

TUGALOO

a novel by
RICHARD LEE MERRITT

copy # 2, Part I.

TUGALOO

GENESIS AND PROVENANCE OF TUGALOO

Early in 1984 I started tutoring Basic English reading and writing at the San Francisco Adult Learning Center. I would have several students simultaneously. One of them was a young, black woman whom we will call Jewel. On 4 August 1984 I wrote the following to my brother's family in Honolulu:

"Jewel is 28 or thereabout, and uses black vernacular English--I have a struggle to get her to say women as we say it--she prefers to say womans for the plural. A few weeks ago I told her we would write a long story about a little black girl in Alabama during the Civil Rights Movement. So I have been having her read about Rosa Parks, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Dr. King's Selma Civil Rights March, etc. The story, to be called Lucy's Story, will be about a black, share-cropper girl, born in 1948 near Selma. We have done some preparatory reading and I bought a tablet for Jewel and got her signed up at the public library. She has been going there to get simple reading on her own. But we haven't written anything together yet. I think it would be a masterpiece if we let her do it in her vernacular, but I have told her we will do it correctly and in Standard English. Maybe we should try doing it both ways and then compare them. I told her she might use vernacular with her friends and family, but that the purpose of the school was to familiarize her

GENESIS AND PROVENANCE OF TUGALOO (continued)

with Standard English."

Unfortunately, Jewel never volunteered a word for this "joint" writing effort. By October, she had dropped out of school. Meanwhile, I had become so absorbed with the plot that I pursued it at home intermittently for the next eight or nine years. From my peculiar kind of desultory research and dedication, the novel Tugaloo finally emerged! Lucy's Story became a latter part of Tugaloo, the action of which starts in 1816. I suffered frightful writer's block before I succeeded in joining the first and later parts of the novel. About 1992, the novel was completed.

As I wrote to my brother in August 1984, "I had Jewel read some of the preliminary, (which I had written at home,) and she was quite taken by it all, giving me a very wide smile. But when I said, 'Now I would like you to start writing about Lucy,' she looked pensive, then said something like, 'I tink I don' be ready fo' dat jes yet, but we tries latah on.' "

II

GENESIS AND PROVENANCE OF TUGALOO (continued)

TUGALOO is a work of fiction. I have not intended to portray real, historic persons. The name TUGALOO came to me when I searched for an authentic-sounding southeastern Indian name, and I saw Tougaloo on the map of Mississippi. Only after this novel was half-finished I discovered a real Tugaloo on the map of northern Georgia!

The name Johnson was chosen for the plantation family specifically because of the ubiquity of that name in the United States.

The given-name Mordecai was selected for its 19th Century, Biblical sound. Only much later did I discover there was a real Mordecai Johnson who was a black president of Howard University in the 1920s.

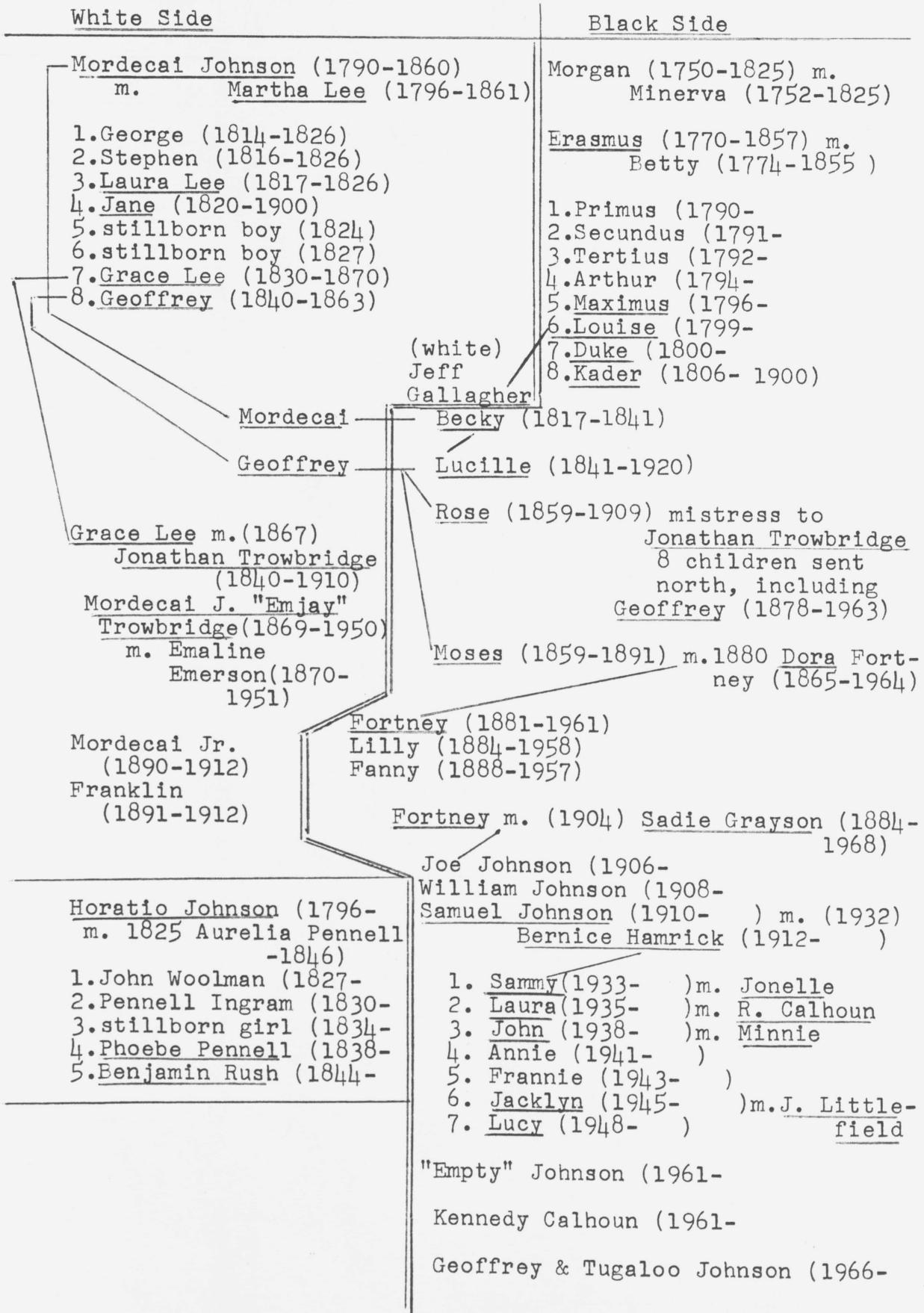
Some important, historic figures such as the Marquis de Lafayette, Presidents Tyler and Pierce, Mme. Octavia LeVert, Alabama senator William Rufus King, General James H. Wilson, New York City banker James Brown and Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., etc., appear only peripherally and in their proper places historically.

I have tried to make the story environmentally and historically accurate. This has entailed considerable research for I have never lived in the South, and have visited there only briefly. Some of my ancestors, however,

GENESIS AND PROVENANCE OF TUGALOO (continued)

did live in the South, (if genes are any help!)
I have multitudes of unknown and very distant cousins
in that fascinating region--descendants of legions who,
with the passion of those days, rallied to the Confederate
cause in 1861.

Richard Lee Merritt
San Francisco, December 1993

TUGALOO FAMILY TREE

TUGALOOANCILLARY FAMILY-TREES AND LISTS OF NAMES

Kader Johnson family: (1811-1901)
Kader (1806- 1900) m. 1826 Ralina (Indian girl from
 1. Brandon (1827- Brandon Plantation)
 m. 1844 Lollie (three daughters)
 2. Rosabel (1830-) m. 1848 Chester (6 children)
 3. Jean Louis, called Johnlooey (1834-)
 4. stillborn boy
 5. Kader's Tom (1839-)
 6. Louise called Weezy (1840-) m. 1856
 Gabriel (Gabe) Johnson Freeman
 (1833-)
 7. Dodie (1843-)

In 1850, Dr. Horatio Johnson took twenty-two blacks to freedom in Pennsylvania. These included Kader's family above, which totaled fourteen in 1850 when spouses and grandchildren are included.

Also going were:

Milton Ingram (1817-) m. 1838 Sarah (1820-)
Russell (1839-)
Roger (1842-)
Roscoe (1844-)

Three young cousins also asked to go along:

Arthur's Tom (1828-)
Apple (1832-)
Rennie (1833-)

Ramsey Family (Overseer's family)

Simon Ramsey (1761-1838) m. 1786 Sophronia Janney (1766-1850)
 (large family reared and remained in Virginia.)
Simon Jr. (1800-)
Josie (1840-)

Tugaloo's Creek Indian Tribe:

Chief Tugaloo (1755-1824)

His squaws: Tallah and Hallaga

His sons: Poosalaba, Pulachee, Tonabamu, Tallega

His daughter: Muscallee

His niece: Ocmulanah (1801-) m. 1819 Rector (1798-)

Rector given Indian name Pulabamu and gains importance in tribe.

His son: Pulallee

TUGALOOANCILLARY FAMILY-TREES AND LISTS OF NAMES

In the 1816 migration from North Carolina to Alabama, Mordecai Johnson had thirty-two blacks. They included the original twelve of Erasmus' family--i.e. Erasmus, his wife, his parents, and his eight children. Mordecai also had just acquired twenty new blacks, called the "Ingram" blacks who had just come down from the old Ingram Plantation at Cypress Creek in Virginia.

Following are the twenty Ingram blacks in 1816:

1. Fred (1794-)
 2. Lady (1799-)
 3. Cuffy (1780-)
 4. Quamona (1784-)
 5. Marcy (1802-)
 6. Kate (1801-)
 7. Alvin (1793-)
 8. Arbutus (1799-)
 9. Leo (1795)
 10. Cassie (1800-)
 11. Daddy Handle (1750-1840)
 12. Bertha (1761-1842)
(their younger children)
 13. Ellen (1798-)
 14. Rena (1800-)
 15. Hannah (1801-)
 16. Randy (1796-)
 17. Big Joe (1795-)
 18. Rector (1798-)
 19. Bellareen (1796-)
 20. Virginia (1798-)
- } sisters of Quamona

Many of the young people were married at the end of the trip. By December 1816, the following were married:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Morgan and Minerva | Blacks not yet married: |
| 2. <u>Erasmus and Betty</u> | |
| 3. Daddy Handle and Bertha | |
| 4. Fred and Lady | |
| 5. Cuffy and Quamona | 1. <u>Maximus</u> |
| 6. Alvin and Arbutus | 2. <u>Duke</u> |
| 7. Leo and Cassie | 3. <u>Kader</u> |
| 8. <u>Randy and Louise</u> | 4. <u>Hannah</u> |
| 9. Secundus and Bellareen | 5. <u>Kate</u> |
| 10. Tertius and Rena | 6. <u>Rector</u> |
| 11. Big Joe and Virginia | |
| 12. Arthur and Marcy | |
| 13. Primus and Ellen | |

TUGAL()

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Almost imperceptably adjusting tail or wing position to take advantage of thin currents of air, the hawk, with practiced ease, floated high in the faded blue sky, his sharp eyes searching fence rows and copses across Nansemond Plantation for the tell-tale color or movement of some tiny animal of prey.

The North Carolina sun, intense, ruthless, though the July morning was only half over, was so nearly overhead that the gray-brown mass of the old square house cast only a hint of shadow on the north side.

In the tobacco fields, Erasmus' sons, inured to manual labor in hot weather and cold, their young black faces glistening with sweat, hoed methodically down the rows.

Little black Kader, barefoot, clad only in his oversize, hand-me-down trousers, emerged from the kitchen house, weighted down with two buckets of food scraps for the poultry. Kader delighted in feeding his many special friends among the farmyard birds. They were waiting for him, their excited squawks and cackles an anticipatory pandemonium. Across the farmyard dust and debris he spread the scraps in a wide arc, laughing as greedy birds seized special morsels/~~then~~, wings flapping wildly, scurried away from their fellows. Kader shucked buckets full of corn from the corncrib. The ducks and geese, not to lose their share, waddled importantly up from the pond.

Kader would make the job last all morning, since he needed to find all the eggs in the hen house and barn. Then too, he must visit new litters of kittens and puppies, as well as young calves and horses. He would gladly stay all day with the animals if his mother, Betty, didn't call for the eggs, or if he weren't required to take drinking water to his brothers in the fields.

When duty called, however, he would emerge from the obscurity of the barn, his bright, black eyes blinking in the sunlight, and bits of hay caught in his close-cut wooly hair. Then he would make up lost time, for his thin little frame was full of energy. He was, as the French would say, the "benjamin," a favorite youngest son, not only in Erasmus' family, but also with Master Mordecai and Miss Martha. He was rarely scolded for he always did his tasks with good-will and carried with him a wide-eyed, pleasurable naïveté that reminded the others of what a world of wonders they lived in.

This morning, the white-washed cabins of the slave quarters were deserted, their doors wide open. Old Minerva and her granddaughter Louise, seated on a wooden bench in the narrow shade of the brick kitchen house, were helping Betty pluck chickens. Old Morgan and his grandson Duke were cleaning the horse stalls.

With the sounds, sights and smells of the growing plants and trees, the farm animals, the buzzing bees, there was a deceptive air of pastoral abundance and well-being.

