

Clara Davis

Interview with Clara Davis

—*Francois Ludgere Diard*

AUNT CLARA DAVIS IS HOMESICK FOR OLD SCENES

"I was bawn in de year 1845, white folks," said Aunt Clara, "on de Mosley plantation in Bellvy jus' nawth of Monroeville. Us had a mighty pretty place back dar. Massa Mosely had near 'bout five hundred acres an' mos' near to one hundred slaves.

"Was Marse Mosely good to us? Lor', honey, how you talk. Co'se he was! He was de bes' white man in de lan'. Us had eve'y thing dat we could hope to eat: turkey, chicken, beef, lamb, poke, vegetables, fruits, aigs, butter, milk ... we jus' had eve'y thing, white folks, eve'ything. Dem was de good ole days. How I longs to be back dar wid my ole folks an' a playin' wid de chilluns down by de creek. 'Tain't nothin' lak it today, nawsuh. When I tell you 'bout it you gwine to wish you was dar too.

"White folks, you can have your automobiles an' paved streets an' electric lights. I don't want 'em. You can have de busses an' street cars an' hot pavements an' high buildin' 'caze I ain't got no use for 'em no way. But I'll tell you what I does want. I wants my ole cotton bed an' de moonlight nights a shinin' through de willow trees an' de cool grass under my feets as I runned aroun' ketchin' lightnin' bugs. I wants to hear de sound of de hounds in de woods atter de 'possum, an' de smell of fresh mowed hay. I wants to feel de sway of de ol' wagon a-goin' down de red, dusty road an' listen to de wheels groanin' as dey rolls along. I wants to sink my teeth into some of dat good ol' ash cake, an' smack de good ol' sorghum offen my mouth. White folks, I wants to see de boats a passin' up an' down de Alabamy ribber an' hear de slaves a singin' at dere work. I wants to see de dawn break over de black ridge an' de twilight settle over de place spreadin' a sort of orange hue over de place. I wants to walk de paths th'ew de woods an' see de rabbits an' watch de birds an' listen to frogs at night. But dey tuk me away f'om dat a long time ago. 'Twern't long befo' I ma'ied an' had chilluns, but don't none of 'em 'tribute to my suppote now. One of 'em was killed in de big war wid Germany and de res' is all scattered out ... eight of 'em. Now I jus' live f'om han' to mouth; here one day, somewhere else de nex'. I guess we's all a-goin' to die iffen dis 'pression don't let us 'lone. Maybe someday I'll git to go home. Dey tells me dat when a pusson crosses dat ribber, de Lawd gives him whut he wants. I done tol' de Lawd I don't want nothin' much ... only my home, white folks. I don't think dat's much to axe for. I supposed he'll sen' me back dar. I been a-waitin' for him to call."