

Sally Reynolds

Personal conversation with Sallie Reynolds

552 South Conception Street, Mobile, Alabama

—Compiled by Mary A. Poole

SATAN'S GOIN' 'ROUND WID HIS TAIL CURLED UP

Sally Reynolds, living at 552 South Conception street, was busy at the wash tub when the writer called to interview her on July 20, 1937, so it being a hot day we decided to continue our conversation out doors under the washshed amid a conglomeration of tubs, buckets, empty boxes, etc.

Sallie said she was born in Hiltown, Georgia, where her mother Margaret Owens was a slave and the cook on the plantation of Mr. Lit Albritton. When Sallie was about three years of age her mother gave her to Mrs. Becke Albritton, who lived at New Providence, near Rutledge in Crenshaw County, Alabama, to whom she was bound until 21 years of age. There was also a brother given by her mother to some folks in Florida and of whom Sallie never had any knowledge whatever.

Sallie said Mrs. Albritton was kind to her, taught her to spin and sew, and she tried to learn herself to weave, but, somehow, could never master it.

Mrs. Albritton had only a few slaves who were named, Mose, Dan, Charles, Sandy (the latter so called because he ate sand as a child), and two women, Hannah and Tene.

They had no regular quarters but just cabins out in a rear lot.

Sallie said all the whippings were given by either of the young Messrs. Albritton, they were high tempered, as their father was before them. She laughed and said she had Indian blood in her veins and sometimes she was sassy as she felt independent knowing Mrs. Albritton would always take her part.

She recalled the Yankee's coming through after the war, one remained at the Albritton home after the others had gone on, and she remembered hearing Mrs. Albritton telling friends who visited her, that after this soldier had left he wrote Mrs. Albritton a letter, telling her to look on the back of the bench on the gallery where he had sat and she would find his message. Sallie said she was a little girl sitting on the floor at her mistress feet, ready to fetch and carry for her and she often wondered but didn't dare ask what the message was; she did, however, hear some one say that the Yankees said, if they ever came again, they would take them from the cradle and that puzzled her, to know just what they meant.

Mrs. Albritton had a regular herb garden and Sallie helped her to gather the herbs, Pennyroil, Dock Sage, Tansy (single and double), Thyme, and Yarrow. They used Samson Snake Root in whiskey for cramps, and Butterfly weed for risings.

The writer asked Sallie about church and she said they had no church but Mr. Albritton talked to her and impressed on her as a child to never touch anything that did not belong to her. "Ask for it and if not

given to her, to let it alone and to never lie, or to carry tales, and she could always keep out of trouble." Sallie said she hated to see Sunday morning come, as the men folks were around the house and they would pick on her and somehow she would get a beating.

Sallie remained with Mrs. Albritton until she was 22 years, when she married John Russell, by whom she had three children. They all died as babies, later she married Gus Reynolds, (now dead) so Sallie just rents a room and lives alone.

Sallie says present generation knows too much and too little, that the "Old-time religion" was best for all, she thinks "Satan's goin' 'round wid his tail curled up, catching all he can devour"; and "folks should do like Christ did when Satan tried to tempt Him, and tell Satan to go get behind them, and they get behind Jesus they could not have sorrow run across their hearts and minds."

Mary Rice

Interview with Mary Rice

—*Gertha Couric, [HW: Eufaula]*

DESE UPPITY NIGGERS

Few of the ex-slaves will readily admit that they were mere field hands in the old days. Generally they prefer to leave the impression that they were house servants, or at least stable boys or dairy hands.

But "aunt" Mary Rice, age 92, who lives in Eufaula, holds no such view about the superior social position of house servants. She was a "big missy gal" (teen age) during the War, and about her duties on the plantation of Dr. Cullen Battle near Tuskegee, where she was born, she said:

"Honey, I lived in de quahter. I was a fiel' nigger, but when I was a lil' gal, I helped around de milk-house, churnin', washing de pails and de lak, and den give all de little niggers milk.



Mary Rice, Eufaula, Alabama

"Massa Cullen and Mistis' Ma'y Jane was de bes' Marster and Mistis' in de worl'. Once when I was awful sick, Mistis' Ma'y Jane had me brung in de Big House and put me in a room dat sot on de 'tother side of the kitchen so she could take kere of me herself 'cause it was a right fur piece to de quahter and I had to be nussed day and night.

"Yassum, I was jes' as happy bein' a fiel' han' as I would'er been at de Big House; mebbe mo' so. De fiel' han's had a long spell when de crops was laid by in de summer and dat's when Massa Cullen 'lowed us to 'jubilate' (several days of idle celebration). I was happy all de time in slavery days, but dere ain't much to git happy over now, 'cep'n I's livin'—thank de Lawd. Massa Cullen was a rich man, and owned all de worl' from Chestnut Hill to de ribers, and us always had eberything us needed.

"Niggers dese days ain't neber knowed whut good times is. Mebbe dat's why dey ain't no 'count. And dey is so uppity, too, callin' dereselves 'cullud folks and havin' gold teeth. Dey sez de mo' gold teeth dey has, de higher up in chu'ch dey sets. Huh!"