But Mordecai Johnson, young master of Nansemond, knew how things really were. Sitting in the musty, cramped office at the Big House with his younger brother Horatio, he mulled over the problems of the Plantation. This office opened through an inconspicuous door at the south end of the wide porch which shaded double-hung windows and the fan-lighted entablature of the main front entrance. Mordecai's mournful gray eyes wandered around the little office from which he, his father, and his grandfather had run the affairs of Nansemond for all these years.

The dog-eared ledgers, the bent and tarnished brass candlesticks, the wallpaper, dirty with the smoke of countless fires, and the bricks of the little hearth, cracked, their mortar falling out--all bespeak the deterioration of the Plantation.

Staring out the window at the familiar scene, past the broken pane, across Martha's garden where Erasmus was pruning some bushes, beyond the big barns and tobacco sheds to the log smoke house where a ribbon of smoke climbed to the pale, sun-drenched sky, he ruefully noted the peeling paint of the window sill, the bare wood of the porch pillars.

When had this fine old house last been painted? Surely not in his lifetime. He could vaguely remember his white-haired grandfather, Bryan Johnson, sitting in this office (it had to be twenty years earlier,) saying to Mordecai's father Ingram, "We must have the house painted next year. Paint protects the wood from the weather. We've let it go long enough. See how the wood gets rough and cracks where the paint is gone? See how those cornice

boards are loose? They must be re-nailed and caulked."

Then Bryan had died and each year Ingram thought of painting the house and each year there was not enough money to buy the paint.

Wind, sun and rain, conspiring to destroy the old house wore away the paint, then attacked the wood, finding cracks and crevices to enter and enlarge. In storms, bits of moulding would be carried away. Some of the shutters dangled by one rusty hinge or fell to the ground. And Mordecai himself, carelessly tossing a rock at a bird about fifteen years ago had broken the window pane. His father had laughed and said, "We'll get that repaired." But it hadn't been repaired and Ingram rationalized, "That broken window lets in a breath of air."

So the grand old house, falling bit by bit to pieces, continued to shelter them only because of its original bulky solidity. Here at Nansemond there had never been enough money to do things properly. The Plantation, despite every effort he made, was in dismal condition and had been getting worse for years.

Though he loved this old place, he had decided to sell out and move to the new lands in Alabama. Through the window he could see the family burial ground, partly obscured by its grove of oak and red maple.

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They had buried his father, Ingram, a few months before. His mother, his grandparents and lots of uncles, aunts and cousins were all out there.

There the dogwood grew in great profusion, all fragrant white in springtime, and in autumn, glowing red when touched by frost. Indeed, dogwood grew all around his fields and he mused forlornly how the old-timers all swore, "where dogwood grew, there the soil was fertile." He knew the fields had been fertile fifty years before, but now they were tired and worn-out with too many tobacco crops.

His grandfather, Bryan Johnson, had come to Johnston County (then Craven) in 1744, planning to build a great estate where the Johnsons would live well for generations. Bryan found good land near Mill Creek, south of the Neuse River, and there he built his plantation house, naming it 'Nansemond' for the Virginia county where he had been born.

Now in this
spring of 1816, after Mordecai's father died, his cousin, Claiborne Ingram, who owned Ingram Court, an adjoining plantation, had offered to buy Nansemond! Claiborne knew Mordecai was interested in moving to Alabama.

In 1816 it wasn't easy to sell North Carolina land for a fair price. Much of the land was worn out from many years of tobacco and corn culture. For years people had been selling their farms to move further west. Not many buyers could be found for the exhausted land here in the coastal plain.

But Claiborne had just inherited some money and forty-three Negroes from an old uncle in Virginia. He could afford to buy Nansemond.

For Mordecai, it was a chance to start over, unlikely he could ever do better. If he didn't sell, it could only mean a long, slow descent into poverty for his family.

Claiborne, on the other hand, might do well enough since the additional land and the inherited slaves and money would permit him the luxury of fallow fields and experimentation with crops other than tobacco. Mordecai had needed a cash crop every year and couldn't avoid planting tobacco, while knowing it was ruining the land.

Claiborne had told him he needed more land if he were to keep the Negroes from Virginia. They had considered a complicated arrangement whereby Mordecai would sell Nansemond to Claiborne for money and for twenty of the slaves. Mordecai had twelve slaves at present, so he would have thirty-two to take west. But first he must go to Alabama to secure land for a new plantation.

It would be a big break with the past, but many friends and acquaintances had been moving west. He heard lots of stories about opportunities in the newly-opened Indian lands. Also that spring, Zachary Antrim, a former neighbor who had moved to Alabama, stopped for a visit. Zachary, on his way to Virginia to buy more Negroes, told of the rich, fertile land along the Alabama River, where the power of the Creek Nation had recently been broken.

Nansemond now belonged outright to Mordecai. Not interested in farming, Horatio wanted to be a doctor. So when their father Ingram made his will early in the year, he had left Nansemond to Mordecai, with the provision that Mordecai pay for Horatio's education through

medical school. Horatio was happy to escape the plantation. He had been attending school in Edenton, where he assisted a local doctor. This Doctor Wyeth, seeing Horatio's aptitude for medicine, had arranged for the boy to go to the University of Pennsylvania Medical School in Philadelphia.

Once Mordecai had made the great decision to sell, he jumped up, saying, "I guess I'll take Erasmus and we'll head for Alabama tomorrow. If we're lucky, we'll find new land and be back by September, and then make the big move before the rains. Can you run Nansemond for a couple months?"

Twenty-year-old Horatio made a wry face, but agreed to do his best.

Now Mordecai went to find his young wife, Martha, whom he found sewing in the shade of the porch while she kept an eye on their little son, George, as he played at the bottom of the steps.

"I'm going to sell Nansemond to Claiborne."

She sighed. "I was afraid you would decide that. Since Zach Antrim was here I knew you were thinking about it. So I guess we'll be going to Alabama?" She turned her thoughtful face toward him. Her golden hair was covered by a loose mob-cap, her blue eyes instantly troubled with the thought of the great up-rooting. They would be leaving all their relatives, their old home, all the familiar sights and sounds of their birthplace. Who knew what that wild new country would be like?

Mordecai took her hand and told her he would be riding west the next day. He might be gone for two months and when he got back, they would all move--move everything!

That day he and Erasmus packed a few things for the journey.

Long before daylight next morning, they took three saddle horses and a pack horse and headed southwest to the rich new lands. They went first to Fayetteville and then followed the "Fall Line Road" across the Carolinas and Georgia to the Chattahoochee River crossing and Fort Mitchell in Alabama (then still part of Mississippi Territory.) There they rested and talked with anyone who knew about available good land. Mordecai decided to head straight west to the Alabama River area known as "High Soapstone Bluff." This was where his friend Zach Antrim had settled.

With some difficulty they located Zach at his new plantation in the wilderness. He had shown them the land thereabout. One day they came to a little Creek Indian village. The villagers had small crops of corn, tobacco and beans growing in their clearings, and they lived in log houses set around an open square. Their chief was Tugaloo, who could speak some English.

Tugaloo was tall, erect, his brown face deeply wrinkled, his black eyes bright with intelligence and good-humor. His thinning black hair, shot with gray, was held in place by a leather headband decorated with shells and Spanish and British silver coins, all surmounted with a couple large feathers. Tiny tattoos adorned his lower cheeks and for later pow wows he would paint ochre and blue stripes over his cheekbones to add to his impressive dignity. He wore buckskin trousers and moccasins but his shirt was an elaborate creation of ruffles and

multi-colored stripes, no doubt acquired from some itinerant white trader. Over his left shoulder, he wore a handsome, belt-like sash.

Mordecai told the chief what he wanted--about 3000 acres of rich land to make a new plantation and it must be near the river for easy transportation to the outside world.

They smoked and talked under the trees. Then Tugaloo told them the tribe had another village about a half-mile away, nearer the river, which they had formerly used, but a couple years earlier many had died from a fever so that now the tribe only visited the spot occasionally. He said he could sell the abandoned village and land, but he would want ten good horses, and knives, rifles and cloth for his people.

Mordecai asked to see the land. He was anxious to go at once. But Tugaloo said, "We will go tomorrow. Tonight we feast." The squaws had prepared a meal of venison, beans and berries.

Early next morning, a small procession lead by Tugaloo and his principal men wound through the forest to the old village. Most of the Indians, curious and excited by the visit, had followed along. The village proved to have seven square lodges built of logs and covered with bark roofs. Four older lodges had collapsed. The lodges had earthern floors with fireplace in the center and holes in the roofs to allow the smoke to escape.

Around the old village had been a stockade for protection from attack, but it had mostly rotted and fallen down. Beyond the stockade were the community fields, not now planted, but with some heavy vegetation and volunteer corn. Mordecai's instinct told him this was very rich land. It looked even better than Zach's fine land.

They looked over the area and decided what the boundaries of the purchase would be. Then, as the sun blazed down from the noon sky, they sat under a great white oak on a little hill from where they could see out over the clearings and trees. Below them a creek trickled down the gentle slope to lose itself in the woods. Mordecai felt this was going to be a good place for his family.

Tugaloo told them they were sitting under a "Pow-Wow" tree where the Indians often met to make agreements. He also had shown them an Indian burial ground nearby. He said he couldn't sell these things. So Mordecai said he would keep these places sacred and available to the Indians.

Part 2 May 31

And thus it was that Mordecai bought the land from Tugaloo. Tugaloo, with his old warriors ranged around him, the squaws and younger Indians looking on, had agreed to sell this spot for ten good horses, ten rifles, twenty knives, and three bolts of red cloth. Mordecai promised to be back in the autumn with the purchase price.

To formally conclude their negotiations, the Indians brought out a brew called the "black drink." After Tugaloo and Mordecai had sipped some from a gourd, all the elders, then Zach and Erasmus had to take some. This drink, made from the yaupon shrub, a kind of holly, was not to Mordecai's taste so he took only a little of it to please the Indians, while acting as though he had swallowed deeply.

Aside from the Indians, Mordecai's nearest new neighbors would be some settlers who had built cabins at the Soapstone Bluff. Mordecai had also noticed two cabins in stump-filled clearings where half-grown cotton crops flourished.

Mordecai's new land, (about five square miles, as agreed with Chief Tugaloo) was located in the Creek Indian cession of 1814. This cession, which was about one-half of all the land in Alabama, would be sold at public auction by the federal government, but only after surveys were made. Not until 1819 would he be able to buy this same land at an auction in nearby Cahaba, thus perfecting his title. For those first two years, the Johnsons, like thousands of other impatient new settlers, were considered "squatters" with no title to the land. However, the federal government made no effective efforts to eject them.

In the feverish rush to the newly-opened lands, many speculators and swindlers were involved. Land prices fluctuated wildly. Many settlers who bought their land on credit were not able to complete their payments, especially when the price of cotton fell. Their land would be relinquished to the government and re-sold.

During these years from 1816 on, when poor white farmers poured into the ceded lands, several small-holders settled near Mordecai, some of them with only 160 acres, the smallest tracts available. When these neighbors (including the two whose cabins he had seen on that first trip) were unable to buy their land, he would buy first one small farm, then another, at the auctions, and then pay the small farmers for their improvements so they could move and re-settle in the back country where land prices were much lower. In this way his plantation would grow to over 5000 acres.

These small farmers typically had no slaves. They and their families did all the hard work of establishing new homes in the wilderness. After choosing a piece of land, they built small log cabins for shelter, then "girdled" the forest trees on a few acres. This "girdling" or cutting out a ring of bark around the trunk would kill the tree. Once the tree was dead and the foliage gone, the sun's rays could penetrate to the old forest floor which the settler would laboriously plough and plant with corn and cotton.

For years after settlement the scenery was disfigured by these forlorn old trees, their lifeless limbs raised to the sky, until, with the passage of time, they would rot and fall, or be felled for

firewood by the farmers. More enterprising farmers would sometimes pile and burn the old trunks to clear the fields. Billions of board-feet of fine hard-wood lumber were destroyed in this thoughtless conquest of nature. And for a life-time the ploughing and harvesting of these fields was impeded by stumps and fallen trunks. Uncounted were the little agricultural triumphs when a farmer was finally able to dislodge and remove a stump, the roots of which had blocked his plough for decades, and which he had roundly cursed seasonally to no avail.

But back to Mordecai and Erasmus on their first journey in 1816-- it had taken them four weeks to ride down from North Carolina and complete the purchase. Mordecai was now in a hurry to get back to sell Nansemond Plantation and get ready for the overwhelming task of transferring his family, possessions, his blacks, his stock, everything they would need, to the new plantation.

After considering making this move by water, from a coastal port

in North Carolina, around Florida in a sailing vessel to Mobile and then up the Alabama River, he had decided to come overland as he and Erasmus had done on horseback. In west Georgia and Alabama this 'road', called the Federal Road or 'Three Chopped Way,' (because surveyors had marked it with triple blazes) was good enough for horse travel, but he knew it would be a considerable trial for wheeled vehicles. It hardly deserved to be called a road, yet many people were travelling it now, and it was by far the most direct way to go--perhaps six or seven hundred miles. But he knew he must make the journey before the autumn and winter rains turned it all into a bottomless quagmire.

