' lonesome for some of my own kind to laugh and talk wid.

Jake Green AL-51

"Mr. Whitehead owned Dirtin Ferry down to Belmont, an' dey had a darkey dere named Dick what claim sick all de time. So de Massa man said, 'Dick, dam it, go to de house. I can't get no work outten you.' So Dick went on. He was a fiddler so dey jes' tuck his vittuls to him for seven years. Den one day, Old Massa say to de overseer man, 'Let's slip up dere an' see what Dick doin'. So dey did, an' dere sot Dick, fat as he could be a-playin' de fiddle an' a-singin',

'Fool my Massa seben years.

Gwiner fool him seben mo'.

Hey diddle, de diddle, de diddle, de do'.'

"'Bout dat time Ole Massa poked his head in de do' said 'Dam iffen you will. Come outten dere, you black rascal, an' go to work, 'An' I ain't never hyard of Dick complainin' no mo'.

"Cose dey had to begin, an' all us got up 'fo' day. Twan't nothin' strange to be standin' in de fiel' by your plow waitin' for de sun to come up. Ev'body was early risers in dem days. Dey was pretty good to us, but ole Mr. Buck Brasefiel', what had a plantation 'jinin' us'n, was so mean to his'n dat twan't nothin' for 'em to run away. One nigger, Rich Parker, runned off one time an' whilst he gone he seed a hoodoo man, so when he got back Mr. Brasefiel' tuck sick an' stayed sick two or three weeks. Some of de darkies tole him, 'Rich been to de hoodoo doctor.' So Mr. Brasefiel' got up outten dat bed an' come a-yellin' in de fiel', 'You thought you had ole Buck, but

by God he rose agin'. Dem niggers was so skeered, dey squatted in de fiel' jes' lack partridges, an' some of 'em whispered, 'I wish to God he had a-died.'

Charity Grigsby AL-52

"An' den again, Marse Jim was purty tol'able good to us, but Mr. Ervin Lavendar was sho' mean to his niggers, an' his plantation warn't far from our'n. He had a pack of dogs what run de niggers; an' dem was skeery times, I tell you. Us didn't l'arn no schoolin' nor go nowhere nor have no corn shuckin' nor nothin'; jes' 'quired to stay in de cabins. I hyared 'bout Bre'r Rabbit an' hoodoo; but I never takes up no time wid dat foolishness; never seed no sense in it. Us got on all right 'thout dat.

"Well'm, one day Mr. Sanders tol' one of de women what was one of de sucklers on de place, dat if she wouldn't do what he axed her to dey was a black coffin over her haid. She 'fused him; so when he was loadin' his gun dere in de wheat fiel', he was holdin' de gun barrel propped under his chin, jes' so, an de other end settin' on de ground. Well sir, it went off an' he killed hisse'f stid of dat sucklin' woman; an' dat was a awful time, 'ca'se de niggers got skeered an' run, an' dey sot Mr. Lavendar's pack of nigger dogs on 'em. De dogs kotched some an' chewed 'em nigh 'bout to death. It warn' none of us, but it were close.

Gabe Hines AL-55

"Endurin' of de Wah, I was big enough to be water toter on de plantation. No, Li'l Missy, I doan' 'zactly know how old I is 'ceptin' by de squeakin' an' achin' of my bones. I 'members lots 'bout doze days. Dem was happy times, Li'l Missy. Arter we all was freed, I went to Silver Run to live and dar I mahied Anna. She lef' me nine yeahs ago an' that broke the happiness. I miss her ev'whar, jes' keep a-missin' her though nine yeahs hev gone since dey tuk her from de cabin an' lef' her up thar on de hill. Dere's nights when de mis'ry in dese ol' bones jist gits past standin' an' on sich nights she come ter me and holp me wid de linnymint jes' as she useter do. But she caint stay long when she come.

"I was a-tellin' 'bout Silver Run. Arter we was mahied and was gittin' use to bein' free niggahs, an' happy in our cabin, one night a gen'ulman from de no'th was to see us an' he tol' us if we'd go wid him he'd pay us big wages an' gin us a fine house to boot.

"Fer two nights we sot dere by dat chimbly a-thinkin' a sight to do or to don't and ponderin' this way and t'other one. Den we 'cided to go. We lef ev'y thing dar 'ceptin' whut we tied up in a bandana han'chief, and we tied that onto a stick for de gen'ulman from de no'th wouldn't let us take no baggage. We was goin' to Columbus, Georgia, but we didn't know dat.

"Li'l Missy, when we got dar, whar he was a-takin' us, we foun' the big wages to be fifty cents a month, and dat fine house tu'ned out to be mo' like a stable. Instid of our cabin and gyarden and chickens and our trees, we had a turrible place, right out under the hot sun wid watah miles away down a hill. And he wan't no gent'man from de no'th!

"Missy, I nebber will be able to tell myself whut made us do hit no mo' den I'll ebber be able to tell how skeered I was one night when de wind howled an' de lightnin' was sprayin' ober de place an' de rain was so turrible hit was a-sobbin' in de fire. We knowed de debbil was ridin' de win' dat night.

"We was a-sittin' dar befo' de fire, me an' my ol' woman, when we heard a stompin' like a million horses had stopped outside de do'. We tipped to de do' an' peeked out an', li'l Missy, whut we seed was so turrible our eyes jes' mos' popped out our haid. Dere was a million hosses all kivered in white, wid dey eyes pokin' out and a-settin' on de hosses was men kivered in white too, tall as giants, an' dey eyes was a-pokin' out too. Dere was a leader an' he heldt a bu'nin' cross in his hand.

"When we seed dat, we fell on our po' knees, skeered mos' to def an' we axed de Great Marster to holp two po' ol' niggers an' holp 'em quick.

"De fust thing we knowed dem Ku Kluxes had de gen'man from de no'th out of his hidin' place 'hind our house an' a-settin' on one of dem hosses. Dey nebber spoke wid him. Dey jes' tuk him off somewhar, we nebber knowed whar, but he di'n't come back no mo'.

"Li'l Missy, we heard arterwards dat dis gen'lman from de no'th was no qual'ty a-tall. Dat he was de wu'st leadah of all de debilment bein' done; one of dem carpet-baggin' men.

"Nex' day arter de Ku Kluxes cotched dis man, his wife lef' Columbus in a hurry, sayin' she couldn't sociate wid de Columbus ladies 'caze dey was so po'. Dey wa po'! Dey is no denyin' that. We was all po' 'caze the Yankees done ruint Columbus. But, li'l Missy, dey's a big dif'ence in bein' po' an' qual'ty and' bein' jes' po' white trash.

Adeline Hodges AL-56

De fust white people I b'longed to was a man named Jones, who was a colonel in de war, but I can't tell you much 'bout dem, 'caze I was jes' a li'l gal den. I was jes' big 'nuff to tote water to de fiel' to de folks wukking and to min' de gaps in de fence to keep de cattle out when dey was gatherin' de crops. I don't 'spec' you knows anything 'bout dose kind of fences. Dey was built of rails and when dey was gatherin' de crops dey jes' tuk down one section of de fence, so de wagons could git through.

A'ter ol' Mister Jones lef' for de war, den de nigger drivers an' oberseer begun to drive us 'round lack droves of cattle. Every time dey would hyar de Yankees was coming dey would take us out in de woods and hide us. Finally dey sold us a'ter carrying us away from Bolivar County. Some of us was sold to people in Demopolis, Alabama, an' Atlanta, Georgia, an' some to folks in Meridian and Shubuta, Mississippi. I don't any more know whar my own folks went to dan you does.

She was the house girl and helped clean house, wash dishes, and take care of the children. After finishing that work, she had to spin thread. Each day she would have to spin so many cuts, and if she did not finish the required number, she was punished.

She said that her mistress kept the finished work on top of a large wardrobe, and 'Aunt' Adeline said that many times she would steal a cut of thread off that wardrobe to complete the day's task to keep from being punished.

"You asked me about huntin'? Lor', yes dey hunted in dem times. Up in dem swamps in Mississippi dere was bears as big as cows, and deers aplenty. Dey bofe was bad about comin' in de corn fiel's and tearin' down de corn. You could hyar dem at nights out in de fiel's. Dey also caught plenty of possums and coons.

