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**Folklore**  
**Meigs County, District Three**  
**[HW: Middeport]**

**NAN STEWART**  
**Age 87**

"Ise bawnd Charl'stun, West Virginia in February 1850."

"My mammy's name? Hur name wuz Kath'run Paine an' she wuz bawnd down Jackson County, Virginia. My pappy wuz John James, a coopah an' he wuz bawnd at Rock Creek, West Virginia. He cum'd ovah heah with Lightburn's Retreat. Dey all crossed de ribah at Buffington Island. Yes, I had two bruthahs and three sistahs. Deir wuz Jim, Thomas, he refugeed from Charl'stun to Pum'roy and it tuk him fo' months, den de wuz sistah Adah, Carrie an' Ella. When I rite young I wurked as hous' maid fo' numbah quality white folks an' latah on I wuz nurs' fo' de chilluns in sum homes, heah abouts."

"Oh, de slaves quartahs, dey wuz undah de sam' ruf with Marse Hunt's big hous' but in de back. When Ise littl' I slepted in a trun'l bed. My mammy wuz mighty 'ticlar an' clean, why she made us chilluns wash ouah feets ebry night fo' we git into de bed."

"When Marse Hunt muved up to Charl'stun, my mammy and pappy liv' in log cabin."

"My gran' mammy, duz I 'member hur? Honey chile, I shure duz. She wuz my pappy's mammy. She wuz one hun'erd and fo' yeahs ol' when she die rite in hur cheer. Dat mawhin' she eat a big hearty brekfast. One day I 'member she sezs to Marse Hunt, 'I hopes you buys hun'erds an' hun'erds ob slaves an' neber sells a one. Hur name wuz Ersлие Kizar Chartarn."

"Marse an' missus, mighty kind to us slaves. I lurned to sew, piece quilts, clean de brass an' irons an' dog irons. Most time I set with de ol' ladies, an' light deir pipes, an'

tote 'em watah, in gourds. I us' tu gether de turkey eggs an' guinea eggs an' sell 'em. I gits ten cents duzen fo' de eggs. Marse and Missus wuz English an' de count money like dis—fo' pence, ha' penny. Whut I do with my money? Chile I saved it to buy myself a nankeen dress."

"Yes mam we always had plenty to eat. What'd I like bes' to eat, waffl's, honey and stuffed sausage, but I spise possum and coon. Marse Hunt had great big meat hous' chuck full all kinds of meats. Say, do you all know Marse used to keep stuffed sausage in his smoke hous' fo' yeahs an' it wuz shure powahful good when it wuz cooked. Ouah kitchin wuz big an' had great big fiah place whur we'd bake ouah bread in de ashes. We baked ouah corn pone an' biskets in a big spidah. I still have dat spidah an' uses it."

"By the way you knows Squire Gellison wuz sum fishahman an' shure to goodness ketched lots ob fish. Why he'd ketch so many, he'd clean 'em, cut 'em up, put 'em in half barrels an' pass 'em 'round to de people on de farms."

"Most de slaves on Marse Hunt's place had dir own garden patches. Sumtimes dey'd have to hoe the gardens by moonlight. Dey sell deir vegetables to Marse Hunt."

"In de summah de women weah dresses and apruns made ob linen an' men weah pants and shurts ob linen. Linsey-woolsey and jean wuz woven on de place fo' wintah clothes. We had better clothes to weah on Sunday and we weahed shoes on Sunday. The' shoes and hoots wuz made on de plantashun."

"My mastah wuz Marse Harley Hunt an' his wife wuz Miss Maria Sanders Hunt. Marse and Miss Hunt didn't hab no chilluns of der own but a nephew Marse Oscar Martin and niece Miss Mary Hunt frum Missouri lived with 'em. Dey's all kind to us slaves. De Hous' wuz great big white frame with picket fence all 'round de lot. When we lived Charl'stun Marse Hunt wuz a magistrate. Miss Hunt's muthah and two aunts lived with 'em."

"No mam, we didn't hab no ovahseeah. Marse Hunt had no use fo' ovahseeahs, fact is he 'spise 'em. De oldah men guided de young ones in deir labors. The poor white neighbahs wurn't 'lowed to live very close to de plantashun as Marse Hunt wanted de culured slave chilluns to be raised in propah mannah."

"I duzn't know how many acres in de plantashun. Deir wuz only 'bout three or fo' cabins on de place. Wurk started 'bout seben clock 'cept harvest time when ebrybody wuz up early. De slaves didn't wurk so hard nor bery late at night. Slaves wuz punished by sendin' 'em off to bed early."

