

## Mollie Tillman

### Interview with Mollie Tillman

—*Susie R. O'Brien, Uniontown, Alabama*

#### *I WARN'T NO COMMON SLAVE*

Aunt Mollie Tillman was fifteen years old when the Southern slaves were freed; but despite her advanced age, she is able to work every day in the cotton fields and admits that she is "purty peart."

She said, "Honey, I kin ricolleck all 'bout slavery time, 'caze I was a big ol' gal den. Why, I 'members when de 'mancipation come as if 't'was yestidy."

Aunt Mollie recalls that she was born on a plantation near Rome, Georgia, and that her owners were Dan and Lucy Phillips.

"Marse Dan was a Baptis' preacher," she explained, "an' he shorely was a good man. He was a chaplain in de big war and he didn't get hurt.

"Marster owned lots an' lots of slaves an' de plantation was jes' full o' niggers. He was a powerful important man.

"Honey, I warn't no common eve'yday slave, I ho'ped de white folks in de big house. Mistus Lucy wouldn't let 'em take me to de fiel'. Dem was good days, chile; might good days. I was happy den, but since 'mancipation I has jes' had to scuffle an' work an' do de bes' I kin."

Aunt Mollie's hair is snow white in sharp contrast to her ginger-cake skin.

"I 'members all 'bout when de Yankees come," she said. "Dey was jes' ruination to de plantation. Dey tuck all de mules an' cows, den sont out an' got all de chickens an' eggs dey could fin'. Eatin' was kind o' slackwid us atter dey lef'."

Aunt Mollie's life has known romance. Let her tell it:

"I was ol' 'nough to be castin' my eyes 'roun' at de young bucks, an' dere was a nigger what lived on de plantation jinin' our'n whut tuck a shine to me. I lacked dat boy fine, too.

"He would come over to see me ever' time he git a chanct. One night he 'low he gwine'r ax his marster to buy me so's me an' him could git married. Well, atter dat he didn' come no mo'.

"I waited an' I watched, but I didn' hear nuffin of dat nigger. Atter 'while I got worried. I was 'fraid de patterollers done kotch him, or maybe he done foun' some gal he lak better dan he do me. So I begin to 'quire 'bout him an' foun' dat his marster done sol' him to a white man whut tuck him 'waydown yonder to Alabama.

"Well ma'am, I grieved fo' dat nigger so dat my heart was heavy in my breas'. I knowed I never would see him no mo'. Soon atter dat, peace was 'clared an' de niggers was free to go whar dey pleased.

"My folks stayed on wid Marse Dan fer a year; den dey 'cided to go to Alabama an' farm. We hit it off to Alabama an' I begin to go 'bout some wid de young bucks. But somehow I couldn't git my min' off dat other nigger.

"Well ma'am, one day at a big meetin' I runned up on him. I was so happy I shouted all over dat meetin' house. We jes' tuck up whar we lef' off an' 'fo' long us got married."

And, Aunt Mollie continued, they lived happily until his death about 20 years ago.

She now lives in Uniontown, happy and contented. She has her garden and flowers; but emphasizes that "de ol' days was de bes' of all."