Caroline Holland AL-57

When I was twelve year old, I was made nu'ss fer my mistis's little girl an' at de fus' I couldn't do nothin' but rock de cradle. I didn't know how to hol' de baby. Us niggers had gardeens (guardians) dat look 'atter us lak dey did atter de hosses and cows and pigs.

"One night atter we had all gone to bed I heered a noise at de window, an' when I look up dere was a man a climbin' in. He was a nigger. I could tell eben do I could scarce see him, I knowed he was a nigger. I could hear my mistis a breathin', an' de baby was soun' asleep too. I started to yell out but I thought dat de nigger would kill us so I jes' kep' quiet. He come in de window, an' he see us a sleepin' dere, an' all of a sudden I knowed who it was. 'Jade,' I whispers, 'What you a doin' here?' He come to my bed and put his rough han' ober my mouf.

"Listen you black pickaninny, you tell em dat you saw me here an' I'll kill you,' he say, 'I th'ow yo' hide to de snakes in de swamp. Now shet up.'

"Wid dat he went to de dresser an' taken mistis' money bag. Atter dat he went to de window an' climb down de ladder an' I didn't do nothin' but shake myself nearly to death fum fright. De nex' day de oberseer an' de pattyrollers went a searchin' th'ough de slave quarters an' dey foun' de money bag under Jade's cot. Dey tuk him an' whupped him for near fifteen minutes. We could hear him holla way up at de big house. Jade, he neber got ober dat whuppin'. He died three days later. He was a good nigger, 'peer to me lak, an' de bes' blacksmith in de whole county. I ke'pa-wonderin' whut made him want ter steal dat purse. Den I foun' out later dat he was a goin' to pay a white man ter carry him ober de line to de No'thern States. Jade jus' had too big ideas fo' a nigger. I us'ta see Jade's ghos' a walkin' out in de garden in de moonlight; sometime he sit on de fence an' look at his ole cabin, den sometimes he stroll off down de cotton fiel'. When de Lawd git th'ough a punishin' him fo' a stealin' dat money, I guess he won't make us no mo' visits. He jus' go right on in heaben. Dat's what ghos'tes is, you know; peoples dat can't quite git in heaben, an' dey hadda stroll 'roun' little longer on de outside repentin'.

"Soon atter dat my gardeen tuk me to Tallasse when de massa died. My gardeen was a good man. He was always a-makin' speeches fo' de slaves to stay under bondage till dey was twenty-one. One dey he was in front of a sto' talkin' 'bout de slaves an' a man come up to him an' said he don't like de way Capt. Clanton talk (dat was my gardeen's name). Capt. Clanton ask him whut he goin' ter do 'bout it an' de man tuk out a pistol an' kil't de Cap'n raght dere on de spot.

Jane Holloway AL-58

Us had a good old time den, effen us jes' had knowed it, 'caze us was always fed good. Dey had long wooden troughs what dey poured our bread and milk in and us eat it wid a wooden spoon. When dey yell, 'Chillun, chillun! Bread!' you bet we jes' burnt de wind getting dere, 'caze us was always hongry.

Joseph Holmes AL-59

"An' I remembers when dem Yankees came to our ole Mistis' house an' take a ladder an' clumb up to de roof an' tear de boards outter de ceilin' to git dem big hams an' shoulders my white folks done had hid up dar. When de Yankees find dat stuff dey give it all to de niggers. Den atter de solgers lef' ole Miss called us to her an' tol'

us we was free, but for us to give back some of de meat an' things dat de Yankees done give us, 'ca'se she didn't have nothin' to eat 'roun' de place. 'Course we was glad to do it, 'ca'se Mistis sho' was good to us.

"'Bout de fruit; it makes my mouth water to think about dem cheese apples, dat was yaller lak gold, an' dose Abraham apples, an' de cherry tree as big as dese oaks here. I's eaten many a big sugar and sweetheart cherry. But dere was another kind called de Gorilla dat growed as big as de yaller plums down dis way. Now let me tell you somp'n 'bout Virginny; 'dey had dere laws 'bout drink. Dey had de bes' peach an' cherry brandy an' mos' any kin' you eber heared of, but dey didn't 'low you to make drink outten anything you could make bread wid; sich as corn or rye. Us had our brandy same as you would coffee, 'case it was cold, an' some mawnin's my pappy would git de brandy out an' my mammy would putt a little water an' sugar wid it an' gib it to us chilluns. Us neber thought nothin' 'bout drinkin'. I kinda believes lak dat ole infidel Ingersoll who said dat anything dat was a custom was dere religion.

"Now you axed about hog-killin' time? Dat was de time of times. For weeks de mens would haul wood an' big rocks, an' pile 'em together as high as dis house, an' den have several piles lak dat 'roun' a big hole in de groun' what had been filled wid water. Den jus' a little atter midnight, de boss would blow de ole hawn, an' all de mens would git up an' git in dem pig pens. Den dey would sot dat pile of wood on fire an' den start knockin' dem hogs in de haid. Us neber shot a hog lak us does now; us always used an axe to kill 'em wid. Atter knockin' de hog in de haid, dey would tie a rope on his leg an' atter de water got to de right heat, fum dose red-hot rocks de hog would be throwed in an' drug aroun' a while, den taken out an' cleaned. Atter he was cleaned he was cut up into sections an' hung up in de smoke house. Lawsie, lady, dey don't cure meat dese days; dey jus' uses some kind of liquid to brush over it. We useta have sho' 'nuff meat.

Josh Horn AL-60

"Now, 'bout how us is getting along. I's telling you de troof, ef I was took 'fore God, I'd say jes' lak I's saying now, ef my chillun ever et a moufful dat wasn't honest, dey et it somewhar else, 'ca'se I ain't ever stole a moufful somepin' t'eat for 'em in all my life. It's honest vittles dey et, and varmints I's killed in de woods, 'ca'se us raised chillun fast, and us had a heap of 'em, sixteen, if I 'members right, and soon's I found out dat I could help feed 'em dat way, I done a heap of hunting. And everybody knows I's a good hunter. Alice used to make me go every Friday night; den us always had a 'possum or two for Sunday."

"Why," I asked, "didn't you go Saturday night?"

"Well, I'll tell you," Josh said, "Alice is a good Christian woman, and she knowed I'd hunt mighty nigh all night, and she didn't want nobody see me coming in Sunday morning wid no gun and no dogs; so I went every Friday night and went in de week too, and dat holp a lot to feed de chillun. I don't owe nobody, not a nickel.

"I was plenty big 'nough to drive de mules to de gin. Set on de lever and drive 'em, jes lak a 'lasses mill, so dat night Marse Ike told us he want everybody go wid him to Colonel Lee's gin nex' morning, and didn't want nobody to git out and go ahead of him. Dat held up de ginning; made us not go to de ginhouse tell sunup.

"Us got de mules and jes' waited. 'Twixt daylight and sunup, us all standing dar at de gate and we heared a little fine horn up de road. Us didn't know what it meant coming to de house. And bimeby Mr. Beesley, what live not fur from Marse Ike, he rode up and had five dogs, five nigger dogs, what dey call 'em, and soon as he come, Marse Ike's hoss was saddled up and Marse Ike and him rode off down de road and de dogs wid em, 'head of us. Us followed 'long behind 'em, stay close as dey 'low us, to see what dey was up to. When dey got close to de ginhouse, ginhouse right 'side de road, dey stop us and Mr. Beesley told old Brown to go ahead. Old Brown was de lead dog and had a bell on him and dey was fasten togedder wid a rod, jes' lak steers. He turn 'em loose, and den he popped de whip and hollered at old Brown and told him 'nigger'. Old Brown hollered lak he hit. He want to go. And dey was a fence on bofe sides made it a lane, so he put old Brown over de fence on de ginhouse side, and told Brown to 'go ahead'. He went ahead and run all aroun' de ginhouse and dey let him in de gin-room and he grabbed in de cottonseed in a hole.

"Den somebody holler 'Guinea Jim', I looks and I didn't see him. Didn't nobody see him, but dey know dat's whar he been hiding. Mr. Beesley told old Brown he jes' fooling him, and Old Brown holler ag'in, lak he killing him, and Mr. Beesley say: 'Go git dat nigger' and old Brown started 'way from dar lak he hadn't been hunting nothing, but he went aroun' and aroun' dat gin and Mr. Beesley told him he hatter do better dan dat or he'd kill him, 'cause he hadn't come dar for nothing.

