ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY
WPA

WPA Alabama Writers Project
EX SLAVES TALES
Butler County, #3

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WPA
ALA. DEPT. ARCHIVES & HISTORY
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DID THEY OWN US

OR WE OWN THEM?

"Yas, chillun, I 'members de wah; 'caze I was here when de Yankees come t'rough an' I was ~~[illegible]~~ about fourteen year ole. Ole Marster he went off to de wah wid a whole passel of sojers, en' he been gone a long time, en' nobody to home to look atter de plantation, 'cep Ole Mistis en' Unker Jude, what was Ole Marster's fust slave he ebber owned. Ole Marster en' Unker Jude was borned de same day, en' Ole Marster's pappy gin Unker Jude to him, whenst dey was leetle bitsy babies. When Ole Marster mai'ed Ole Mistis, dey was young folks, en' dey move ter he own plantation. He tuk Unker Jude wid him, en' Unker Jude was de ca'i'ge driver. When Ole Marster went off ter de wah, he tole Unker Jude ter look atter Ole Mistis en' evy'ting on de place 'twell he come back. Whilst Ole Marster gone to de wah, Unker Jude was oberseer for Ole Mistis, en' he made de niggers wuk harder dan Ole Marster did, to make co'n, en' oats, en' fodder, en' meat fer de sojers.

"Ole Mistis made de womens cyard 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 clos' en' makin' linsey fer de women's clos'. Us didn't hab no udder clos' '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' scotch 'em.

"Us kep' hearin' of de Yankees comin', en' one mawhin' Ole Mistis she say: 'Jane, you go down ter de front gate en' stay dar en' watch en' see iffen de Yankees comin' down de big road, en' when you sees 'em, you run tell me quick.'

"Bimeby, I seed de Yankees comin' about a mile down de road, en'

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I run tell Ole Mistis, en' she call de womens en' dey run down t'rough de orchard to de big woods, en' I run tell Unker Jude en' he onhitch de mules en' lead 'em down ter de big gully behin' de fiel'.

"Ole Mistis tole me to run back to de house, quick, fo' de Yankees get dar, en' git her gole watch en' chain outen de bureau drawer; but de Yankees come in whilst I was gitten de watch en' chain, en' one ob 'em grabbed it outen my han' en' put it in his pocket en' tole a nudder Yankee: 'I'se gwine tek dis homeeter my gal.'

"De house en' de yard was plum full of Yankees en' dey rid dey hosses en' tore up ev'y'ting, lookin' for money en' jewelry. Dey ax me whar it was hid, en' I tole em' I didn't know en' dey said I was lyin', en' iffen I didn't tell 'em, dey would kill me 'lak er dam Rebel', en' I sho was skairt.

"'Dey et up all de sump'n' to eat in de kitchen en' tuk all de meat an' meal outen de smokehouse en' didn't lef' us nuddin', en' dey went to de crib en' tuk ev'y year co'n en' all de fodder en' put it in wagins en' tuk 'em off.

"De Yankees ax me don't I wanner be free en' I say: 'No, suh', en' dey say ev'body gwine be free en' I won't hab ter wuk fer Ole Marster no mo'. Den dey ax me whar Ole Marster at, en' I say: 'He gone to wah', en' dey ax me whar Ole Mistis, en' I say: 'I dunno whar she at; she done gone off sumsuz.' Dey ax me whar de guns, en' I tole 'em us didn't hab no guns.

"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 mister 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

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Georgiana, Alabama

'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' de flewed aroun' en' us had to stay 'way 'twel night. Unker Jude, he wuk all night long, makin' bee gums outen 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 de honey en' put it in de new gums fas' as dey could make comb fer it. Dem bees who' was smart.

"When de wah done gone, Ole Marster he come, wid one he arms shot plum off, en' Ole Mistis she cry, she so glad to see him en' Unker Jude he cry en' hug Ole Marster, en' us all cry en' tek on, we so glad Ole Marster come back en' so sorry he arm shot off. Ole Marster tell all de niggers dey free now en' don't hatter wuk fer him no mo', en' some er de young niggers went off atter de Yankees, en' neber did come back, but de res' ob us jes' stayed right whar we is. Us had a mighty hard time for a long time, but de white folks had de same hard time en' us didn't mek no diffunce. I mai'ed Rufus en' us raise a big fambly right dar on Ole Marster's plantation, en' outen us's twelve chillune, ain't nary one eber seen de inside ob de jailhouse. I raise my chillune jes' lak Ole Mistis raise her'n en' dats de way to raise 'em, to wuk en' keep outen debilment. Ole Marster dead en' gone en' Ole Mistis too, but I 'members 'em jes' lak dey was, when dey looked atter us whenst we belonged to 'em or dey belonged ter us, I dunno which it was. De times was better fo' de wah. Us had good things to eat en' plenty of it, en' we had good clos' en' clean clos' fer Sunday. Dat's mo'n some triflin' niggers got now.