After meeting Tugaloo, they had returned the six miles to Zach's new plantation. A couple days later, he & Erasmus started back to North Carolina. They wasted no time and were home in less than three weeks, sometimes travelling forty miles a day. They would usually get meals and lodging at farm houses along the way, but they could camp if necessary. They could ford or swim most of the rivers and found bridges or ferries in the more populated places. Mordecai was making mental notes of what they would need for the big move.

KADER'S BIG DAY

At Nansemond, little nine-year-old Kader, last son of Erasmus and Betty, had been keeping watch for their return. He would sit for hours in the crotch of a big oak from which he had a commanding view of the road toward Fayetteville. He knew nothing of geography, but knew they would come from that direction. At last, his patience was rewarded

when he saw the four familiar horses in the distance--Master Mordecai in the lead and black Erasmus following, leading the extra horses.

Kader scrambled down the tree trunk, rushed headlong to the big house. He had on only ^{HIS} a floppy pair of britches, hand-me-downs from Duke, his next-older brother. One gallus over his left shoulder was attached to two large pearl buttons, fore and aft. In these hot summer days, he would gladly have left the tattered britches in the cabin. Nobody cared if he ran around in his skin--nobody, that is, but Miss Martha, and she had made it quite clear that she expected everybody at Nansemond, including Kader, to wear clothes. She had caught him trouserless one day playing with kittens in the barn.

"Kader, where are your britches?"

"I done los' my pearl button on the back, Miss Martha, an' dey don' stay up by deyselfs 'cause dey big an' floppy."

"Kader, I want you to go right in to your mother and tell her she's to drop whatever she's doing and get a new button sewed on those britches. Next time I see you, you have those britches on! If I catch you or anyone else running around Nansemond without clothes, they'll get a good whipping! Now git!"

So now Kader had his modesty once more as he ran to the big house. "Dey's comin', dey's comin'," he shrilled at Miss Martha whom he saw on the verandah. He was fairly bursting with excitement. He was now bringing the news they had all waited for in the suspense of the last few weeks.

Miss Martha stood up quickly, her sewing dropped to the floor, her

eyes searching the road.

Kader, his small black face puffed with importance and joy, shot around the edge of the house to find his mother, Betty, who would be in the brick kitchen building at the back of the big house.

Small though he was, Kader made a great deal of noise when the occasion demanded. He bolted into the hot kitchen where Betty and Louise, sweating profusely, were making dinner in a pot hanging in the stone fireplace.

"Dey's comin'!!" Betty and Louise knew what he meant. They dropped what they were doing. Wiping their hands on their aprons, they rushed to the front of the house.

Kader raced to the tobacco fields where his brothers and Master Horatio were working. When they heard his shouts, "Dey's comin'", they all threw down their tools and ran toward the big house. Nobody wanted to miss the homecoming.

From the fields, Kader went to the quarters, the little row of white-washed cabins where the blacks lived. He alerted his grandmother, old Minerva.

Thus, by the time Mordecai and Erasmus rode into the plantation drive, everybody, black and white, was assembled to welcome them.

Mordecai had started before dawn from Fayetteville, 35 miles away. Even the horses seemed to sense they were nearing home where they would get a good rub-down, plenty of grass and corn and time to rest.

Mordecai jumped from his roan mare. Miss Martha, heedless of the onlookers, disregarding the dust and sweat, ran into his embrace, repeatedly kissing his bronzed and bearded face. At the same time he

was laughingly shaking hands with brother Horatio.

"It looks like we have us a new plantation down Alabama way!"

Before his words, they knew from his wide smile that the trip had been a success.

Betty was hugging Erasmus as their daughter and all seven sons cavorted around their father, slapping his back, grinning and shouting. They were all asking questions at once. Minerva and Morgan, Erasmus' parents stood back a bit, pleased smiles on their black faces, until Erasmus got through the crush to hug them also.

Nobody from Nansemond had ever made such a long journey. It was a time for rejoicing certainly. They had returned safely from a perilous trip into the unknown and Mordecai had bought a new plantation.

Mordecai told Duke and Kader to take the horses to the barn for a good currying and a generous helping of corn.

Horatio told the blacks all to go back to the quarters to rest and to hear Erasmus' story of the trip. There~~not~~ late in the evening, Erasmus told them of the dark forests, the wide rivers they had crossed. That night Kader went to sleep in his father's lap, exhausted with the excitement of the day, and dreaming of this far place where Master Mordecai said they were all going, this place where wild Indians roamed and drank the magic black drink.

At the big house, Mordecai sat with Martha and Horatio, telling them what had happened and of his plans. In cradles nearby, little George and his baby brother slept through it all.

Mordecai told his wife and brother they must make great haste and

perhaps they could complete the move before the winter rains that would swell the river crossings and make swamps of the road. He would have to buy a couple Conestoga wagons and get some teams of oxen... maybe in Smithfield or Kinston where the traders down from Pennsylvania had such things for sale. He could get horses for Chief Tugaloo here and use them for draft animals on the journey. They would need farm wagons. They must take everything, the stock, the smithy, the furniture, tools, tents, plows, kitchen pots, axes and saws. There would be an enormous amount of work with axes as they cleared the new fields. And they would have to take seed, corn and cotton for next year's crops, and enough food, smoked hams, corn, everything to keep them all fed until the middle of the next summer when they might get the first of their new crops. Of course, they could hunt some deer and other wild animals to augment their diet. But he had to think about feeding almost forty people for the next year.

Mordecai asked how the crops were coming. Then he said, "I'll go see Claiborne in the morning. We will sell him our crop along with the plantation. We will decide on the division of the Negroes. He's going to pay me twenty Negroes along with money."

Horatio then said, "You better try to get five pretty young girls for Erasmus' boys. Primus has been sulking for weeks thinking he'll never have a wife. He's twenty-six now. Then the younger boys got the idea from him. I guess Duke and Kader can wait a while, but those five older boys ought to be married." Primus had told Horatio he was partial to Ellen, one of the new Negroes at Ingram Court.

Mordecai's grandfather, Bryan Johnson, had been still living when Betty had her first five sons. Bryan had been reading some Latin books and decided the little black boys should be named Primus (first,) Secundus (second,) Tertius (third,) Arthur and Maximus (largest.) They were born between 1790 and 1796 when Bryan died. No one was sure how Arthur happened to get his non-Latin name. These were the boys now old enough to marry.

Mordecai agreed to try to get suitable wives next day. Then, jumping up, he said he would go bathe in the creek down near the smoke-house, then they could have dinner and rest.

Next day at Ingram Court, details of the sale were arranged. Claiborne agreed to give Ellen and four other young girls for Erasmus' five oldest boys to marry. Claiborne secretly was glad to be rid of the beauteous Ellen with whom he had been sleeping. His wife had discovered the transgression and was punishing him in a hundred ways. Claiborne thought sending Ellen to Alabama would end his problem, bringing tranquility back to his household.

He called the Negroes together while the masters decided which ones would go with Mordecai. The strong young ones with special training were the most valuable. After making the division, the masters asked the blacks if they were satisfied to go. Two wanted to stay at Ingram Court with their families. They were exchanged and at last everybody was satisfied.

Claiborne and Mordecai had agreed earlier in the year on the value of Nansemond Plantation, its land and buildings. Now, they factored

in the value of the crop. At last, they shook hands.

Judge Wylie, a mutual friend and neighbor, was writing down the agreement which later would be recorded at the Smithfield courthouse.

Claiborne, flush with his inheritance from Virginia, would pay Mordecai \$13,000 in addition to the twenty Negroes. He would also include three teams of oxen, four wagons and ten horses.

Mordecai would leave some of the large heirloom furniture in Nansemond House to be sent on later by boat. It might be several years before they would have a proper house in Alabama. He laughed to himself as he thought of the big mirrors, the four-poster beds, the dining table and silver candlesticks in one of Tugaloo's rotting Indian cabins.

^{had}
Claiborne said the two plantations would be operated as separate units with perhaps one of his younger brothers or his overseer, Jeff Gallagher, living in Nansemond House. Jeff, a young Scotch-Irishman, was going to marry soon. Further, Claiborne promised to look after the old Johnson burial ground. After all, some of his own family were buried there.

When Mordecai rode home that evening, his spirits were high. It was not yet the end of August. They had a good chance of getting to Alabama before the rains.

Next morning, he and Erasmus rode to Smithfield where Mordecai was lucky to find three old Conestoga wagons for sale. He bought the two better wagons, five span of oxen, and some great pieces of canvas sail cloth for covering his other wagon loads or making tents.

The old German from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was delighted to get cash for his merchandise in this place where no one seemed to have any money. They didn't buy anything else, since Mordecai knew he could get everything they might need in Augusta or Milledgeville, Georgia, on their trip west. Milledgeville was an active little place, the capital of the state and the starting point of the "Three Chopped Way."

Mordecai told the German, Peter Unterdorf, about the new country where they would be going. There on the banks of the Alabama, settlers would be needing every kind of tool and manufactured goods. The German was very interested. He had pulled from his pocket a worn map of the eastern United States. They studied the region, Mordecai showing him the Soapstone Bluff above where the Cahaba flowed into the Alabama River.

A SUMMER DALLIANCE

Maybe ten days after her father and Master Mordecai had started for Alabama, Louise, as she often did, was working in the fields with her brothers while Horatio watched from the shade of an old oak tree. Having started very early to take advantage of the cooler part of the day, they had taken a break at about two o'clock, when the sun was at its hottest. They were hoeing some to keep down the weeds and they were "topping and suckering" the tobacco plants. The sun was merciless that day but they were used to that. The heat shimmered over the field. There was no breeze--even the tree leaves drooped. Finally, when Horatio told them to go back to the quarters at nearly seven P.M., Louise, drenched with perspiration, her muscles aching, headed with dragging steps for the little pool in the creek down by the smokehouse. Years ago they had dammed the creek with some rocks so that a pool was formed. She had been thinking all afternoon about the cool water. She would go splash around down there to cool off and clean away the dirt of the field.

The stream was the dividing line between Nansemond and Ingram Court. The pool was used for swimming and bathing by the blacks from both plantations but sometimes the white men would also use it...

She was glad to find the pool deserted, its dark deep water moving slowly under overhanging trees. Louise removed the headrag from her close-cropped hair, dropped her old gray homespun dress and stepped gratefully into the water, moving quickly to the deepest part, the water up to her neck. She rubbed herself and splashed, singing a little nonsense tune to herself.

Hearing a movement behind her on the Ingram Court side, she turned her head. There, grinning down at her, blue eyes sparkling, was a young white man, his curly auburn hair damp with perspiration. Apparently he was bent on bathing also since he was stripped to the waist, having flung his shirt to the ground. Half-embarrassed, half-frightened, she saw his sweaty and muscular body, the tan skin, the hairy chest and forearms.

Jeff Gallagher, for it was he, was very hot and tired. That day Claiborne's forty-three new Negroes had arrived from Virginia. They had come walking slowly down the Halifax Road accompanied by their old overseer and a young white man on horseback, and by two wagons with their meager possessions. Some of the older blacks and those with sore feet were riding on the top of the wagon loads.

Claiborne didn't have quarters for all these new people so he told Jeff to parcel them out in the barns and sheds where they could sleep on straw. Jeff had spent much of the day in the hot, dusty barns getting the new blacks settled.

Now he had finished the work, but needed a cool swim badly. First he quickly swallowed some rum, then headed for the little creek. When he reached the canopy of overhanging trees he had removed his shirt. That's when he saw the girl. "What have we here," he asked. "Who are you?"

Louise thought of running to her side, but did nothing. "I'se Louise, Master Mordecai's gal," she whispered.

"Ah, Louise," he said, "You don't mind if I join you for a sinful

romp in the water do you?"

She wasn't sure what he meant, and remained silent, her eyes growing wider as he dropped his trousers and plunged into the water. The pool was hardly large enough to allow much swimming but he paddled a bit each way and then said, "Come on, Louise, let's have a look at you!"

He approached her, put his hand on her shoulder. She was surprised that the touch felt good to her. She allowed him to lead her to the shallow water on the Ingram Court side. The water streamed off their bodies. Her young breasts stood out firmly. She hung her head, trying to keep her eyes off him. He touched her again saying, "You're a very pretty girl."

Again she thought of running, but something made her stay..."Now Louise, you're on the Ingram Court side."

Almost in a trance, she knew what he probably would do. She wanted him to do it! She hoped he would do it!

Louise was not a virgin. Two years before, one of the Ingram Court blacks had jumped on her in a quick animal act in the cornfield. Certainly she hadn't enjoyed it. It was painful and she was frightened. Later she had had a still-born child.

But this was different. The white man gently led her to a leaf-filled hollow in a nearby copse. They hadn't much to say to each other but she felt drawn to him. What was there to say? She knew he was Jeff Gallagher, Master Claiborne's Irish overseer. They lay down in the dry leaves, Jeff caressing, then kissing her. She found herself returning the caresses. It was so pleasant there in the filtered sunlight, the leaves above making moving shadows on their skin.

Soon she gave herself to him, once, twice.

Afterward, she remembered she must get back to Nansemond. Jeff told her she must tell no one what they had done, but she should come back next evening to meet him again at the same hidden hollow.

So they would meet each warm summer evening, delighting each other with physical love. But one evening, when they laughed softly together, they were discovered by Robbie Ingram, Clainborne's 15-year-old son. Robbie was showing 14-year-old Marcy, one of the new Virginia blacks, around the plantation.