"Brown made a circle aroun' dat gin 'way down to de fence dat time, and he was so fat he couldn't git through de fence. You know what sort of fence, a rail fence it was. Den he stop and bark for help. Now I seed dis wid my own eyes. Dey put Brown on top de fence and he jump way out in de road, didn't stay on de fence. He jump and run up and down in de road, and couldn't find no scent of Jim. You knows how dey used to make dem rail fences?

"Well, Brown come back dar, and dis is de trufe, so help me Gawd. He bark, look lak, for dem to lift him back up on de fence, and bless God, if dat dog didn't walk dat rail fence lak he walking a log, as fur as from here to dat gate yonder, and track Jim jes' lak he was on de groun'. He fell off once, and dey had to put him back, and he run his track right on to whar Jim jumped off de fence way out in de road. Old Brown run right cross de road to de other fence and treed ag'in on t'other side de road toward Konkabia. Old Brown walk de fence on dat side de road a good piece, jes' lak he done on de other side, and dem other dogs, he hadn't never turned dem loose.

"When Brown he jump off dat fence, he jump jes' as fur as he kin on de fiel' side, lak he gwine ketch Jim lak a gnat or somepin' and he never stop barking no more, jes' lak he jumping a rabbit. Den, Mr. Beesley turn dem other dogs loose dat he hadn't never turned loose, 'ca'se he say old Brown done got de thing straight. And he had it straight. Dem dogs run dat track right on down to Konkabia and crossed it to de Blacksher side. Dey was a big old straw field dar den and dey cross it and come on through dat field, all dem dogs barkin' jes' lak dey looking at Jim. 'Reckley, dey come up on Jim running wid a pine brush tied behind him to drag his scent away, but it didn't bother old Brown.

"When dem dogs 'gin to push him, Jim drap de brush and runned back toward Konkabia. Now on Konkabia dere used to be beavers worse den on Sucarnatchee

now. Dey was a big beaver dam 'twixt de bridge and de Hale place, and Jim run to dat beaver dam. You know when beavers build dey dam, dey cut down trees and let 'em fall in de creek, and pull in trash en brush same as folks, to dam de water up dar tell its knee-deep. De dogs seen him, old Brown looking at him, jes' 'fore he jump in 'bove de dam right 'mongst de trash and things dey'd drug in dar. Brown seed him and he jump in right behind him. Jim jes' dive down under de raff, en let he nose stick outer de water. Every once in a while Jim he put he head down under, he holding to a pole down dar, and once Mr. Beesley seed him, he jes' let him stay dar.

"Brown would swim 'bout 'mongst de brush, backerds and for'erds, and terreckly Mr. Beesley tole old Brown, 'Go git him.' Den all de men got poles and dug 'bout in de raff hunting him. Dey knowed he was dar, en Marse Ike had a pole giggeren aroun' trying to find him too. Den he told Mr. Beesley to give him de hatchet and let him fix he pole. He sharpen de pole right sharp, den Marse Ike start to jug aroun' wid de pole, and he kinder laugh to hisse'f, 'ca'se he knowed he done found Jim. 'Bout dat time Jim poke he head up and say: 'Dis here me', and everybody holler. Den he ax 'em please, for God's sake, don't let dem dogs git him. Dey told him come on out.

"You see, Jim belonged to Miss Mary Lee, Mr. John Lee's Ma, and his Pa was kilt in de war, so Mr. Beesley was looking out for her. Well, dey took Jim outer dar, and Mr. Beesley whipped him a little and told him: 'Jim, you put up a pretty good fight and I's gwine to give you a start for a run wid de dogs.'

"Jim took out towards Miss Mary's, and Mr. Beesley helt old Brown as long as he could. Dey caught Jim and bit him right smart. You see dey had to let em bite him a little to satisfy de dogs. Jim could have made it, 'cept he was all hot and wore out.

Emma L. Howard AL-61

"Massa would only whup a slave fer two things," she recalled. "One thing was if things warn't done up jes' right at hog killin' time, and de other was iffen a nigger warn't clean when he 'ported for work on Monday mornin's. Ol' Massa didn't do de whuppin's hisse'f. Jake did it, but Massa sat dar on his horse to see dat only a certain number of licks was give.

Hannah Irwin AL-63

"I remembers one night raght atter de war when de re'struction was a-goin' on. Dere was some niggers not far fum our place dat said dey was agoin' to take some lan' dat warn't deres. Dere massa had been kilt in de war an' warn't nobody 'ceptin' de mistis an' some chilluns. Well, Honey, dem niggers, mo' dan one hundred of 'em, commenced a riot an' was a-takin' things dat don't belong to 'em. Dat night de white lady she come ober to our place wid a wild look on her face. She tell Massa Bennett, whut dem niggers is up to, an' widout sayin' a word, Massa Bennett putt his hat on an lef' out de do'. Twarn't long atter dat when some hosses was heered down de road, an' I look out my cabin window which was raght by de road, an' I saw acomin' up through de trees a whole pack of ghosties; I thought dey was, anyways. Dey was all dressed in white, an' dere hosses was white an' dey galloped faster dan de win' raght past my cabin. Den I heered a nigger say: 'De Ku Klux is atter somebody.'

"Dem Ku Klux went ober to dat lady's plantation an' told dem niggers dat iffen dey ever heered of 'em startin' anything mo' dat dey was a-goin' to tie 'em all to

trees in de fores' till dey all died f'um being hongry. Atter dat dese niggers all 'roun' Louisville, dey kept mighty quiet.

Martha Jackson AL-64

I knowed a nigger onc't whut was gone nigh 'bout a year, and he wa'n't gone nowhur but right up de big road a piece, livin' in a cave whut he dug outer de side uv a clay bank. And Miss Betty say, 'Marthy, whur you reckon Dan at?' And I never said nothin'. De Patterrollers couldn't fine him or nobody, and he ain't never showed hisse'f in daylight 'tel he peered up atter de S'render.

"Lawdy, Lawdy, dem was tribbolashuns! Wunner dese here 'omans was my Antie and she say dat she skacely call to min' he e'r whoopin' her, 'case she was a breeder woman, and brought in chillun ev'y twelve mont's jes' lack a cow bringin' in a calf. And she say, dat whut make her mo' val'ble to her Ole Marster. He orders she can't be put to no strain 'casen uv dat. And she say she give him praise on his gretty grave fer dat. But dem others he worked 'em day en night, Sad'dy en Sunday too you'se sho' ter hear dem women uv er night battin' de clo'es on er log in creek wid de stick.

Jane AL-65

"Ole Mistis made de womens card bats, en' spin en' weabe on de loom. What er loom look lak? It look lak er loom, dat what it look lak; what you spec' it look lak? All de womens, white en' black, wuk hard makin' jeans fer de sojers clo's en' makin' linsey fer de women's clo's. Us didn't hab no udder clo's 'cep dem linsey, but dey sho was good uns en' las' er long time, iffen yer didn't stan' too close ter de fire en' scorch 'em.

"Dem Yankees mighter been dar till yit, iffen one ob 'em hadn't rid his hoss ober a bee gum en' Man! dem bees en' dem Yankees sho did mess up! In about a minute dere wan't no Yankees nowhar 'cep down de big road whar de dus' jes' foggin' up! 'Bout a week some mo' Yankees come, but dey muster heared 'bout de bees, 'caze dey lef' dey hosses outside de big gate en' walked up to de house, but dey didn't stay long 'caze dey wan't nuffin' lef' atter de fu'st Yankees done to' up ev'ything. En' when dey ready to go dey tuk dey guns en' stood way off en' shoot de bee gums all to pieces, en' dey flewed aroun' en' us had to stay 'way 'twel night. Unker Jude, he wuk all night long, makin' bee gums ouden a hollow log, en' nex' day he hive ebery one ob dem bees en' put 'em in de new gums, en' de bees dey tote all dey honey en' put it in de new gums fas' as dey could make comb fer it. Dem bees sho' was smart.

Hilliard Johnson AL-66

See, I wa'n't so ole, jes' a young boy in slavery time, but I recall young Massa told Tom, a young nigger dere, one time not to go to de frolic.

"'Clean up dem dishes and go ter bed,' he say. And Tom said 'Yassuh' but Marse Nep watch Tom th'oo de do' and atter while Tom slip out and away he went, wid young Massa right 'hin' him. He got dere and foun' Tom cuttin' groun' shuffle big as anybody. Young Massa called him, 'Tom,' he say, 'Tom, didn't I tell you you couldn't come to dis frolic?' 'Yassuh,' says Tom, 'You sho' did, and I jes' come to tell 'em I couldn't come!'