"I goes to church en' sings en' prays, en' when de good Lord teks me, I'se ready to go, en' I specs to see Jesus en' Ole Mistis en' Ole Marster when I gits to de He'benly Lan'."

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Wash. Copy,
5/28/37.
L. H.

Mildred Scott Taylor
Georgiana, Alabama

1st Draft

Jan 19 Sent to Washington week of Jan 18 Washington

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UNCLE MOSE - A true Story

The early spring sunshine sifted through the honey-suckle vines clustering around the cabin door, and made a net-work of dancing light upon the floor. A little negor boy sat on the steps gazing silently up the dusty road and idly listening to the insistent buzzing of insects hovering about the honey-suckle blooms.

"Don't yer see nothin' of her yet, Jerry?" came in a querulous voice from a bed in a corner of the cabin.

"Naw, unc' Mose. She ain't in sight yit, but it's mos' time fer 'er."

"Hit do 'pear lak dis mis'ry is er gittin' wus all de time," the voice went on.

"Miss Sally say dat limerumunt gwine he'p it," essayed Jerry consolingly.

"It don' do no good 'cep'in jess whilst Aun' Judy is er rubbin'. De rubbin' does mo' good dan de limermunt."

"Dar she is rat now!" exclaimed Jerry presently.

"Praise de Lawd! fer de ole man sho is hongry en got de mis'ry from his haid to his heels."

"Dar's ernudder lady wid Miss Sally. Sarter looks lak er gal."

"Mus' be some er ole master's gran'dahters come on er visit. Whyn't yer come an' sit some cheers out an' dus' em' an' straighten dis quilt 'stead er settin' dar lak er black patch on de sunshine? Don' yer know how ter act when de quality is er comin'?" By the time the chairs had been arranged to his notion the visitors were at the door.

"Good morning, Uncle Mose," said the older woman brightly, as she put a covered basket down on a table by the bed.

She had a strong, sweet face and smooth white hair, and the gracious dignity of a queen. "I hope you rested well last night and are feeling very

much better. I have brought some one to see you, now guess who she is," and she ~~stood~~ placed the girl where the sunshine fell across her face.

Uncle Mose turned his head on the pillow, and gazed eagerly at his visitor. Then his old black face wrinkled into a smile. "lawd, honey, you sho' mus' be one er Mars Eddard's dahters, frum de favor!"

"You are right, Uncle Mose. It's Miss Caroline."

"I'm so sorry to find you in bed, Uncle Mose," said the girl, coming closer, while Miss Sally began taking an appetizing breakfast from the basket and putting it on the table.

"Father told me not to come home without seeing Uncle Mose. He talks of you so often."

The old man beamed with pleasure. "Den Mr. Eddard's done fergive me for not choosing him dat time," he said with a chuckle. "Did you ebber h'yar 'bout dat time I choosed mah master?"

"Now, Uncle Mose none of your reminiscences until Jerry has given you your breakfast. Then I know that Caroline will be delighted to hear all about it," and Miss Sally smiled indulgently. "Here, Caroline, put these flowers in water where Uncle Mose can see them, while I measure some medicine for him."

"Dat sho wuz er good breakfus', Miss Sally," said the old negro with a sigh of content, as Jerry gave him the last bit of waffle. "Ole Aun' Jincy allers wuz er good cook, en her ma befo' 'er. Couldn't nobody beat Aun' Lucy cookin' in dem days. Ginger cakes? She made de bes' ginger cakes! Miss Sally, you 'member dat time Ole Marster give me an Mars' Wat er whole silver dollar en we walked two miles to Mars' Water's sto' en spent ev'ry bit er it fer ginger cakes? Er whole dollar's wuth er ginger cakes, an' Aunt Lucy rat dar at home er cookin' de bes' ones in de country! Mars' Wat sho wuz er sight!" and Mose lay looking with dim eyes into a happy long-vanished past.