"When I'se livin' at Red House I seed slaves auctioned off. Ol' Marse Veneable sold ten or lebin slaves, women and chilluns, to niggah tradahs way down farthah south. I well 'members day Aunt Millie an' Uncl' Edmund wuz sold—dir son Harrison wuz bought by Marse Hunt. 'Twuz shure sad an' folks cried when Aunt Millie and Uncl' Edmund wuz tuk away. Harrison neber see his mammy an' pappy agin. Slaves wuz hired out by de yeah fo' nine hundred dollahs."

"Marse Hunt had schools fo' de slaves chilluns. I went to school on Lincoln Hill, too."

"Culured preachahs use to cum to plantashun an' dey would read de Bible to us. I 'member one special passage preachahs read an' I neber understood it 'til I cross de riber at Buffinton Island. It wuz, 'But they shall sit every man under his own vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it.' Micah 4:4. Den I knows it is de fulfillment ob dat promis; 'I would soon be undah my own vine an' fig tree' and hab no feah of bein' sold down de riber to a mean Marse. I recalls der wuz Thorton Powell, Ben Sales and Charley Releford among de preachahs. De church wuz quite aways frum de hous'. When der'd be baptizins de sistahs and brethrums would sing 'Freely, freely will you go with me, down to the riber'. 'Freely, freely quench your thirst Zion's sons and daughtahs'."

"How wells I 'member when I wuz converted. I'd thought 'bout 'ligion a lot but neber wunce wuz I mued to repent. One day I went out to cut sum wood an' begin th inkin' agin and all wunce I feeled so relieved an' good an' run home to tell granny an' de uthahs dat I'd cum out at last."

"No, we didn't wurk on Saturday aftahnoons. Christmas wuz big time at Marse Hunts hous'. Preparations wuz made fo' it two weeks fo' day cum. Der wuz corn sings an' big dances, 'ceptin' at 'ligious homes. Der wuz no weddins' at Marse Hunts, cause dey had no chilluns an' de niece and nephew went back to own homes to git married."

"We played sich games as marbles; yarn ball; hop, skip, an' jump; mumble peg an' pee wee. Wunce I's asked to speak down to white chilluns school an' dis is what I speak:

'The cherries are ripe,  
The cherries are ripe,  
Oh give the baby one,  
The baby is too little to chew,  
The robin I see up in the tree,  
Eating his fill and shaking his bill,  
And down his throat they run.'

Another one:

'Tobacco is an Indian weed,

And from the devil doth proceed  
It robs the pocket and burns the clothes  
And makes a chimney of the nose.'

"When de slaves gits sick, deir mammies loked af'er em but de Marse gived de rem'dies. Yes, dere wuz dif'runt kinds, salts, pills, Castah orl, herb teas, garlic, 'fedia, sulphah, whiskey, dog wood bark, sahsaparilla an' apple root. Sometimes charms wuz used.

"I 'member very well de day de Yankees cum. De slaves all cum a runnin' an' yellin': "Yankees is cumin', Yankee soljers is comin', hurrah". Bout two or three clock, we herd bugles blowing' an' guns on Taylah Ridge. Kids wuz playin' an' all 'cited. Sumone sed: "Kathrun, sumthin' awful gwine happen", an' sumone else sez; "De' is de Yankees". De Yankee mens camp on ouah farm an' buyed ouah buttah, milk an' eggs. Marse Hunt, whut you all call 'billionist [HW: abolitionist] an' he wuz skeered of suthern soljers an' went out to de woods an' laid behind a log fo' seben weeks and seben days, den he 'cided to go back home. He sez he had a dream an' prayed, "I had bettah agone, but I prayed. No use let des debils take you, let God take you." We tote food an' papahs to Marse while he wuz a hidin'."

"One ob my prized possessions is Abraham Lincoln's pictures an' I'se gwine to gib it to a culured young man whose done bin so kind to me, when I'se gone. Dat's Bookah T. Washington's picture ovah thar."

"I'se married heah in Middeport by Preachah Bill, 1873. My husban' wuz Charles Stewart, son of Johnny Stewart. Deir wuz hous' full my own folks, mammy, pappy, sistahs, bruthas, an' sum white folks who cumed in to hep dress me up fo' de weddin'. We kep de weddin' a secrut an' my aunt butted hur horns right off tryin' to fin' out when it wuz. My husban' had to leave right away to go to his job on de boat. We had great big dinnah, two big cakes an' ice cream fo' desurt. We had fo'teen chilluns with only two livin'. I has five gran' sons an' two great gran' daughters."

"Goodbye—cum back agin."