



WPA Alabama Writers Project
EX SLAVES TALES
Conecuh County, #6

Ready for filming: 4-18-1977

Filmed: 5-5-1977

SAW

47

Oxford

STOCK No. 0753 1/2

Annie Dee Dean,
Jack Kytle



The Elder Remembers.

Rev. Albert L. Robinson, Negro preacher of Evergreen, Ala., was once pronounced dead and "laid out" under a white sheet. As the Negro neighbors were "settin' up" with the body, however, Robinson suddenly came back to life, tossed the sheet aside and frightened the "sitters" so badly that he was given the run of the entire plantation.

Telling of his "coming back to life," Reverend Robinson said: "The one person who remained with my body were my adopted mother. She stood by, rejoicing of my recovery.

"On my recovery I became a great ball player. My shroud, which was a white jacket and blue trousers, was my ball suit. I wore it out on the diamond."

Asked about his early life in Evergreen, he said:

"Evergreen in 1876 were a mere forest. It had only two streets and two brick stores. One store, known as Cooper and Mertin's, was where Rutland Hardware Store now is. The other one was Farnham Store. John Hill, a colored brick mason who lived where Five Points Filling Station now is, was hired by Mr. Farnham to build the Farnham store out of brick and lime. This store is now occupied by Binion Grocery. All the other stores built after that time were wooden buildings, but a fire broke out and burned down a great deal of them. Then the town made a rule that building of stores should be only of brick.

He was asked about the past of Mineral Springs, near



Evergreen. He said : pertaining to these springs; I've known on that plot of ground eighteen springs. But when man began to interfere; putting in cement, hedging up the water and demanding the stream to stay at that spot; then it was that seventeen springs sank and broke out across the road in the woods. This cement place; it died. It rose across the branch.

"Why, I have known the time when Murder creek looked like a branch. The different deltas caused it to grow large.

"Old Evergreen I knew when there was only the houses of Mr. Watkins, Mr. Lewis Finch, Mr. Bob Farnham, Mr. Young Rabb and Mr. Bob Rabb. Where the Methodist Church is today was the colored people's ball diamond. Where the White House hotel is, was woods. The Hawkins house was out of town. Where the Gantt's house is was out in the woods, and so was the house where Mr. King lives.

"Where Mr. Wild's cotton exchange is, Mr. Gantt had a mill. There was a duck pond there and it was out in the woods, where the Whitcomb Hotel was, old man Pat McGehee, colored, lived. Up on Stanpipe Hill was Mr. Hal Stearns' place, where Mr. Mitchell use to live."

Asked if he liked to read and if he would like some magazines to take home, the elder said; "If I have any idol, its my books. I never refuse to tote print. Mr. Harry Dey is so nice to give me periodicals; he's made me many gifts. He made me a present of this high hat. I was telling him the other day, 'You remember this hat?' Then he inquired, 'Did you have to put any paper in it?'; and I replied, 'No, your head and I is about the same.' Mr. Dey is so sweet; I declare he is. Every Christmas he gives me something nice and he don't call me anything

by 'Bishop.' He's so full of sympathetic; brim full of it, what I am ~~xxxxxxx~~ talking about."

When asked what he thought of the new overhead bridge that spans the north side of town, he was very enthusiastic. "Oh, it's a peach," he said, "It just tops off Evergreen."

##



side another, better known to some as "the ...", the smaller ... in the streets of ... especially in ... As he would say: "My ... is never ..."

... of state and ... as a ... he ... in the ... of ... standing ... as the ... His ... the ... and ... the ... of his ...

... his ... in ... of his ... and ... the ... of ...

... the ... of ...

... the ... of ...

June-1937

REV. ALBERT L. ROBINSON

DIVINE HEALER AND EVANGELISTIC PREACHER



For many years Rev. Albert L. Robinson has been noted in Conecuh county as one of its rare and striking characters. On first sight you are aware that this seventy year old "Negro Preacher" grew up in an atmosphere where culture and refinement flourished.

As he earnestly tells you he has "The same power as the Apostles- has preached the gospel and healed the sick for more than fifty years, you recognize definite 'Apostolic' traits of manner and speech, and you wonder about this little old man and his philosophy of life.

Elder Robinson, better known to some as "Doc Robinson", is a familiar figure on the streets of Evergreen, especially on Saturday afternoons. As he would say: "My presence is never missing."

Small of stature and spry as a cricket, he darts about in the midst of his flock, standing out as an important personage. His gold rimmed spectacles, high hat and long tail coat are enhanced by his alertness and the clever handling of his walking cane.

Elder Robinson's "Sunday best" walking cane is one of his own design and making. Some forty years ago, he wrought this odd cane from a small cedar tree. The main body of the tree having been the average size of a walking stick. The small branches growing out from the body of the tree had been stripped of their foliage and woven into a sort of plaited design over the full length of the stick, and the network of woven branches tapers and fastens at the lower end.

The stick is crowned with a round knob, painted blue. This denotes the God-head, over all. Several inches down, imbedded in the stick are twelve brilliant rhinestones. These denote the twelve Apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel. On the opposite side of these stones is a socket where, until recently there was a glass eye. This represented "The All Seeing Eye of God". About two months ago, a young negro boy took this eye and the Elder indignantly "put his mouth on him, and he will ~~never~~ have bad luck from now on."

Half way down the stick, entirely separate from the symbols, is a

Rev. Albert L. Robinson
(continued)



large flat black button tangled up in the woven branches. The Elder says: "Its in the ravine of the stick, and denotes the half tribe of Gad who was rejected on account of marrying an idolatrous woman. Hence he was separated from the tribe. To get back to the tribe he thought to get rid of the woman, and he slayed her and cut her up. Then he was everlastingly separated from the tribe.

The entire stick, except for the blue knob on top, is painted shiny black and Elder Robinson wields it with great pride.

Individual and imaginative, this little preacher is truly dramatic, and even in his seventies he is a "busy man." From a recent review the writer endeavors to quote his exact words as he spoke intimately of his life.

* I am a Divine Healer, with the same power as the Apostles. I've been preaching and healing for over fifty years. I am now seventy two years old. Was born May 20th 1865. My father and mother were bought by Mr. Jack /Stallworth, from the state of Virginia. A Slave trader brought them to Conecuh and sold them here. Then they were moved to Pineville, Monroe county

Mr. Jack Stallworth had ~~two~~ a double kitchen, and I was born in the far one of those kitchens.

In 1876 I came to Evergreen and stayed under the care of General Martin. He sent me to colored school and I stayed with him until he died. I went from here to Pensacola Fla. on the 22nd of Sept. 1881. After coming out of school, I joined Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist church under L.M. Robinson, pastor of said church. I entered the Ministry in said church and became Missionary of that district.

In 1889 I went to New Orleans La. on a Mission Tour. 1890 came to Brewton Ala. 1893 came to Evergreen and entered the Association of said church. I am now a Missionary of the Evergreen District for life.

I married Katie Lee in the year 1892, became father of three children. First two were twins; Noble Al and Lillie L. Daisy L., my baby, is now ~~thirty~~ thirty two. She and Lillie L. live in Cleveland Ohio. Noble Al

June-1937

Rev. Albert L. Robertson
(continued)



lives in Brewton Ala.

My father's treatment with owner in Alabama was very good. He was fireman of the farm of his owner. My mother's name was Mattie. Her treatments in Virginia were very good. She was house-woman and seamster for the family. Her treatments in Alabama, by her owner Mr. Stallworth, were very good. She died when I was five years old. My father, after the death of my mother, went off and left us. I was carried ~~to~~ up to the home house of Mr. Jack Stallworth, and there cared for by Lizzie Stallworth, colored. When just a boy, I came to Evergreen to live with General Martin.

General Martin had a big library. Books everywhere! From the ~~first~~ floor to the ceiling, and all the way round the room! My bed was in that library. Whilst I was admitted to General Martin's library to sleep in, oft times I would look at those great mass of books in groups; I said one day, 'after now, I'm going to be like General Martin, my guider. Oft he would say to me: "You have a sign and a mark to become noted."

When asked if he read any books in that library he said: "I remember of Blackstone the wonderful law dictator, whom will be a standard in his jurisprudence as long as a scholar can be produced. I credit the General with what I have in my vocabulary. He is my standard and status! I continually follow his trend.' Where Mrs. Wilds parlor is today, that was the library, and that was my room.

I worked in the garden, helped Miss Mary cook, went on errands and every odd and everything was under my care. Mr. John D. Burnett's wife, Miss Virginia, was Miss Mary's oldest daughter. Miss Carrie Finch the next daughter, Miss Nannie Herrington the next, and Miss Daisy was the baby. Mr. Ed Martin was the only son. Miss Mary Martin was the same as a mother to me. General Martin cared for me like a father."

When asked for stories about his past life he said: "The only stories in my life to comfort my children are in my ministerial biography. At one time in my life-my first trip to Louisiana- I ran a revival at



Rev. Albert L. Robinson
(continued)

~~"The only stories in my life to comfort my children are in my Ministerial Biography. At one time in my life my first trip to Louisiana- I ran a revival at Moss Point Mississippi and whilst engaged in that meeting, some Africans were visiting that place. One of the men said to Rev. T.T. Thomas, (colored): "I want to borrow her to preach, and T. T. Thomas said to me: "Will you go with him Rev. A. L. Robinson?" My answer: "Yes." I and the African boarded a little skiff and went cross the East Paspagola (Pascagoula) and West Paspagola Bay. The distance cross were three miles. When we arrived on the other side, we went two and a half miles on the little island. Nothing lives over there but Africans. The name of the place is Tougas.~~

I preached for them four nights and they wanted to retain me, but I told them: "Be truthful, you only borrowed me. Return me to the place where you came in possession of my presence," and this man said "Gos", meaning yes."