Randolph Johnson AL-67

Unlike most of the former slaves, he never worked hard. His hours were too filled with the joy of playing, for he belonged to a little crippled boy about his own age and guarded over him all the time. At night the little white master and his small black playmate slept in the same room; the latter having a pallet that he spread on the floor. During the day both little white and black played in the shade of the cedars on the grassy lawn. The kindly white owner of the plantation was always good to Randolph. Never a cross word was spoken to him, he says.

"But one day," Randolph said, "de little massa took very sick. Dey wouldn't even let me see him. I had a feelin' trouble was a comin', kaze little massa neber did have no real life like other boys. He was always a lookin' lak a sick puppy. I gues de Lawd jus' wanted him fo' hisself, and he took him.

"Adder dat I was put to work on a mule dat turned de wheel of de cotton gin. He jus' walk aroun' in circles lak de mule dat's pullin' a syrup press. Den de War came, and all de good clothes dat we had made on de loom turned to tatters. De food got low; some of de slaves run away and some of our houses was burned by de Yankees. Atter de war, de massa came back and told us niggers dat we waunt slaves no mo'. Said we could go, but if we wanted to stay we could do dat too. He gib' each fambly dat stayed a mule, a cow, some tools and money enough to run 'em till dey could git de crop harvested. He was de best massa dat any nigger ever had.

Abraham Jones AL-68

"Yes, sir, I saw de stars fall. Some folks say dey didn't never fall but I seen 'em. Dey fell jest like pitch from a torch, 'Z-z-z-z-zip, z-z-z-z-zip!' and big cracks come in de ground. I was settin' on de end of de porch, and I watched 'em. Dere was so many grown people crowdin' into de house, 'twa'n't no use fer me to try to git in so I jest sot still. We had a big sill under our house, more dan a foot thick, and so many people crowded in de house till dere weight broke de sill. Dey was cryin' and hollerin' but de stars didn't hurt nobody; dey jest fell and went out, and I don't know where dey went den; maybe into dem cracks in de ground. De cracks stayed a long time and it was dangerous for de people to go about at night; dey might fall into de cracks. One of dem I remember was two feet across and so deep dey couldn't find no bottom wid a long pole. I reckon dem stars kept fallin' for about a hour. Folks thought de end of time was comin' and ever'body got right after dat.

"Back at dat time de country was not settled much and dere was lots of Indians. My grandpappy was a full-blooded Indian but I don't know what kind. De Indians was good people but if dey thought you had done 'em wrong dey'd kill you right now. I saw some of dem when dey left dat country. Dey women carried de babies in some sort of sacks, hung down in front of 'em, and de men carried some of de bigger chillun on dey shoulders. Dey didn't have no property—jest lived wild in de woods.

Emma Jones AL-69

"Atter us got to be big gals, us wo' cotton dresses an' drawses in hot weather, an' when it git col' we had to wear long drawses an' homespun wool dresses an' home-knitted socks and shoes dat de cobbler made in his shop. You know, white folks, we useta make near 'bout eve'ything dat wes needed to run a body raght on our

plantation. Us had eve'ything. On Sunday us wo' gingham an' calico dresses an' I ma'ied in a Swiss dress.

Josephine AL-71

"I and my Mistis and her baby hid in de swamps three days while Sherman and his army was passin' through," she explained. "Marse Rogers was in Virginny and when he got back home, there wasn't nothin' left but a well. Everything had been burned up. His house was gone and so was de smoke house; everything." She added that the well was a "dry well" where melons and butter and milk and meats were placed, in Summer, to keep them cool.

"Those three days my little brother hid in this well, while the soldiers were passin'," she said.

"Fore God, Missy," she exclaimed, "when we got dat little nigger out ob dat well, he had almost turned white!"

Lucindy Lawrence Jurdon AL-72

"No'm, us never did learn nothing. If us tried to read or write dey would whack our forefingers off.

"My grandmammy had sixteen chilluns. I 'members dat when us courted us went to walk an' hunted chestnuts. Us would string dem an' put 'em 'round our necks an' smile at our fellers. "I 'members dat one ol' sick man was freed 'fore freedom come. Dey let him go whar he wanted to, so he dug a hole in de ground an' used it fer a room. He put rafters inside to help hold it up an' it slanted down at de back."

Mandy Leslie AL-75

"Yassum, I 'members de war, but I don't lak no wars. Dey give folks trouble and dey's full of evil doings. When de Yankees come t'rough here, dey took my mammy off in a wagon, and lef' me right side de road, and when she try to git out de wagon to fetch me, dey hit her on de head and she fell back in de wagon and didn't holler no more. Dey jes' driv' off up de big road wid Mammy lying down in de wagon—she mount a been dead, 'cause I ain't never seed her no mo'.

"Unker John Leslie and Aunt Josie and all dey chillun come along in a wagon, gwine up North, dey said, and dey said dey found me standing dar side de road crying for my mammy. Aunt Josie, she say: 'Pore little lamb, you gwine wid us. Us ain't got much, but us can't let you die.' And Unker John, he say: 'Poor chile, us mustn't leave her disaway.' He lift me up in de wagon and drive twell de mule gin plum' out, and den us stop and took up on a place not fur from Mon'gomery, on Mr. Willis Biles' place. Us live dar twell I was grown woman, and Mr. Biles sho' was a good man to live wid and he treat us right every year.

Dellie Lewis AL-76

"Mr. Munger was our oberseer, but he had money of his own. He was better dan mos' oberseers, an' dere warn't no po' white trash, dem onery buckers libed further back in de woods.

Louis AL-79

Old Louis was what was called a "runaway nigger." He would run away in the latter part of the summer once in every two or three years and come back in time to help dig sweet potatoes. I was out in the sweet potato patch one morning when he returned. The doctor was there, also. When Louis walked up he simply said, "Hello, Louis; are you well?"

"Yes sir, Marster."

"Well, take that basket and go to picking up potatoes." Not a word was said about his running away. After the hands had knocked off work and Louis was sitting in front of his cabin, I went to him for an interview.

"Uncle Louis, what makes you run away? You don't get whipped or abused in any way."

The old slave scratched his grizzled head, puffed at his clay pipe and pondered the subject for some time before he replied:

"Marse Davie, I does cause de woods seems to call me. When de fall insect's is singin' in de grass an' the 'simmons is gettin' soft an' de leaves is beginnin' to turn, I jes natcherly has ter go. De wild sloes, de red haws an' de crab apples is ripe. De walnuts an de hickory nuts an de beach mast drappin' an de blue smoke comes over de woods, an de woods birds an de yard birds goes souf wid de cranes an ducks an wil' geese an de blackbirds an de crows goes in droves—it seem lack all dat is jes callin' me."

"Where do you go?" I asked.

"Lorsy, Marse Davie, I never goes off de plantation. I always go to de woods back o' de past'er. Ole Master knows whar I is an so does Henry. Don't you know dat holler dat come down on de lef' han' side of de branch—de fus holler you comes to, not more dan two hundred yards in de woods?" I knew it well.

"Don't you 'member a big green oak tree growin' on de right han' side of de holler bout a hunder yard up de path?"

"Well, sir, dat tree is my home. I done toted some poles an some sedge gress up dar an made me a bed—but you can't see it from de groun'. When I gets up dar I can see all 'roun'. I seen you an Marse Joe de las' time you go fishin'. I lays dar all day and listen to de birds and critters talkin'. A chicadee tole me you was comin' long befo' I seen you. Den a jay bird caught a sight of you an he tole me. Can't nobody come along widout de birds tellin' me. Dey pays no min' to a horse or a dog but when dey spies a man dey speaks. I done tame' a squi'l so he comes see me ever'day.

"De birds and critters sho is good comp'ny. I done made frends wid up all but de owl and de hawk. Dey is jes natchally bad an de other critters hates 'em. A ole red-breast' hawk come an lit in a daid pine tree. I seen him so plain til I knowed what he was thinkin' about. He was jes mad clean down in his craw and was cussin' ever'thin'. A little pewee bird seen him an begin to fuss. A crow fly over and hear de pewee, den fly down close an take a good look at mister hawk den he fly up and start callin' de other crows. In a little while a whole drove of crows is flyin' 'roun dat pine tree. Den de jay birds come an dey is callin' for a fight, but de ole hawk never move. Den de mocking birds come an dey sair right in and starts pecking at de hawk until he dove into de woods and gets away, an all de birds begin to talkin' 'bout bugs an things."