"Now tell me about when you chose your master," said Caroline, drawing a chair closer to the bed.

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"O, dat time; I 'members dat mornin' jess lak it wuz yistiddy. Hit wuz in the spring-time lak dis, en ole Mose wuz er lil' black rascal lak Jerry dar. I wuz playin' roun' de cabin do' en H'yer come Jim de ke'ge driver, en say ole Marster wanted me rat erway. I sho wuz skeered! But I couldn' think o' no meanness I had done so I jess helt up mah haid en marched up de road ter de Big House. En dar I foun' Ole Marster er standin' on de steps, en in er row on de po'ch wuz Mars' Eddard, en Mars' Ted, en Mars. Wat, en Mars. Tom. 'Come h'yer Mose, 'say Ole Marster in dat big way er his'n. 'Come h'yer en choose yer marster. I'm gwine to give yer ter de one you picks out.' I 'gan at Mars' Eddard. He wuz older 'en me an' sorter se'rus lak so I passed him by. I looked at Mars' Ted er long time sorter hestatin', but den I jess chanced ter look at Mars' Wat, en dem blue eyes er his'n wuz fa'ly dancin' wid sum'n sorter lak ole Nick en I say ter mahself 'dats de marster fer Mose,' so I say out loud, 'I chooses Mars' Wat,' en bress yer heart, honey, I ain' nebber been sorry er minute sence. But de res' er Ole Marsters' boys nebber did fergive Mose fer dat," and he chuckled at the remembrance.

Caroline laughed. "Thank you, Uncle Mose, I've enjoyed hearing about it. I must go and see Mammy now. Next time I come I hope you will be better."

"De ole man ain' had his foots ter de flo' in five weeks dis comin' Sadd'y Miss Ca'line. Good bye, Miss Ca'line honey, come ergin."

"And now, Jerry, you run tell Aunt Judy to come up at once and rub Uncle Mose's ankles," said 'Miss' Sally as Caroline left the cabin. "I'll warm this liniment ~~while Jerry is gone~~ and have it all ready." She stopped before the open fireplace and raked up the embers into a little blazing fire, and putting the saucer of turpentine on the floor at some distance, she stood up and turned toward the bed. Just then a spark from the fire fell into the saucer, and the turpentine blazed up. 'Miss' Sally, startled, sprang back, but in so doing, her light cotton morning gown came in contact with the blazing turpentine and was quickly ignited. She caught up her skirts and tried to put it out with her hands, but could not. For several seconds 'Miss' Sally stood face to face with

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an awful death.

"My God-er-Mighty!" cried Uncle Mose, and with the agility of youth and health he sprang from the bed dragging a blanket with him, and throwing it around her, wrapped it close, extinguishing the flames just as 'Aunt' Judy and Jerry appeared in the door.

"De Lawd in Hebben!" cried fat Judy, her single glance at Miss Sally's white face, burned garments and helpless hands, and 'Uncle' Mose tottering back to his bed.

"Po' lamb! now jess look at dem han's! Lemme tie 'em up in wet sody this minute. You sho mos' got burned up, honey."

"I would have, but for Uncle Mose," said 'Mis' Sally faintly, as she sank into a chair.

Aunt Judy turned stormy eyes upon the poor groaning old man. "I'd lak ter know how cum Unc' Mose jess foun' out he kin walk?" She inquired belligerently. "I 'lowed some time ergo dat Mose wus possumin'. I sho ain' gwine to waste mo' elbo' grease on dat old hyp'crite."

"Hush, Judy," said her mistress sternly, "Uncle Mose is no hypocrite. He has inflamatory rheumatism. It was a miracle." she added reverently.

"Dat's hit!" exclaimed Mose, eagerly. "Er miracle! Hit wus de Lawd-er-Mighty let Mose git up dem. For how you reckon I'd eber facr Mars' Wat ergin ef I had to tell him I jess lay in de baid en let my lil' mistress burn up? Mose done promus Mars' Wat ter tek keer er Miss Sally, an' de ol man done de bes' he could."

Told by Edith Tatum, Greenville, Alabama.