"Hush," Robbie whispered urgently to her as he indicated the naked bodies of the lovers in their leafy bower. The children watched wide-eyed from behind a log as Jeff and Louise completed the love act then fell back exhausted. Then the children crept away unseen.

Next evening Robbie and Marcy followed Jeff at a distance, when he returned to meet Louise. This time they breathlessly watched the entire tryst from start to finish. Robbie was excited out of countenance, whispering to Marcy that they would do the same things and see what it was like.

Marcy was afraid. "I don't tink I'se sposed to do dat wit no white boy, Marse Robbie. I'll git me in trouble fo' sho'."

Robbie hissed, "You're just supposed to do what I say. I'm your master. Remember you belong to Ingram Court now!" They were lying in a soft place behind a big log.

Robbie threw off his clothes, lifted Marcy's dress and in the awkward manner of a novice, skipping the non-essentials, he managed to make love

to her. It was the first time for both of them. Still they had always lived on farms and knew something of the procedure from having watched the animals and now, they had just seen the vivid performance of the young overseer and Louise, doing the job properly.

Once started, Robbie and Marcy discovered they enjoyed making love and they continued through those last summer days before the Johnsons moved to Alabama. Then, when the blacks were divided, Marcy was chosen to go west with Mordecai. She would be a bride for one of Erasmus' boys.

When Mordecai Johnson and his plantation caravan started for Alabama early in September, three of his black girls were pregnant with half-white babies.

Ellen, knowing she was pregnant, had "jumped over the broom" with wedding Primus in a festive Negro/ceremony at the Nansemond quarters. When she told Primus she was carrying Claiborne's baby, Primus said, "Dat don' bothah me none, I'se jus' glad to have yo' fo' mahsef!"

Marcy, with little Kate, and Ellen's sisters Rena and Hannah, would be the four brides for Primus' younger brothers. Mordecai told them they could get to know each other and when they got to Alabama, they could marry the partners they preferred.

After the journey started, Louise discovered she was pregnant with Jeff's baby. The young Ingram Negroes, Rector, Randy and Big Joe, were soon courting her. Randy and Big Joe were Ellen's older brothers, but Rector was the only Ingram black not somehow related to the others in Mordecai's group. Rector, who was 18, had wanted to go to Alabama because he was in love with Bellareen, but Bellareen had spurned his

attentions. So now, Rector belonged to Mordecai and had to go with them to Alabama, even though it seemed like he wouldn't get Bellareen. So Rector started "sweet-talking" Louise. But Randy and Big Joe were his rivals.

Mordecai had been pleased with the selection of blacks. His twenty new blacks were almost all young, strong and healthy, some with special skills. He and Claiborne had kept families together, so he had Daddy Handle, who was 66, and Handle's wife Bertha, 55. These were the oldest, but Mordecai took them to get their five youngest children, Big Joe, Randy, Ellen, Rena and Hannah, who were aged 15 to 21, and were prime slaves. Daddy Handle, whose seven older children were married and would remain behind, was the oldest by far of the twenty new blacks, but it was said that he could still do a good day's work in the fields. Bertha had been the housekeeper at the old Virginia plantation. She would surely be a great prize for Martha in Alabama (if and when they got the new big house built.)

The next oldest blacks after Bertha were Cuffy, 36, and his 32-year-old wife, Quamona. Cuffy and Quamona were bringing their two daughters, Marcy, 14, and Kate, 15. Also Quamona's two younger sisters chose to come along. They were Bellareen, 20, and Virginia, 18. So there were seven in the Handle family and six in the Cuffy family.

Three of Cuffy's young married cousins also came along with their wives. They were Fred, 22, Alvin, 23, and Leo, 21. They were married to Lady, Arbutus, and Cassie respectively. So, counting the cousins, Cuffy's extended family was really twelve in number.

When Mordecai and Erasmus had driven the Conestoga wagons and oxen

back from Smithfield, they moved all their newly-acquired wagons, horses, oxen, and the twenty blacks over to Nansemond from Ingram Court.

Mordecai said, We will start for Alabama on Thursday, September fifth. We must get everything dismantled and loaded--all our possessions, as much food as we can carry, everything we have that's moveable, all the stock, pigs, cattle, geese, ducks, chickens--everything goes. I want us all packed and ready by Wednesday evening so we can start at sunup on Thursday."

The Ingram blacks were travelling light (after their many moves) but the Johnson blacks had their own pigs and chickens aside from those belonging to the plantation. Mordecai always had allowed them a few acres to grow animals and food for themselves. He let them work in their own gardens on Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

The fowl had to be transported in wooden cages. Some of the blacks would herd the pigs, cattle and horses along the trail to Alabama. They all would move much slower than Mordecai had been able to do on horseback. The oxen took their own time. Some of the pigs would surely stray and have to be retrieved. Finding grass and fodder for all the animals along the way would slow them. One advantage of having so many blacks was that they all could help keep the stock moving in the right direction.

To Mordecai's chagrin, everything was not ready by Wednesday evening. They still had to make more cages for the chickens. But finally, on Thursday evening all was ready. All the wagon axles had been greased, the wheels checked, everything loaded. Mordecai insisted everybody sleep that night in or near the wagons as they would do on the trail.

Even Miss Martha and the babies slept for the first time atop the load in a Conestoga. Wrapped in blankets or pieces of canvas, ~~the~~ the blacks slept in, under or near the other wagons. Horatio slept under the family Conestoga.

Thursday evening Mordecai, Martha and Horatio had walked through the silent, bare rooms of the old Nansemond big house. Only the biggest pieces of furniture were still there. They would send for them when a new house was built in Alabama. Mordecai and Horatio were almost overcome with melancholy. They felt like traitors abandoning this old family home. Earlier they had put flowers on all the graves. Erasmus, Betty, and his parents had done the same for their relatives' graves. They were all saying, "Goodbye, forever." It was not likely they would ever again see this place.

THE MIGRATION

Long before sunrise on Friday, September sixth, Mordecai was arousing his people. Bertha, Betty and the black women quickly made coffee and porridge with milk. Mordecai was impatient to get started, so that just as the first light showed in the east, the caravan started lumbering slowly down the Fayetteville Road, the Johnson Conestoga in the lead. In addition to the two Conestogas, Mordecai had eight farm wagons, thirty-two blacks, a fair-sized herd of cattle, spare oxen and horses, pigs and the family dogs. He would find on the trip that the dogs were invaluable in keeping the stock together.

As his great wagon pulled out the gate, Mordecai took one last look back at the silhouette of the big, weather-worn house, dark against

the glow of dawn. Then he turned resolutely to the front, nipping the slow-moving oxen with the whip and crying out for all to hear, "Let's go! We're off to Alabama!"

He was driving the wagon, Martha by his side in a poke-bonnet, the babies in a soft pile of bedding just behind them. With Horatio driving, Morgan and Minerva were riding in the second Conestoga. Daddy Handle and Bertha had the next wagon, then Erasmus and Betty, then Cuffy and Quamona, Alvin and Arbutus, Fred and Lady, Leo and Cassie, Primus and Ellen, with the brothers Secundus and Tertius in the final wagon and the younger blacks taking turns riding or herding the stock.

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Most of them, this was the biggest event of their lives, ~~and~~ ^{and} first. Only Mordecai and Erasmus had seen the new place where they were going. So they were seeing all sorts of new scenery, they would go through some real towns, cross great rivers and forests. The work was light, the weather warm, the food ample. This was a delightful time. They put behind them thoughts of the old home. They turned their faces to the future. Both whites and blacks felt exhilarated.

The oxen were strong and reliable but very slow. Mordecai hoped his wagon train could average ten miles a day but if they were to stay together, they could go only as fast as the oxen. He planned to make the best time between North Carolina and Milledgeville, Georgia, since the roads in that section were older and free of stumps. Further along, the going would be more difficult and slow on the narrow, stump-filled "Three Chopped Way," with its difficult bogs and river crossings.

But it occurred to him that if they were dangerously late by the time they got to the Chattahoochee crossing, he would hitch horses to the

principal vehicles and dash as quickly as possible to the new plantation. He was in a race with the winter rains. Perhaps he could leave some wagons, stock and oxen somewhere and go back for them in the spring. At Ft. Mitchell, just southwest of the crossing, he might arrange to do this. From Ft. Mitchell to the new plantation was about 120 miles by crow-flight, but longer on the twisting forest trail.

He would try, however, to get the entire train to the new site before rains. He hoped the rains would be late and insignificant until then. It would be November before they got there.

On the evening of the second day, Mordecai was delighted to lead his caravan into Fayetteville. They had come over thirty-five miles in two days, (but with conditions as good as they could expect.) The weather was cloudy and cool, the road dry and a little dusty, with few hills to climb. So the animals and people were not over-tired. They pulled on through Fayetteville to camp on the south side.

The blacks were all excited to see so large a town. It then had only about 3000 people, but had been the state capital twenty-five years before, and it had a good many fine big houses with tree-lined streets.

Mordecai didn't want his blacks to get into any trouble so he told them to stay in camp and be ready to move on early next morning. Leaving Horatio and Erasmus in charge at the camp, he rode back into town to say goodbye to some of his old friends there.

On Sunday morning they got a very early start down the road southwest to Columbia, South Carolina, maybe 175 miles away. Mordecai felt he needn't worry too much about blacks running away as they might sometimes do on such journeys. He had three large families of blacks. He knew they would

want to stay together. Only young Rector, who was unrelated to the others, might get an urge to seek his freedom. At 18, he seemed happy enough to stay with them, enjoying the trip and paying court indiscriminately to any of the unattached girls who would notice him.

Mordecai knew that some slave owners, usually traders moving their "merchandise," tied or chained their blacks up in "coffles" when they were travelling. He had seen these forlorn groups of slaves passing slowly by, their eyes on the ground, their lives hopeless, the slave-drivers occasionally stinging them with whips to make them move faster.

Mordecai was certain his twelve original Nansemond slaves would not want to escape. There was a strong feeling of concern, mutual dependence, even love, between the white Johnsons and Erasmus' family. Mordecai couldn't be so sure of the intentions of the twenty new blacks, but he wanted them to see that he would be just and generous with them.

One evening he discussed with Horatio the possibility of some of the slaves deserting them--especially when they got into Indian country. He told Horatio he thought Rector, if anyone, young and unattached as he was, would be most likely to attempt escape. Understandably some of the blacks were tempted to look for a free life with the Indian tribes. He thought they should keep an eye on Rector and not give him any exceptional opportunities for running away, (such as sending him away from the road after stray hogs, or allowing him to wander about in the towns and plantations they were passing.)

As they moved on toward Columbia, South Carolina, Mordecai's concern about Rector seemed groundless. The young man liked girls and liked to eat, and in the train were six young unmarried girls he could court. The meals were ample and regular. The truth was that Rector wouldn't willingly have left the train for the unknown. He was having the best time of his short life. He found travelling far more exciting and pleasant than humdrum plantation life.

The train was developing a system. They found that tying some of the boars to the backs of wagons helped keep the swine moving together. Like other animals, they played "follow the leader." When the wagons started off in the morning with the boars tied behind, the swine soon learned to follow along. But with their fat bodies and short legs, they were not used to the long daily walks and they would squeal and grunt with displeasure when the march resumed each day. They preferred sleeping and eating to walking. With their crafty little eyes one or another would spot some tempting morsel along the road and dash out to eat it. Then the herders and the dogs would chase them back into line. The most troublesome of the hogs put their own lives in jeopardy since Mordecai, unwilling to lose time hunting lost hogs, had several of them butchered and eaten upon re-capture.

Mordecai had decided to have one or two wagons bring up the rear of the train, following the stock to lessen the chance of straying. He had two blacks mounted on saddle horses to help herd the animals. Much of the time he and Horatio gave over their wagons to other drivers

while they rode horseback up and down the train keeping control, or sometimes scouting ahead for good camping grounds with grass and water for the animals.

ERASMUS

Erasmus, too, often on horseback, helped prevent or solve the many little crises of each day--keeping count of the stock and finding lost animals, checking the condition of harnesses and wagon wheels, stopping petty disputes among the slaves.

While Mordecai's old father, Ingram Johnson was alive, he and Mordecai had managed plantation business between them, with Erasmus naturally assuming the job of foreman.

Erasmus, now 46 with hair mostly gray, was intelligent and dignified, a natural leader who had been foreman for years at Nansemond. Because of him, they needed no salaried overseer. He knew how to give orders, then see that they got done, and what's more, he knew beforehand what had to be done. It was natural enough that the Nansemond blacks, who were his sons, should take orders from him.

But now Mordecai noticed that the new blacks also liked Erasmus, recognizing him as an authority to be obeyed. He worked well with them.

Before the journey, Mordecai had thought for a while of making Erasmus overseer. In the South it was not unknown for a black slave to be overseer, but it was quite rare. Overseers were generally white men, but sometimes free black men or mulattoes. Blacks in such positions were at a disadvantage since they needed to do business occasionally with white merchants and traders, in a slave system

which saw blacks only as subordinates. Most blacks suffered from inability to read and write, and couldn't, of course, keep records. Erasmus was the only Johnson black who could read a little, and that only because Mordecai's grandfather, Bryan Johnson, had amused himself teaching the black child for a couple years back around the time of the Revolution. It was Bryan who later gave Latin names to Erasmus' sons.

