

## Andy Marion

### Interview with Andy Marion, 92 years

—*W.W. Dixon, Winnsboro, S.C.*

"Yes, sir, I was born befo' de war 'tween de white folks, on account of us niggers. They was powerful concerned 'bout it and we was not. My mammy always said she found me a babe in de chinkapin bushes, but you can leave dat out if you want to. They say I comed into de world in 1844. I sho' was a good plow-hand when de first gun was fired at some place down near Charleston; I think it was at Sumter. They say I was born where Marster Eugene Mobley lives now, but it b'longed to Marster William Brice, when I was born in 1844, bless God! My father named Aleck and my mother Mary. Us colored folks didn't git names 'til after de war. I took my name, when I went up to de 'lection box first time to vote for Gen. Grant for president. My father was from old Virginia, my mother from South Carolina. Our plantation had seventy-two slaves living about here and yon in log houses wid dirt floors. They bored auger holes in de sides of de room, stuck end of poles in dese holes. De pole reach' out into de room and rested on wooden blocks sort of hollowed out on top; then some slats of pine finish up de contraption bed. Quilts was spread on dis which was all de bed we had.

"I been married four times since de war and I'm here to tell you dat a nigger had a hell of a time gittin' a wife durin' slavery. If you didn't see one on de place to suit you and chances was you didn't suit them, why what could you do? Couldn't spring up, grab a mule and ride to de next plantation widout a written pass. S'pose you gits your marster's consent to go? Look here, de gal's marster got to consent, de gal got to consent, de gal's daddy got to consent, de gal's mammy got to consent. It was a hell of a way!

"I helped my marster 'mong de bullets out along de Mississippi River, but I's glad we didn't whip them 'cause I's had four wives and dere is de las' one settin' right over dere, a fixin' you some strawberries and a shakin' her belly at me laughin' lak Sarah in de Bible and thinkin' of namin' de child of her old age, 'Isaac'.

"What kind of work I do in slavery? I was de carriage driver. Us had a fine carriage and two high-steppin' horses, Frank and Charlie. I used to hear lots of things from behin' me, while drivin' de folks and saying nothin'. Money, did you say? We had no use for money. Kind words from de white folks was money 'nough for me. We just worked hard, eat more and slep' well. We got meat, hominy, and corn meal on Mondays and wheat bread, lard and 'lasses on Saturdays. No time for fishin' or huntin'. Married slaves was encouraged to have their own gardens. Our clothes was of wool in de winter from our own sheep, and cotton in de summer from our own fields. Had many spinnin' wheels and cards. Miss Mary, de mistress, saw to dis part.

"Our white folks was Psalm-singin', old style Presbyterians. You daresn't whistle a hymn on Sunday which they called Sabbath. Just as soon as I got free, I jined de Baptist church, hard shell. Brother Wright is my preacher at Blackstock now. My marster, William Brice, his wife, Miss Mary, his son, Christie, and

his daughters, Miss Lizzie, Miss Kitty and Miss Mary, was de ones I drove de carriage to Hopewell church on Sunday for. Dat church is flourishin' now. De pastor of dat church, Rev. John White, befo' he died I waited on him sixteen years, and in his will, he give me dis house and forty acres around it for my life. Dat's what I calls religion. My mistress was a angel, good, and big hearted. I lay my head in her lap many a time. Marster had a overseer twice. They was poor white trash, not as good as de niggers. Miss Mary run them both off and told marster what she couldn't see to when he was away, she'd pick out one of de slaves to see after. All de overseer done was to wake us up, see to feeding stock and act biggity. Us slaves worked from sun up to sun down.

"Sometime befo' de war, my marster sold out and bought a big place in Mississippi. On de way dere, de slaves (grown) was chained together. Yes sir, de chain was 'round de necks. We went by wagons and steamboats sometimes. We stayed in Mississippi 'til durin' de war we refueged back to South Carolina. Dat's when de Yankees got possession of de river. We settled near New Hope church. It was in dis church dat I saw sprinkling wid a kind a brush when baptizin' de chillun. Over at Hopewell, you had to have a brass trinket (token) to show befo' you could take Communion of de Saints. We was always compelled to go to church. Boss like for de slaves to sing while workin'. We had a jack-leg slave preacher who'd hist de tunes. Some was spirituals; my wife and me will sing you one now, 'Got to Fight de Devil when You Come Up out de Water'." (This was well rendered by the old man and his wife). "Nothing stopped for slave funerals. De truth is, I can't 'member any dyin' on our places. None of our slaves ever run away.

"A pass was lak dis, on it was yo' name, what house you goin' to and de hour expected back. If you was cotched any other house, pataroller whip you sho'. Always give us Chris'mus Day. Dere was a number of dances dis time of de year. Got passes to different plantations. Dere would be corn shuckin' different places. Not much games or playin' in our set. Wife, let's sing another spiritual. Come on Janie, let's sing 'You Got to Lay Your Burden 'pon de Lord'.

"Sickness of slaves was quickly 'tended to by de doctor. 'Member gallopin' for old Doctor Douglas many a time.

"I went to de war from Mississippi as body guard for my marstar. I was close to de fightin' and see it. If it was hell then, it must be tarnation now wid all dese air-planes flyin' roun' droppin' booms on old people lak Janie and me, over dere fixin' them strawberries. De good Lord, save us from a war over Blackstock and my garden out dere!

"I was free three years befo' I knowed it. Worked along just de same. One day we was in de field on Mr. Chris Brice's place. Men come along on big, black horse, tail platted and tied wid a red ribbon. Stopped, waved his hands and shouted 'You is free, all of you. Go anywhere you wants to'. Us quit right then and acted de fool. We ought to have gone to de white folks 'bout it. What did de Yankees do when they come? They tied me up by my two thumbs, try to make me tell where I hided de money and gold watch and silver, but I swore I didn't know. Did I hide it? Yes, so good it was two years befo' I could find it again. I put everything in a keg, went into de woods, spaded the dirt by a pine stump, put de keg in, covered it up wid leaves and left it. Sometime after, we looked for it, but couldn't find it. Two years later, I had a mule and cart in de woods. De mule's foot sunk down into de old stump hole and dere was de keg, de money, de silver and de watch. Marster was mighty glad dat I was a faithful servant, and not a liar and a thief lak he thought I was. My marstar was not a Ku Klux. They killed some obstreppary (obstreperous) niggers in them times.

"I first married Sara Halsey in 1875, she had three chillun. She died. Ten months after, I took Harriett Daniels; she had three chillun, then she died. Eight months after, I married Millie Gladden, no chillun. She lived seventeen years, died, and ten years ago I fooled dat good-lookin' Jane a-settin' over dere. She was a widow then, she was de widow Arthur. She was a Caldwell, when she was born. We have no chillun but she is still lookin' for a blessin'." (Here the nonagenarian broke forth in a quiet chuckle).

"There wasn't as much sin in slavery time, not as much sufferin', not as much sickness and eye-sore poverty. Dere was no peniten'try and chain gangs 'cause dere was no need for them. Cuttin' out de brutishness on some places, it was a good thing for de race."