The old man was wound up for an interminable talk on his favorite theme, the talk of critters, and to change the subject I asked: "Uncle Louis, ain't you afraid of ghosts?"

"Lor', chile, I ain't feared of no ghos' or spook, as I's seed lots of both. All a ghos' do is jes show hise'f. You never hear of one doin' nothin' to nobody. Dey is sociable an wants to be near livin' people. When folks gets scared it hurts de ha'nt's feelin's an dey goes somewhere else. Dey has all de feelin's dey had when dey was livin'. You wouldn't stay by wid folks dat's fear'd of you an want to run away from where you is.

"Las' night, when I was up in my nes', an my fire had died out, all 'sept one little chunk, an de moon was shinin' like day, I lay down, I did, an I take a li'l nap o' sleep. Den I wakes up sudden an looks 'roun ag'in. Well, sir, de norf side of de hill was covered wid ghoses an spooks; dey was layin' down, standin' up and leanin' agin trees, but mos'ly dey was jes sittin' on de groun', all lookin' at me hard as dey could, widout battin' an eye.

"De neares' one to me was a little white ooman. She war sittin' flat on de groun', holdin' a baby in her lap. She look mighty pitiful an I say 'please Missis, can I ho'p you an yo' baby? I'd be 'bleeged if you tell me.' Her lips move but I couldn't hear no sound. Den I lay me down an drap off to sleep agin. When I wakes up de ghosses is all dere an de little white ooman look lak she want to say somethin', but can't, an I say, 'I ain' nothin' but a poor runaway nigger, but my Marster is a mighty kin' man, he'll sholy he'p you; but she didn't say nothin' an I goes back to sleep. De next time I wakes up de sun was risin' an I jes lays dere an watches de ghosses an spooks get thin, an fade away like a fog."

The old Negro was sitting in the twilight, talking in a low, impressive monotone, in a language we both understood but which I find difficulty in transcribing after all these years that intervene. A screech owl was "miseryflying" in the family grave yard back of the quarters, a fitting abligato to the narrative. Though creepy sensations crawled up my spine, I still had my doubts.

"Uncle Louis, do you really believe you saw all that, and didn't dream it while you were curled up in your nest?" I asked.

The old man seemed aggrieved at my doubts as he replied:

"It ain't no beleevin' about it. I knows what I knows an I sees what I sees. De ghos' is what lives when de body is done wore out, but it don't die."

"It's all imagination," I said, in defense of reason and nature, as I understood these things.

"I wants to ax you what does de imaginin'. It's your ghos' that does the imagin' so you can see other ghosses an spooks."

Tom McAlpin AL-80

"But Boss, dere ain't never been nobody afightin' lak our 'federates done, but dey ain't never had a chance. Dere was jes' too many of dem blue coats for us to lick. I seen our 'federates go off laughin' an' gay; full of life an' health. Dey was big an' strong, asingin' Dixie an' dey jus knowed dey was agoin' to win. An' boss, I seen 'em come back skin an' bone, dere eyes all sad an' hollow, an dere clothes all ragged. Boss, dey was all lookin' sick. De sperrit dey lef' wid jus' been done whupped outten

dem, but it tuk dem Yankees a long time to do it. Our 'federates was de bes' fightin' men dat ever were. Dere warn't nobody lak our 'federates.

Anne Maddox AL-81

"'Bout four o'clock in de evenin' all de little niggers was called up in de big yard where de cook had put milk in a long wooden trough an' crumbled ash-cake in it. Us had pot licker in de trough, too. Us et de bread an' milk wid shells an' would use our hands, but it was good.

"Ol' Marster give us plenty of licker," she said, "an' us laked dat. One of de funniest things us had aroun' de plantation was a little goat dat could walk a fence jist lak us little niggers.

Frank Menefee AL-83

Us plowed 'twell dark an' lots an' lots of times all night long wid a lantern tied to front an' back of de plows. We was picking cotton all night long too, be ready to take dat wagon to de gin by three or four o'clock in de morning. Sometimes dey would put de slaves in chains. When dey wuk clearing up new groun' dey had chains put 'roun' dey ankles.

Isaam Morgan AL-84

"Massa Morgan sol' wood to de steam boats, an' us slaves hadda cut de wood, an' split it up into smaller pieces. Any time a slave worked over time or cut mo' wood dan he s'pose' to, Massa pay him money for it, caze whenever one of us slaves seen somp'n we lak, we did jus' lak de white folks does now. Us bought it.

"No'm none of our slaves ever tried to run away. Dey all knowed dey was well off. We didn't have no oberseer but once. He was a mean un too. He tried to fight an' whup us slaves, an' one night six big nigger men jumped on him an' scairt him mos' to death. Atter dat de massa wouldn't never have no mo' oberseers. He tended to dat business hisself.

Tony Morgan AL-85

Uncle Tony's memory of what occurred at Fort Mims was vivid, according to Jim Thomas. The older slave related that he was one of many Negroes in the fort at the time. He said the defenders had been sleeping off a night of dissipation the morning William Weatherford's warriors attacked.

Men, women and children were butchered in the ensuing slaughter and the buildings were fired. The massacre continued until noon, Uncle Tony said, when the Indians retreated with scalps and several Negro prisoners to their camping site, called the Holy Ground. Here, the half-starved Negroes lived in constant dread that they would be butchered by war-inflamed Creeks.

W.E. Northcross AL-89

I went home and got another spelling-book, although it was not allowed. Some of my own people told my master that I had a book trying to read. He sent for me to come to the house. I obeyed, though I dreaded to meet him, not knowing what the consequence would be. But his heart had been touched by Divine power and he simply told me that he heard that I had a book, and if I was caught with it I would be

hung. So I thanked him and departed. Notwithstanding my master's counsel I thirsted for knowledge and got some old boards and carried them to my house to make a light by which I could see how to read. I would shut the doors, put one end of a board into the fire, and proceed to study; but whenever I heard the dogs barking I would throw my book under the bed and peep and listen to see what was up. If no one was near I would crawl under the bed, get my book, come out, lie flat on my stomach, and proceed to study until the dogs would again disturb me. I did this for many nights. I continued in this way to try to learn to spell and read as best I could.

Wade Owens AL-90

"Dey hid de carriage horses, meat, silver an' plates. Yankees asked iffen marsa was good, an' us said yes. Dey searched de smokehouse an' some scraps no good an' nothin' but scrappy horses so dey didn't bother a thing. Us stayed one year an' worked on one-eighth farm. The Ku Klux Klan was turrible. One John Lyons would cut off a woman's breast an' a man's ear or thumb.

Simon Phillips AL-93

The old slave added that every plantation had a still and there was much brandy, but he rarely ever saw a drunk man. He says that when the men felt themselves becoming intoxicated, they would go home and lie down; now, he says, they go home and fall down.

Roxy Pitts AL-94

My mammy was part Injun, en Ole marster cudden' keep her home ner workin' needer; she alluz runnin' off an stay out in de woods all night long. When I was a little gal, she runned off ag'in en lef' a teeny little baby, en nebber did come back no mo'. Dey said she gone whar de Injuns is. Dat was atter de wah, en pappy had to raise dat little bitsy baby hisse'f. He tuk it en me to de fiel' whar he workin', en kep' a bottle of sweeten water in he shirt to keep warm to gib de baby when it cry. Den Pappy he mai'ed Aunt Josie en dey had er whole passel er chilluns, en dey was my brudders en sisters.

"Us chilluns sho was misch'us. One time, atter a big rain, us foun' two hens swimmin' aroun' in de tater house, en us tuk en helt em under de water twel' dey's done drowned dead, en we tuk 'em to Mammy en she cooked 'em in a pot en shot de kitchen do'. When dem chickens got done, us went under de flo' en riz up a plank en got in de kitchen en stole one ob dem chickens outen de pot en et it smack up. When Mammy foun' dat chicken gone, she tuk er brush broom an wo' us plum out. But us didn't keer; de brush broom didn't hurt nigh lak de chickens taste good."

