

Rob Perry

Interview with Uncle Rob Perry & Aunt Della Britton Trenton, S.C.

—*Caldwell Sims, Union, S.C.*

"Aunt Della born in 1863. He in 1864. He drove cows fer Marse Squire Jim Perry, who lived on the line of Edgefield and Newberry Counties. Mos de time dey traded in Newberry County, 'cause it nearer town. All road wuz bad in dem days, even in summer dey wuz allus rough.

"Uncle Rob toted water, picked up chips and carried rations fum kitchen to dinin room. Often Messrs. Jim Long, Sam, Jake and Bob Smith, (3 brothers) came to our big house fer dinner and to dance afterward.

"Plenty water to tote and fires to build den. Go out an git pine and cedar limbs to put over de picturs and 'roun de mantle boards' Fix up de table wid trimmins, git mo candles and put all roun. Mak egg-nog in de winter and mint juleps in de summer. Some time dar wuz sillabub, it ain't so good tho. De young mens dat I mentioned befo have me ter pick out pretty girls fer dem ter dance wid. I drap a curtsey an han' dem de name. If dey want ter dance wid him they look at him and flick dey fan an if dey didn't den dey never give him no mind.

"Dat done all pass by as evry thing does. Now I thanks God and looks to de Savior. Ef dar is success ter ye dat is what you has to do all de time. Della and I done had fifteen chilluns. Us is so lonesome as we has jes one a livin.

"Mr. Campbell, a Yankee man married Miss Joanna Perry. Her paw wuz Mr. Oliver Perry of Bouknight's Ferry on de Saluda River. In dat famly wuz Miss Isabelle and Messrs. John, Milledge, Jake and Tom. Miss Joanna marry on Friday in de parlor all fixed up wid cedar ropes a-hangin' fum de ceilin an de mo-es candles what a body ever did see. She made us buil' her a arch and kiver hit wid vines. It sot before de mantle and a white bell hung fum de middle uv it. White cloth wuz stretched over eveything and dey never let nobuddy walk in dat room cep in dey bare feet fer fear dey dirty all dat cloth.

"Miss Isabella sho picked de pianny fer Miss Joanna. A Young lady fum anuther plantation sang two songs. All pur white ladies wore dey pretties' white dresses wid flowers in dey hair. Miss Joanna had her face all kivered up wid er thin white cloth dat fell off'n her and laid all back uv her on de floor. An de white ladies had dey white dresses a layin over de floor but didn't none uv dem have dey faces kivered cept Miss Joanna, you see she wuz de bride.

"My ole 'oman wuz rigged in white herself. Evvything in dat house wuz fixed up extry fer da ceremony. I wo' one de men's black coats and black pants and a white shirt wid a ves' an tie. I had on a fine pair black shoes. Dey give all dat ter me en I kep it adder de weddin. Dat suit I wore ter church fer de nex ten years.

"Nex day, Saturday, come de big 'infair'. A double table wuz set up in de dinin room. Ham, turkey en chicken wuz put on dat table dat wussent teched. Dey jes stay dere along wid de fixins. All de victuals wuz placed on de plates in de kitchen and fetched to de table. Five darkies wuz kep busy refreshin de weddin diners.

"Miss Joanna an de Yankee man what she done married de day befo dat, her sister, de lady what sing en her maw an paw an de parson set at de table what they calls de bridal table. Dat table had de mo-es trimmins on hit of bows an ribbens and de like ob dat. I still sees Miss Joanna a settin dare. She wo' her weddin dress jes zactly lak she did de day befo. She never had her face kivered up wuz de onliest change I seed. De weddin dinner musta lasted two hours'. Atter dat de carriage came roun en evvybody lined up along de front door by de cape jessamines ter throw rice an ole shoes at de bride when she come outside de big house ter git in de carrage. Evvybody wuz mighty spry to be done danced all de night befo til de sun had showed red in de Eas' dat Sadday mornin.

"Atter she gone off I jes' cud'n figger' out how Marse' had got so much together fer dat weddin', kaise hit had'n been no time since de Yankee so'ders had carried off ev'y thing and left us dat po'. But den sum years has slipped by since dat.

"When I turn back to go in de big house, I see de pea-fowls a sneakin' off to de river rale 'shame 'kase dey never had er sign uv a tail. All dey tail feathers wuz plucked ter make de weddin fans en ter go in de Mistus an de gals hats. Dat sho wuz er big drove en dey is de pretties' fowl whut dere is, an folks doesn't give dem no mine dese day