When asked to explain Divine Healing, Rev. Robinson said: "Laying my hand on them, faith or not, I heal. If my wife have any pains about her, and I am asleep-she reaches and gets my hand and lays it on her pain. I don't know when she moves my hand, but next morning she says to me: "I suffered last night." I ask her "why did you fail to wake me?"

They look wise. There were several young white men there and I asked them. After the train was gone, I said: "Where is the next church?" Those white men said to me: "Young man, your nearest church here is 200 miles due west of this place." I said to them: "My friends, you are gentlemen." Then I said to the colored man: "Will you take my two grips into your care into your house, and let me sit here on your porch until morning? I'll be thankful for it." And he said to me: "Yes" They are from New Orleans and I'm afraid of you starting on my knees."

The nice young white man said to me: "There's no more in that bag. He's of good year. You look at appearance-what's your name?" He said "Mr. A." and I said to the young white man: "You watch my baggage, it will not remain here very long. It's a boy preacher, chosen of God, and sent on this mission."

I said: "I'll be glad to help you in any way I can."

June-1937

Rev. Albert L. Robinson
(continued)



Her reply: "I did not need to wake you. I got hold of your hand and imposed the said hand on the place of my suffering. The pain got away from there and I went to sleep."

Such as for the blood,-I use herbs of the forest. That's my secret. I boil the herbs and give as drink for fever and blood. If the skin is pricked, as by knife, I lay my hand on and you don't bleed.

For tonsil-lights, I apply my naked hand to the throat, fix a glass of clear water-apply my hand over the top of that and convey around the glass and reveal in the name of the Lord. I give them that to drink. They swallow every drop and are healed.

A party by name of Ira Bell Thomas suffered with fire-brew (fibroid) tumor in 1930. I arrived to her home on Monday morning. Within thirty days she got rid of that tumor. Lucinda Bradley, she suffered with tonsil*lights. I cured her tonsil-lights with the imposition of hand and clear water in the name of Christ. There are many other cures.

Another thing I've told my children for consolation to keep on ~~memory~~ Memory: "Once in returning from New Orleans, I got off at Long Beach Miss. There were several young white men there and one colored man. After the train were gone, I ask: "where is the next church?" Those white men said to me: "Young man, your nearest church here is four miles due West of this place." I said to them: "Many thanks to you gentlemen." Then I said to the colored man: "Will you take my two grips into your care into your house, and let me sit here on your steps until morning? I'll be thanked for it." And he said to me: "No!" "You are jess from New Orleans an I'm 'fraid of you stayin' on my steps."

The nice young white men said to him: "There's no harm in that boy. He's of good rear. You look at ^{his} appearance-can't you see!" He says: "No sir." And I said to the young white men: "You watch my sayings, he will not remain here very long. I'm a boy preacher, chosen of God, and sent on this mission.

I said: "Listen! I will go and find the way; but the distance of

June-1937



Rev. Albert L. Robinson
(continued)

my going were not less than seven miles, and going that distance, I entered in the space of a great plot of ground with wild cows in it. I suppose there were seventy five! They all raised their heads and their attention was called by one large red cow. She groaned, then started toward me in a great rush. I ask God to change their rage, and they all turned and ran the other way. Then I persued my own way.

When coming in sight of the church that I was persuant, It was upon a hill. Instead of it being a colored church, it was a white membership. The people on the outside were a great crowd! Some standing, some sitting, some laying down, and I said: "Good evening gentlemen." They said: "Very well!" Then I entered the church. The preacher was tightly engaged in a sermon, wonderfully preaching! I set down right at the door inside, by a one legged white man, and he opened his knife and began to pop it very loud! He would look at me side ways. I, with good patience waiting on the Lord for instructions what to do. My mind told me: "If you bow down here, he will stick that knife in you! I wanted to pray for the closing, but the Lord said to me in the meantime: "When he calls for prayer, you rise up and bow in obedience to the preacher, and at once depart." In obedience to the message, I did so.

Coming out of the church I took both of my suit cases and walked as tho I could not hardly go! And departing from there, coming through the mass of the white men on said ground, I inquired: "How far is the colored church from here?" They said: "Three miles." Passing by them to the corner of a green hedge, the road turned south westward, and after leaving that hedge there was a long sand bed and a spirit told me: "You set your suit cases down so as to make impression on the sand, appearing you are worried. Then you take up those suit cases and directly walk straight across the road as though you were going out in the woods to rest." "As soon as you steps cross the road, you walk on the grass down side the road, and go in haste! When they come to the place where you crosseâ, they will think you are out in the woods resting, but don't stop, I'll be with you." I obeyed, and in the course of an hour I arrived in sight of



Rev. Albert L. Robinson
(Continued)

a colored baptist church on a hill to my right. A short while after there I arrived, I saw a young, active ~~thru~~ coming young white man. Seems to me he was about eighteen years old, and I spoke to the people, sitting there in their midst, and said: "Look! See that young man? I'm going to clear up my throat, and when he sees me he's going to turn around. They said to me: "Well Reverend, clear up your throat!" I cleared it up very loud, and he ~~turned~~ looked up and turned at once around and went back.

I preached that night and the next morning a white preacher said to me: "You went to my church yesterday, and we thought you were a peddler." I said to him: "These two cases that I have-my clothes and books are therein. I am a Missionary Baptist Evangelist. The Lord ordered me to go to New Orleans and preach in the open air, and I obeyed." For eleven days, I preached at the foot of Canal Street."

Elder Robinson says: "The impression of the Holy Spirit forms itself in a voice just as a person speaking through a trumpet, above ~~my~~ head, very soft and ~~xxxxxxx~~ very near. The Lord in his ubiquity is always near and not distant. He fills every place.

"My first impression of the Holy Spirit was at eighteen years. I was walking along the streets in Pensacola, just returning from my praying place; a place for breathing my prayer. I make no voice. The first message was: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel----"
"When my desire is to do a certain thing, and I'm in an attitude for prayer, I hear the voice."

Then Elder Robinson told about the time he died and was laid out in his shroud. He said: "I were seventeen years old. The afflictions that I were incumbered with were Pneumonia, typhoid and malaria. I was sick one hundred days. My doctor, Dr. McKittrick, in the meantime, he announced me dead. At six o'clock in the evening, I waked in this new life in Hades, up until six the next morning. My impression whilst dead, I were in a destructive place called hell! I saw and heard the groans of lost ones! The fiend of the night of terror appeared before me in a frightful form! I could not run on account of my inactiveness. Had I had strength I would have left the place!

In the meantime I saw the appearance of that sentence in the bible

June-1937

7-A



Rev. Albert L. Robinson
(continued)

where it said: "Hell is naked before God." The condition of the place and its suburbs is level as a plain. Underneath are the pit. The entrance of said pit has no covering. If you are not sentenced, you only stop in the suburbs. If you are sentenced, you are sent with a whirl, no power to stop you until entering in the open door.

In this pit great black smoke came rolling over and over with a terrible rumbling. Satan's appearance are frightful! and in the midst of the smoke you could hear the groans and shrieks of lost souls crying: ~~Woe! Woe! Woe!~~ "Woe! Woe! Woe is me! Woe! Woe is me!" It seems that each one's cry was adapted to individuals in the singular number. It was fire and smoke mingled. There was no place of mercy to be deserved. Satan seeming like he was of himself, a mass of fire, with eyes, head, face and mouth of fire! Arms of fire! Hands of fire! Fingers of fire! There was no place on his head for hair! It was all fire! He came up with the boiling smoke! Threw his eyes at you! and then disappeared! Then he'd roll up and appear with the smoke, rumbling like a solid ball!

After I came acquainted with the Lord, I would constantly visit hell! I saw people there, seemingly turned into fire! They were miserable! They were not satisfied of their job that they engaged into, and they seemingly desired rescue, but there were none.

Now concerning of pictures describing Satan with horns and forks, he failed to have them. When I saw him in hell, had he had them, he could not have used them, because he was in such a hurry! Hell was in a hurry! Everything was rapidly moving!

Now concerning his imps! They were like flying bats in the suburbs. Now we have them here in this world in appetites as well as in the wind. Spiritual bats are the same as these in the wind. Their appearance in hell are the same as bats here. This of course is in "Similarity". We have the same spiritual bats, oral bats, and carnal in appetites, all adapted in our bodies, fed by the spirit of Satan, so we needs be careful and noticeable.

In my return back to this world, I found only one person in the room from where I had departed. When coming too, they had told me that the

(Continued)

July-1937



REV. ALBERT L. ROBINSON

(continued)

~~the~~ one person who remained with my body were my adopted mother. She was standing by, rejoicing of my recovery. When the parties sitting up with my body saw the movement of the sheet covering me over, they removed said sheet from my face as my head rolled over to one side, ~~with~~ while my eyes opened and looked straight in their faces." "ixix
(It was then, we are told that "Them niggers jess give him the whole plantation!")

"On my recovery" the elder says: I became a great ball player, and my shroud, which was a white jacket and blue trousers, was my ball suit. I wore it out, on the diamond.

When asked about his early life in Evergreen, he said: Evergreen in 1876, was a mere forest." It had only two streets and two brick ^{One store} stores/ known as Cooper and Mertins, was where Rutland Hardware store ~~was~~ now is. The other one was Farnham store. John Hill, a colored brick mason, who lived where Five Points Filling Station is, was hired by Mr. Farnham to build the Farnham store out of brick and lime. This store is now occupied by Binion Grocery. All the other stores/ ^{that} were built after that time were wooden buildings, until a fire broke out in Evergreen and burned down a great deal of those wood buildings. Then the town made a rule that building of stores should be only of brick.

