

## Ed McCrorey (Mack)

# Interview with Ed McCrorey (Mack), 82 years old

—*W.W. Dixon, Winnsboro, S.C.*

"Yas sah, I was born in slavery time, on de Lord's Day. I 'members mammy tellin' me, but just which month, I disremembers dat. De year done gone out my 'membrance, but I is eight-two. You'll have to help figger dat year out for me. It was befo' de Yankees come, 'cause I see them then. I good size chap, I was dat day.

"My marster was Wateree Jim McCrorey. My mistress name Miss Sara. Sure she de wife of Marster Jim. Does I recollect de chillun? 'Spect I can name most of them. Young Marster Bill marry a Miss Harper kin to de old Jedge Harper. Miss Sara, her marry a Beaty, a buckra, and Marster John got killed in de war.

"My father was name Washington, after General George Washington, though he got nothin' but 'Wash' in de handlin' of his name. My mammy name Dolly, after de President's wife 'Dolly'. De white folks tell mammy dat her was name for a very great lady. You ask me why I say father and not say mother? Well boss, let me see; maybe I regard father, but I loves mammy. My white folks say father but I learnt on de breast and knees of mammy to say mammy, and dat's a sweet name to dis old nigger, which and how I ain't gonna change 'less her changes it when I git to heaven bye and bye.

"Marster Jim live on Wateree Creek. Had big plantation and a heap of slaves. Maybe you knows de place. Marster Troy own it, after de war. De Yankees never burn up de house. It catch afire from a spark out de chimney of de house dat Marster Troy was habitatin' then. Yas sah, Yankees took all they could carry way, but didn't touch de house. Marster Troy kept a bar and lots of poor white trash continually 'round dere smokin'. 'Spect some of them no 'count folks caused de fire.

"Lord bless you! Yas sah, us had plenty to eat and wear; wore shoes in winter, though they were sorta stiff, de wooden bottoms make them dat way. Us boys run 'round in our shirt tails in summer time. Us lak dat!

"What I lak best to eat in them times? 'Lasses and pone bread for breakfast; roastin' ears, string beans, hog jowls, bread and buttermilk for dinner; and clabber and blackberry cobbler for supper. Them's good eatin's I tell you!

Did I ever git a whippin'? Lordy, Lordy! did I? Once I 'members one moonlight night 'bout midnight, a gettin' up off my pallet on de floor, goin' out in de sugar cane patch and gittin' a big stalk of de cane. When I gits back to our house, young Marster Jim ketch me and say: 'Dat you Ed?' I'd lak to deny it was me, but dere I was, ketch wid de cane on me. What could I say? I just say: 'Please Marster Jim, don't tell

old marster, just do wid me what you laks'. He make his face grim and sentence come from his mouth: 'Ten lashes and privilege of eatin' de cane, or five lashes and de cane be given de pigs in de pen; lashes 'plied wid a hame string on de bare back and rump'. Dat last word seem to tickle him and he laugh. Dat brightened me some. 'Which you goin' to take', say young marster. I say, 'I wants de sugar cane, Marster Jimmy, but please make de lashes soft as you can'. Then he git stern again, took me by de hand, lead me to de harness house, got a hame string and say, 'Now don't you bellow, might wake mother'. Then he give me de ten lashes and they wasn't soft a-tall. I didn't cry out on de night wind though. Dat ended it.

"My white folks 'tended Wateree Church. I never went to church in time of slavery, though. I now b'longs to de Big Zion African Methodist Church in Chester, S.C. What I feel lak when I jine? I felt turnt all 'round, new all over. It was lak I never had been, never was, but always is to be 'til I see Him who clean my heart. Now you is teched on sumpin' dat I better be quiet 'bout.

"I marry Emily Watson, sumpin' 'bout her attractive to all men, white men in particular. After I got four chillun by her, one of de big white men of de county have a ruction wid his widow-wife and step chillun. They left him. Emily was a cookin' for him. It wasn't long befo' she quit comin' home at night. I leaves de place. Emily have four chillun by dat white man. One of my chillun by Emily, is a street sweeper for de town of Winnsboro. 'Spect he is fifty years old. Dat was our oldest child. De second one up and marry a preacher, Rev. Brown. De other two in New Jersey and they make a heap of money they say, but I never see de color of dat money.

"Our neighbors was Gen. Bratton and Capt. Ed. P. Mobley. Both powerful rich men and just 'bout set de style of polite livin'. Everybody looked up to General Bratton, expected nothin', got nothin'. Everybody dat come 'round Marster Ed. P. Mobley, expect sumpin' and went away wid sumpin'.

"After freedom, Marster Ed's son, Marster Mose, marry Miss Minnie McCrorey; her de mother of Marster Bill Mobley, County Treasurer, Richland County. She die and Marster Mose take another sister, Miss Emma. Her son big doctor at Florence, S.C.

"Does I know any funny stories? Does you want a true story? Yas? Well, all Marster Ed Mobley's niggers lak to stay wid him after freedom. They just stay on widout de whippin's. 'Stead of whippin's they just got cussin's, good ones too. Dere was two old men, Joe Raines and Joe Murray, dat he was 'ticular fond of. Maybe he more love Joe Raines de bestest. One day Joe Murray let de cows git away in de corn field. At dinner time Marster Ed cuss him befo' de whole crowd of hands, layin' 'round befo' dinner; and he cuss him powerful. After dinner Joe Murray grieve and complain much 'bout it to de crowd. Joe Raines up and allow: 'Next time he cuss you, do lak I do, just cuss him back. Dis is a free country, yas sah. Just give him as good a cussin' as he gives you'.

"Not long after dat, de boar hog git out de lot gate, when Joe Murray was leadin' his mule out. Marster Ed lit out on Joe Murray a cussin' and Joe Murray lit out on Marster Ed a cussin', and then Marster Ed ketch Joe and give him a slavery time whippin' and turn him loose. Joe Murray take his mule on to de field, where he glum wid Joe Raines. Joe Murray tell 'bout de boar hog gitting out and de cussin's and de whippin's. Joe Raines allow: 'You didn't cuss him right. You never cuss him lak I cuss him, or you'd a never got a whippin'.' Joe Murray allow: 'How you cuss him then, Joe?' Say Joe Raines very slow, 'Well when I cuss Marster Ed, I goes way down in de bottoms where de corn grow high and got a black color. I looks east and west and north and south. I see no Marster Ed. Then I pitches into him and gives him de worst cussin' a man ever give another man. Then when I goes back to de house, my feelin's is satisfied

from de cussin' I have give him, and he is sure to make up wid me for Marster Ed don't bear anger in his bosom long. De next time cuss him but be sure to go way off somewhere so he can't hear you, nigger'.

"Some time I sorry I's free. I have a hard time now. If it was slavery time, I'd be better off in my body and easy in my mind. I stays wid my daughter, Emily. My old marster, Wateree Jim, is de bestest white man I has ever knowed. My race has never been very good to me.

"I was too young to work much, just 'tend to de cows, carry water in de fields, pick up chips, find de turkey and guinea nests. I's never voted in my life, never been in jail in my life. Seem lak I's just a branch or pond dryin' up on de road side, and de onliest friend I's got is de President and dat good old dog of mine.

"Goodbye and God bless you sir, 'til we meet again.