

William Oliver

Interview given by Uncle William Oliver, a boy in slavery time

Murrells Inlet, S.C.

—*Genevieve W. Chandler, Murrells Inlet,
Georgetown County, S.C.*

"Underground Railway? They give it that name being they had this way to transfer the slaves. T.O. Jones was one of the officers. Grewed up in Illinois.

"I was born in Horry—eight miles this side of Conway. The old Oliver place. Father Caesar Oliver; Mother Janie. Mother born near Little River—Jewitt place. Joe Jewitt raise my father. Had four brother, twelve sister:

One Trizvan

Two Sarah

Three Martha

Four William

Five Mary, the fifth

Six Lizzie, the sixth

Seven Emma, the seven

Eighth Alice, the eighth

Nine Joanna

Ten Havilla

Eleven Ella

Twelve Redonia

Thirteen Caesar

Fourteen Zackie

Fifteen Eddie

Sixteen (He could not remember)

"Three boys so scattered about you can't tell anything about them. All chimney, clay. All chimneys that day, clay. Moved right away soon as Freedom came. Women done cooking and washing same as now. Shuck mattress. My mother was a weaver. Old timey loom. Cotton and wool. Sheckel (Shuttle?)

"I remember one song my mother sang:

Do, Lord, remember me!

Remember me when the year go round!

Do, Lord, remember me!

Why can't you die

Like Jesus died?

He laid in His grave!

He crippled some.

Some He saved.

"I can't get it all.

"My father head man on the plantation. Indigo? Cut the bush down. Put it in sacks. Let it drip out. Call that indigo mud. Raise cattle and hogs loose over the County. No cash money was give to slave. Had to get a ticket. Hire they self out as stevedore—anywhere they could—and pay Massa so much for the time. Smart slave do that. Oh, yes, my father do that. If they keep themselves alive after freedom, they doing well.

"Schooling? Only by night. And that couldn't be known. When he could get any body to teach him 'ABC' but wasn't allowed to go to any school.

"We'd eat peas, rice, cornbread, rye bread, sweetbread. Most molasses. Game was all over the woods. Everybody could hunt everybody land those days. Hunting was free. When I come along had to work too hard to hunt. Could get pike out the lakes. Go fishing Sabbath. That was day off. Sunday free day. Wild turkey. 'Possum. Don't bother with no coon much. 'Possum and squirrel all we could get. Had our garden. Different bean and collard. Turnip.

"Clothes? Regular wool and cotton. Maple dye and indigo. Red, blue, gray. Lot of gray. Big slave owners had a shoemaker. Plenty of hides. Cow hides, deer hides.

"When I married, was working turpentine. Rent timber and cut boxes.

"The cruelest treatment I know of in the United States and all the other states was done in the Southwestern states. Take New Orleans. Galveston? Was fixing to get to Texas. Texas beat the country for cruelty. They tell me when your Master and Missus in this country want to make you do your task, they threaten to sell you to Texas. Had a regular 'Vanger Range' in New Orleans. Place they keep the slaves and auction them off. Man by the name of Perry Ann Marshall. He was sold out there. He told my father he'd be out in the field in the morning—hoe in hand. Had to get out there 'fore it was light, hoe in

hand. Boss man there with whip. When light enough to hoe, give order, 'Heads up!' Then lots of women fell dead over the hoe. Give order. 'Heads up!' you chop! Breakfast bring to you in the field. Set right there by you hoe and eat till he say, 'Heads up!' When women fell dead, lie right there till night where the body drop—till you knock off. That's Texas! I call Texas 'Hell.' Even today black man can't get no first class ticket Texas!

"When you come right down to the truth, we always got up fore day most of time. You could go visiting other plantation, but must have you a ticket. Patrol catch you they whip you."