When asked about Mineral Springs he said: "Pertaining to Mineral Springs, I've known ~~that plot of~~ on that plot of ground, eighteen springs! But when man ~~gaxx~~ began to interfere--putting cement, hedging up the water, and demanding the stream to stay at that spot--then it was that seventeen springs sank, and broke out across the road in the woods. This cement place, it died! ~~It~~ rose across the branch.

I've known the time when Murder creek looked like a branch. The different deltas caused it to grow large.

Old Evergreen, I knew when there were only the houses of Mr. Watkins, Mr. Lewis Finch, Mr. Bob Farnham, Mr. Young Rabb and Mr. Bob Rabb. Where the Methodist church is today was the colored peoples

July-1937



Rev. Albert L. Robinson
(continued)

diamond. Where the White House Hotel is, was woods. The Hawkins house was out of town. Where the Gantt's house is was out in the woods, and so was the house where Mr. King lives.

Where Mr. Wild's Cotton Exchange is, Mr. Gantt had a mill. There was a duck pond there and it was out in the woods. Where the Whitcomb Hotel was, old man Pat McGehee, a colored man, lived. Up on Stanpipe Hill was Mr. Hal Stearns place, where Mr. Mitchell use to live."

When asked if he liked to read, and if he would like some magazines to take home, Rev. Robinson said: "If I have any idol, its my books. I never refuse to tote print." He seemed especially pleased and went on to say: "Mr. Harry Dey is so nice to gave me periodicals; he's made me many gifts. He made me a present of this hat. I was telling him the other day: "You remember this hat?" Then he inquired: "Did you have to put any paper in it?" "No, I said, your head and I is about the same." Mr. Dey is so sweet! I declare he is! Every Christmas he gives me something nice, and he don't call me anything but "Bishop!" "He's so full of sympathetic! Brim full of it what I'm talking 'bout!"

When asked what he thought of the new overhead bridge that spans the north side of town, He was very enthusiastic. "Oh its a peach! he said. "It just tops off Evergreen."

Alabama

Sent to Wash.
1/29/37

Annie Sue Sloan
Petterson Marzoni

"His Fokes" Remember



The sight of Negroes beside the highway was nothing new to the traveler, who was driving leisurely through the South. There was something different about this one, however, whose age gave him a shuffling gait as he paced carefully in front of a neat cabin on the outskirts of Evergreen (Tour #1). It was almost surrounded by the white tombstones and markers in the adjoining cemetery.

The traveler stopped the car, when the old man halted and faced the cabin, holding his hands in front of him, apparently sighting something. He faced about, hands still before him, when he saw the automobile. He lifted his hand to the ragged brim of his hat.

"Evenin', suh," he said as he approached, "and ma'am," he added hastily as he saw the other occupant.

"Howdy, uncle," they both greeted him.

"Y'all must be from a long ways," the ancient pointed to the license tag on the car, which identified it as not from Alabama.

"We are. Is that your house?"

"Nawsuh. Dat's Buck's place."

"Buck?"

"Yessuh. You don' know Buck? Ef'n you'd waited twell nex' year there'd been a stone tellin' all about 'ij."

"You mean a tombstone?"

"No'm. I means a monument right heah 'longside de road. His fokes is gettin' ready to put it up and I wuz jes' sorta figgerin' a good place for it when you driv up."

The travelers looked at the cabin. They thought of what a



monument would cost with an inscription.

"You mean his family is going to buy an expensive monument and put it here along the highway?"

"His fambly?" there was a certain tinge of scorn in the old Negro's astonished tone. "Shucks, nawzuh. I mean his white fokes. De quality heah in Evergreen. Old Buck maybe was done teched in de haid, but he wuz quality and his fokes done remember and dey gonna put a stone heah so ever'body will know 'about him.

"Buck was my ha'f brother," there was pride in this announcement, and the old man ^{dream} himself erect with the thought of his relative of quality. "Two of de fines' gemmun in Evergreen done sing at his funeral with two niggers. It sho' was pretty." The ancient shook his head for emphasis.

"We've found the real South, Jim," came a whisper in the ear of the traveler. "Let's hear some more." The driver nodded.

"That's fine, uncle," he smiled at the old man. "Do you think we could see the cabin?"

"Yessuh, yessuh," a bow and a beaming smile. "I'se proud to show you."

The car was pulled up clear of the highway. The travelers debarked and accompanied the old man up the walk to the front of the cabin, wondering how to get the story of Buck. They need not have worried.

"This heah," the beaming Negro swung his hand about, "was give to Buck by his fokes. All them ladies in the Gyarden Club fix it so the white gemmun, Mr. Cal and Mr. Walter and Mr. Mack and Mr. Charlie and a hunderd or so others could give 'em the money to build the cabin.



Buck's place done burn down heah six-seven years ago. Dat's when he went to live with Aunt Kitty." The old man broke into a chuckle.

"And was dey goin's on den!" He laughed out loud.

The tiny cabin had been inspected and the traveler and his wife had seated themselves on the stoop.

"No'm, thank you, I sorta talks better when I'se standin'," the ancient answered an invitation to sit. "But I guess you orta know about Buck," he replied to the request for his story.

"Most of his fokes called him Phil," the tale began. "Some of 'em and all of us called him Buck. His name was Phil Samuel and nobody rightly knows how ole he wuz. I figgers he was 112, and some says he wuz only 90 and some says more'n I do. Anyhow Buck's been heah a mighty long time. And he weren't no Af'ican nigger.

"Ma'am? Oh, we called dem what wuz born in Afuca and brung over right to the fields Afucans. Us as was born heah wuz diffrent. It wuz a Afucan what made Buck like he wuz. About a hunderd years or so ago when Buck was just a 'shirt-tail nigger' he wuz all time ateasin' people.

"Ma'am? I dunno," cepten it wuz boys about 15-16 went aroun' with their shirt tails hangin' out." The deep, happy chuckle broke out again. "Boys jes natcherly do it. Ain't you got no boys 'bout that old?"

"Well, ma'am, you wait and see 'twell they get that big. Don't make no difference how you talk or how you do, they jes natcherly gonna let dey shirt tails hang out." He laughed again and took up his story.

"Dis heah Buck he laughin' and playin' so much at his work he



ain't got time to tuck in his shirt tail, but he done pick wrong when he pick on Afucan Pete. That Afucan jest up and natcherly bus' him in de haid with a hoe.

"Buck ain't able to play 'roun' for a good while after that and he never wuz the same. I guess that hoe musta done somepin' to his brain. Some fokes said he wuz crazy from then on, but Buck never wuz crazy. He wuzn't like other fokes, but he knew more'n anybody ever give him credick for. He ain't never forget nothin'!

"I don' rightly know whether Buck fit in the war or not. After he's free he do get this heah place. It wuzn't no graveyard then, but fokes kep' on dyin' and they had to bury 'em, so de graves jes natcherly kep' on crowdin' him like you see. But that din't worry Buck none. He had sperrits of his own what he talked to all de time. Dey musta told him plenty of joes 'cause he wuz always a-chucklin' or a-pluckin' when he walk along. Nobody wuz 'fraid of his talk. It wuz his bizness.

"Nawsuh, Buck didn't have no regler job, but that twarn't 'case folks was scairt of him. He jes' didn't like to be tied down I guess. Afore he got too ole he used to do mos' of the woodchoppin' at de bigges' houses in town.

"He useter work night times, specially in the time of the moon. Buck he liked the moon. He ain't never sunned his close. He jes used to hang 'em out in the moonlight. Not that he had much close, rightly they wuz mostly rags, but he kep' 'em clean.

"Come a bright night, gwestes at the big houses 'roun' heah useter to think they was hearing ghostes when Buck was out doing his choppin'. They'd hear somebody walking by under the winders whisperin' and a-chucklin' like sperrits and they useter pull the bedclose



up over they haids and shake, I guess."

The old Negro stopped to laugh.

"When he got sort of ole for woodehoppin' he jes projäck 'roun' at de stores downtown cleanin' up some and fotehin' and carryin' for the boss men. Mos' in genrilly it wuz for Mr. Dey who runs the big jewelry store. Buck sorta took to Mr. Dey like he B'long to him. He always swep' up the store and run his errands.

"One night Mr. Dey's on his way home and he heard somebody callin' him like he wanted him powerful bad. It was Buck. He say: 'Don't look jit, Mr. Dey. Wait'twell I tell you. Just keep agoin' but don't look.' Bymeby Buck say: 'Stop! Stop right whar you is, Mr. Dey. Now! Look! Look fum whar you is and you see it clar.' Mr. Dey he look and dere wuzn't nothing but the moon, but he could see it clear for luck and he says he wuz lucky like Buck meant he should.

"Buck he never was uppity but he could say things to his white fokes and they'd think it wuz funny. Like one time a lady ask Buck would he eat his Chrissmas dinner in her kitchen. Buck he say: 'Is you gonna have turkey?' And the lady she say: 'No, Buck, but we gonna have a mighty good dinner with plenty of fixin's." But Buck he say: 'If you ain't got turkey den please don't look for me, ma'am.'

"Yessuh that Buck was a sight. If he warn't quite right in his min', he could recollect' better'n anybody you ever saw in your born days. He knowed ever'body what wuz born in Evergreen for a hunderd years and he never forgits 'em. One time a white gemmun come home after he been away a long time an' Buck say 'Howdydo, Mr. Sam' when



he seen him with his young lady, and Mr. Sam say to his young lady, "Well, you and Buck 'members me anyhow." She ac' like she mad at him for misnamin' her with Buck, but she jest laff.

"Buck never knew nothin' 'bout money. He ain't never paid taxes on his house. Somebody always did and he ain't never worried about eatin'. Somebody always done feed him.

"That time I'm tellin' you 'bout Aunt Kitty happen six-seven years ago, when his house burn down. They don't fix it up right away, so they send him 'roun' for Aunt Kitty to board him. Him an' Aunt Kitty gits along all right for three-four years, even effen dey does aurgifies a lot. Dey done bus' up 'tirely one day when Buck caught him a mess of fish and foteh 'em home for Aunt Kitty to fry 'em up.