Irene Poole AL-96

"Mah pappy, Alfred Poole, b'longed to Marse Jeff an' he bought mah mammy, Palestine Kent, from another plantation 'cause mah pappy jes' couldn' do no work fer thinkin' 'bout her.

"Aunt Irene, do you remember anything about the conjurers in the old days?"

"I don't put much sto' by dem folks. Dey used to give you de han' so you could please yo' mistess an' dey would sell you hush water in a jug. Hush water was jes' plain water what dey fixed so if you drink it you would be quiet an' patient. De mens

would git it to give to dey wives to make 'em hush up. I reckon some of de mens would be glad to git some now 'cause gals dese days is got too much mouf."

Nicey Pugh AL-97

"An' as fo' de funerals, I don't eber remember but three white folks dyin'. Dey jus' didn't seem to die in dem days, an' de ones dat did die was mostly kilt by somp'n'. One white gentman got hisself kilt in a gin 'chinery an' anudder was kilt a workin' on de big road. Den dere was a white 'oman who was kilt by a nigger boy kaze she beat him for sicking a dog on a fine milk cow. He was de meanest nigger boy I eber seed. I'll neber forgits de way dem white mens treated him atter he done had his trial. Dey drug him through de town behin' a hoss, an' made him walk ober sharp stones wid his bare feets, dat bled lak somebody done cut 'em wid a knife. Dey neber gib him no water all dat day an' kep' him out in de boilin' sun till dey got ready to hang him. When dey got ready to hang him dey put him up on a stand and chunked rocks at his naked body; dey thro gravel in his eyes and broke his ribs wid big rocks. Den dey put a rope around his neck an' strung him up till his eyes pop outen his head. I knowed it was a blessin' to him to die.

I sometimes wish I could be back on de ole place. I kin see de cool-house now packed wid fresh butter an' milk an' cream. I can see de spring down amongst de willows an' de water a trickling down between little rocks. I can hear de turkeys a gobblin' in de yard and de chickens a runnin' aroun' in de sun, an' shufflin' in de dus'. I can see de bend in de creek jus' below our house, an' de cows as dey come to drink in de shallow water an' gits dere feets cool.

"Yassuh, white folks, you ain't neber seed nothin' lak it so you can't tell de joy you gits f'um lookin' for dewberries an' a-huntin' guinea pigs, an' settin' in de shade of a peach tree, reachin' up an' pullin' off a ripe peach and eatin' it slow. You ain't neber seed your people gathered 'bout an' singin' in de moonlight or heered de lark at de break of day. You ain't neber walked acrost a frosty fiel' in de early mornin', an' gone to de big house to build a fire for your Mistis, an' when she wake up slow have her say to you: 'Well, how's my little nigger today?'

Mary Rice AL-99

"Yassum, I was jes' as happy bein' a fiel' han' as I would'er been at de Big House; mebbe mo' so. De fiel' han's had a long spell when de crops was laid by in de summer and dat's when Massa Cullen 'lowed us to 'jubilate' (several days of idle celebration).

Cornelia Robinson AL-100

"Us had a ol' quack herb doctor on de place. Some bad boys went up to his house one night an' poured a whole lot of de medicine down him. An honey, dat ol' man died de next day.

Janie Scott AL-102

Jane said her mother's Master and Mistress didn't want her mother to marry Andy, because he was too light in color and light niggers Janie said folks didn't think as strong as a good black one, so her mother, Sarah Porter, and Andy White her

father just borrowed a mule without the Master's consent and rode off and were married, anyhow.

"They didn't even know what money was." Then she continued: "Once when my mother was a little girl she asked her mistress to give her fifteen cents, and her Mistress wanted to know why she wanted fifteen cents. Her Mother replied: "I wants to see what money looks like."

Her Mistress thought she was trying to act smart and in place of fifteen cents she received a whipping.

During the Civil War when supplies were scarce, especially salt, Marster John rode off taking her mother's sister Ca'line with him, and when he returned alone his wife, Mrs. Meyers, wanted to know where was Ca'line, and Marster John replied: "I sold her for a sack of salt." At first they did not believe him, but Ca'line never returned and Sarah never saw her sister anymore.

Maugan Shepherd AL-103

Maugan remembers one overseer, scornfully referring to him as "po' white trash."

"Us slaves called him by his las' name behin' his back," the old darky explained, "'caze us hated to 'mister' dat white man."

Frank Smith AL-105

"We lived clos't ter de big hotel whar General Lee and a whole passel of soldiers stayed, and dey had de shineyest clo's I ebber seed. Dey was fine gem'men and Ole Mistis she let me wait on 'em whilst she didn' need me ter wuck eround de house, and dey gimme a dime lots of times. I shined General Lee's shoes sometimes—and he alluz gin me a dime and said: 'Dat looks nice.' Some of de ginerals jes' gimme de dime and didn't say nuthin' but dey wasn't big mens lak General Lee and Ole Marster. He was straight and dignerfied and didn't talk much, but he'd walk up and down on de front gallery and de ord'lies brung him telegrafs from Bull Run, whar us and de Yankees was fightin'. Lawzy missy, I heard em talkin 'bout 'Bull Run' dat day and I 'lowed somebody's bull had got out and us and de Yankees was tryin' ter ketch him and git him back in de paster!

John Smith AL-106

I was bout twenty seven year ole when de war broke out. De ole uns was called out fust and de young uns stayed home and practiced so dey could shoot straight an' kill a Yankee. Us practiced every Friday evenin'. Course I didn't know what dey fightin' 'bout. I jes' knowed dey was mad 'bout somepin'. Atter while Marster's son Jim j'ined de 'Federate sogers an' I went wid him for to tote his knapsack, canteen and sichlike and to look atter him. Dat's when I got dese here balls in my side and got a bullet in my laig, too. I was movin' de hawses to de back of de lines out de thick of de fight when, zipp, a minit ball cotch me right in de shoulder."

Proudly John displayed the balls in his side and the scar on his leg. The old woman, at whose cabin John was visiting, interrupted the story several times. Finally he got tired of it and said: "Shet yo' mouf 'oman, I don't need no ho'p, dis is grown folks talk, you don't know nothin' 'bout it, you wasn't even birthed tell two year 'fo' de Surrender. Now whar was I at? I slep' right by Marsa Jim's side. Sometime atter us done laid down and bofe of us be thinkin' 'bout home, Marse Jim say, 'John, I lak

to have some chicken.' I don't say nothin' I jes' ease up an' pull my hat down over my eyes an' slip out. Atter while I come back wid a bunch o' chickens crost my shoulder. Nex' mornin' Marse Jim have nice brown chicken floatin' in graby what I done cook for him. Us was fightin' on Blue Mountain when Marse Jim got kilt. I looked and looked for him but I never did find him. Atter I lost my marster I didn't 'long to nobody and de Yankee's was takin' eve'y thing anyhow, so dey tuck me wid dem.

"I tuck keer of Gen'l Wilson's hawse, Gen'l Wilson was de head man in de Yankee army. But I didn't lak dey ways much. He wanted his hawse kep' spick and span. He would take his white pocket hankercher an' rub over de hawse and if it was dirty he had me whupped. I was wid Gen'l Wilson when he tuck Selma 'gins't Gen'l Forrest and sot fire to all dem things. I drive de artillery wagon sometime. Atter Surrender I was kinda puny wid de balls in my side."

Uncle John had about talked out and as I rose to leave I said, "Thank you John, this will make a good story," to which he replied indignantly, "Hit ain't no story. Hit's de Gawd's trufe mistess."

Annie Stanton AL-107

As I growed bigger into a big yearlin' gal I was tuk intuh de oversee'rs home to 'tend tuh de dinin' room table sich as settin' hit an' washin' de dishes an' cleanin' up, an' later on I was showed how to iron, spin thread, weave cloth, and make candles. Honey, folks talkin' 'bout depression now don't kno' nothin' 'bout hard times. In dem days folks didn't hab nothin' 'ceptin' what dey made. Eben if yo' had a mint ob money, dere was nothin' to buy. We made de candles to burn by tying strings on the stick and puttin' dem down in melted tallow in moulds. In dem times we had no matches, folks made fire by strikin' flint rocks together an' de fire droppin' on cotton. I don't know whether dese rocks were ones dat de Indians lef' or no, but day was dif'rent from other rocks. People usta carry dem an' de cotton roun' in boxes sumtin lak snuff boxes tuh keep de cotton dry. Sumtimes when dey could'nt get de fire no odder way, dey would put de cotton in de fireplace and shoot up in dere an' set hit on fire."