None of the others had been taught. Mordecai himself and Horatio had been tutored at Ingram Court along with other white cousins. Even Miss Martha scarcely knew how to read, but she could sign her name.

Mordecai decided Erasmus, despite his many good qualities, could not be an effective overseer. He thought how difficult it would be to have an overseer who couldn't keep records. It might work so long as he, Mordecai, were there to write down business transactions. Erasmus could do a fine job supervising the plantation work. Maybe he could be taught to keep records. But certainly the plantation would need more than one literate person. What if Mordecai got sick?

SIMON RAMSEY

In Alabama, a literate, white overseer would be desirable--really a necessity, but Mordecai had not been able to find one for certain. At Ingram Court he had met the overseer who had brought the Ingram blacks down from Virginia. This man, Simon Ramsey, about 55 years old, was big, red-faced, blue-eyed and bald, but with such bushy black eyebrows it seemed as if the hair of his head had merely

changed position.

The two talked at length, Mordecai getting to know the man and his attitudes, and describing to him the great job they would have creating the new plantation.

Simon said he had done most of the business at Cypress Creek Plantation in late years. Claiborne's uncle and aunt would often spend months in Williamsburg, the old Virginia capital, where they had a large house. Then when they came to Cypress Creek, the old master would look into the office and say, "Everything's all right! Glad to hear it! Well now, you're doing a fine job, Simon!" He wouldn't stop to hear Simon's response, good or bad. So Simon had run things himself.

Knowing blacks were more likely to speak candidly among themselves, Mordecai earlier had asked Erasmus to sound out Daddy Handle and the others about Simon. He wanted to know if Simon was a just and fair overseer, and what the blacks thought about him.

Daddy Handle told Erasmus they all got along well enough. He was ~~about~~ the only black who could remember when Simon hadn't been there.

About 1786 Simon had replaced a cruel overseer who used to whip the blacks for petty reasons, and who stole from the master. One day Old Master had come upon that overseer mercilessly whipping Cuffy, then a six-year-old boy. Old Master, very angry, told that overseer to leave the plantation at once. Later, after Simon came, things were much better. Daddy Handle reckoned they were as well off with Simon as with any overseer he ever heard of.

This information reinforced Mordecai's feeling that Simon would be

a good man for Alabama.

Simon had been interested when Mordecai asked if he would like the new overseer job at a higher salary than he had had in Virginia. Simon had no job now with the old master dead, Cypress Creek sold, and the blacks here with Claiborne.

He said he personally would like to go, but he would have to talk it over with his wife in Virginia. They had married children there and moving so far at this time of life would be a big change for them.

Mordecai, anxious to complete the trip before the rains, therefore had started without Simon. If Simon and his wife should decide to go to Alabama, they could follow later. Mordecai told him exactly how to find them, making a map and describing the route. Mordecai would hold open the job for six months.

Now as the train neared Columbia, Mordecai ever more clearly realized that Simon would be indispensable in Alabama. He could merely hope that the Virginia overseer would show up before springtime.

He wrote a letter to Simon (to be posted in Columbia) in which he offered an additional \$100. a year salary to entice the man to come.

That same evening, he told everybody that henceforth, Erasmus would be foreman, third in authority after himself and Horatio. Also, that when they arrived at the new plantation, Master Horatio would be leaving them--thus Erasmus would be in charge if Mordecai were absent. Later, they might get their old overseer, Simon Ramsey, back again.

A murmur of satisfaction went up from the Ingram blacks who knew that Simon was a good deal better than many overseers of whom they had heard.

Just two weeks out of Fayetteville, they got to Columbia, South Carolina, on Sunday, September 22nd. They proceeded through the old town to camp on the far side of the Congaree River. The letter to Simon was left at a hotel where the north-bound mail coach would stop.

They were meeting a lot of traffic on the road, not a little of it headed for Alabama. This sometimes made it harder to find suitable grassy areas for the stock since much of the grass near the road was eaten, trampled or occupied. But they had been lucky to sometimes find farmers who would let them turn the pigs and other stock into cornfields where the animals would eat their fill overnight. Mordecai would pay the farmers for this privilege.

They swallowed a lot of dust stirred up by all the vehicles and animals passing along the road. Dusty or not, the bright red undercarriages and blue bodies of the Conestogas stood out proudly--they were the finest wagons on the road, their great white canvas covers like sails to be seen leading the cavalcade.

In Mordecai's Conestoga, the family bedding was packed on top of the load, so little George and his brother had a large soft place to play when they were awake.

It was seventy-five miles to their next goal--the Savannah River crossing at Augusta, and then they would be in Georgia. They had some loose iron wagon tires that needed repair. The warm, dry weather made the wooden wheels shrink. Augusta, though a small city, was an active

inland commercial center owing to its position on the navigable Savannah River. Here the produce of a wide area (cotton, tobacco and other crops) was gathered together to be sent eighty miles down-river to Savannah, the seaport and principal city of Georgia. Mordecai knew he could find a smithy or wheelwright and probably a gunsmith shop. He would have the wagon wheels repaired and also shop for rifles for Chief Tugaloo.

No sooner had they crossed the bridge into Augusta than they started to see great piles of cotton bales along the streets. The warehouses weren't large enough to hold the crop waiting for shipment to Savannah and the world.

When Mordecai found the wheelwright's shop, he had five faulty wheels replaced on three of the wagons. He had Erasmus and Horatio conduct the remainder of the train to a camping spot out the Ocmulgee Road. Erasmus' three oldest sons stayed to drive the three wagons which would be repaired in about four hours.

On horseback, Mordecai then found a gunsmith from whom he was able to buy twelve "Kentucky" rifles, the old reliable frontier weapon.

The gunsmith, accustomed to selling a single rifle now and then, at first couldn't believe his ears when he heard a customer asking for twelve. Mordecai needed ten for Chief Tugaloo and two more for himself. The gunsmith had to go to his river-front warehouse to fill the order, but finally he supplied all that Mordecai needed, including ammunition.

The percussion cap had been perfected in 1807, but the old-style

flintlock Kentucky rifles were still being produced (until about 1827,) and were the favorite of many frontiersmen and Indians since they didn't require the fulminate caps. The rifles Mordecai bought were made in Lancaster, Pennsylvania by Adam Graeff. They were .40 calibre, 59 inches in length overall, weighed eleven pounds and had beautifully-finished curly-maple stocks with finely chased and tooled brass fittings and patch-box set into the stock.

Graeff could produce the rifles for twelve dollars apiece in Lancaster, but they cost sixteen in Augusta. The rifles, ammunition, and greased patches used in firing the weapons, all cost two hundred forty-two dollars.

Next, Mordecai went to a large store called "Unterdorf's Emporium," where he found the bolts of red cloth and the hunting knives that he had promised to Tugaloo. As an afterthought, he bought some kegs of nails.

Once the wagons were repaired, they stopped to pick up the purchases then proceeded to join the wagon train. Mordecai had the knives and guns transferred into the back of his Conestoga.

He and Martha then rode back to Unterdorf's unusually well-supplied Emporium to make some other necessary purchases. Martha bought some bolts of rough cloth called "Osnaburg," to make into slaves' clothing. Many of the plantation households made their own homespun cloth, but with only two women, Betty and Louise, Marthan found they hadn't time for spinning and weaving. When they got to Alabama, she and the women would make up new clothing for all the blacks. Customarily, the blacks each got two or three sets of new cotton clothing a year, and for winter, they would get a suit of wool jersey cloth and a pair of shoes.

At the Emporium, "ordecai inquired about the German name of the

young proprietor. He discovered that Jacob Unterdorf was the son of old Peter Unterdorf who had sold him the Conestogas up in Smithfield, North Carolina. Jake was happy to hear about his father. He said the Unterdorfs, a large family of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, had been farmers and craftsmen until several years before, when Peter discovered there was a great demand in the west and south for the manufactured products of eastern Pennsylvania. Since then, they had built up a substantial mercantile business bringing these goods to newly-settled areas.

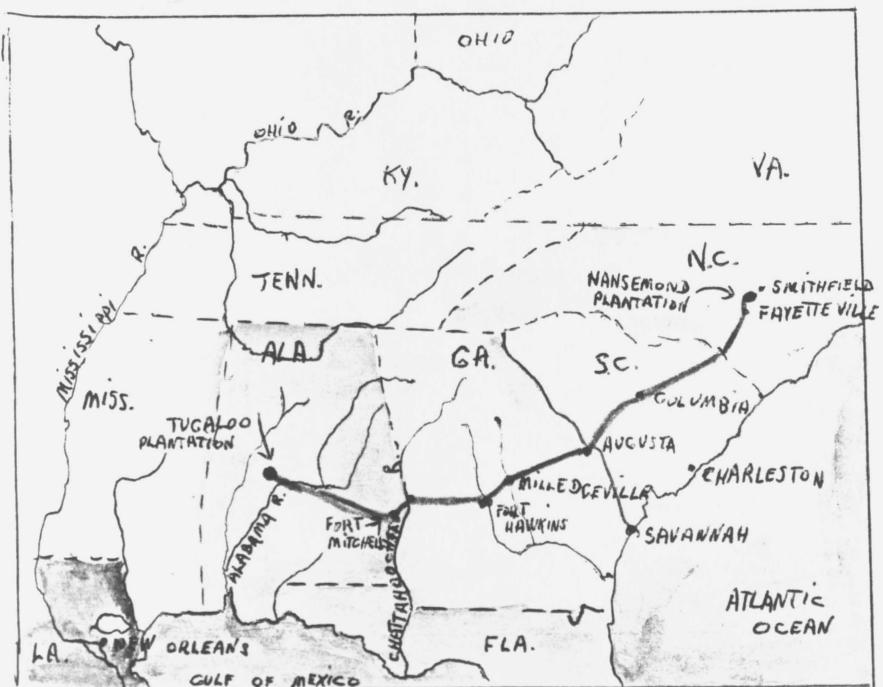
Mordecai told Jake about the Soapstone Bluff on the Alabama River where he was going. "It's a new and rich country, bound to be settled up in a few years. I know you could sell shiploads of goods there if you could get them up the river! They will need axes, rifles, knives, pots, shovels, hoes, nails, ploughs, seeds, cloth, wagons, --everything to build a new country!"

That night Jake wrote to his father in Lancaster suggesting they investigate opening an Emporium in Alabama.

Receiving the letter a month later, Peter Unterdorf, newly-returned from North Carolina, was pleased and amused that his son had recognized the opportunity that he, Peter, had already taken extensive measures to seize.

He had loaded a coastal sailing vessel at Wilmington ^{Delaware} with all and more of the goods that Jake had listed. The vessel, the "Quaker Maid," would soon sail for Mobile where Peter had arranged for warehouse space. He would go along and then go up the Alabama River to seek a good spot for their new enterprise. It might well be the Soapstone Bluff!

Map 42.



THE OLD SOUTH IN 1816-

Showing the route of Mordecai Johnson from Nansemond Plantation, N. C., to the new Tugaloo Plantation near the Alabama River in Alabama. He followed first the "Fall River Road" and then the "Three Chopped Way" from Ft. Hawkins, Ga. on the Ocmulgee River (later Macon) west into Alabama.

When Mordecai and Martha returned to camp from Unterdorf's Augusta Emporium, he made certain everything was in order for a very early start next morning. With some misgiving he thought that now September was gone. It would be Tuesday, October first in the morning. There was a crisp autumnal feel to the air. It was very pleasant, but he knew the rains could start soon, and that would immensely complicate the problems of traveling.

He told Horatio and Erasmus they must try to make better time. It was about 130 miles to Fort Hawkins on the east bank of the Ocmulgee River. This fort had been built in 1806 in the so-called "Old Ocmulgee Fields," where the Creeks and their predecessors had cultivated crops for generations.

In 1804 the Creek Nation had ceded the land east of the Ocmulgee to the whites. There was great agitation in the state of Georgia to force the Creeks to cede all their land and retire beyond the Mississippi, but not until 1828 would the Creeks relinquish all their claims to Georgia land.

So now in 1816, when Mordecai reached Fort Hawkins and crossed the river, he would be crossing into Indian land. The Indians had agreed in 1806 to the cutting of the horsepath, (later the Federal Road) through their hunting grounds and they had long since become accustomed to much horse and wagon traffic.

Mordecai's route from Augusta lay first to Milledgeville, the Georgia state capital since 1804. There he paid seventy-five cents per wagon to have his caravan ferried across the Oconee River.

They glimpsed the Georgia Statehouse, surprisingly large in this over-blown hamlet of tree-lined, dirt streets and white clapboard houses. The capitol building was not yet in the Gothic-Revival style it would assume a decade later when crenelations and pointed arches would be added to its bulk to further awe the unsophisticated.

At Milledgeville they crossed a bridge over the Fishing Creek and pressed on toward Fort Hawkins. The road was now called locally the "Hawkins Trail."

On Wednesday, the ninth of October, they sighted the two sturdy square blockhouses that rose three stories over the ten-foot stockade of Fort Hawkins. From a tall flagstaff floated the Stars and Stripes, emblem of the young republic. This flag had eighteen stars and eighteen stripes, though two years later, congress would decide to revert to the original thirteen stripes, so not to over-burden the flag with stripes when new states were admitted to the Union.