"Buck he tell her they ain't 'muff fat in the pan and Aunt Kitty say ain't no nigger can tell her how to cook fish and Buck say he can. It all end up when Aunt Kitty bus' him in de haid wid de fryin' pan.

"So'se he couldn't live dere no longer, so Mr. Leon Riley fix him up a pallet in de shed in back of his store. Dat's when de Gyarden Club ladies done arrange for his house."

The old man paused to bend an admiring gaze upon Buck's home, built by white "fokes."

"Buck he took up livin' heah like he ain't been away," the story teller took up the thread. "He wuz mighty ole but he kep' right on workin' like he wuz a projickin' boy or somepin'. Ever'body useta look for Buck and effen he wuan't 'roun' they miss him, 'case he been in Evergreen since dey wuz sech a place.



"Long time ago Mr. George Farnham, one o' de outsingest white gemman heah, he tole Buck that he would reques' the privilege of singin' at Buck's funeral. Buck was mighty proud and said, 'Yessuh, please suh do that, Mr. George' the other'.

"So when Buck he died right atta Christmas (1936) and the time of the funeral come Mr. George Farnham and Mr. Jesse Lee Johnston, another white gemman, got up and sing with two of us fokes. It sure was pretty."

The old man stared off into the fading light of the afternoon.

"I bet old Buck was might proud and haughty with them angels when he heard Mr. George and Mr. Jesse Lee standin' right up and singing out loud in our church with about a hunderd other white fokes listenin' to 'em and to de prayin' and de sermon. That fine Reverun' Mr. Tate, what preaches down de white fokes Methodist Church, he said a mighty strong prayer for Buck.

"Yassuh, I bet ole Buck wuz proud, goin' 'roun' up dere a-whisperin' and a-chucklin' to heself. I bet he come plum' near to bustin' when he heard tell about that moniment they gonna put up heah for him."

The story was done. The traveler reached in his pocket.

"Nawsuh, I can't rightly take no money," the old Negro refused the bill held out to him. "I ain't done nothin' ceppen take up your good time a-talkin'.

"Well then do you think your Garden Club ladies would use it to help pay for the marker?" he was asked.

"They wouldn't think us rude trying to help?" the traveler's companion asked.



"No, ma'am," the ancient assured her. "Them ladies knows that quality can't be brash."

The pair drove off, the old Negro waving to them with the bill in his hand, his battered hat in the other.

"That," said a quiet voice in the driver's car, "seems to be some sort of answer to the race problem."

501 Shipp Street,
Evergreen, Alabama
January 7, 1937.

Miss Myrtle Miles, State Director,
Federal Writers' Project
Works Progress Administration
Birmingham, Alabama.

Evergreen Co.



Dear Miss Miles:

Yesterday I went to a negro funeral, thinking I might hear some real chanting that would be worth recording. The music turned out to be a beautifully harmonized quartet, sung by two of Evergreen's prominent business men and two negroes. Decidedly unprecedented! There must have been at least fifty representative white men and women there to pay tribute to an old landmark.

For years Phil Samuel, known too as Buck, was a vital and picturesque part of the town. His age has been given as 90 years and on up as old as 115. His half brother claims he was 112. Anyway he was so old that nobody remembers him as a child. The story goes that one day, when Phil was just beginning to become a real "shirt tail nigger" in those days that probably meant about fourteen or fifteen years old-Phil was working in the field with the rest of the negroes owned by Mr. Rabb. Somehow he liked to 'pick' on African Pete, and African Pete couldn't take much. The negroes designated as "African" were a different class of negroes. They hadn't been on this soil quite as long as the other negroes, and they were considered very touchy and high tempered. When Phil began 'pickin'" on African Pete it was too bad, for Pete got mad and 'let him have it'! He struck him on top of his head with a hoe, and Phil was never the same again.

Some called Phil crazy, tho he really wasn't, even tho he talked to himself incessantly. He evidently lived in another world, a world apart from his people. He was truly a white man's negro, with not an enemy in the world. You wonder if he surrounded himself with imaginary crowds. He appeared so pre-occupied and oblivious to people around him, as he shambled and shuffled through the streets, mumbling and chuckling with laughter, as though somebody had just told him their very best joke.

There was something unusual about Phil's mind, his memory never seemed to fail him. It was only a short time ago, that I spoke to him on the street one day. I had been out of town for more than a year and my father had been dead for more than 25 years. I said: "Phil you don't know do you?" He stopped mumbling long enough to look straight at me, tho he didn't seem to be seeing anything, then he shook his head at me and said: "You is one er Mist'r Dick Sampey's guls." Then he shuffled off on his way, his shoulders shaking with laughter as he mumbled something about my

father. Years ago, when people had front fences, with gates that clicked when they shut, and big open fireplaces that took lots of wood, Phil went from house to house and cut wood for his white folks. His favorite time being way in the night, when the moon shone brightest. Many a night I have been wakened by the wierd sound of soft talking and low laughter, and then the click of the gate! I'd draw the cover up and shiver a little as the talking passed under my window. Even tho I was most sure it was Phil, I always heaved a sigh of relief when I'd hear Phil's ax making its rythmic strike. And then, way further into the night, in my half sleep and waking, would come the same rythm from Phil's ax in some other back yard.

Phil seemed to love night better than day. Moonlight was his greatest joy. He said he never did sun his clothes, he always "mooned'm." For years Phil, ragged and disreputable looking, shuffled through the streets of Evergreen, in and out the stores and homes of black and white. He found a place close the hearts of the entire town, Everybody looked out for Phil, Just before Christmas, a good housewife told him to come around on Christmas day and get his dinner. Phil asked: "Are you gonner have turkey?" "No" she said: "But I'm going to have a might good dinner." "Well" he said: "Don't look fer me." Phi; served his fellowman humbly, and asked so little in return. His confidence and faith in the town, won for him a respect seldom achieved.

At one time Phil owned a cabin and lot almost in the heart of town, and there lived most of his long life. As time passed, the cemetery came right to his very door. Graves of prominent people almost surround he cabin. This never seemed to matter to him. Who knows but what he liked being near the dead. Maybe it meant something to him to watch over his white friends.

Money meant nothing to Phil. He believed he would be taken care of, and he was. He couldn't pay his taxes, but still he called his home his own. And then one night, several years ago, his home burned, and he was left with nothing. Even the bed, so coveted by the ladies with a yen for antiques, was gone. Men around town persuaded Aunt Kitty Harris to give Phil a room and help take care of him. Aunt Kitty is an old landmark too. In her time she has nursed most of Evergreen's 'well to de chillun'.

All went well with Aunt Kitty and Phil until one day Aunt Kitty was frying a mess of fish Phil had caught. Phil wanted them one way and aunt Kitty another. They got to "argyfyin" bout it and aunt Kitty was so enraged to think a 'onery nigger' would stan' up an try to tell her how to cook er fish', she perlitlely tuck up th' fryin pan an hit him over th' head! When asked why she did it, she said: "Ole Phil was makin' at me wiff er butcher knife! Dats why I did it."

This little episode put Phil on the street again, and then Mr. Leon Riley gave him a bed in the back of his store. Immediately the Garden Club got interested in rebuilding his cabin in the



cemetery. Cal Stallworth, Walter Wild, Mack Binion, Chas Talliaferre and many others made it possible for the Garden Club to build the comfort-cabin that Phil lived in until last Tuesday night when a passing train struck him. He died in less than an hour. The town gave him a real funeral with flowers and music. Mr. Tate, the Methodist minister here, assisted the colored pastors by offering a very appropriate prayer.

Phil was laid to rest in the shadow of his own front door, in the midst of his white friends. Facing Highway 31, his cabin stands as a monument to a beloved old darkey, and the town plans to place a marble stone with a fitting inscription over the gravel

Mr. Harry Dey, who is a prominent jeweler here, has always been one of Phil's best frineds. For years Phil was at his beck and call. Sweeping out the shop and dozens of other things he did. He was intrusted with the delivery of the most valuable packages. Always mumbling as he went. Mr. Dey was wont to call Phil his 'silent pardner.'

Yesterday you could hear any number of people telling their first recollection of Phil. Mr. Dey said: "The first time I ever saw Phil Samuel, was years ago, when I first came to Evergreen. It was in the days of wells and water buckets. The town was by the old warehouse, not far from the Depot. I can see him now, drawing water out of that well-pulling on the chain that rattled over the wheel above the well-- as the bucket swung up in sight, sloshing and spilling, Phil talked on. I stood there, fascinated, as this unique old figure carried his bucket of water to some store and came back for more. I was seeing Evergreen- how the business houses got their drinking water, and what an old darkey meant to the town. That was a picture I have never forgotten. Some years later Mr. Dey said: "I was walking down the street one day, over there between Edwin Page's home and Mr. Deming(s corner, and I heard an urgent voice calling my name. I turned to see Phil hurrying toward me. all excited. "Don't look Mist'r Dey! Don't look yet! Wait till I tells you. Jess keep on er goin', but don't you look!# So I kept going and wondering what Phil meant. Then all at once Phil said: "Stop! Stop right whar you is! Now! Look! Look frum whar you is." "What in the world are you talking about?" I asked him, "Look at th' moon" said Phil, as he shuffled on, look at it frum whar you is an you kin' see it clar." And of course seeing the new moon clear meant good luck.



Another friend of Phil's was George Farnham, a prominent singer in town. Years ago he requested the privilege of singing at Phil's funeral, and it was he and Jesse Lee Johnston who sang with the two colored men.

