

**Writer—Jayne, Lucille B.
Capahosic, Virginia.
Gloucester Co.
Typist—Nicholas**

FOLKLORE

Material from Upper Guinea.

In the upper part of Guinea, generally known as the "Hook," you will find two very interesting characters, both Negroes. Aunt Susan Kelly, who is a hundred years old, and Simon Stokes, who is near a hundred.

Aunt Susan is loved by all who know her, for she is a very lovable old Negro.

Aunt Susan's Story

"My mammy, Anna Burrell, was a slave, her massa wuz Col. Hayes, of Woodwell; he wuz very good ter his slaves. He nebber sold mammy or us chilluns; he kept we alls tergether, and we libed in a little cabin in de yard.

"My job wuz mindin' massa's and missus' chilluns all dey long, and puttin' dem ter baid at night; dey had ter habe a story told ter dem befo' dey would go ter sleep; and de baby hed ter be rocked; and I had ter sing fo' her 'Rock a-by baby, close dem eyes, befo' old san man comes, rock a-by baby don' let old san man cotch yo' peepin', ' befo' she would go ter sleep.

"Mammy used ter bake ash-cakes; dey wuz made wid meal, wid a little salt and mixed wid water; den mammy would rake up de ashes in de fire-place; den she would make up de meal in round cakes, and put dem on de hot bricks ter bake; wen dey hed cooked roun' de edges, she would put ashes on de top ob dem, and wen dey wuz nice and brown she took dem out and washed dem off wid water.

"Mammy said it wuz very bad luck ter meet a woman early in de mornin' walkin'; and nebber carry back salt dat yo' habe borrowed, fo' it will bring bad luck ter yo' and ter de one yo' brung it ter. If yo' nose iches on de right side a man is comin', if de lef' side iches a woman is comin'; if it iches on de end a man and woman is sho' ter come in a short.

"For a hawk ter fly ober de house is sho' sign ob death, fo' de hawk will call corpses wen he flies ober."



Simon Stokes, son of Kit and Anna Stokes, is quite a type. He and his [45] parents with his brothers and sisters were slaves; owned by George W. Billups, of Mathews County, who later moved to Gloucester County and bought a farm near Gloucester Point. They had eleven children, Simon is the only one living.

Simon's Story

"Massa George and missus wuz good ter his slaves. My mammy wuz missus' cook; and him and de odder boys on de farm worked in de co'n and de terbaccer and cotton fields.

"Me sho' didn't lik dat job, pickin' worms off de terbaccer plants; fo' our oberseer wuz de meanes old hound you'se eber seen, he hed hawk eyes fer seein' de worms on de terbaccer, so yo' sho' hed ter git dem all, or you'd habe ter bite all de worms dat yo' miss into, or git three lashes on yo' back wid his old lash, and dat wuz powful bad, wusser dan bittin' de worms, fer yo' could bite right smart quick, and dat wuz all dat dar wuz ter it; but dem lashes done last a pow'ful long time.

"Me sho' did like ter git behind de ox-team in de co'n field, fo' I could sing and holler all de day, 'Gee thar Buck, whoa thar Peter, git off dat air co'n, what's de matter wid yo' Buck, can't yo hear, gee thar Buck.'

"In de fall wen de simmons wuz ripe, me and de odder boys sho' had a big time possum huntin', we alls would git two or three a night; and we alls would put dem up and feed dem hoe-cake and simmons ter git dem nice and fat; den my mammy would roast dem wid sweet taters round them. Dey wuz sho' good, all roasted nice and brown wid de sweet taters in de grabby.

"We alls believed dat it wuz bad luck ter turn back if yer started anywher, if yo' did bad luck would sho' foller yer; but ter turn yo' luck, go back and make a cross in yo' path and spit in it.