

## Emma Jeter

### Interview with "Aunt" Emma Jeter

#### 21 Long Twelve, Union, S.C.

—*Caldwell Sims, Union, S.C.*

"Lordy, Honey, I sho was born in slavery and I is proud o' it too. Ole Marse Cole Lawson was my ole marster. When I axed him how old I was, he allus 'lowed something like dis, 'you is older than you is good', and dat all he ever said 'bout my age. Sweet Dreams (her grand daughter), come here and fetch me a drink from de well to wet my mouth! My grand-daughter stay wid me at night. When she doan stay, some o' de other grand uns stays. Sometime it's jest me and Sago here all alone. I jes' sets and looks at him at night while he sleep. He work de rich white folks' flower yards fer 'em, and dat brings him in at night real tired. My grand-daughter's real name is Marguerite Porter, but nobody don't hardly know dat; kaise everybody call her Sweet Dream, her lil baby name. She my oldest daughter's fifth chile. My feelings tells me I is ole, and my white folks 'll tell you I was born in slavery, 'cept dey is all dead.

"Light furs' struck me on de large plantation o' Ole Marse Cole Lawson, de paw o' Mr. Victor Lawson. Mr. Victor ain't no spring chicken no mo' hisself. Dat over in Sedalia in de Minter Section. You kno's 'bout de large plantation o' Marse James E. Minter, dat gib de section its name? (CHS show boundaries of Minter lands). Way back over dar whar I was born.

"Paw stay in Union County. Maw was sold to a man name Marse Bailey Suber over in Fairfield, while I still a suckling. At dat time, my paw was bought by a widder woman, Miss Sarah Barnett, in Union Cnty. Lawd Jesus! Dat separate my maw and paw. Maw tuck me 'long wid her. Maw name Clara Sims. When Me and maw went to Fairfield, us didn't stay dar long 'fo ole man Harrison Sartor of Santuck, bought my maw. Us glad to git back to Union. I was a big size gal by dis time and I start to be de waiting gal in my new Marse's house fer his wife, Miss Betsy. Miss Betsy had one sister, Miss Nancy Wilson, dat live wid her. Her missus and old Marster and dere son, Willie, was all dat I had to wait on, kaise dat was all dar was in de household.

"God-A-Mighty! Is you gwine to fill up dat book wid all dat I says? Well, Marse Harrison didn't 'low paw to see maw 'cept twice a year—laying-by time and Christmas. My paw still 'longed to Miss Sarah Barnett. Dat's 'zactly why I is got five half-sisters and one-half brother. Paw got him another wife at Miss Sarah's. Miss Sarah want young healthy slaves. Maw had jes' me and Ann. Ann been daed, Oh, Lord, forty years. Dis all to my recollections.

"Is you gwine to fix fer me and Sago to git some pension? Gawd naw, some dese lil babies whats 'er sucking de maw's titties is gwine to git dat pension. Us all gwine to be daed 'fo it even come out. You ain't gwine to even sho' dat to no Gov'ment man; no Lawd, ain't never thought I's gwine to git it.

"Yes, Honey, I was in Fairfield den, but I 'members when crowds o' men come in from de war. All us chilluns seed mens coming and us run and tuck off fas' as us could fer de nearest woods, kaise us wuz dat scared, dat dem mens gwine to git us. Atter dat, us found out dey was our own folks. Us had done tuck and run from dem den.

"Chile, you come back when Sago here, and us tell you dat book full, sho nuff.