"Aunt Annie" said she never could start a fire with the flint rock and cotton, and she said, "de fust matches and lantern I'se eber seed was when de Yankees cum tuh dere place, I th'ot dey was two officers, 'couse dey had de matches and lantern. Two years a'ter I was freed, an' twar den I seed mah first lamp.

"De men did mos' ob de farm wurk, dey planted cotton, corn, potatoes, cane, peas and pumpkins, an' dey ginned de cotton by hitching four horses tuh de gin, and dey run hit dat way."

George Strickland AL-109

Dey fed us li'l niggers in wood troughs made of poplar. De cook in de big house cooked pots of greens an' po'd potlikker an' all in de troughs. Us et hit wid mussel shells or wid usses han's or gourds. Our wimmin folks would bile de gourds to keep dem from being bitter.

"Dey gived us clo'es ev'y Saddy night an' de winter clo'es had some cow hair in dem to make 'em warm.

Cull Taylor AL-110

Dere was wooden troughs different heights for de different age chillun, an' dose troughs was scrubbed as white as cotton mos'. When meal time come, dey would crumble up cornbread wid pot licker, or milk an' gib to de youngest ones.

"But let me tell you, de bes' thing ob all, was de good locust beer, dey made from locust seeds. Dey also made 'simmon beer, an' wine out ob plums. Dem war good days den."

George Taylor AL-112

"I also 'members de time I was put up on de block to be sold, an' when de man only offered five hundred dollars, fer me, an' Ol' Marster tole me to git down, dat I was de mos' valuable nigger he had, 'ca'se I was so strong, an' could do so muck work.

I 'members when de Yankees come through, I was standin' on de Ol' Marster's porch, an' I seed dem comming, an' Marster got up on his crutch an' go to de steps an' invite dem in, an' believe me dey come in, too. Dey jes' natcherly tore up ol' Marster's place; then de furniture all 'roun' an' broke heaps ob hit. I knows b'fore dey got dere ol' Marster had mah paw, an' Jerry Lee, an' Mace Pouncey, an' anudder man take four barrels ob money an' carry down to de spring an' put hit in de spring, an' I'se tellin' you, Miss, you couldn't any more git near dat spring, dan nothin', ca'se de quicksan' made dem barrels boil up, one at a time, an' de way dey had to git dem barrels, was to buil' a scaffold from de river, an' let a line down an' ketch aroun' dem barrels.

Amanda Tellis AL-113

However, at the close of the war, Amanda was told to pretend she had a chill, and go to her mother's cabin, so she did as she was told. When she reached the cabin, her mother, brothers and sisters each had a pillow slip, filled with clothes and she was given hers and they ran away, and came to Mt. Vernon, Alabama. Amanda was only eleven years old then.

Amanda is now confined to her bed and has been for the past seven weeks, her body has wasted away, until she is skin and bones. Her eyes however are still bright and keen, her hair snow white and she still has a few teeth. Her mind seems to be clear, and her memory good, in fact the past is now a part of her, and she told the writer she was so happy because she had come to ask her about it, before it was too late.

Mollie Tillman AL-116

"I was ol' 'nough to be castin' my eyes 'roun' at de young bucks, an' dere was a nigger what lived on de plantation jinin' our'n whut tuck a shine to me. I lacked dat boy fine, too.

"He would come over to see me ever' time he git a chanct. One night he 'low he gwine'r ax his marster to buy me so's me an' him could git married. Well, atter dat he didn' come no mo'.

"I waited an' I watched, but I didn' hear nuffin of dat nigger. Atter 'while I got worried. I was 'fraid de patterollers done kotch him, or maybe he done foun' some

gal he lak better dan he do me. So I begin to 'quire 'bout him an' foun' dat his marster done sol' him to a white man whut tuck him 'way down yonder to Alabama.

"Well ma'am, I grieved fo' dat nigger so dat my heart was heavy in my breas'. I knowed I never would see him no mo'. Soon atter dat, peace was 'clared an' de niggers was free to go whar dey pleased.

"My folks stayed on wid Marse Dan fer a year; den dey 'cided to go to Alabama an' farm. We hit it off to Alabama an' I begin to go 'bout some wid de young bucks. But somehow I couldn't git my min' off dat other nigger.

"Well ma'am, one day at a big meetin' I runned up on him. I was so happy I shouted all over dat meetin' house. We jes' tuck up whar we lef' off an' 'fo' long us got married."

William Henry Towns AL-118

"Ever'body worked hard enduring' dat time. Dat was all we thought we was 'spose' to do, but Abe Lincoln taught us better'n dat. Some say dat Abe wan't intrusted so much in freein' de slaves as he was in savin' de union. Don' make no diff'ence iffen he wan't intrusted in de black folks, he sho' done a big thing by tryin' to save de union. Some of de slaveholders would double de proportion of work so as to git to whip 'em when night come. I heard my ma say after slavery that dey jes' whipped de slaves so much to keep dem cowed down an' 'cause dey might have fought for freedom much sooner'n it did come.

"Ever' once in a while slaves would run away to de North. Mos' times dey was caught an' brought back. Sometimes dey would git desp'rit an' would kill demse'ves 'fore dey would stand to be brought back. One time dat I heard of a slave that had 'scaped and when dey tried to ketch him he jumped in de creek an' drown hisse'f. He was brought from over in Geo'gia. He hadn't been in Alabama long 'fore him an' two more tried to 'scape; two of 'em was caught an' brought back but dis yuther one went to de lan' of sweet dreams.

Stepney Underwood AL-119

"My mammy belonged to the Johnstons and my pappy was owned by the Underwoods," he continued; "dey lived next to each other on two big plantations in Lowndes County. Dey was good peoples—dem Underwoods. I remembers dat dey use to think I was as funny as a little monkey. De massa usta laugh his head off at me, and when dere was parties, de guestes would always say: 'Whar Stepney? We wants to see Stepney dance.' I usta cut many a [...] pigeon wing fur 'em.

"One day atter I finish' my chores, I slip off an go across de line to see my mammy. When I was a-comin' back th'ough de woods, I met up wid two pattyrollers. Dey stop me and say: 'Nigger, who you belong to?'

"'Massa Jim Johns'on,' I answers.

"'Whut you a doin' out here, den?' dey say, all de time a slippin' a little closer so's to grab me.

"I don't take time to gib 'em no mo' answers kaze I knowd dat dis meant a beatin'. I starts my legs a-flyin' an' I runs through de fores' lak a scar't rabbit wid dem pattyrollers right behin' me. My bare feets flew over dem stones an' I jus' hit de high spots in de groun'. I knowed dem two mens didn't have no chance to kotch me, but dis sho meant a whuppin' when I got home.

"But I didn't go home dat night. I stay out in de woods and buil' me a little fiah. I laid down under a sycamo' tree a-tryin' ter make up my min' ter go an' take dat beatin'. I heered de panthers a screamin' a way off in de fores' an' de wildcats a howlin', an' how I wished I coulda been wid my mammy. Eve'y now and den, I could see eyes a shinin' in de darkness an' rustlin's in de bushes. Warn't no use of me a-cryin' kaze I was a long way fum home an' dere warn't no one to could hear me. Eve'y thing seem to be agin' me. Far off across de ridge I heered a screech owl a-callin', an' I knowd dat meant death. I was glad I had my overalls on so's I could turn my pockets inside out'ards to stop him. Atter I done dis, he sho-nuf stopped. Den my lef' ear it commence to ichin', and I knowd dat someone was a-sayin' somethin' mean about me. Probably dat oberseer dat was a-goin' to whup me when I got home. Soon I fell slap to sleep on a bed of moss. De nex' day I was awful hongry, an' long 'bout de time de sun was a-comin' ober de ridge, I heerd some mens a-comin' through de brush. It was de massa, de oberseer an' some mo' mens. I runs toward de massa and I calls as loud as I could: 'Massa Jim, here I is.'

"He come up wid an awful frown on his face and de oberseer, he had a big whup in his han'.

