

Cordelia Anderson Jackson

Interview with Cordelia Anderson Jackson, 78 years old

157 Kings St. Spartanburg, S.C.

—Caldwell Sims, Union, S.C.

Cordelia lives in a small shack with some friends. She is quite an actor and a tireless teller of yarns. She still ties her head up in a white rag and has large eyes set far apart and a very flat nose. She is ebony colored. She is a firm believer in her religion and she enjoys shouting on any occasion for joy or for sorrow.

"White folks tells stories 'bout 'ligion. Dey tells stories 'bout it kaise dey's 'fraid of it. I stays independent of what white folks tells me when I shouts. De Spirit moves me every day, dat's how I stays in. White folks don't feel sech as I does; so dey stays out. Can't serve God all de time; allus something getting in de way. Dey tries me and den I suddenly draps back to serving de Holy God. Never does it make no difference how I's tossed about. Jesus, He comes and saves me everytime. I's had a hard time, but I's blessed now—no mo' mountains.

"Ever since I a child I is liked white folks. Dey's good and dey does not know why dey tells stories 'bout Jesus. I got a heap mo' in slavery dan I does now; was sorry when Freedom got here. I 'specks I is nigh to a hundred, but dat's so old. I jest calls myself any whars twixt seventy-five and a hundred. I recollects slavery, though. Ma was Charlotte Anderson and she lived in Union County wid de Tuckers, jest across from de Richards Quarter.

"Biggest sight I ever see'd was dat balloon when it come down on Pea Ridge. De man in it everybody addressed as Professor (Prof. Lowe—1861). He let uncle Jerry git in it. Mr. McKissick helped uncle Jerry up in it. It was de first balloon ever come to Union county, and 'til dis day I don't like no balloons.

"Airplanes jest tickles, I cannot tell you how come, but dey jest does. I went out dar (throwing her arm in the direction of the landing field) and see'd 'em light. Dressed-up white folks hopped down out'n it from a little do' dat a man wid leg'uns and a cap on opened. Thing gwine on wid lots of burring and all like dat. When dem folks got out, some mo' clam'ned in. Dat same man opened de do', shot (shut) it, and de plane tuck off. White folks 'lowed dat it was gwine to 'lanta, Ga.

"Right dar I 'low'd, when I goes up like dat, I sho ain't gwine up wid no man—I'se gwine up wid Jesus.

"Dat white woman [HW: Amelia Earhardt] went up and ain't nobody found her yet and it been two months. Lawd, she looking fer de world's end. God don't mean fer womens to do nothing like dat. Womens is stumbling blocks at times.

"I got a boy dat been through school. He stays off, but he treats me so good and talks to me like white folks does; so I calls him, 'white child'. I 'longs to de church club. He tries to larn me to talk proper when I goes out to dem meetings, but I fergits how befo' I reaches de meeting. Us named it de 'Mothers' Club'. 'White child' pays fer me to 'long dar, and when I is down wid spells, dey nurses me. 'White child' pays fer my 'onsurance' so dat I does not have no worriment to aggravate my soul.

"White child birthed one Sunday morning jest a year atter de big earthquake. It was also Christmas morning, kaise my child drapped a year to de day atter dat earthquake and I feared dat he was not gwinter have no sense. But My God, how he can read!

"One night, Aug. 30th, our house started rocking. We thought a panther was a-rocking it, kaise my old man had see'd one. He run out wid a gun and went to de wood pile; den he hollered to me and said, 'Delia, come out here, de whole world is shaking'. God sho showed his power dat night. Ever since dat I been fixed wid God. It won't long atter dat, us heard a noise in our other room. Old man went in dar and see'd a panther climbing up fer our rations. He grabbed his gun from over de do' and shot dat panther in de corner.

"I used to think dat niggers was fools dat called me a nigger. I go and tell Miss Nellie Tucker. She 'low, 'No, you ain't no nigger when other niggers calls you one.' Marse William whistle like a partridge; den Miss Nellie play her pianny. I dance and Marse send fer me a sugar and butter biscuit. Marse git his banjo and he pick it fer me to sing 'Oh, Bob white, is your wheat ripe? No, no, not quite.' Dat when I lived as a little gal on Marse William's home tract, called Musgrove Tract.

VISION: "Was traveling in a gold chariot to Heaven. De overseer had come to bleed me, but I went up. Something say to look back and see whar you been. I looked back and said, 'Lawd, take me whar no rent won't bother me!' Lawd answer, 'Do not pray dat way. Pray fer Him to do His will'. Den I axed de Lawd whar is I. He say, 'Did you look down on dem chimneys?' Den I see'd dat I was in de chariot wid water all under me. It looked like de sky.

"To-day, I am so glad to walk about in Jesus' care. I wish people could see my faith. I am a Christian."