



**Charlotte Beverley**

**CHARLOTTE BEVERLY was born a slave to Captain Pankey's wife, in Montgomery County, Texas. She has lived most of her life within a radius of 60 miles from Houston, and now lives with one of her children in a little house on the highway between Cleveland and Shepherd, Texas. She does not know her age, but appears to be about ninety.**

"I's born in Montgomery County and I's the mudder of eleven chillen, four gals and seven boys. My grandma come from Alabama and my daddy was Strawder Green and he belong to Col. Hughes. My maw named Phyllis and she belong to Capt. Pankey.

"There was 'bout forty niggers, big and little, on the plantation. Lawd, they was good to us. Us didn' know nothin' 'bout bad times and cutting and whipping and slashing. I had to work in the house and I 'member one thing I has to do was scrub Mistus' gol' snuffbox twict a week. She kep' sweet, Scotch snuff and sometimes I takes a pinch out.

"We used to go to the white folks church and if us couldn' git in we'd stand round by the door and sing. Mistus wouldn' 'low us dance on the place but they give us pass to go to dance on nex' plantation, where my daddy live.

"Every year they have big Christmas dinner and ham and turkey and allus feed us good. Us have Christmas party and sing songs. That was sweet music.

"Marster have a lovely house, all ceiled and plastered. It was a log house but it was make all beautiful inside with mirrors and on the board was lots of silver and china and silver spoons with the gol' linin's and part of my job was to keep 'em sparklin'. [Pg 86]

"Folks in them times cooks in the fireplace and my auntie, she cook. She make 'simmon bread and 'tater pone and the like. She mash up 'simmons with butter and pour sweet milk and flour in it. That make good 'simmon bread. We has skilletts what was flat and deep and set on three legs.

"The slaves lived in little log houses and sleep on wood beds. The beds was make three-legged. They make augur hole in side of the house and put in pieces of wood to make the bed frame, and they put straw and cotton mattress on them bed.

"Old marster used to let he slaves have a extry cotton patch to theyselves and they work it by the moonlight. They could sell that cotton and have the money for theyselves.

"My white mistus was a Christian and she'd own her God anywhere. She used to shout, jus' sit and clap her hands and say, 'Hallalujah.' Once I seed her shout in church and I thinks something ail her and I run down the aisle and goes to fannin' her.

"One of the slaves was a sort-a preacher and sometimes marster 'lowed him to preach to the niggers, but he have to preach with a tub over his head, 'cause he git so happy he talk too loud. Somebody from the big house liable to come down and make him quit 'cause he makin' 'sturbance.

"I brings water from the well and they have what they call piggins, and they was little tubs with two handles. Mistus wouldn' 'low me to do any heavy work.

"I see sojers and knits socks for 'em by moonshine. Me and my husban' was married by a Yankee sojer. I was dress in white Tarleyton weddin' dress and I didn' wear no hoop skirt. I had a pretty wreath of little white flowers, little bitty, little dainty ones, the pretties' little [Pg 87] things. When I marry, my sister marry too and our husban's was brudders. My husban' dress in suit of white linen. He sho' look handsome. He give me a gol' ring and a cup and saucer for weddin' gif'. We git married in Huntsville and us didn' go no weddin' journey trip. We was so poor we couldn' go round the house! I's 'bout twenty some year when I marries, but I don' know jus' how old. We has a big dance that night and the white folks come, 'cause they likes to see the niggers dance.

"The white folks had interes' in they cullud people where I live. Sometimes they's as many as fifty cradle with little nigger babies in 'em and the mistus, she look after them and take care of them, too. She turn them and dry them herself. She had a little gal git water and help. She never had no chillen of her own. I'd blow the horn for the mudders of the little babies to come in from the fields and nurse 'em, in mornin' and afternoon. Mistus feed them what was old enough to eat victuals. Sometimes, they mammies take them to the field and fix pallet on ground for them to lay on.

"The las' word my old Mistus Pankey say when she die was, 'You take care of Charlette