

Milton Marshall

Interview with Milton Marshall, (82)

Newberry, S.C. RFD

—*G.L. Summer, Newberry, S.C.*

"I live in Newberry County, a few miles from town on Mr. Alan Johnstone's place. I rent and make a fair living. I have ten children now living and two dead. Dey is all on a farm. I was born in Union County, jes' across de Newberry line, near de Goshen Hill section. I was young when we moved to Newberry and I have lived dar nearly all my life. My father, Ned Worthy, was a slave of Frank Bynum's mother. My mother was Maria Worthy who was a slave of Mr. Burton Maybin. She cooked for a long time for de Maybin family.

"I was small in slavery time, and played wid de white chaps. We used to go wid Mr. Burt Maybin to see dem muster at de old Goshen Hill muster ground.

"Marse Burt Maybin owned 88 slaves, and I was one, and is de only one now living. We had no money in slavery time, jes' got food and clothes for our work; but my marster was a good feeder, always had enough to eat. Some of de marsters didn't give niggers much to eat, and dey had to slip off and steal. We had plenty of what was de rule for eating in dem days. We had home-made molasses, peas, cornbread and home raised meat sometimes. We killed rabbits and 'possums to eat, and sometimes went fishing and hunting. Marse wouldn't allow fishing and hunting on Sundays, but de chaps would slip off on Sundays sometimes and catch lots of fish.

"Our clothes was made at home, spun and wove by de women folks and made by dem. Copper straw and white cloth was used. Our shoes was made by a shoe-maker in de neighborhood who was named Liles. Dey was made wid wooden soles or bottoms. Dey tanned de leather or had it tanned in de neighborhood. It was tacked around de soles. It was raw-hide leather, and de shoes had to be soaked in warm water and greased wid tallow or meat skin so de shoes would slip on de feet.

"I married Missouri Rice at her own house. We had a big wedding and she wore a white dress wid two frills on it. I wore a dove-colored suit and a high brim hat wid a small crown. I bought de hat for \$7.00 jes' to marry in, but used it for Sundays.

"We had good white neighbors in slavery time. My marster and mistress was all right. All of us had to go to work at daylight and work till dark. Dey whipped us a little and dey was strict about some things.

"Us chaps did not learn to read and write, dat is why I can't read and write today. Marse wouldn't allow us to learn. Once he saw me and some other chaps, white chaps, under a tree playing wid letter blocks. Dey had de ABC's on dem. Marse got awful mad and got off his horse and whipped me good.

"De niggers didn't have a church on de plantation but was made to go to de white folks church and set in back of de church. Dey had to git a pass to go to church same as any other place, or de patrollers would catch 'em and beat 'em.

"Atter de war was over de niggers built brush arbors for to hold meetings in. I sho' remember de old brush arbor and de glorious times den, and how de niggers used to sing and pray and shout. I am a Baptist and we baptised in de creek atter we dammed it up to hold water deep enough. Sometimes we used a waterhole in de woods. I remember one old Baptist song, it went:

Down to de water I be baptised, for my Savior die;

Down to de water, de River of Jordan,

Where my Savior baptised.

"Some of de slaves was whipped while dey was tied to a stock. My marster was all right, but awful strict about two things, stealing and telling a lie. He sho' whipped dem if dey was caught in dem things. Some marsters didn't feed de slaves much, but my marster always had enough. Every Sunday he would give each nigger a quart of flour extra for breakfast.

"We had to work all day Saturdays, but Marse wouldn't let anybody work on Sunday. Sometimes he would give de women part of Saturday afternoons so dey could wash. He wouldn't allow fishing and hunting on Sundays either, unless it looked like rain and de fodder in de field had to be brought in. He always give us Christmas Day off, and we had lots of good eats den.

"I remember de old corn-shuckings, cotton-pickings and log-rollings. He would ask all de neighbors' hands in and dey would come by crowds. I can remember dem good. I remember de grain was put in drains and de horses was made to tramp on it to git de seed out. Den it was put in a house and poured in a big wooden fan machine which fanned out de chaff. De machine was turned by two men. Dey made molasses by taking de cane and squeezing out de juice in a big wooden machine. De machines now is different. Dey is made of cast.

"A stage dat was drawn by two horses went past our place. It carried mail and people. When Marse wanted to send word to any people in de neighborhood he sent it by somebody on a horse.

"Many of de slaves, and some old white people, too, thought dar was witches in dem days. Dey believed a witch could ride you and stop blood circulation.

"Dar was many dogs on de farms, mostly hounds and bird dogs.

"My grandfather was called 'Jack', and he was a nigger-driver. Dat was a nigger dat had to oversee de slaves when de marster was away from home. He would call de cows like dis, 'Su—wee, Su-wee' or 'Sook, Sook'. He called his dogs by whistling. He had several dogs. When grandpa died and was buried, his dogs would git out and bark and trail jes' like trailing a rabbit, and de trail always led to de graveyard. Dar dey would stand by his grave and howl for a long time, wid deir heads up in de air.

"De old folks made medicines from root herbs and tree barks. Herb tea was made to keep away fevers. Marse always called his big chaps up to de house in de mornings and made dem drink chinaberry tea to keep worms from gitting in dem.

"When freedom come, de slaves was notified dat a white man by de name Ban White would come to de plantation and make a speech to dem. He said, 'Now dat you is free, you will be wid your marster, and he is willing to give you 1/3 of what you make. You is free, and dar will be no more whippings.' Den Marse said, while he was crying, 'You stay on wid me and I'll give you food and clothes and 1/3 of what you make.

"Atter de war, de Ku Klux did bad in our neighborhood. Dey killed five or six niggers. I guess it was 'cause dey was Republicans and had trouble at voting times.

"I never did think slavery was right. I was jes' a chap den and never thought much about it till long since it was over. De carpetbaggers dat come to our place tried to make me believe dat de white man was our enemy, but I found out better. I am a Democrat and always was one. I was 40 years old when I repented of my sins and jined de church. I wanted to jine and be baptized and be saved.