Wash. Copy
MJC
~~12/30/36~~
7/19/37

WPA ALA. DIV. ARCHIVES & HISTORY

(Continued)

Alabama). AUNT JANE'S STORY Greenville

" Yas, chilluns, I members de wah; coz I was here when de yankees come tru, en I was erbout 14 year ole. Ole Marster he went off to de wah wid er whole passel er sojers,en he been gone er long time, en nobody ter home ter look atter de plantation, cep Ole Mistis en Unker Jude, what was Ole Marster's fust slave he ebber owned. Ole Marster en Unker Jude was borned de same day, en Ole Marster's pappy gin Unker Jude ter hin whenst dey was leetle bitsy babies, en when Ole Marster mai'ed Ole Mistis, when dey was young fokes,en move ter he own plantation, he tuk Unker Jude wid him, en Unker Jude was de ca'i'ge driver. When Ole Marster went off ter de wah,he tole Unker Jude ter look atter Ole Mistis en evy'ting on de place twell he come back. Whilst Ole Marster gone to de wah,Unker Jude was obers er fer Ole Mistis, en he made de niggers wuk harder dan Ole Marster did, to make co'n, en Oats, en fodder, en meat fer de sojers. "

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" Ole Mistis made de womens cyard 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 close en makin linsey fer de women's close. Us didn't hab no udder close 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."

" Us ke heerin de yankees comin, en one mawnin Ole Mistis she say: 'Jane, you go down ter de front gate en stay dar en watch en see iffen de yankees comin down de big road, en when you sees em,you run tell me quick.' Bimeby, I seed de yankees comin erbout er mile down de road, en I run tell Ole mistis, en she call de womens en dey run down tru de orchard to de big woods, en I run tell Unker Jude en he onhitch de mules en lead em down ter de big gulley behine de fiel. Ole Mistis tole me run back ter de house,quick,fo de yankees get dar, en git her gole watch en chain outen de bureau drawer; but de yankees come in whilst I was gitten de watch en chain, en one ob em grabbed it outen my han en put it in his pocket en tole ernudder yankee: 'I'se gwine tek dis home ter my gal.' De house en d yard was plum full er yankees en dey rid dey hosses all ober de flowers en to' down de vines en knock de palins down, en went all tru de house en tore up evyting,lookin fer money en jewelry, en dey ax me whar it was hid, en I tole em I didn't no, en dey said I was lyin, en iffen I didn't tell em,dey would kill me 'lak er dem Rebel', en I sho was skairt . Dey et up all de sumpn ter eat in de kitchen en tuk all de meat en meal outen de smokehouse en didn't lef us nuddin, en dey went ter de crib en tuk evy year co'n en all de fodder en put it in wagins en tuk em off." <Continued>

"De yankees ax me don't I wanner be free en I say:'No,suh', en dey say ev'body gwine be free en I won't hab ter wuk fer Ole Marster no mo. En dey ax me whar Ole Marster at, en I say 'He gone ter de wah', en dey ax me whar Ole Mistis,en I say 'Idunno whar she at,she done gone off summuz.' en dey ax me whar de guns, en I tole em we didn't hab no guns."

" Dem yankees mighter been dar till yit,iffen one ob em hadn't rid his hoss ober er bee Gum en Man! dem bees en dem yankees sho dix ~~mixxmpx~~ mess up! In erbout er minit dere wan't no yankees nowhar cep down de big road whar de dus jes foggin up! Bout er week some mo yankees come, but dey muster heerd bout de bees,kase dey lef dey hosses outside de big gate en wa'ked up to de house, but dey didn't stay long,cause dey wan't nuffin lef atter de fust yankees done to' up evyting. En when dey ready ter go dey tuk dey guns en stood way off en shoot de bee gums all ter pieces, en de bees flewed eroun en us had ter stay way twel night. Unker Jude, he wuk all night long,makin bee gums outen er hollow log, en nexday he hive ebery one ob dem bees en put em in de new beegums, en de bees dey tote all de honey en put it in de new beegums fas as dey could mek comb fer it. Dem bees sho was smart."