Few of us remember when Phil was not an outstanding character on our streets. Forty years ago and more, a young man came back to Evergreen to visit his old home. Someone today remembers having heard him say to a certain young lady: "Well ~~EVERGREEN~~ how is Evergreen? Fine I'm sure. At least I see you and old Phil are still here."

The negroes at the funeral were deeply impressed, as the negro pastor expressed it, 'th picture the white folks made should mean something to them, and Phil's peaceful life should be a great lesson.

While there I located some negroes who are interested in getting songs for you.



Signed--Annie Dee Dean

A VISIT TO HELL.

*@ Conecuh Co
Dist # 6*

The Rev. Albert L. Robinson, seventy-two year old Negro preacher and healer of Evergreen, has seen hell. According to his own words, he "died" when he was seventeen years old, saw Satan and the ghastly imps and heard the weird groans of lost souls.

Reverend Robinson, sometimes called "Doc;" sometimes "Elder," is one of the striking characters of Conecuh County. He lays his hand, according to his own words, upon an afflicted person; and that person immediately is healed.

He asserts earnestly that his power is the same as that possessed by the Apostles. For more than fifty years now he has "preached the gospel and healed the sick," and his philosophy of life sometimes becomes bewildering.

Small of stature and spry as any cricket, he darts about in the midst of his flock, standing out among them as an important personage. He wears gold-rimmed spectacles, and a long-tail coat. And he possesses a walking cane that he regards as a magic wand.

That walking cane is of his own design and manufacture. Some forty years ago, he wrought it from a small cedar tree; the main body of the tree having been the size of an average walking cane. The small branches of the tree were stripped clean and woven into a plaited design over the cane's full length. The network of woven branches tapers and fastens at the lower end.

The stick is crowned by a rounded knob, painted blue. This denotes the God-Head, over all. Several inches down, embedded in the stick, are twelve brilliant rhinestones. These indicate the twelve Apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel. On the opposite side of these stones is a



socket where, until a short time ago there was a glass eye. This represented "the All-Seeing Eye of God." About two months ago a young Negro boy removed this eye and the Elder indignantly "put his mouth on that boy, and he will have bad luck hereafter."

Halfway down the stick, entirely separate from the symbols, is a large flat black button tangled in the woven branches. The Elder says: "It's in the ravine of the stick and denotes the half-tribe of God who was rejected on account of marrying an idolatrous woman. Hence, he was separated from the tribe. To get back to them, he thought everlastingly separated from the tribe."

The entire stick, except for the blue knob on top, is painted shiny black and Elder Robinson flourishes it with extreme pride.

The Elder tells about the time he died; was laid out in his shroud and saw hell with his own eyes. He said:

"I were seventeen years old. The afflictions that I were incumbered with were pneumonia, typhoid and malaria. I was sick one hundred days. My doctor, Dr. McKittrick, announced me dead. At six o'clock in the evening I waked in this new life in Hades and was there up until six the next morning. My impression whilst dead; I was in a destructive place called hell. I saw and heard the groans of lost ones. The fiend of the night of terror appeared before me in a frightful form. I could not run on account of my inactiveness. Had I had strength I would have left the place.

"In the meantime, I saw the appearance of that sentence in the Bible where it said, 'Hell is naked before God.' The condition of the place and its suburbs is level as a plain. Underneath is the pit. The entrance of said pit has no covering. If you are not sentenced, you only stops in the suburbs. If you are sentenced, you are sent in with a whirl; no power to stop you until entering in the open door.



"In this pit great black smoke came rolling over and over with a terrible rumbling. Satan's appearance are frightful! And in the midst of the smoke I could hear the groans and shrieks of lost souls crying! 'Woe! Woe! Woe is me! Woe! Woe! is me!' It seemed that each one's cry was adapted to individuals in the singular number. It was fire and smoke mingled. There was no place of mercy to be discerned, Satan seeming like he was himself a mass of fire; with eyes, head, face and mouth of fire. Arms of fire, hands of fire, fingers of fire! There was no place on his head for hair. It was all fire. He came up with the boiling smoke; threw his eyes at you, then disappeared. Then he'd roll up and appear with the smoke, rumbling like a solid ball!

"After I 'came acquainted with the Lord, I would constantly visit hell. I saw people there, seemingly turned into fire. They were miserable. They were not satisfied of their job that they engaged into. They seemingly desired rescue, but there were none.

"Now, concerning of pictures describing Satan with horns and forks; he failed to have them. When I saw him in hell, had he had them, he could not have used them, because he was in such a hurry. Hell was in a hurry. Everything was rapidly moving.

"Now concerning his imps; they were like flying bats in the suburbs. Now we have them here in this world in appetites as well as in the wind. Spritual bats are the same as those in the wind. Their appearance in hell are the same as bats here. This, of course, is in similarity. We have the same spritual bats, oral bats and carnal in appetites; all adapted in our bodies, fed by the spirit of Satan, so we needs be careful and noticeable."

The wiry little preacher asserts, "My presence is never missing!" Life to him is drama.

"I am a divine healer," he contends, "with the same power as the



Apostles. I was born May 20, 1865. My father and mother were bought from Virginia by Mr. Jack Stallworth. A slave trader brought them to Conecuh and sold them here. Then they moved to Pineville, in Monroe County.

"Mr. Jack Stallworth had a double kitchen and I was born in the far one of those kitchens.

"In 1876 I came to Evergreen and stayed under the care of General Martin. He sent me to colored school and I stayed with him until he died. I went from here to Pensacola, Florida, on Sept. 22, 1881. After coming out of school, I joined Mr. Zion Missionary Baptist church under L. M. Robinson, the pastor. Then I became missionary of that district.

"In 1889 I went to New Orleans on a mission tour. In 1890 I came to Brewton, Alabama. In 1893 I arrived in Evergreen and entered the association of said church. I am now a missionary of the Evergreen district for life.

"I married Katie Lee in the year 1892, became father of three children. The first two were twins, Noble Al and Lillie L. My baby, Daisy L. is now thirty-two. She and Lillie L., live in Cleveland, Ohio. Noble Al lives in Brewton, Alabama.

"My father's treatment with his owner in Alabama was very good. He was a foreman of his owner's farm. My mother's name was Mattie. Her treatments in Virginia were very good. She was house-woman and seamster for the family. Her treatments in Alabama, by her owner Mr. Stallworth, were very good. She died when I was five years old. My father, after the death of my mother, went off and left us. I was carried up to the home house of Mr. Jack Stallworth and was cared for there by Lizzie Stallworth, colored. When just a boy, I came to Evergreen to live with General Martin.

"General Martin had a big library; books everywhere! They were from the floor to the ceiling and all the way round the room. My bed was



in that library. Whilst I was admitted to General Martin's library to sleep in, oftentimes I would look at those great mass of books in groups. I said one day, 'After now I'm going to be like General Martin, my guider,' Oft, he would say to me, 'You have a sign and a mark to become noted.'

"Among books I read in that library, I remember of Blackstone, the wonderful law dictator, whom will be a standard in his jurisprudence as long as a scholar can be produced. I credit the General with what I have in my vocabulary. He is my standard and status! I continually follow his trend. Where Mrs. Wilds' parlor is today; that was the library and that was my room.

"I worked in the garden, helped Miss Mary cook, went on errands and everything was under my care. Mr. John D. Burnett's wife, Miss Virginia, was Miss Mary's oldest daughter. Miss Carrie Finch was the next daughter; Miss Nannie Herrington the next, and Miss Daisy was the baby. Mr. Ed Martin was the only son. Miss Mary Martin was the same as a mother to me and General Martin cared for me like a father."

Asked about happenings of his past life, Reverend Robinson said:

"The only stories in my life to comfort my children are in my ministerial biography. At one time in my life on my first trip to Louisiana; I ran a revival at Moss Point, Miss., and whilst engaged in that meeting some Africans were visiting that place. One of them said to Rev. T. T. Thomas, 'I want to borrow her to preach,' and T. T. Thomas said to me, 'Will you go with him?.' My answer was yes, and I and the African boarded a little skiff and went across the East Paspagola (Pascagoula) and west Paspagola Bay. The distance across were three miles. When we arrived on the other side, we went two and a half miles on the little island. Nothing lives over there but Africans. The name of the place is Tougas.

"I preached for them four nights and they wanted to retain me, but I told them, 'Be truthful. You only borrowed me. Return me to the place



where you came in possession of my presence.' And the leader said, 'Gos,' meaning yes."

When asked to explain divine healing, the elder said:

"Laying my hand on them, faith or not, I heal. If my wife have any pains about her and I am asleep, she reaches and gets my hand and lays it on her pain. I don't know when she moves my hand, but next morning she says to me, 'I suffered last night.' I ask her, 'Why did you fail to wake me?' Her reply, 'I did not need to wake you. I got holt of your hand and imposed the said hand on the place of my suffering. The pain got away from there and I went to sleep.'

"Such as for the blood, I use herbs of the forest. That's my secret. I boil the herbs and give as drink for fever and blood. If the skin is pricked, as by knife, I lay my hand on the wound and it does not bleed.

"For tonsil-lights, (tonsillitis) I apply my naked hand to the throat, fix a glass of clear water, apply my hand over the top of that and convey around the glass and reveal in the name of the Lord. I give them that to drink. They swallow every drop and are healed.

"A party by the name of Ira Bell Thomas suffered with fire-brew (fibroid) tumor in 1930. I arrived at her home on Monday morning. Within thirty days she got rid of that tumor. Lucinda Bradley, she suffered with tonsil-lights. I cured her tonsil-lights with the imposition of hand and clear water in the name of Christ. There are many other cures.