The Johnson wagons rolled across the flat, fertile land of the "Old Ocmulgee Fields." Here were groups of Indians who had come to trade or transact business. Mordecai's people felt a surge of excitement for they were now leaving the settled area.

Since it was only about noon, Mordecai kept his train moving west. He left them only briefly to visit the fort and inquire about road conditions.

After ferrying across the Ocmulgee River, they found themselves on the Federal Road to Alabama and Mobile. The road was called the "Three-Chopped Way," since surveyors had used a triple blaze on tree trunks to mark the route.

With Mordecai's urging, they covered another ten miles before camping that night. Now they were about seventy-five miles from the Falls of the Chattahoochee River where they would enter the Alabama part of the Mississippi Territory. They were traversing an endless pine forest. They saw many deer but few Indians.

Mordecai told Martha they were making good progress, particularly since everything seemed in good order. They were all healthy, and the animals and wagons were standing up well. Blacks and whites were all in good spirits. From time to time Mordecai and Erasmus would try their luck at hunting, bringing back venison for a change of diet.

Early on the 16th of October they reached the Indian towns near the Chattahoochee and found Indians who poled them across the river in barges. They then followed the road to Fort Mitchell where the army maintained a considerable garrison. Mordecai, delighted to have reached Alabama at last, visited with the officers and inhabitants familiar with the roads and conditions over toward the High Soapstone Bluff on the Alabama River. He knew he had about 130 miles to go to Tugaloo's village. He decided to keep going as quickly as possible since the weather was holding dry and sunny. They should be able to complete the journey in another ten or twelve days.

They pulled out of Fort Mitchell at daybreak on October 20th, passing a large new building called "John Crowell's Storehouse." Soon they would leave ~~the~~ the Federal Road which headed south to Mobile and New Orleans. They were taking a road which had been only an Indian trail several years earlier. It led almost straight west to the Soapstone Bluff. Jackson's men and settlers had widened the trail so that wagons with alert drivers could negotiate the route in dry weather. There were still innumerable tree stumps and pot-holes to be avoided. Streams had to be forded since no bridges were built.

It proved to be slow-going. They passed a hamlet called Crockettsville. Then they were traveling south of the Tallapoosa River, one of two principal tributaries of the Alabama. Next there was an old trading post founded back in 1783 by a Pennsylvania Dutch Jew, a veteran of the Revolution named Abram Mordecai. Then another post called "Econachattee," or "Red Ground," where the Tallapoosa and Coosa Rivers flowed together to form the Alabama.

They wouldn't stop now, but Mordecai Johnson planned to come back sometime in the future to see these posts, since they seemed to be the nearest mercantile establishments to his new land.

Despite the primordial appearance of the countryside, the influence of the white man had long been felt here. Hernando De Soto had led a Spanish expedition through the area as early as 1540. During the ensuing centuries, three great empires, the French, the British, the Spanish, and now the new American Republic, had all attempted to control this land and gain the Indian inhabitants as allies.

At the end of the American Revolution, the British ceded the land west to the Mississippi to the United States. But this didn't prevent much international intrigue, particularly during the recent second war with Britain (War of 1812.) In the new war and after, the star of Andrew Jackson had risen.

In 1814 at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in Alabama, General Jackson, called "Sharp Knife" by the Indians, broke the power of the Creek Nation, forcing them to cede half their lands to the whites. This 23 million acres was three-fifths of the present state of Alabama and one-fifth of Georgia.

Chief Tugaloo and his villagers, who had not participated in the Creek War, continued to live on this "ceded" land, not understanding

the significance of what had happened. The juggernaut of white settlement, sweeping all before it, was moving swiftly toward them.

In a few years they would lose even the land they retained at their own village. Their ancient way of life would be ended, their ancestral hunting grounds occupied by white farmers and planters with Negro slaves who would transform the forest lands into wide cotton fields. The defeated Creek Nation would move beyond the Mississippi River to Oklahoma.

It was the morning of November sixth when the Johnson train drew up opposite the Soapstone Bluff (also now called "Moore's Bluff" after the first white settler.) Mordecai noticed that a couple new cabins had been built there since August. He was lucky to find a settler who had a large raft big enough to ferry the Conestogas, the other wagons and the stock across the Alabama River. They camped on the north bank, and for the first time during the great trip, Mordecai relaxed, knowing they were only four or five miles from the new plantation site. Next day, the sun rising warm and bright, Mordecai led them triumphantly toward their destination.

It had been a remarkably successful trip with Mother Nature holding back the autumn rains. Since there was no wagon road to Mordecai's new land, they spent the next three days with crews of blacks chopping

down trees to widen the Indian path, the wagons creeping on behind.

Now Mordecai told Erasmus to take Duke, Kader and Rector, along with the dogs, and drive the pigs and other loose stock on to the old Indian village. There they made a makeshift ~~pen~~, using logs from the fallen cabins and stockade.

Now Miss Martha and most of the black women went ahead on horseback to the old village. Louise rode the most gentle of the old saddle horses with the two babies, George and ~~Stephen~~^{STEPHEN}, suspended in well-padded sacks from each side of her saddle-horn.

It would take a couple days to get the wagons through. The insistent, measured ring of the axes foretold all the great changes soon to come to the Alabama territory. For countless ages the river had flowed silently through these unending forests. If waters or great winds toppled a mighty tree, it would lie forever where it fell, perhaps giving shelter to birds or small burrowing animals, until grubs and decay would return its substance to the soil. Man had made almost no impression here. The Muskogee (Creek) Indians lived here but their numbers were few. They lived in small permanent villages along the water courses, visiting their relatives at the end of almost imperceptible forest footpaths. They had few horses before the whites invaded their country. Tradition said they had come to Alabama from the west, perhaps from Mexico, to escape the conquistadores.

Tallega, one of Tugaloo's sons, while stalking a deer, first heard the sound of the axes. With Indian caution he approached the sound. From behind a tree he saw the blacks, their axes flashing in the sun.

Next, with mounting excitement, he saw the line of wagons with the great Conestogas in the fore. Then he saw Mordecai on horseback and he remembered that this was the white man who had sat with Tugaloo at the Pow-Wow Tree three moons earlier.

Tallega drew back from his vantage point and melted rapidly into the forest. Within the hour he was reporting to Tugaloo the arrival of Mordecai's caravan.

Martha and the women had much to do to prepare the old Indian lodges for occupation. Seven of these still stood around an open square. The largest, formerly that of the chief, was at the end of the square. It was in fairly good condition and it would serve the white Johnsons as their home until a new big house could be built.

The blacks took the remaining six cabins, roughly adhering to their family relationships. Erasmus and Betty and old Minerva and Morgan and their family occupied the first two cabins on the west of the square, while Daddy Handle and Bertha and their remaining children were first on the east. The other younger blacks took the last three lodges and some of the young men continued to sleep in and around the wagons as they had done on the journey. In a few days, Rector, Randy and Big Joe had cleared and repaired one end of a collapsed cabin for their sleeping room. The Indians showed them how to repair the bark roofs.

It was the ninth of November when the first Conestoga rolled out into the clearing at the old village. They had already been exchanging visits and trading with the nearby Indian village of Chief Tugaloo.

Mordecai had invited Tugaloo and his people to see the arrival of the wagons. The Indians, in full regalia, had come single-file down the forest path.

Blacks, whites and Indians all cheered and whooped when the first Conestoga lurched into view, followed by the other wagons, one by one.

Mordecai called them all together. "We have been singularly fortunate to arrive at our new home without mishap and with fine weather all the way. We have much to do--years of work ahead of us before our job is done, but today we will have a feast of thanksgiving! We will eat, sing, dance and relax. I expect we will all remember this trip all our lives. It has been a happy time. This afternoon, at the Pow Wow Tree I will pay our good friend Tugaloo the agreed price for our new plantation land."

And so it was. They prepared roast pig and venison on fires built in the village square. The Indians brought fresh corn and vegetables from their gardens and there were nuts, berries and roots gathered from the forest, with milk, cream and cheese from Mordecai's cows.

When at last the food was ready and all had eaten their fill, Tugaloo made a sign that he wished to speak. Facing Mordecai he said, "My Brother, we are pleased to see this ancient town of our people come once more to life. Our people always lived here until a fever came two years ago, taking perhaps sixty of our tribe to the Great Spirit. Those who remained joined us at the other village. We have not enough people now for both villages. But the sun and the rains have washed away the fever from this spot, and we hope it will be a

good place for you. My young people would like now to do a harvest dance on this square to celebrate the safe arrival of our new neighbors."

The Indians had their drums and were soon doing a spirited, wild dance that seemed endless to the new-arrivals. To the great amusement of Tugaloo and all the others, Mordecai and Horatio jumped into the dance and pranced about for ten minutes in imitation of the Indians.

Later, the blacks did some dances accompanied by Indian tom toms. The Indians at first watched soberly until they realized it was dancing of joy and merriment. Then some of their dancers tried the loose-jointed, abandoned dances of the blacks. The on-lookers roared with pleasure at the sight.

Finally, about five o'clock in the afternoon, they all proceeded to the Pow Wow Tree only a few hundred yards away. There, Mordecai and Tugaloo sat facing each other and Mordecai spoke. "It has been three moons since we first met under this tree and made a solemn agreement. We agreed that this land and old village would become the new Johnson Plantation. I agreed that the old burial ground and Pow Wow Tree would be held sacred and always available to the Creek Indians for their needs. I agreed also to bring as payment to Tugaloo ten good horses, ten rifles, twenty knives and three bolts of red cloth." Some of the young blacks had unloaded the crates containing the purchase items from the Conestoga. Mordecai now gave the rifles and knives to Tugaloo, saying, "When we have finished this Pow Wow, we will go to the temporary ^{horse pen} ~~general~~ to choose the ten

horses you will take." Once again the Indians insisted on smoking and drinking the "Black Drink," since this was a formal occasion. Mordecai had thought of giving some brandy to Tugaloo and his principal men, but decided against it since it might lead to unnecessary trouble. As it was, the Indians were delighted with their new possessions. The beautiful new rifles would insure their food supply.

Mordecai showed Tugaloo and the other Indian hunters how to load and fire the rifles. He gave them ammunition and they practiced shooting at targets for a while. Then they went to the horse-pen and chose the ten horses they wanted.

Now they all ate and danced some more and the bright moon was high before the red visitors returned to their own village.

GETTING SETTLED

Next morning everyone had a job. Some were unloading the wagons, some were tending the stock, some were mending roofs, for Mordecai knew that soon the heavens must open with the long pent-up autumnal rains. He sent some of the young men with axes and a wagon to cut a great supply of firewood from dead and fallen trees. Now the wood was dry. Perhaps next week it would be soaked with rain. They made an enormous pile of chopped firewood in the square whence the women could pack it into their cabins. Mordecai told them to pile the wood against their cabin walls as high as the ~~roof~~, so they wouldn't be short of fuel during the cold wet months. Fortunately, in those days, the wood of the forest was nearby and seemed endless.

Also he directed his carpenter Maximus and some helpers to build log frames to set on the floors of the cabins. These were then filled with dry pine needles and small twigs, and on top they would place ticks filled with dry leaves or corn shucks. Some had brought feather ticks with them from North Carolina. These made not-uncomfortable beds, although they needed to be pounded a bit to make them fit the human form.

He asked Horatio to take the two rifles and teach Primus how to hunt and shoot, while seeing if they could get a deer. He knew this was a violation of the slave-code of the South, where there were laws against teaching blacks to use weapons, or to read. But

Horatio would soon be leaving for Philadelphia, and here in this wilderness it would be very convenient to have a trusty slave who was also a good hunter. They had many mouths to feed. Erasmus was not a bad shot, but Mordecai believed that Primus, who was young, athletic and sharp-eyed, might make the hunter they needed. Mordecai was himself a fine hunter, but he and Erasmus couldn't take the time away from directing all the plantation activities.

That afternoon, Mordecai's judgement proved good when Primus and Horatio staggered back into the village, each with a medium-sized deer on his shoulders. Horatio had given Primus a couple lessons in loading, aiming and firing the Kentucky rifles. They shot at some targets in tree trunks. Then they looked for some deer. Primus had beginner's luck, bagging the first deer they saw! The forests were still full of game. Within an hour, Primus shot another deer! Needless to say, he was very proud of himself when they got home. Horatio taught him to keep the rifle cleaned, and thereafter, he would go out a couple times a week and rapidly became an accomplished hunter, keeping the plantation supplied with wild meat. Pretty Ellen, too, was pleased with her young husband whom she had learned to admire and love.

During those first weeks in Alabama, much had been happening romantically and biologically among the blacks.

Alvin's wife, Arbutus, was the first to give birth at the new plantation when she bore twin sons. Cassie and Lady had their first babies soon after.

Randy Handle had asked Master Mordecai if he might marry Louise. Secundus wanted to marry Bellareen. Tertius wanted Rena. Big Joe Handle wanted Virginia and Arthur wanted little Marcy! Mordecai was amazed that it had all worked out so well--all the young men and women were ready to be married to one another. He had expected at least some bickering and dissatisfaction. If they had these five weddings, only 20-year-old Maximus, 18-year-old Rector, 15-year-old Hannah and Kate, and Erasmus' two youngest sons, Duke and Kader, would remain unmarried.