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" When de wah done gone, Ole Marster he come home,wid one he arms shot plum off,en Ole Mistis she cry,she so glad, en Unker Jude he cry en hug Ole Marster, en us all cry en tek on, we so glad Ole Marster come back en so sorry he arm shot off. Ole Marster tell all de niggers dey free now en don't hatter wuk fer him no mo, en some er de young niggers went off atter de yankees, en neber did come back,but de res ob us jes stayed right whar we was. Us her a mighty hard time fer er long time, but de white folks had de same hard time en us didn't mek no ~~nf~~ diffunce. I mai'ed Rufus en us raise er big fambly right dar on Ole Marster's plantation,en outen us's lw chilluns, ain't nar'e one eber seen di inside ob de jailhouse. I raise my chilluns jes lak Ole Mistis raise her'n en dats de way ter raise em, ter wuk en keep outen debilment. Ole Marster dead en gone en Ole Mistis dead en gone,but I members em jes lak dey was, when dey looked atter us whenst we belonged ter em er dey belonged ter us, I dunno which it was. De times was better fo de wah, Us had good tinge ter eat en plenty ob it,en we had good close en clean close fer Sunday, en dat's mo'n sum triflin niggers got now."

" I goes to church en sings en prays, en when de good Lord teks me,I'se ready ter go, en I specs ter see Jesus en Ole Mistis en Ole Marster when I gits ter de Hebenly Lan'."

FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT

Butler County, Alabama

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AUNT JANE'S STORY

Oh yas, chilluns, I wuz here when de yankeys come through. I wuz er young o'man 'bout fourteen years ole'.

One mo'ning ole' missus sed, "Jane, I'se gwine in my room but you stay an de frount an' watch an' ef you hear dem yankeys er cummin' you run an' tell me so I kin hide. Presently I heard de soun' of hosses feet an' it soun'ed lak thunder so I run an' tole missus I heard er funny soun'. De yankeys had come, an' dey had big guns an' swords an' dey wuz dressed up in sojer clothes.

Missus sent me to tell de men to unhitch all de hosses an' take dem to a deep gulley an' hide 'em. So I run an' tole de mens whut missus sed, den I run back to de house but missus sed she did'n wan' to see 'em 'cause dey would take eb'y ting dey saw, she knowed. So in a little while dey wuz at missus house sallin' for dis ting and callin' for de udder. "Whar's your marster?" dey ax me. Den I sed, "He in de war." Den dey ax me whar missus wuz, en I sed she wuz gone off. "Well, whut time will she be back?" dey sed. I tole 'em I dunno. So dem yankeys ax me whar de guns and de ammernition wuz an' I tole 'em I dunno so dey went in de cubbard an' got all de cooked grub en den dey ax me if I wuz hongry. Den dey eat en' dey make me eat, too. I wuz skeered to death but dey did'n try to bodder me. After while dey went to de stable an' got er hoss an' tuck marster's saddle an' put on de hoss, an' carr'ed him away. Dey ax me so many questuns tel I wuz skeered to death. Den dey ax me ef I want to be free an' I sed "No suh" An' dey sed dis country is gwine to be free sho, den you kin wurk fur yourse'f. Den dey lef 'en er few days mo' yankeys cum' through an' dun de same way.

De war lasted 'er long time an' all de wemmen had to knit an' spin de thread an' weave de cloth to make de clothes fur de sojers. My mammy use to weave on 'er loom an' missus made de wemmen make clothes an knit de socks an' sent dem to de sojers. Den I kep hearin' dat de fokes wuz gwine to be free an' after while de news cum out dat all de cullud fokes wuz free. Den I married er man an raised er famly but dat man died an' I had twelve chilluns to take keer of, but missus help me to take keer ob dem. Den 'er long time after dat I married 'er nudder man an' raised three mo' chilluns. Dese three chilluns wuz born free so I wuz gittin' mighty ole'

Yas, dem wuz good ole days befo' de war an' der nevah wuz no man as good as my ole' marsta an' no 'oman as good as my ole' missus an' us wuz happy slaves. An' now I is almos' done an' soon I will go to jine my whie fokes on'de udder side of Jordan an' in Heaben.

- -

This story was told to Lucy B. Walker by her mother, Jane Walker and Lucy told it to me.

Mildred Scott Taylor
Georgiana, Alabama

Alabama Stories,

Mildred Scott Taylor
Georgiana, Alabama.

Butler Co

Final

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UNCLE MOSE - A true Story.

The early spring sunshine sifted through the honey-suckle vines clustering around the cabin door, and made a network of dancing light upon the floor. A little Negro boy sat on the steps gazing silently up the dusty road and idly listening to the insistent buzzing of insects hovering about the honey-suckle blooms.