"Another thing I've told my children for consolation to keep in memory:

"Once in returning from New Orleans, I got off at Long Beach, Miss. There were several young white men there and one colored man. After the train were gone, I ask, 'Where is the next church?' Those



white men said to me, 'Young man, your nearest church here is four miles due west of this place.' I said to them, 'Many thanks to you gentlemen.' Then I said to the colored man, 'Will you take my two grips into your care into your house and let me sit here on your steps until morning? I'll be thankful for it.' And he said to me, 'No! You are jest from New Orleans an' I'm 'fraid of you stayin' on my steps.' The nice young white man said to him, 'There's no harm in that boy. He's of good rear. You look at his appearance; can't you see?' The colored man says, 'No sir.' Then I said to the young white men, 'You watch my sayings; he will not remain here very long. I'm a boy preacher, chosen of God, and sent on this mission.'

"I said, 'Listen, I will go and find the way.' But the distance of my going were not less than seven miles; and going that distance, I entered in the space of a great plot of ground with wild cows in it. I suppose there were seventy-five. They all raised their heads and their attention was called by one large red cow. She groaned, then started toward me in a great rush. I ask God to change their rage, and they all turned and ran the other way. Then I pursued my own way.

"When coming in sight of the church that I was pursuant, it was upon a hill. Instead of it being a colored church, it was a white membership. The people on the outside were a great crowd. Some were standing, some sitting and some laying down. I said, 'Good evening, gentlemen.' They said, 'Very well.' Then I entered the church. The preacher was tightly engaged in a sermon, wonderfully preaching. I sat down right at the door inside, by a one-legged white man, and he opened his knife and began to pop it very loud. He would look at me sideways. I, with good patience, waited on the Lord for instructions of what to do. My mind told me, 'If you bow down here, he will stick that knife in



you.' I wanted to pray for the closing; but the Lord said to me in the meantime, 'When he calls for prayer, you rise up and bow in obedience to the preacher, and at once depart.' In obedience to the message, I did so.

"Coming out of the church I took both my suit cases and walked as though I could not hardly go. And departing from there, coming through the mass of white men on said ground, I inquired, 'How far is the colored church from here?' They said, 'Three miles.' Passing by them to the corner of a green hedge, the road turned southwestward, and after leaving that hedge there was a long sand bed and a spirit told me, 'You set your suit cases down so as to make impression on the sand, appearing you are worried. Then you take up those suit cases and directly walk straight across the road as though you were going out into the woods to rest. As soon as you steps 'cross the road, you walk on the green grass downside the road, and go in haste. When they come to the place where you crossed, they will think you are out in the woods resting, but don't stop. I'll be with you.' I obeyed, and in the course of an hour I arrived in sight of a colored Baptist church on a hill to my right. A short while after I arrived, I saw a young, active white man coming. Seems to me he was about eighteen years old. I spoke to the people, sitting there in their midst, and I said, 'Look! See that young white man? I'm going to clear up my throat, and when he sees me he's going to clear up my throat, and when he sees me he's going to turn around.' They said to me, 'Well Reverend, clear up your throat.' I cleared it up very loud and he looked up and turned at once around and went back.

"I preached that night and the next morning a white preacher said to me, 'You went to my church yesterday and we thought you were a peddler.' I said to him, 'These two cases that I have; my clothes and books are therein. I am a Missionary Baptist evangelist.' The Lord



ordered me to go to New Orleans and preach in the open air, and I obeyed. For eleven days I preached at the foot of Canal Street."

The elder continues: "The impression of the Holy Spirit forms itself in a voice just as a person speaking through a trumpet above my head, very soft and very near. The Lord in his ubiquity is always near and not distant. He fills every place.

"My first impression of the Holy Spirit was at eighteen years. I was walking along the streets in Pensacola, just returning from my praying place; a place for breathing my prayer. I make no voice. The first message was, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.' When my desire is to do a certain thing, and I'm in an attitude for prayer, I hear the voice."

Washington Copy,

6/29/37.

L. H.

CHENEY CROSSEX-SLAVE AND SOUTHERN MAMMY TELLS ABOUT HER PAST.

From all accounts, aunt Cheney Cross must be quite ninety years old. "In jew 'in the war" she says, "I had done long pass my thirteenth birthday." ~~and~~ Today, aunt Cheney is a typical reflection of slavery ~~time~~ ^{days} and ~~the~~ ^{to} Southern Mammy.

~~Clear~~ away from Highways, and Automobiles, she lives several miles from Evergreen, on a small farm in the piney woods, with her "baby boy."

Talk with aunt Cheney, ~~and you are not surprised~~ that Evergreen's City Marshall, Mr. Harry L. Riley, "put out 'ter hope" this old family servant who had "tended" to his father, Mr. George Riley; his mother, "Miss Narciss;" and "Miss Lizzible", his sister; ~~and then she had~~ ^{also} helped bring his own "chillun" into the world.

Aunt Cheney had promised Mr. Riley that she would come in town on a certain Saturday morning in May, 1937, and ~~she~~ would bring a letter from her young "mistess" for me to read.

It was past noon on that particular Saturday, when she came up the back steps, a little out of breath, but smiling. "Lawd honey!" she said: "Here 'tis pass dinner time an I 'se jess makin' my arrivement here. Nome, I don't wants no dinner, thank you jess ~~the~~ same. Whut makes me so late here now, I stopped by Miss Ella Northcutt's, she's my folks too, you know, an she done made me eat all I kin hole! Nome honey, I ca'n't eat no cabbage. Me an' cabbage never is set horses together much, but I will thank you for th' ice tea."

Settling herself down in a low chair, she sighed and began taking off her shoes. "Honey, you dont mind ef I resses me' feets does you?" "My white folks is spilin' me here ~~ter~~ day! I'll be lookin' fer it ~~ter~~ mornin' too, an I wont be gettin' it." Her black eyes twinkled in her shiny, old, wrinkled face, as she talked on.

"I tole Mr. Harry I 'se comin'! An here I is!" "How'd I come? I come on Mack an' Charlie, Dats how!" "Yes, man! Dese two boys here, dey brung me." Pushing her feet out for inspection, she leaned forward, smiling and pleased. "Dese here foots, dey's Mack an' Charlie. Dey's my whole pennance for gittin' 'bout". "Don't you worry none, Mr. Harry, he'll git me back home 'gainst dark come on."

"Lawd honey, I don't want 'ter know no better folks'n Mr. Harry an' Miss Emma! I foller dem good folks clean up ~~ter~~ ^{to} Mussel Sho! Yessum, I sho did. At fust, I tole 'm I could ~~nt~~ go no how, but dey pull down

CHENEY CROSS

(continued)



an' my daddy's mistess too, ^{was miss} ~~was~~ Mary Fields, an my daddy ^{was} ~~was~~ Henry Fields. Den de Carters bought my daddy from ^{miss} Mary Fields. Well, dey mix up an' down back dat, tell now my young mistess, what use ~~to~~ be little Frances Purifire, she's married ~~to~~ Mr. Cunningham.

" I ^{was} ~~was~~ brung up right in ~~de~~ house wid my white folks. Yessum, I sleep on ~~de~~ little trundler bed what pushed up under ~~de~~ big bed, indurinat ~~de~~ day. I watched over dem chillun ~~day~~ an' night! I washed ^{my} ~~my~~ an' fed ^{me} ~~me~~, an' played wid ^{me} ~~me~~. One ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~de~~ babies had ~~to~~ take goats milk. When she cry, my mistess say, "Cheney, go on an' git dat goat." Yes Lawd! an' dat goat sho did talk sweet ~~to~~ dat baby! Jess lack it ~~was~~ ^{was} her own. She look at it an' wag her tail ~~an~~ ^{an} fass an' say: "Ma-a-a-a-a!" Den she lay down on ~~de~~ flo' while us holes her feets an' let ~~de~~ baby suck ~~de~~ milk. All ~~de~~ time dat goat bees talkin': "Ma-a-a-a-a" tell dat baby got satisfied.

" When us chillun got tuck wid any kind ~~of~~ ^{of} sickness or zeezes, us tuck azzifizzity an' garlit. You know, garlit what smell lack onions. Den we wore some roun' us necks, Dat kep' off flu-anz.

" Dese days, it look lack ^{somekin} ~~some~~ teat don't tase lack dat we cooked back yonder. ~~De~~ coffee us used had ~~to~~ be fresh groun' ever day. An' when it commence ~~to~~ bile, I put dese here knees down on ~~de~~ flo berfo' ~~de~~ fire an' stir dat coffee for ~~de~~ longest. Den my gran'ma, she hung dat pot up on dem pot hooks over ~~de~~ fire, an' washed ~~de~~ meat an' drap it in. Time she done pick, an' overlook ~~de~~ greens an' den wranched'm in Spring Water, ~~de~~ meat was bilin'. Den she take ^a great big ^{mess} ~~mess~~ of dem fresh turnip greens an' squash ^{em} down in dat pot. Dey jess melt down an' go ter ~~seasonin'~~ ^{seasonin'}.

" Hex' thing I know'd, here come my mistess, an' she say: "Now Cheney, I wants some pone bread fer dinner." Dem hick'ry coals in dat fire place, ~~was~~ all time ready an' hot! They would'n be no finger prints left on dat pone when Cheney got ^{then} ~~through~~ pattin' it out neither. Better not! Look lack dem chillun jess could'n git ~~er~~ ^{er} maff ~~er~~ dat hard corn bread.

" Plenty ~~of~~ fancy cookin' went on 'roun' dat fire place, but somehow ~~de~~ pot licker an' pone bread, long side wid ~~de~~ fresh butter milk, ~~stirs~~ ^{may} mem'ry worse'n anything.

" All dis good eatin' I'se speakin' 'bout tuck place ^{befo' de} ~~befo'~~ ^{de} yankees raided us. It ^{was} ~~was~~ den, too, dat my mistess tuck me down ~~to~~ ^{to} Spring' back ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~de~~ house. Down dare it ~~was~~ a holler tree stump, taller'n you is.

