

Nellie Loyd

I

Interview with Nellie Loyd

Newberry, S.C.

—*G.L. Summer, Newberry, S.C.*

"I was born in Union County, S.C., near Goshen Hill, about 91 years ago. I belonged to Mr. George Buchanan. He went to the war and got his right arm shot off. After the war, his sons moved to Oklahoma. He was good to his slaves, and never allowed any negro under 12 years of age to work in the fields. I helped around the house until I was 12 years old.

"The soldiers were called 'minute men'. They had wide hats with palmetto buttons in front. They sometimes mustered at Goshen Hill. Some of the slaves was hanged for stealing, but my master never hanged any.

"I married Nozby Loyd soon after the war, and had three children. I come to Newberry about thirty years ago, and have worked with white families or in the fields."

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Interview with Nellie Loyd (91)

Newberry, S.C.

—*G.L. Summer, Newberry, S.C.*

"I lived wid Albert and Carrie Coleman. Dey is no kin, but dey give me a place to live. I am too old to work much, but I does what I can to help.

"I was born near Goshen Hill in Union County, and I was a slave of Marse George Buchanan. He give us good quarters to live in and plenty to eat. He was a good master. I believe he never whipped any slaves, for I never did hear of it if he did, and he never allowed anybody else to whip dem either.

"My grand-mother's mother come from Virginia. It was said she was kin to de Indians.

"I worked around de house most of de time. My mother cooked at de home of Marse George. She kept de keys to de smokehouse where dar was always plenty of home-raised smoked meat. Marse made his own flour, too. He made salt by digging a deep hole in de ground and getting de mud dat had salt in it. We never had our own gardens, but we had small watermelon patches. Marse had a big garden.

"Marse had a blacksmith shop and he used charcoal in it. To make de charcoal he would cut down pine trees and pile de big limbs up and put dirt over dem; den burn de limbs and dat would leave de charcoal. He would pour water over it den.

"Some of Marse Buchanan's boys went to war, and some of dem got killed. Dey had patrollers den, and if dey caught you off de place dey would have twelve men to whip you.

"We never worked at night except sometimes when it rained and we had to get de corn shucked or de fodder hauled to de barn. Sometimes we picked cotton by de light of de moon. We worked on Saturday afternoons but not on Sundays. On Christmas we had a good time and good things to eat. De men would drink beer and whiskey. Beer was made from locusts and persimmons, and everybody would drink some of it.

"De slaves never learned to read and write. Dey never had any churches, but dey had to go to church and so dey went to de white folks' church and set in de back or de gallery. Niggers had lots of dancing and frolics. Dey danced de 'flat-foot'. Dat was when a nigger would slam his foot flat down on de floor. De wooden bottom shoes sho would make a loud noise. At weddings everybody would eat and frolic.

"We had our own leather made and tanned at home; den it was tacked to de wood soles to make shoes.

"When anybody got sick, de old folks made hot teas from herbs dat dey got out of de woods. One was a bitter herb called 'rhu'. It was put in whiskey and drunk to prevent sickness. Marse always give it to de nigger children, and to de grown ups, too. Dey hung asafetida bags around de necks of de kids to keep down sickness.

"When freedom come, Marse said we was free, but he kept us till dat crop was finished, and some of de niggers stayed on for several years and worked for wages.

"De yankees come through our section, and Marse hid his meat and things in deep holes dat he dug in de cemetery. He built a fence around de cemetery. De yankees took good horses and left poor ones. Dey made niggers cook for dem all night. De Ku Klux wore white clothes and white caps. Dey made out dey was ghosts from de cemetery, and dey would get a man and carry him off, and we never would see him again. De Red Shirts come in '76. I 'member my husband voted once or twice. He was a Republican; but dey soon put a stop to dat.

"I think Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson must have been all right; just heard about them. Dey said dat Jeff Davis surrendered under a June apple tree. Just heard about Booker Washington and dat is all I know. Reckon he is doing good work.

"I joined de church when I was quite young, because meningitis was in de neighborhood killing so many folks and I got scared.

"Atter de war de niggers started up hill; den went back. Since dat time up to now, dey has been working most on farms. Some rent small farms and some work as wage hands or share-croppers. Dem dat went to town have worked as carpenters and other such work.

"I can't 'member anything more, except dat marse had a still-house on his place, and other farmers did, too. Dey made brandy and whiskey from peaches, apples and grapes dat dey raised; den sold it to other farmers in de neighborhood who didn't have as much as dey did.