

W. N. HANNAH, AGENCY

PALMYRA, VIRGINIA

OFFICE JUtility 9-2751 • RES. JUtility 9-3075

Uncle Burton's Recollections of Chatham, Va., Commencing 1835

I belonged to John Wills, who at this time I believed to be about 50 years old. He had two brothers, Horatio, who lived at Wilmington, Va. (Place now owned by A.O. Bell), and Elias who lived at Willow Hill, Va. (now, 1909, owned by Mr. Wood) and one sister, Lucy, who married Capt. Jack Winn and lived at Winnsville, Va. (Now owned by the Winns)

Mr. John Wills's first wife was Miss Quarles of Louisa County. His second wife was Miss Emily Woodson of Fluvanna County. By his first wife he had two boys, John, who never married, and Albert, who married Miss Martha Codrington Hatcher, of Cumberland County, and six girls. Mary, who married James Shipman of Rockingham County, Lucy, who married Mr. Robert Nelson, of Spottsylvania County, Eliza, who married Henry James of Richmond, Va., Matilda, who married Robert Adams, of Fluvanna County, Martha Q. who married Dr. Herace Talley of Cumberland County and Rebecca, who never married. By the second wife he had one daughter, Blanche, who married Mr. Leftwich of Bedford County.

Chatham was a great place for entertainments, the girls being fine dancers. Miss Lucy would take the ballroom floor at Wilmington. Miss Matilda ran off to get married while the family was at supper one night. Mr. William Gay helped to get her trunk out the back way so she might join Richard Adams, waiting for her down back of the garden. It was said that they were in such a hurry Miss Matilda jumped over the tasseling corn as she rushed through the garden.

When Miss Lucy was a girl one of her beaux was forbidden to come to the house by her brother but the lover would not be outdone. Rather would he mount his horse, ride up and down the road near the house playing the fiddle and saying to me, "Boy, you go tell your Miss Lucy to come down and **X**

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listen to the music",

I was Old Marster's body servant for a long time. He was a great fisherman and fished often in the Rivanna River near Stillman's Mills. Old Marster practiced medicine for ten miles around and rode horseback most of the time. Rockingham and Roebuck were the names of his last two horses. My riding horse was an old black male named Jim that he gave me ^{to} ride _{around} with him fishing and on other trips.

Old Marster had a lot of fun in him. Once when he had some of us carrying a barrel of water across the yard he made out like he was carrying a lot, but when he got to the other side he said, "It's a good thing to know how to grunt".

When I was a chap his favorite way of punishing me was to catch me by ~~the~~ the ear and bump my head against the side of the smokehouse. I had only one fault to find with Old Marster—he spoiled me when I was a boy then turned around and beat the lint out of me, but one thing I have to say, he never hit me a lick miss.

Gared Minor was the carriage driver at Chatham and twice took Old Marster by private conveyance to the White Sulphur Springs and would spend the summer there.

Old Marster at one time owned property in Columbia, Va. and built the house where the Turners now live. Old Marster lived there for three years.

When Old Marster was a young man at school in Baltimore he was taken sick and, as there were no railroads in those days, my father was sent across the country in a snarehorse gig to bring him home. This he did all ^{right} right, leading the horse a great deal of the way and taking care of Old Marster. As a reward for his faithfulness Old Marster promised him if he should fall to his lot in the division of the slaves he would at once give

Uncle Burton Payne

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him his freedom. My father, Thomas Mathews, was assigned to him and Old Marster kept his promise, watching over him carefully all his life, and giving him a home of his own and in his last days took him back to Chatham and provided ferry him as long as he lived.

I was given to Mars Albert, who moved up to the Forest Place, three miles north of Wilmington. We often went back to Chatham, for Old Marster was paralyzed in his last days. If I did not go in to see him he would send for me the next time I went. I hated to go in to see him because he always cried when I left.

(I believe this information was gathered by Mr. Samuel Adoni Stevens, Cousin Vergilia Pettit's husband, directly from Uncle Burton)

(I do know that when Uncle Burton and Aunt Martha had been married for fifty years Aunt Jennie Pettit, wife of Pembroke Pettit, fixed a good, nice old fashioned country dinner for them and invited them to come to her house, Rock Nest. She said it seemed to make them so happy and they were so appreciative that she was well paid for her effort. He said Aunt Martha came with her snow white apron on and Uncle Burton looked so nice all dressed up. She served them in her kitchen and said that the blessing he said before they started to eat was perfectly beautiful. They did not live too long after this.

Cora W. Hannah)