"Don't yer see nothin' of her yet, Jerry? came in a querulous voice from a bed in a corner of the cabin.

"Naw, Unc' Mose. She ain't in sight yit, but it's mos' time fer 'er."

"Hit de 'pear lak dis mis'ry is er gittin' wus all de time," the voice went on.

"Miss Sally say dat limerumunt gwine he'p it," essayed Jerry consolingly.

"It don' do no good 'cep'in jess whilst Aun' Judy is er rubbin'. De rubbin' does mo' good dan de limerumunt."

"Dar she is, rat now!" exclaimed Jerry presently.

"Praise de Lawd! fer de ole man sho is hongry en' got de mis'ry from his haid to his heels."

"Dar's ernudder lady wid Miss Sally. Sarter looks lak er gal."

"Mus' be some er ole master's gran'dahters come on er visit. Whyn't yer come an' sit some cheers out an' dus' em' an' straighten dis quilt 'stead er settin' dar lak er black patch on de sunshine? Don' yer know how ter ack when de quality is comin'?" By the time the chairs had been arranged to his

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notion the visitors were at the door.

"Good morning, Uncle Mose," said the older woman brightly, as she put a covered basket down on a table by the bed.

She had a strong, sweet face and smooth white hair, and the gracious dignity of a queen. "I hope you rested well last night and are feeling very much better. I have brought some one to see you, now guess who she is," and she placed the girl where the sunshine fell across her face.

Uncle Mose turned his head on the pillow, and gazed eagerly at his visitor. Then his old black face wrinkled into a smile. "Lawd, honey, you sho' mus' be one er Mars Eddard's dahters, frum de favor!"

"You are right, Uncle Mose. It's Miss Caroline."

"I'm so sorry to find you in bed, Uncle Mose," said the girl, coming closer, while Miss Sally began talking an appetizing breakfast from the basket and putting it on the table.

"Father told me not to come home without seeing Uncle Mose. He talks of you so often."

The old man beamed with pleasure. "Den Mr. Eddard's done fergive me for not choosing him dat time," he said with a chuckle. "Did you ebber h'yar 'bout dat time I choosed mah master?"

"Now, Uncle Mose none of your reminiscence until Jerry has given you your breakfast. Then I know that Caroline will be delighted to hear all about it," and Miss Sally smiled indulgently. "Here, Caroline, put these flowers in water where Uncle Mose can see them, while I measure some medicine for him."

"Dat sho wuz er good breakfus', Miss Sally," said the old

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negro with a sigh of content, as Jerry gave him the last bit of waffle. "Ole Aun' Jincy Allers wuz er good cook, en her ma befo' 'er. Couldn't nobody beat Aun' Lucy cookin' in dem days. Ginger cakes? She made de bes' ginger cakes! Miss Sally, you 'member dat time Ole Marster give me an Mars' Wat er whole silver dollar en we walked two miles to Mars' Water's sto' en spent ev'ry bit er it fer ginger cakes? Er whole dollar's wuth er ginger cakes, an' Aunt Lucy rat dar at home er cookin' de bes' ones is de country! Mars' Wat sho wuz er sight!" and Mose lay, looking with dim eyes into a happy, long-vanished past.

"Now tell me about when you chose your master," said Caroline, drawing a chair closer to the bed. 'Miss' Sally as Caroline left the

"O, dat time; I 'members dat mornin' jess lak it wuz yistiddy. Hit wuz in the spring-time lak dis, en ole Mose wuz er lil' black rascal lak Jerry dar. I wuz playin' roun' de cabin do', en H'yer come Jim de ke'ge driver, en say ole Marster wanted me rat erway. I sho wuz skeered! But I couldn't think o' no meanness I had done so I jess helt up mah haid en marched up de road ter de Big House. En dar I foun' Ole Marster standin' on de steps, en in er row on de po'ch wuz Mars' Eddard, en Mars' Ted, en Mars. Wat, en Mars. Tom. 'Come h'yer Mose, 'say Ole Marster in dat big way er his'n. 'Come h'yer en choose yer marster. I'm gwine to give yer ter de one you picks out.' I 'gan at Mars' Eddard. He wuz older 'en me an' sorter se'rus lak so I passed him by. I looked at Mars' Ted er long time sorter hes'tatin', but den I jess chanced ter look at Mars' Wat, en dem blue eyes er his'n wuz fa'rly dancin' wid sump'n sorter lak ole Nick en I say ter mahself, dats de 13.

