

RIVIANA BOYNTON:

Rivana Williams Boynton [TR: as in earlier interview, but Riviana, above] was born on John and Mollie Hoover's plantation near Ulmers, S.C., being 15 years of age when the 'Mancipation came.

"Our Boss man, he had "planty" of slaves. We lived in a log houses. My father was an Indian and he ran away to war, but I don't 'member anything of my mother. She was sold and taken away 'fore I ever knew anything of her.

"I 'member that I had to thin cotton in the fields and mind the flies in the house. I had a leafy branch that was cut from a tree. I'd stand and wave that branch over the table to keep the flies out of the food.

"I'd work like that in the day time and at night I'd sleep in my uncle's shed. We had long bunks along the side of the walls. We had no beds, just gunny sacks nailed to the bunks, no slats, no springs, no nothing else. You know how these here sortin' trays are made,—these here trays that they use to sort oranges and 'matoes. Well, we had to sleep on gunn sack beds.

"They had weavin' looms where they made rugs and things. I used to help 'em tear rags and sew 'em an' make big balls and then they'd weave those rugs,—rag rugs, you know. That's what we had to cover ourselves with. We didn't had no quilts nor sheets not nothin like that."

[TR: The following portion of this interview is a near repeat of a portion of an earlier interview with this informant; however it is included here because the transcription varies.]

"I 'member well when the war was on. I used to turn the corn sheller and sack the shelled corn for the Confederate soldiers. They used to sell some of the corn, and I guess they gave some of it to the soldiers. Anyway the Yankees got some that they didn't intend them to get.

"It was this way:

"The Wheeler Boys were Confederates. They came down the road as happy as could be, a-singin':

'Hurrah! Hur rah! Hurrah!
Hurrah! for the Broke Brook boys.
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!
Hurrah for the Broke Brook boys of South Car-o-li-ne-ah.'

"So of course, we thought they were our soldiers singin' our songs. Well, they came and tol' our boss that the Yankees were coming and we had better hide our food and valuable things for they'd take everything they wanted.

"So they helped our Massy hide the things. They dug holes and buried the potatoes and covered them over with cotton seed. Then our Massy gave them food for their kindness and set out with two of the girls to take them to a place of safety, and before he could come back for the Missus The Yankees were upon us.

"But before they got there, our Missus had called us together and told us what to say.

"Now you beg for us! You can save our lives. If they ask you if we are good to you, you tell them, 'YES'!

"If they ask you, if we give your meat, you tell them 'YES'!

"Now the rest didn't get any meat, but I did 'cause I worked in the house, so I didn't tell a lie, for I did get meat, but the rest didn't get it."

"We saw the Yankees coming. They never stopped for nothing. Their horses would jump the worn rail fences and they'd come right across the fiel's an' everything.

"They came to the house first and bound our Missus up stairs so she couldn't get away, then they came out to the sheds and asked us all kind of questions.

"We begged for our Missus and we say:

'Our Missus is good. Don't kill her!
'Dont take our meat away from us!
'Dont hurt our Missus!
'Dont burn the house down!

[TR: The rest of the interview is new information.]

"We begged so hard that they unloosened her, but they took some of the others for refugees and some of the slaves volunteered and went off with them.

"They took potatoes and all the hams they wanted, but they left our Missus, 'cause me save her life.

"The Uncle what I libbed with, he was awful full of all kinds of devilment. He stole sweet taters out of the bank. He called them "pot" roots and sometimes he called them "blow horts". You know they wuld blow up big and fat when they were roasted in the ashes.

"My uncle, he liked those blow horts mighty well, and one day, when he had some baked in the fireplace, Ole Massy Hoover, he came along and peeked in through the "hold" in de chimley wall, where the stones didn't fit too good.

"He stood there and peeked in an' saw my uncle eat in' those blow horts. He had a big long one shakin' the ashes off on it. He was blowing it to cool it off so he could eat it and he was a-sayin'

"Um! does blowhorts is mighty good eatin'. Then Massy, he come in wid his big whip, and caught him and tied him to a tree and paddled him until he blistered and then washed his sore back with strong salt water. You know they used to use salt for all of sores, but it sho' did smart.

"My aunt, she was an Indian woman. She didn't want my uncle to steal, but he was just full of all kind of devilment.

"My Massy liked him, but one day he played a trick on him.

"My Uncle took sick, he was so sick that when my Massy came to see him, he asked him to pray that he should die. So Massy Hoover, he went home and wrapped himself up in a big long sheet and rapped on the door real hard.

"Uncle, he say, 'who's out there? What you want?'

"Massy, he change his voice and say, 'I am Death. I hear that you want to die, so I've come after your soul. Com with me! Get ready. Quick I am in a hurry!'

"'Oh, my sakes!' my uncle, he say, 'NO, no I aint ready yet. I aint ready to meet you. I don't want to die.'

"My Missus whipped me once, but not so very hard. I was under Her daughter, Miss Mollie. She liked me and always called me "Tinker". When she heard me crying and goin' on, she called:

"Tinker, come here. What's the matter? Did you Missus whip you?"

"Then my Missus said, 'Tinker was a bad girl, I told her to sweep the yard and she went off and hid all day.'

"Mollie, she took me up in her arms and said, 'They mustn't whip Tinker; she's my little girl.'

"If it hadn't been for Miss Mollie, I don't know where I'd be now. I married right after freedom. My husband, Alexander Boynton and I stayed right on the plantation and farmed on the shares.

"We had plenty of children,—18 in all.—three sets of twins. They all grew up, except the twins, they didn't any of them get old enough to get married, but all the rest lived and raised children.

"They are all scattered around, but my youngest son is only 38 years old. I have grand-children, 40 years old.

"I don't know just how many, but I have 20 grand-children and I have three generations of grand-children. Yes, my grand-children, some of them, have grand-children. That makes five generations.

"I tell them that I am a "gitzy, gitzy" grand-mother."

"I live right here with my daughter. She's my baby girl. I'm not very strong anymore, but I have a big time telling stories to my great-grand-children and great-great-grand children".