CHENEY CROSS
(continued)

She tell me ^{to} ~~to~~ clam up ^{to de} ~~to~~ top of dat holler tree, den she han' me a big heavy bundle, all wropped up an' tied tight. Hit sho ~~was~~ ^{was} heavy! Den she say: 'Drap it in, Cheney.' I did'n know den, whut she's up to, but dat ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~de~~ silver an' jewel'ry she ~~was~~ ^{was} hidin'.

"Yes honey! I'members dat yankee raid ~~lark~~ ^{lark} lack it ~~was~~ ^{was} jess yistiddy. I'se settin' dare in ~~de~~ ^{de} loom room, an' Mr. Thad Watts' lil' gal, Louise, she's standin' at th' wind'er. She say: 'O-O-OH! NANNIE! jess look! Down yonder!' 'Baby, what is dat?' I says. 'Dems de yankees comin'! Gawd hep us!' I says, an' berfo I kin keeth ~~me~~ ^{me} breff ~~de~~ ^{de} place is kivered. You could ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ stir ~~up~~ ^{up} wid a stick. Feets sounded lack mutterin' thunder. Dem bemits stick up lack dey jess settin on de mouf ~~de~~ ^{de} dey guns. Dey swords hangin' on dey sides singin' a chune whilst dey walk. A chicken better not pass by ~~de~~ ^{de} he do ~~off~~ ^{off} come his head!

"When dey pass on by me, dey put ^{high} shuck me outter ~~my~~ ^{my} skin. 'Where's de men's?' dey say, ~~an~~ ^{an} shake me up. 'Where's de arms?' Dey shake me tell ~~me~~ ^{me} eye balls loos'n up. 'Where's de silver?' Lawd! ~~me~~ ^{me} ~~teef~~ ^{teef} drappin' out! Dey did'n give me time ~~to~~ ^{to} ketch ~~me~~ ^{me} breff. All ~~de~~ ^{de} time, Miss Mary jess look ~~am~~ ^{am} in ~~de~~ ^{de} eye an say nothin'!

"Dey tuck dem enfield rifles, half as long as dat door, an buss in ~~de~~ ^{de} smoke house wind'er. Dey jeck me up off'n ~~me~~ ^{me} feet an' drag me up ~~de~~ ^{de} ladder an' say: 'Git dat meat out!' I ~~trick~~ ^{trick} kep' on thow'n out Miss Mary's hams an sawsidges, tell dey holler 'STOP!' I come backin' down dat ladder lack a squirrel. An I aint stop backin' tell I retch Miss Mary.

"Yes, Lawd! dem yankees loaded up a waggin fuller meat an' tuck ~~de~~ ^{de} whole barrel of ~~lasses~~ ^{lasses}. Takin' dat ~~lasses~~ ^{lasses} kilt us chillun! Our mainest ~~musement~~ ^{musement} ~~was~~ ^{was} makin' lasses candy. Den us cake walk 'roun' it. Now dat ~~was~~ ^{was} all gone. Look lack dem so-gers had ~~to~~ ^{to} sharpen dey swords on eyerthing in sight. Th' big Crepe Mullen bush by ~~de~~ ^{de} parlor wind'er ~~was~~ ^{was} bloomin' ~~so~~ ^{so} pink an' pretty, an' dey jess stood dare an' whack off dem blooms lack folkses heads drappin' on ~~de~~ ^{de} groun'.

"I seed ~~de~~ ^{de} Sargunt when he run his bennit ~~clen~~ ^{clen} thew Miss Mary's bestest feather bed an' rip it slam open! Wid dat, a win' blow'd up an' tuck dem feathers ever' which ~~or~~ ^{or} way ~~for~~ ^{for} Sunday. ~~Yer~~ ^{Yer} could'n see where you's at. De Sargunt, he jess ~~thow'd~~ ^{thow'd} his head back an' laugh fit ~~to~~ ^{to} kill hissef! Den fust thing next, he done suck a feather down his win'pipe! Lawd, honey! Dat white man sho struggled! ~~Dank~~ ^{Dank} ~~so-gers~~ ^{so-gers} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~water~~ ^{water} in his face! Dey shuck him ~~de~~ ^{de} ~~xxxx~~ ^{xxxx}

May-1937

CHENEY CROSS
(continued)



know hants has ^{to} count ever hole in dat sifter berfo dey can come through. Some folks puts ^{de} Bible down dare, too, ~~cause~~ Den ^{de} poor spairit has ~~to~~ read ever word ^{of} dat book berfo' he crosses over.

" I reckon 'bout ^{de} terriblest thing ever happen ^{to} me ~~was~~ dat big lookin' glass. De lookin' glass ^{was} all laid out in th' top ^{of} ~~my~~ ^{my} trunk, waitin' fer me weddin' day. One night I see standin' by de trunk wid hit wide open. I seed ^{subin} black berfo' me eyes an' den a screech owl lit in my window an' screech right in my face. I 'se, ^{de} scared I sot right down in ^{de} middle ^{of} dat lookin' glass. Hit buss in a ~~million~~ ^{million} pieces! Mamma thow'd up her hans an' holler: "Git up frum dare, gal! You go 'ner have seven years ^{of} bad luck. Shoo dat hootin' owl ~~away~~ berfo' you dies in yo' tracks. Den I swoons off. I feels dem hants gittin' ready ^{to} ride me clean down in ^{my} grabes. Bout den ^{subin} kep' sayin' ^{to} me, over an' over: "Thow dem pieces ^{of} lookin' glass in runnin' watter. Den hit say: "Burn yo' mammy's ole shoe an' de screech owl leave. After dat ^{de} mine ~~was~~ at res."

" Soon as my daddy hear 'em firin' off far ^{de} Surinder, he put out ^{for} ~~the~~ plantation where he fust belong. He leff me wid my mistess at Pine Flat, but 'twant long tell he come back ^{to} git me an' carry me home wid him. I hate ~~to~~ leave my mistess, an' she did ^{not} want ~~to~~ part from me. She say: "Stay here wid me, an' I'll give you a school larnin'. She say ^{to} Captain Purifire: "You go buy my lil' nigger a book, Git one ^{of} dem Blue Back Websters, she say, "so I kin eddicate her ^{to} spell." Den my daddy say: "Her mamma tole me not ^{to} come home wid out her an' she has ^{to} go wid me!"

" I never will fergit ridin' berhind my daddy on dat mule, way in ^{de} night. Us leff in sich a hurry, I did ^{not} git none ^{of} my cloze hardly, an' I aint seed my mistess from dat day ^{to} dis!

It was back in 1935 that Mrs. Taylor, Welfare Director of Conecuh county, ~~had~~ had sent for Aunt Cheney, and had read the following letter to her, which made it possible to get the pension:

Furman, Ala. Nov. 29, 1935.

"Mr. H. L. Riley,
"Evergreen, Ala.

"Dear Sir:

"The Fields' negroes belonged to the Carter families of Pine Flat, Butler county, who owned extensive lands on Cedar Creek in Wilcox County.

"Henry Fields belonged to my mother, Mrs. Nancy Carter Purifoy. He was Cheney's father. Cheney was grown or very nearly grown, when I was an infant, and I have passed my 66th birthday.

"George Fields, Cheney's nephew, and many of his ^a descendants, still live on our Cedar Creek lands. Also some of ^{Wm} Fields' sons and grandchildren. So Cheney can't be under 75 years of age.

"Hope this information sufficient to help our dear old friend.

We were always so fond of Cheney.

"Very truly yours,

"(MRS) Frances Purifoy Cunningham -

CHENEY CROSS
(continued)



After reading this letter to aunt Cheney, Mrs. Taylor gave it to to keep for her very own.

What a picture aunt Cheney had made! Sitting with bowed head, the early morning sun streaming across her face and down on the letter she held in her hand.

Tears glistened and fell from her worn cheeks as she tenderly held the almost sacred page before her eyes. Upside down? Yes, but what mattered! This was from her young "Mistress" and her "Mistress" had not forgotten!

Annie Dee Dean

Phil Samuels

from Annie Lee Dean
Concord Co. #6

"His Fokes" Remember



The sight of Negroes beside the highway was nothing new to the traveler, who was driving leisurely through the South. There was something different about this one, however, whose age gave him a shuffling gait as he paced carefully in front of a neat cabin on the outskirts of Evergreen (Tour #1). It was almost surrounded by the white tombstones and markers in the adjoining cemetery.

The traveler stopped the car, when the old man halted and faced the cabin, holding his hands in front of him, apparently sighting something. He faced about, hands still before him, when he saw the ~~car~~ ^{automobile}. He lifted his hand to the ragged brim of his hat.

"Egenin', suh, ~~and, ma'am, he~~ he said as he approached, ~~the car~~ --and, ma'am," he added hastily as he saw the other occupant.

"Howdy, uncle," they both greeted him.

"Y'all must be from a long ways," the ancient pointed to the license tag on the car, which identified ^{it} as not from Alabama.

"We are. Is that ~~your~~ your house?"

"Nawsuh. ^{Dats} ~~That's~~ Buck's place."

"Buck?"

"Yessuh. You don' know Buck? Ef'n you'd waited twell nex' year there'd been a stone tellin' all about 'im."

"You mean a tombstone?"

"No'm. I means a moniment right heah 'lonside de road. His fokes is getting ready to put it up and I wuz jes' sorta figgerin' a good place for it when you driv up."

The travelers looked at the cabin. They thought of what a monument would cost with an inscription.

"You mean his family is going to buy an expensive monument and put it ^{up} here along the highway?"

"His fambly?" there was a certain tinge of scorn in the old Negro's astonished tone. "Shucks, nawzuh. I mean his white fokes. ^{de} ~~the~~ quality heah in Evergreen. Old Buck maybe was done teched in de haid, but he wuz quality and his fokes done remember and ^{dey} ~~they~~ gonna put a stone heah so everbody will know 'bout him.