Like other slave masters in those days, Mordecai was happy enough to have all his blacks married and producing babies. This increased his work force and the value of his estate since blacks were considered "valuable property."

Mordecai decided the five young couples could wed on Saturday, the 16th of November. They would all jump over the broom and he would read a bit of the Bible to them early in the afternoon, then they would have Sunday off from the chores.

Unfortunately, the glorious, long dry autumn came to an end that same Saturday morning. Nature seemed in a veritable frenzy--filling

the sky with great black clouds and beating the forest and village mercilessly with powerful, erratic thrusts of wind, blowing first one way and then another.

All work stopped when the rain came. They all rushed to the inadequate shelter of their leaky cabins. They had shut in the farm animals and fowl, but they could not shut out the wind and rain. Never had they experienced such a storm. Wind and water, acting in concert, contrived to enter all the cabins. The wind would lift and carry away bits of the roofs, and the water found every crack. Mordecai and Martha spread canvas over their walnut four-poster bed and other furniture to protect it from the multiplying drips. Rivulets ran over the earthen floors in all the cabins. The Indian cabins had no chimneys, the smoke escaping through a hole in the center of the roof. Of course, the rain came in where the smoke went out. Luckily, because of Mordecai's foresight, they all had plentiful supplies of dry fire wood.

At noon, Mordecai sent out word for them all to gather in his cabin, which was the largest, and they would proceed with the wedding ceremony. There was very little room to spare when the blacks had all crowded in.

They laid the broom down by the smoking, sputtering fire, and one by one, the young couples jumped over, each greeted with applause and murmurs and shouts of approval from their friends and families.

Mordecai then read bits from the Bible. While no Bible-scholar, Mordecai knew from experience some appropriate passages, and he knew

how, in the manner of priests from the beginning of time, to make it solemn and impressive.

In 1812, alarmed by hints of ~~his~~ approaching death, Mordecai's father, Ingram, had bought the big King James Bible from an itinerant salesman who stopped at Nansemond with ~~his~~ wagon-load of books newly-printed in Philadelphia and London.

Now, from its velvet-covered box, Mordecai carefully and slowly took out the Bible, handling it as though it were a holy treasure. He placed it on a small table near a burning candle. The windowless cabin was dark except for the fire and the candle. The lowering sky allowed no light to enter the smoke-hole in the roof.

The irregular light of the candle lit Mordecai's serious face and gray eyes as he glanced past the pale figures of Horatio and Martha near the four-poster bed, then over the indistinct black faces of the gathered slaves.

Deliberately and with emphasis, Mordecai said, "This Bible contains the word of God!" The eyes of the illiterate blacks grew wide as they sensed the power in these printed pages. Kader, who had managed to scramble to the front of the group, held his breath and jumped with surprise when a dash of cold rain water splashed his cheek.

Mordecai read selected passages from Matthew Chapter XIX--"What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder." He avoided the sections about the difficulty a rich man would face entering the kingdom of heaven. That would be hard to explain to his slaves.

But in Chapter V. he read parts of the Sermon on the Mount which promise rewards in heaven to those who are persecuted, meek and submissive here on earth. These passages Mordecai felt would be appropriate for slaves.

The blacks were over-awed by the Bible and by Mordecai's ability to read it. Indeed, of all those people, only one other, Horatio, could have read that book.

When the brief service was completed, Mordecai gave small glasses of rum to the blacks and Miss Martha gave a woolen blanket to each of the brides. Then Mordecai told them to hurry back to their cabins and keep as dry as possible. Aside from feeding the stock, there would be no more regular work until the storm subsided.

The storm raged for three days and nights, showing them they must re-build their cabins, particularly the roofs, if they were to keep dry in winter. Now Mordecai was thankful he had brought three kegs of shingle nails from Unterdorf's in Augusta. Under Maximus' direction he set several of the young men to work making shakes to re-roof the seven cabins. They chose suitable straight cedar logs from the forest, cut them in sections about twenty inches long, then split these sections with hatchet or froe into smaller radial tapered sections. Once the men had mastered the process, they worked rapidly, soon having a large pile of shakes. Three or four continued to make shakes while Maximus showed others how to proceed with nailing the new shake roofs in place. They started with Mordecai's cabin and extended the roof overhang a couple feet. Mordecai told them to do this since he planned to have the log walls chinked, and for that they would make a mixture of water, straw, cow manure and clay, which would stay in place only if protected from the rain.

They dug shallow trenches around the periphery of the cabins to carry off the rain and keep their floors dry. They hung rough-built doors using cow-hide leather for hinges, and while Martha wanted windows, Mordecai told her they must wait until they could get some window-glass. So the cabins, after a couple weeks of concentrated labor by many hands, became warm and dry.

Mordecai hoped to get some new buildings built within a year or

two. They would start with something modest but sometime they must have a new big house also. If Simon Ramsey showed up in the springtime, he would need a new house. So Mordecai was thinking of building a new double cabin of the kind popular on the frontier--two cabins in line with a common roof and a dog-run or breezeway in between. Then he and Martha would move to the new building and the Ramseys could take over the large Indian cabin.

It seemed logical that the Indian village would become the slave quarter and the whites would move to new buildings. But since the multiple wedding there was pressing need for new cabins for the blacks. On his fingers Mordecai counted that there --no, thirteen, were now twelve married black couples on his plantation. There would soon be many babies. So he decided that the four collapsed Indian cabins should be re-built. Many of the old logs could be re-used and were already on site.

There was no stone in this Black Belt region so he sent Erasmus, Arthur and Duke with a wagon to a stone-outcropping they had found a mile west. With some difficulty they got the wagon near the stone and were able to bring loads of it back to make simple foundations for the re-built cabins. Mordecai wanted the buildings set up about two feet above the ground. They would have floors made of logs split down the middle, flat side up. And they would have stone fireplaces at one end, with stick and mud-daubed chimneys. They would be warmer than the Indian cabins

but also much darker since they didn't have the overhead light from the smoke hole.

Chickens, dogs, pigs, and children too, would find shelter under these cabins on hot or rainy days.

Through December and January, weather permitting, all this building activity continued until all eleven Indian cabins were sturdily re-built and floored. Over near the Pow Wow Oak they had built a stout new double cabin for Mordecai. Long, low sheds were constructed for the stock and the pens and fences made solid.

Meanwhile, riding over every bit of his land and the surrounding area, Mordecai had familiarized himself with it all and made extensive plans for its development.

The clearings and old Indian community fields were perhaps two hundred acres in extent. They would push back the forest on the west side. If they worked hard they might double the planting area by plowing time. After plowing he would plant corn and cotton but he wasn't sure how he could get a cotton crop to market. He would have to find bargemen to pole it down the Alabama River to Mobile. Maybe the first year he would stick with corn and a large vegetable garden until he knew more about the cotton market in this remote place.

He knew that planters had been producing rich cotton crops for a decade up in the Tennessee Valley of northern Alabama. They

sent their crops to the New Orleans market on boats going down the Tennessee River, then the Ohio, then the Mississippi--a lengthy, circuitous route, but still far-easier than going overland where roads scarcely existed.

Mordecai had some of his men cutting and stacking suitable poles for making zig-zag rail fences to protect the new fields and keep the stock in their new pastures. Also, they were stacking brush and small trees for burning.

In the forest were bald cypress, mulberry, maple, ash, tupelo, sweetbay, sycamore, honey locust, hickory, black walnut, yellow poplar and pine, many oaks, cherry, birch and beech--a great wealth of ancient and young trees. Mordecai was reluctant to destroy all this valuable timber, still, the fields had to be cleared. He and Maximus marked the larger trees that would make good lumber. These would be girdled and left standing in place. Later they would be cut to be hauled to the building site where the new big house and outbuildings would be built. After the dead trees had dried for a year or two, they would be much lighter and easier to handle.

Horatio Johnson Goes North

One day in December, leaving Erasmus in charge at the plantation, Mordecai had ridden with Horatio and Duke over to "Moore's Bluff" as the Soapstone Bluff was now called. Horatio was starting the long journey to Philadelphia.

Mordecai, realizing how much he had come to depend on Horatio in all the diverse, unending tasks they faced each day, hated to see his brother go. He coaxed him to stay, even offering him half of all the estate. But Horatio adamantly rebuffed these blandishments. He was determined to go to medical school-- plantation life was not for him. He reminded Mordecai that they had agreed that once the move to Alabama was complete, Horatio could go to Philadelphia. So now he was going! Horatio had arranged to go down river on a barge to Mobile where, in a few days, there would be a coastal vessel to take him north.

Mordecai, while sorry his brother was going, still admired the boy's determination. He knew this quality, which he himself had, must lead to success. His little brother would be a medical doctor one day! So now here they were at Moore's Bluff on the muddy bank of the Alabama River. In the gray sky above, the sun was weak. No warmth there. Sad trees, bare and somber, leaned out over the icy, black water of the river.

"Write to me, you hear? I want to know what's happening with you," Mordecai admonished. Horatio grinned and nodded.

The bargeman rowed a small boat to shore to pick up Horatio, who, after saying goodbye to Duke, embraced his brother quickly, shook hands, then jumped with his luggage into the boat. He had to look away for a moment to hide the tears in his eyes.

Mordecai watched as they rowed to the barge then went aboard the larger boat. The bargemen cast off immediately, pushing the

cumbersome, flat-bottomed barge with long poles toward the center of the river.

Mordecai called out once more, "You write!" The brothers waved at one another several times, then the barge rounded a curve in the river and was gone.

Mordecai felt very much alone and down-cast, but he smiled when Duke said, "Don' you worry none, Massa Mordecai, caz Massa Horatio he gwine be back heah by springtime an' he gwine be plum-full o' larnin' an' be de bes' doctor in Alabama, an' de folks dey's all comin' from all 'round to get doctored!"

Mordecai said, "Come on, Duke, let's go have a look at Moore's Bluff." Leading Horatio's horse, they rode up the Soapstone Bluff one hundred feet above the water level to look at the tiny settlement on the plateau. Starting with Thomas Moore in 1815, several Tennessee farmers had built cabins there and planted plots of corn, though they lived principally by hunting and fishing.

Mordecai had noticed a second barge tied up at the river's edge. At the top of the Bluff they met the bargemen who proved to be Scottish river traders who were planning to build cabins and open businesses here at the Bluff. They told Mordecai the territory was being settled at an astonishing pace--new farms and plantations all along the river with streams of traffic on the Federal Road in good weather and bad. They felt that Moore's Bluff would be an important trading center within a short time. They could barge goods up from Mobile and find a ready market.

Their barges, once emptied, could take cotton downriver to market!

Mordecai, when he heard about the burgeoning agricultural and commercial activities in the Territory, decided it would be possible to plant his first cotton crop that spring since it was probable he could arrange for transportation to Mobile.

Cotton would be a new crop for him. It had always been tobacco and corn in North Carolina. But he was a good farmer and also a good listener. He had talked with many cotton planters and he had read some small manuals about the cultivation of this cash crop.

He would try to get in the first seed by mid-March. There was no cotton seed in Moore's Bluff but they told him he might get seed at Zach Antrim's or one of the other new plantations six or seven miles south down toward the Cahaba River. After asking the Scottish traders to bring him up some window glass, a supply of nails and some metal door-hinges on their next trip, Mordecai took the trail to Zach's plantation.

Arriving early in the afternoon, they found Zach supervising blacks who were building a large, two-story log barn. Zach had made many improvements in the five months since Mordecai had seen this place. The cleared area was much larger.

Zach was overjoyed to see his neighbor and hear all the news of the new Johnson Plantation. After sending Duke to the kitchen to get his lunch, Zach and Mordecai went up to the big new cabin

where Zach already had the luxury of windows and galleries or porches on all four sides.

Zach's wife gave them lunch while they talked of politics, agriculture, land, Indians, river transportation, settlers--all the topics that were in their minds.

Mordecai asked if Zach had some cotton seed for sale. Zach had raised and marketed a small cotton crop the previous summer and he agreed to sell a couple hundred-weight of seed to Mordecai. That's all they could pack back on the spare horse, but Zach said he could have more later if he needed it. When they headed home about four P.M., Zach promised to ride up for a couple days in mid-March to get them started right as cotton growers.

Zach's little, dark-haired wife, Sabrina, who's situation was much like that of Martha (she was isolated, young and white with several small children) pressed Mordecai to bring Martha and the babies down to the Antrim Plantation for a visit. She and Martha had not met one another, but she was sure they would have much to talk over. She rarely saw another white woman, even though some other new plantations were nearby. Everybody was so busy getting established it left little time for the old-fashioned leisurely visits they had known in the old eastern states.

"Woman-talk, you know, that's what we need. I'm sure Martha would enjoy it as much as I would! You just bring her down here and leave her for a couple weeks. We'll get acquainted and have lots

to talk about! Of course we'll take good care of her!"

Clearly, Sabrina was sincere. Mordecai, knowing the visit could be a welcome interlude for Martha, had promised to bring her down soon.

When Mordecai on his roan mare, with Duke and the third horse loaded with cotton seed bags, started north on the forest trail, Zach and Sabrina stood on their cabin gallery waving farewell. Mordecai noticed that this was a wagon trail of sorts leading up to Moore's Bluff. He could bring Martha down in a wagon in dryer weather, though rains could make it all a soggy morass.