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marster fer Mose, so I say out loud, 'I chooses Mars' Wat,' en bress yer heart, honey, I ain' nebber been sorry er minute sence. But de res' er Ole Marsters' boys nebber did fergive Mose fer dat," and he chuckled at the remembrance.

Caroline laughed. "Thank you, Uncle Mose, I've enjoyed hearing about it. I must go and see Mammy now. Next time I come I hope you will be better."

"De ole man ain' had his foots ter de flo' in five weeks dis comin' Sadd'y Miss Ca'line. Good bye, Miss Ca'line honey, come ergin."

"And now, Jerry, you run tell Aunt Judy to come up at once and rub Uncle Mose's anklea," said 'Miss' Sally as Caroline left the cabin. "I'll warm this liniment and have it all ready."

She stopped before the open fireplace and raked up the embers into a little blazing fire, and putting the saucer of turpentine on the floor at some distance, she stood up and turned toward the bed. Just then a spark from the fire fell into the saucer, and the turpentine blazed up. 'Miss' Sally, startled, sprang back, but in so doing, her light cotton morning gown came in contact with the blazing turpentine and was quickly ignited. She caught up her skirts and tried to put it out with her hands, but could not. For several second 'Miss Sally stood face to face with an awful death.

"My God-er-Mighty!" cried Uncle Mose, and with the agility of youth and health he sprang from the bed dragging a blanket with him, and throwing it around her, wrapped it close, extinguishing the flames just as 'Aunt' Judy and Jerry appeared

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in the door.

"De Lawd in Hebben!" cried fat Judy her swift glance taking in Miss Sally's white face, burned garments and helpless hands, and 'Uncle' Mose tottering back to his bed.

"Po' lamb! now jess look at dem han's! Lemme tie 'em up in wet sody this minute! You sho mos' got burned up, honey."

"I would have, but for Uncle Mose," siad 'Mis' Sally faintly, as she sank into a chair.

Aunt Judy turned stormy eyes upon the poor groaning old man.

"I'd lak ter know how cum Unc' Mose jess foun' out he kin walk? She inquired belligerently. "I 'lowed some time ergo dat Mose wus possumin'. I sho ain' gwine to waste mo' elho' grease on dat old hyp'crite."

"Hush, Judy," said her mistress sternly, "Uncle Mose is no hypocrite. He has inflamatory rheumatism. It was a miracle," she added reverently.

"Dat's hit!" exclaimed Mose, eagerly. "Er miracle! Hit wuz de Lawd-er-Mighty let Mose git up den. Fer how you reckon I'd eber facr Mars' Wat ergin' ef I had to tell him I jess lay in de baid en let my lil' mistress burn up? Mose done promus Mars' Wat ter tek keer er Miss Sally, an' ole man done de bes' he could."

Told by Edith Tatum, Greenville, Alabama.

Wash. copy,
1/19/37.
L. H.

15.

Alabama). ~~AUNT JANE'S STORY~~ Did they own ko or we own Thing? Interviewed Greenville Scott Jay G. Jones

" Yas, chilluns, I members de wah; 'coz I was here when de yankees come ~~dum thru~~ through, en I was ~~er~~bout 14 year ole. Ole Marster he went off to de wah wid ~~er~~ whole passel ~~er~~ of sojers, en he been gone ~~er~~ long time, en nobody ~~ter~~ To home ~~ter~~ To look atter de plantation, 'cep Ole Mistis en Unker Jude, what was Ole Marster's fust slave he ebber owned. Ole Marster en Unker Jude was borned de same day, en Ole Marster's pappy gin Unker Jude ~~ter~~ To him whenst dey was leetle bitsy babies; ~~an~~ when Ole Marster mai'ed Ole Mistis, ~~when~~ dey was young ~~folkes~~ folks dey, en move ter he own plantation, he tuk Unker Jude wid him, en Unker Jude was de ca'i'ge driver. When Ole Marster went off ter de wah, he tole Unker Jude ter look atter Ole Mistis en evy'ting on de place 'twell he come back. Whilst Ole Marster gone to de wah, Unker Jude was oberseer fer Ole Mistis, en he made de niggers wuk harder dan Ole Marster did, to make co'n, en oats, en fodder, en meat fer de sojers. "

" Ole Mistis made de womens cyard 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 ~~clothes~~ jeans fer de sojers close en makin linsey fer de women's close. Us didn't hab no udder close '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."