"Buck was my ha'f brother," there was pride in this announcement, and the old man drew himself erect with the thought of his relative of quality. "Two of ^{de} ~~the~~ fines' gemmun in Evergreen done sing at his funeral with two niggers. It sho' was pretty." The ancient shook his head for emphasis.

"We've found the real South, Jim," came a whisper in the ear of the traveler. "Let's hear some more." The driver nodded.

"That's fine, uncle," he smiled at the old man. "Do you think we could see the cabin?"

"Yessuh, yessuh!" a bow and a ^{beaming} ~~proud~~ smile. "I'se proud to show you."

The car was pulled up clear of the highway. ~~and~~ The travelers debarked and accompanied the old man up the walk to the front of the cabin, wondering how to get ^{the} ~~the~~ story of Buck. They need not have worried.

"This heah," the beaming Negro swung his hand about, "was give to Buck by his fokes. All them ladies in the Gyarden Club fix it so the white gemmun, Mr. Cal and Mr. Walter and Mr. Mack and Mr. Charlie and a hunderd or so others could give 'em the money to build the cabin. Buck's place done burn down heah six-seven years ago. Dat's when he went to live with Aunt Kitty." The old man broke into a chcukle.

"And was dey ^{goin' to} ~~gonna~~ on den?" He laughed out loud.

The tiny cabin had been inspected and the traveler and his wife had seated themselves on the stoop.

"No'm, thank you, I sorta talks better when I'se standing," the ancient answered an invitation to sit. "But I guess you orta know about Buck," he replied to the request for his story.



kep' on crowdin' him like you see. But that din't worry Buck none. He had sperrits of his own what he talked to all de time. Hey musta told him plenty of jokes 'cause he wuz always achucklin' or a cluckin' when he walk along. Nobody was 'fraid of his talk. It wuz his bizness.

"Nawsuh, Buck didn't have no regler job, but that twarn't 'case folks was scairt of him. He jes' didn't like to be tied down I guess. 'fore he got too ole he used to do mos' of the woodchoppin' ~~at de bigges houses in town.~~ at de bigges houses in town.

"He useter work night times, specially in the time of the moon. Buck he liked the moon. He ain't never sunned his close. He jes used to hang 'em out in the moonlight. Not that he had much close, rightly they wuz mostly rags, but he kep' 'em clean.

"Come a bright night, gwestes at the big houses 'roun' heah useter to think they was hearing ghostes when Buck was out doing his choppin'. They'd hear somebody walking by under the winders whispering and achucklin' like sperrits and they useter pull the bedclose up over they haids and shake, I guess."

The old Negro stopped to laugh.

"When he got sort of ole for woodchoppin' he jes projick 'roun' at de stores downtown cleanin' up some and fotchin' and carryin' for the boss men. Mos' in genrilly it wuz for Mr. Dey who runs the big jewelry store. Buck sorta took to Mr. Dey like he blong to him. He always swep up the store and run his errands.

"One night Mr. Dey's on his way home and he heard somebody callin' him like he wanted him powerful bad. It was Buck. He say: 'Don't look yit, Mr. Dey. Wait' twell I tell you. Just keep ~~me~~ agoin' but don't look.' Byneby Buck say: 'Stop! Stop right whar you is, Mr. Dey. Now! Look! Look fum whar you is and you see it clar.' Mr. Dey he look and dere wuzn't nothing but the moon, but he could see it clear and he says he wuz lucky like Buck meant he should.





"Buck he never was uppity but he could say things to his white fokes and they'd think it wuz funny. Like one time a lady ask Buck would he eat his Chrismus dinner in her kitchen. Buck he say: 'Is you gonna have turkey?' And the lady she say: 'No, Buck, but we gonna have a mighty good dinner with plenty of fixin's.' But Buck he say: "If you ain't got turkey den please don't look for me, ma'am."

"Yessuh that Buck was a sight. If he warn't quite right in his mind, he could recollect better'n anybody you ever saw in your born days. He ^{knew} everbody what wuz born in Evergreen for a hunderd years and he never forgits 'em. One time a white gemmun come home after he been away a long time an' Buck say 'Howdydo, Mr. Sam' when he seen him with his young lady, and Mr. Sam say to his young lady, 'Well, you and Buck 'members me anyhow.' She ac' like she mad at him for misnamin' her with Buck, but she jest laff.

"Buck never knew ^{nothin'} ~~anything~~ 'bout money. He ain't never paid ~~any~~ taxes on his house. Somebody always did and he ain't never worried about eating. Somebody always done feed him.

"That time I'm tellin' you 'bout Aunt Kitty happen six-seven years ago, when his house burn down. They don't fix it up right away, so they send him 'roun' for Aunt Kitty to board him. ^{him an' Aunt Kitty} ~~They~~ gits along all right for three ~~four~~ ^{dey does} four years, even effen ~~they~~ ^{de} aurginifies a lot. Dey done bus' up 'tirely one day when Buck caught him a mess of fish and fotch 'em home for Aunt Kitty to fry 'em up.

"Buck he tell her they ain't 'nuff fat in the pan and Aunt Kitty says ^{de} sin't no nigger can tell her how to cook fish and Buck say he can. It all end up when Aunt Kitty bus' him in ^{de} the haid ^{wid de} ~~with the~~ fryin' pan.

"Cose he couldn't live ^{de} ~~there~~ no longer, so Mr. Leon Riley fix him up a pallet in ^{de} ~~the~~ shed in back of his store. ^{Dats} ~~That's~~ when ^{de} ~~the~~ Gyarden Club ladies done arrange for his house."



The old man paused to bend an admiring gaze upon Buck's home, built by ~~this~~ fokes.

"Buck he took up livin' heah like he ain't been away," the story teller took up the thread. "He wuz mighty ole but he kep' right on workin' like he was a projickin' boy or somepin'. Everbody useta to look for Buck and effen he wuzn't 'roun' they miss him, 'case he been in Evergreen since ~~they was~~ ^{dey wuz} sech a place.

"Long time ago Mr. George Farnham, one ~~de~~ ^{o' de} outsingest white gemmun heah, he tole Buck that he would reques' the privilage of singin' at Buck's funeral. Buck was mighty proud and said, 'yessuh, please suh do that, Mr. George.'"

"So when Buck he died right atta Christmas (1936) and the time of the funeral come Mr. George Farnham and Mr. Jesse Lee Johnston, another white gemmun, got up and sing with two of us fokes. It sure was pretty."

The old man stared off into the fading light of the afternoon.

"I bet ole Buck ~~he~~ was mighty proud and haughty with them angels when he heard Mr. George and Mr. Jesse Lee ~~sing~~ standing right up and singing out loud in our church with about a hunderd other white fokes listening to 'em and to ~~the~~ ^{de} prayin' and ~~the~~ ^{de} sermon. ~~That~~ ^{that} fine 'everun' Mr. ^{what} ate, ~~who~~ ^{de} preaches down ~~at~~ ^{de} the White Methodist Church, he said a mighty strong prayer for Buck.

"Yassuh, I bet ole Buck ~~was~~ ^{wuz} proud, going' 'roun' up ^{de} awhisperin' and achucklin' ~~with~~ ^{to} heself. I bet he come plum' near to bustin' when he heard tell about that moniment they gonna put up heah for him."

The story was done. The traveler reached in his pocket.

"Nawsuh, I can't rightly take no money," the old Negro refused the bill held out to him. "I ain't done nothin' ceppen take up your good time atalkin'."

"Well then do you think your Garden Club ladies would use it to help pay for the marker?" he was asked.

"They wouldn't think us rude trying to help?" the traveler's companion asked.

"No, ma'am," the ancient assured her. "Them ladies ~~is~~ know that quality can't be brash."

The pair drove off, the old Negro waving to them with the bill in his hand, his battered hat in the other.

"That," said a quiet voice in the driver's ear, "seems to be some sort of answer to the race problem."



through. Some folks puts de Bible down dere, too. Den de poor spairit has to read ever' word of dat book befo' he crosses over.

"I reckon 'bout de terriblest thing ever^o happen to me was dat big lookin' glass. De lookin' glass was all laid out in ~~the~~ ^{de} top of my trunk, waitin' for my weddin' day. One night I'se standin' by de trunk wid hit wide open. I seed somepin black befo' my eyes an' den a screech owl lit in my winder an' screech right in my face. I'se so scared I sot right down in de middle of dat lookin' glass. Hit bus' in a million pieces! Mamma th'owed up her han's an' holler. 'Git up from dere, gal. You gone^o have seven years of bad luck. Shoo dat hootin' owl away befo' you dies in your tracks.' Den I swoons off. I feels dem ha'nts gittin' ready to ride me clean down in my grabe. 'Bout den somepin kep' sayin' to me, over an' over: 'Th'ow dem pieces of lookin' glass in runnin' water.' Den hit say: 'Burn your mammy's ole shoe an' de screech owl leave.' Atter I does dat my min' was at res'.

"Soon as my daddy hear 'em firin' off for de Surrender, he put out for de plantation where he fust belong. He lef' me wid my mistis at Pine Flat, but 'twan't long twell he come back to git me an' carry me home wid him. I hate to leave my mistis, an' she didn't want to part from me. She say: 'Stay here wid me, an' I'll give you a school larnin'.' She say to Captain Purifire: 'You go buy my li'l nigger a book. Git one of dem Blue Back Websters,' she say, 'so I kin eddicate her to spell.' Den my daddy say: 'Her mamma tole me not to come home widout her an' she has to go wid me.'

"I never will fergit ridin' behin' my daddy on dat mule way in de night. Us lef' in sich a hurry I didn't git none of my cloze hardly, an' I ain't seed my mistis from dat day to dis!"