"'You little bur-head Nigger debil', de massa say, 'I teach you ter run away fum yo' place. Come on home; I'se gwine give you a good breakfast an' fix you up in some decent clothes. I'se got visitors a-comin' an' heah you is out in de woods when I needs you to dance.' Den de massa, he smile lak I ain't done nothin' wrong. 'I guess you wants yo mammy, you little lonesome pickaninny. Well, I s'pose I hadda go ober and buy her. You little debil you—now git on home.'"

Charlie Van Dyke AL-120

The only day that Uncle Charlie said they were given any real holiday was Christmas, everybody got his drink of whiskey on Christmas, and not another drink until next Christmas, "it sure seemed a long time between drinks", added Charlie with a smile.

When asked about war days, Uncle Charlie was first on the Confederate side, then on the Northern side, and he seemed somewhat bewildered about it all, he said he saw a stockade, as he called it, in Selma, Ala., and he remembered food stuff being sent to the soldiers, and also recalled the Yankees coming, and a Captain coming up the road and telling them the soldiers were coming. Uncle Charlie said the colored folks thought the Captain had to go back North before they came back, but in a flash like lightening there they were, hundreds of them, and they scared folks so bad some of them jumped in the river and tried to swim across and those that couldn't, they just drowned.

Simon Walker AL-122

Whin dey couldn't fin' de plate an' jewl'ry, dey was hoppin mad, an atter takin' all de hams an rations dey could tote off dey sot fire to de smoke-house, an' de bahn an' all de cotton dat was piled around de ginhouse, to keep de Confederits frum gittin it, dey said. Dey took all de good houses an' mules an' lef' dere ole hongry, broke-down nags dat won't fittin' fer nothin' 'cept fert'lize. But dey didn't hu't nobody, not eben Cookie whin she tuck er broom atter em in de kitchin."

Mingo White AL-125

After de war I saw Ned, an' he tol' me de night he lef' the patterollers runned him for fo' days. He say de way he did to keep dem frum ketchin' him was he went by de woods. De patterollers come in de woods lookin' for him, so he jes' got a tree on 'em an' den followed. Dey figured dat he was headin' fer de free states, so dey headed dat way too, and Ned jes' followed dem for as dey could go. Den he clumb a tree and hid whilst dey turned 'roun' an' come back. Ned went on widout any trouble much.

"I was a pretty big boy when de war broke out. I 'member seein' the Yankees cross Big Bear creek bridge one day. All of de sojars crossed de bridge but one. He stayed on de yuther side 'twell all de res' had got 'crost, den he got down offen his horse an' took a bottle of somp'in' an' strowed it all over de bridge. Den he lighted a match to it an' followed de res'. In a few minutes the Rebel sojars come to de bridge to cross but it was on fire an' dey had to swim 'crost to de yuther side. I went home an' tol' my mammy dat de Rebels was chasin' de Union sojars, an' dat one of de Unions had poured some water on de bridge an' sot it afire. She laugh' an' say: 'Son, don't you know dat water don't make a fire? Dat musta been turpentine or oil?' I 'member one day Mr. Tom was havin' a big barbecue for de Rebel soldiers in our yard. Come a big roarin' down de military road, an' three men in blue coats rode up to de gate an' come on in. Jes' as soon as de Rebels saw 'em de all run to de woods. In 'bout five minutes de yard was full of blue coats. Dey et up all de grub what de Rebels had been eatin'. Tom White had to run 'way to keep de Yankees from gittin' him. 'Fo de Yankees come, de white folks took all dey clo's an' hung 'em in de cabins. Dey tol' de colored folks to tell de Yankees dat de clo's was dere'n. Dey tol' us to tell 'em how good dey been to us an' dat we lacked to live wid 'em.

Us lef' Mr. Osborn dat fall an' went to Mr. John Rawlins. Us made a share crop wid him. Us'd pick two rows of cotton an' he'd pick two rows. Us'd pull two rows of corn an' he'd pull two rows. He furnished us wid rations an' a place to stay. Us'd sell our cotton an' open corn an' pay Mr. John Rawlins for feedin' us. Den we moved wid Mr. Hugh Nelson an' made a share crop wid him. We kep' movin' an' makin' share crops 'twell us saved up 'nough money to rent us a place an' make a crop fer ourse'ves. Us did right well at dis until de Ku Klux got so bad, us had to move back wid Mr. Nelson for protection. De mens that took us in was union men. Dey lived here in the south but dey tooken us part in de slave business. De Ku Klux threat to whup Mr. Nelson 'case he took up fer de niggers. Heap uv nights we would hear of the Ku Klux comin' an' leave home. Sometimes us was scared not to go an' scared to go 'way from home.

"One day I borrowed a gun frum Ed Davis to go squ'el huntin'. When I taken de gun back I didn't unload hit lack I allus been doin'. Dat night de Ku Klux called on Ed to whup him. When dey tol' him to open de do', he heard one of 'em say, 'Shoot him time he gits de do' open. 'Well, he says to 'em, 'wait 'twell I kin light de lamp.' Den he got de gun what I had lef' loaded, got down on his knees an' stuck hit th'ough a log an' pull de trigger. He hit Newt Dobbs in de stomach an' kilt him. He couldn't stay 'roun' Burleson any mo', so he come to Mr. Nelson an' got 'nough money to git to Pine Bluff, Arkansas. The Ku Klux got bad sho' 'nough den and went to killin' niggers an' white folks, too.

Callie Williams AL-127

"Pappy was a driver under de overseer, but mammy say dat she stay at de little nursery cabin and look after all de little babies. Dey had a cabin fixed up with homemade cradles and things where dey put all de babies. Der mammies would come in from de field about ten o'clock to nurse 'em and den later in de day, my mammy would feed de youngest on pot-licker and de older ones on greens and pot-licker. Dey had skimmed milk and mush, too, and all of 'em stayed as fat as a butter balls, me among 'em. Mammy saw dat I always got my share.

"While mammy was tendin' de babies she had to spin cotton and she was supposed to spin two 'cuts' a day. Four 'cuts' was a hard day's work. What was a cut? You oughta' know dat! Dey had a reel and when it had spun three hundred yards it popped. Dat was a "cut." When it had been spun, den another woman took it to de loom to make cloth for de slaves.

George Young AL-129

"I seed slaves plenty times wid iron ban's 'roun' dey ankles an' a hole in de ban' an' a iron rod fasten to hit what went up de outside of dey leg to de wais' an' fasten to another iron ban' 'roun' de waist. Dis yere was to keep 'em from bendin' dey legs an' runnin' away. Dey call hit puttin' de stiff knee on you, an' hit sho' made 'em stiff! Sometimes hit made 'em sick, too, caze dey had dem iron ban's so tight roun' de ankles, dat when dey tuck 'em off live things was under 'em, an' dat's whut give 'em fever, dey say. Us had to go out in de woods an' git May-apple root an' mullen weed an' all sich to bile for to cyore de fever. Miss, whar was de Lord in dem days? Whut was He doin'?

"But some of 'em runned away, anyhow. My brother Harrison was one, an' dey sot de "nigger dogs" on him lack fox houn's run a fox today. Dey didn't run him down till 'bout night but finely dey cotched him, an' de hunters feched him to de do' an' say: "Mary Ann, here' Harrison." Den dey turned de dogs loose on him ag'in, an' sich a screamin' you never hyared. He was all bloody an' Mammy was a-hollerin', 'Save him, Lord, save my chile, an' don' let dem dogs eat him up.' Mr. Lawler said, 'De Lord ain't got nothin' do wid dis here, an' hit sho' look lack He didn't, 'caze dem dogs nigh 'bout chewed Harrison up. Dem was hard times, sho'.

"No'm, I dunno nuthin' 'bout no spirits, either, but Christ 'peered to de 'postles, didn't He, atter he been dead? An' I'se seed folks done been dead jes' as na'chel in de day as you is now. One day me an' my wife was pickin' cotton right out yonder on Mr. White's place, an' I looked up an' seed a man all dressed in black, wid a white shirt bosom, his hat a-sittin' on one side, ridin' a black hoss.

"I stoop down to pick some cotton, den look up an' he was gone. I said to my wife—I call her Glover but she go by two names—I said, Glover, wonder whar dat man went what was ridin' long yonder on dat pacin' hoss?' She say, 'What pacin' hoss an' what man?' I said, 'He was comin' down dat bank by dat ditch. Dey ain't no bridge dere, an' no hoss could jump hit.' Glover said, 'Well, I'm gwine in de house 'caze I don' feel lack pickin' cotton today.'