" Us kep' hearin' of de yankees comin', en one mawnin Ole Mistis she say: 'Jane, you go down ter de front gate en stay dar en watch en see iffen de yankees comin' down de big road, en when you sees em, you run tell me quick.' ¶ Bimeby, I seed de yankees comin' ~~er~~bout a mile down de road, en I run tell Ole mistis, en she call de womens en dey run down through ~~tru~~ de orchard to de big woods, en I run tell Unker Jude en he onhitch de mules en lead em down ter de big gulley behine de fiel'. ¶ Ole Mistis tole me To run back ~~ter~~ To de house, quick, fo' de yankees get dar, en git her gole watch en chain outen de bureau drawer; but de yankees come in whilst I was gitten de watch en chain, en one ob em grabbed it outen my han' en put it in his pocket en tole ernudder yankee: 'I'se gwine tek dis home ter my gal.' ¶ De house en de yard was plum full ~~er~~ of yankees en dey rid dey hosses all ober de flowers en tore ~~to~~ down de vines en knock de palins down off de fence, en went all through ~~tru~~ de house en tore up evy'ting, lookin' for ~~fer~~ money en jewelry, ~~en~~ dey ax me whar it was hid, en I tole em I didn't know ~~no~~, en dey said I was lyin', en iffen I didn't tell em, dey would kill me 'lak er dam Rebel', en I sho was skairt. ¶ Dey et up all de sumpn to ~~ter~~ eat in de kitchen en tuk all de meat en meal outen de smokehouse en didn't lef' us nuddin', en dey went to ~~ter~~ de crib en tuk evy year co'n en all de fodder en put it in wagins en tuk em off." <Continued>

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"De yankees ax me don't I wanner be free en I say:'No,suh', en dey say ev'body gwine be free en I won't hab ter wuk fer Ole Marster no mo'. Den dey ax me whar Ole Marster at, en I say 'He gone to de wah', en dey ax me whar Ole Mistis,en I say 'Idunno whar she at;she done gone off summuz.' dey ax me whar de guns, en I tole em we didn't hab no guns."

" 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 di mess up! In about a mine 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 heard bout de bees,case dey lef' dey hosses outside de big gate en walked up to de house, but dey didn't stay long,cause dey wan't nuffin lef' atter de fust yankees done to' up evyting. En when dey ready to go dey tuk dey guns en stood way off en shoot de bee gums all to pieces, en de bees flewed roun' en us had to stay way twel night. Unker Jude, he wuk all night long,makin' bee gums outen 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 de honey en put it in de new gums fas' as dey could mek comb fer it. Dem bees sho' was smart."

" When de wah done gone, Ole Marster he come home,wid one he arms shot plum off,en Ole Mistis she cry,she so glad to see him, en Unker Jude he cry en hug Ole Marster, en us all cry en tek on, we so glad Ole Marster come back en so sorry he arm shot off. Ole Marster tell all de niggers dey free now en don't hatter wuk fer him no mo', en some er de young niggers went off atter de yankees, en neber did come back,but de res' ob us jes' stayed right whar we in. Us had a mighty hard time for a long time, but de white folks had de same hard time en us didn't mek no diffunce. I mai'ed Rufus en us raise a big fambly right dar on Ole Marster's plantation,en outen us's twelve chilluns, ain't many one eber seen de inside ob de jailhouse. I raise my chilluns jes lak Ole Mistis raise her'n en dats de way to raise em, to wuk en keep outen debilment. Ole Marster dead en gone en Ole Mistis too, but I' members em jes' lak dey was, when dey looked atter us whenst we belonged to em or dey belonged ter us, I dunno which it was. De times was better fo' de wah. Us had good things to eat en plenty of it,en we had good close en clean close fer Sunday, dat's mo'n some triflin niggers got now."

" I goes to church en sings en prays, en when de good Lord teks me,I'se ready to go, en I specs to see Jesus en Ole Mistis en Ole Marster when I gits to de Hebenly Lan'."

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BUTLER COUNTY

District 3