In surprisingly good time they arrived home where, during the evening meal, Mordecai told Martha all that had happened.

Martha was delighted that he had ordered the window glass since all the cabins were dark as caves and not much better on warm, sunny days when they could leave the doors open. Like most young women would be, she was much taken with the prospect of a visit to the Antrim Plantation. She was ready to go that week but Mordecai said she should wait a month or so until their own plantation was in better shape. In December they hadn't yet moved into their new double-cabin where Maximus was just installing a floor of buck-sawn half-logs. The floor had to be fitted carefully and smoothed to eliminate cracks and slivers. Martha had braided rag-rugs to cover the new floor. She badgered Mordecai to find out how the Antrims lived. "They had windows! They had galleries! What a grand place it must be! How did Sabrina dress? Had they

built a separate kitchen?"

"Yes."

"Did they have fine furniture from North Carolina?"

"Yes."

"How many rooms did they have?"

"Four." Mordecai laughed at his little blond inquisitress, then picked her up and whirled her about a couple times. When he set her down he kissed her lightly and whispered, "Miss Martha will just have to wait until next month--then she'll get all the answers about Antrim Plantation!"

Martha would miss Horatio perhaps even more than did Mordecai in the weeks that followed. She and her brother-in-law were about the same age and were thrown together constantly first at Nansemond, then during the trip, and later, in the close quarters of the Indian cabin. Horatio had slept in a one-legged bed built in the cabin corner while Mordecai and Martha preserved their privacy in the four-poster bed by hanging a blanket as a screen from the roof.

On the long, slow trip from North Carolina, Horatio had discovered that Martha scarcely knew how to read and write. This deficiency, even in a woman of the planter class, was not uncommon in those times. Martha's father, whose 300 acres and four slaves placed him at the lower borderline of the ruling planter class, had not considered it necessary for his daughters to be educated. His four sons, like Mordecai and Horatio, had been tutored for a few years, but the girls were kept home learning spinning, weaving, sewing and such homely arts. They were taught to laboriously sign their names and that was

something of an accomplishment when many people signed documents with Xs. The girls learned the alphabet and that was about all. There wasn't much reading material in the rural South anyway.

Horatio tended to be intellectual, introspective and sensitive-- fine qualities for a prospective doctor. In evening camp when there was time, he started teaching Martha how to read and write. He had a copy of Parson Weems' Life and Memorable Actions of George Washington and several other books that they used.

Mordecai was amused and benignly permissive seeing them thus engaged, still his practical nature and good sense told him it would be useful for Martha to develop a literary skill. It might be very useful!

During many evenings after the babies were asleep, Horatio and Martha would sit side by side in the fire-light, he looking over her shoulder as she struggled with the unfamiliar words. Naturally bright, she was making progress while Horatio, with some surprise, had perceived that he had more than brotherly interest in her. He was falling in love with his brother's wife! This disquieting discovery had precipitated his departure for Philadelphia. He planned to go anyway, but decided to go immediately without further complicating their lives.

For her part, Martha would miss her serious, handsome young tutor without knowing of his strong feelings.

Mordecai agreed to help her with the reading lessons, but his time was limited by the crying needs of the new Plantation. Again

he was thinking of Simon Ramsey. If the overseer would only arrive soon! In a few weeks his prayer was answered.

On a mild day late in January, Martha was surprised to see a strange wagon pull out of the forest trail. It was the first vehicle of any kind to come since their arrival. It was driven by an oversized white man with a tiny bonneted woman by his side. They had three extra horses tied to the rear of their loaded wagon.

The dogs were all barking and running in circles while the stately geese honked their protests. Bertha Handle, who was helping Martha get settled in the new double cabin, looked out for a moment then said, "Well, I sho' believe that's Mista Simon Ramsey! That's the way he sits in a wagon. And that sho' is Miss Sophronia--she's Mista Simon's wife!"

Bertha was right! As the wagon drew nearer, everybody could see the fierce black eyebrows topping Simon's big red face. And that face--from ear to ear such a bright smile as you've never seen! Simon and Sophronia had driven in the heart of winter all the way from Virginia, so there was much to smile about. Sophronia too, had a smile quite beyond her diminutive proportions.

Mordecai, summoned from the new fields, came hurrying up as did Daddy Handle and many of the Ingram blacks. The blacks had been hoping Simon would come. They knew he could be strict, but he was fair and never violent, and they had all gotten along together for many years. The Ingram blacks felt they couldn't have a better

overseer than Simon. It was even a little pleasant to have someone from the Old Dominion--slave or free, there was something special about being Virginians born!

Mordecai, seldom displaying so much emotion, jumped up and down clapping his hands with pleasure on seeing Simon. "Now I'm real pleased to see you--words can't say how much! I guess you've come to stay, not just for a short visit?" He jumped on the wagon axle and gave the beaming Simon some hearty thumps on the back.

"You can see around here there's plenty to do for a long time to come and I don't know what would have happened to us if you hadn't come. But here's my wife Miss Martha! Martha, this is Mr. Simon Ramsey down from Cypress Creek Plantation in Virginia!"

Simon introduced Sophronia and then the Ramseys looked around at all the gathered Ingram blacks. Sophronia said, "Here are some people that we know very well. We feel at home already! Daddy Handle and Bertha! Cuffey and Quamona! How good to see you all!" There were choruses of approval as they all said hello to each other and asked about family matters.

The Ramseys drove the wagon into the old Indian village square and got down where Mordecai showed them the recently-vacated chief's cabin, which they would inhabit. "If you had come a week earlier, we wouldn't have had a cabin for you," he laughed. He introduced them to all of Erasmus' family and told of all the recent marriages, the new babies.

Sophronia drew in her breath, "Rena and even little Marcy married

already, I declare!"

Little Marcy, not yet fifteen, sported a wide grin and holding Arthur's hand, already looked very pregnant. "Dis heah do be mah husband, Arthur, Miz Phronie," Marcy averred, raptly rolling her eyes upward at the tall embarrassed young man who, unaccustomed to so much attention in the presence of white strangers, manifested a crooked smile and lowered his eyes.

Mordecai told all the blacks to leave their work for the rest of the day and they would just help the Ramseys get settled and have a big feast of celebration. He sent Duke over to ask Chief Tugaloo and his villagers to come to the afternoon affair.

Then they prepared a big fire in the square for roasting pig, corn and other food, but also to keep warm during their party.

Tugaloo, who had enough dignity for several Indian chiefs, nonetheless was not one to avoid a celebration. So the Indians soon filed out of the forest to meet Simon and partake of the festivities.

They ate, sang and danced while the young blacks and Indians engaged in impromptu foot races and jumping contests. Rector sought to impress a quiet Indian girl named Ocmulana by excelling in these contests. He had talked to her but she knew little English. He gave her a little round mirror. She had smiled and hung the mirror around her neck. Rector was lucky that day, winning several contests against spirited competition. Ocmulana watched him, was interested. They ate together.

It was that afternoon that Mordecai told the gathering that he

had decided to name the new Plantation for old Indian Chief Tugaloo. "May we always be neighbors, peacefully helping one another! But even if it should not be so, the name of Tugaloo will cling to this land to remind us of our Muskogee Creek friends. We will remember who was here first. We will guard the Tugaloo Pow Wow Oak and the Burial Ground."

So was born the name of the great Plantation that would survive for near two centuries--perhaps more--and undergo unimaginable triumphs and vicissitudes, always belonging to descendants of these gathered celebrants, their blood mixed to new amalgams.

SIMON AND SOPHRONIA

The new-arrivals were quickly settled in the big Indian cabin since they hadn't brought much furniture. They had their bed and two chests of bedding into which Sophronia had slipped some dishes. They had some bags of clothing and household and personal effects. Sophronia also had her spinning wheel and a small box of books--a real rarity on the frontier, and Simon had a box of tools.

Simon knew if they needed furniture they could quickly make it with the raw material of the forest all around them. They would need a table and chairs and some shelves. They had left some furniture in Virginia where they had seven grown children and many grandchildren.

Simon told Mordecai they had already resolved to go to Alabama before the letter had come from Columbia, S. C. They felt they still had ten or fifteen years of active life ahead of them. With Cypress Creek Plantation sold and their position gone, it was logical for them to follow the Ingram blacks to the new country.

Three of their sons, now overseers in Virginia, hoped to become plantation owners some day. But, as Simon said, "Maybe they'll find that's not so easy since it takes a lot of money to build a plantation--especially buying the blacks." In those days a prime black man might cost a thousand or twelve hundred dollars and that was three times the annual salary of one of his sons. So the boys' dreams, in his view, were not realistic.

Since it is not part of our main story, your writer can tell his readers

However, Jack Ramsey, Simon's 25-year-old second son, did soon manage to become a plantation owner by ingeniously marrying the young heiress of a middling property in Virginia, thereby acquiring with his wife, her land, her debts, and her fourteen blacks! To this marriage Jack brought intelligence, competence, honesty, love and good-will, health and cheerful mien, all good qualities inherited from his parents.

Who would dare to say it was not a good marriage for the young lady?

But back to Mordecai, who quickly discovered that he had not hired an ordinary sort of overseer. Indeed, overseers as a class were rough, crude, sometimes violent or cruel, and their success in the system was measured by how much work they could elicit, by whatever means, from indifferent or recalcitrant blacks, thereby improving the profits of the owner.

Simon was of a different breed. As the weeks went by with Simon assuming his new duties directing the blacks in all their variety of tasks, he showed a sensitivity unexpected in an overseer. Early each morning his commands to the blacks were clear, if peremptory, and he saw that they completed their jobs properly each evening. But Simon tempered his orders with understanding. He knew what might be reasonably expected from each worker each day. While not condoning malingering he could divine by some sixth sense when a black was really ill or had a good reason for not completing his daily task.

Simon knew how to give little rewards for jobs well-done--usually in the form of leisure time or extra rations. If a black did a good

day's work in less than a day, he could rest for the remainder of the time. With the blacks, so Simon believed, the carrot worked much better than the stick. In this he differed from the majority of overseers, who, across the South would beat or whip blacks for infractions, major or minor. Simon always made it his business to see that everyone was comfortably housed and fed, and the ill cared for.

Since the Ingram blacks had known no other overseer they immediately adapted to his ways. Also, Simon recognized the special place of Erasmus, who had been acting overseer, and who was the unquestioned foreman and "paterfamilias" of the Nansemond blacks. They all worked well together. Mordecai, Simon, and often Erasmus would have little conferences each evening to decide the tasks for the following day. Mordecai found the great fund of good sense and experience of the older white man to be an invaluable addition to their collective abilities. Now to his own youthful audacity they could bring the personal knowledge gained by Simon in years of observation and practice. It would be a happy combination.

Mordecai's satisfaction with Simon grew day by day as he saw how the blacks, though well-treated, worked willingly and full-measure. This was how he had hoped it would be. Lucky that he had found this treasure of an overseer! There would be no whips and beatings at Tugaloo!

Sophronia in her own way was an admirable and welcome addition. Soon after they arrived, she showed Martha her little collection of books, newly-unpacked and on a shelf made by Simon. She had tutored neighborhood white children on the plantation in Virginia. Now she had brought along

some of the school books in case they might prove useful in Alabama.

She had a Bible, an old copy of the New England Primer, three of Noah Webster's books--American Spelling Book, Common School Dictionary, and An American Selection of Lessons. She had some histories, some English poetry including Alexander Pope and William Wordsworth, the Parson Weems biographies of Franklin, Washington and Wm. Penn, Lindley Murray's English Grammar and English Reader and some English novels including Roderick Random and Tristram Shandy. Altogether, her little shelf of books made a brave display in that wilderness.

Martha remarked that she had several books in her cabin, that she had been learning to read until Horatio's departure, but now she had no teacher. Then Sophronia offered to teach her.

When Mordecai heard of Sophronia's proposal, he was pleased (since this relieved him of his promise to tutor Martha,) and he asked her if she also would be willing to teach Erasmus. Erasmus literate, would be far more valuable to him. While teaching reading and writing to blacks was illegal in most of the South, Mordecai did not expect interference in this remote corner of the forest.

Ellen

Within a week or two, Bertha Handle, and Louise had joined the little class which met each afternoon in Sophronia's Indian cabin. Sometimes Duke and Kader or some of the other blacks would also be there, while on the floor, Martha's babies would sleep or crawl about making discoveries.

At the outset, they had to keep the door open for light. They would build up the fire on those cold winter afternoons, making themselves cold but light on one side, warm but dark on the other. Sophronia

had packed a school slate about eighteen inches square at the bottom of her box of books. Now she would face her little circle of students making letters on the slate with a bit of soft limestone from the rock pile. Then they would hand the slate around so the students could practice forming the letters. Sometimes on warmer days, they would sit outside scratching the letters on the soft ground with sticks. Some of the other blacks might watch and marvel, though the importance of these marks on the ground was beyond them.

In February, when the traders brought window glass to Moore's Bluff, Maximus installed large six-light windows in Mordecai's and Simon's cabins. This delighted the women who longed for some natural light in their homes. It certainly helped with the little school since they could now close the door, keep warm, and still study.

Two tiny windows, six inches square, were put into each of the other cabins. Window glass was an expensive luxury, certainly a rarity in slave cabins. All the people were warned not to break the glass.

The winter days succeeded one another, all the labor of establishing the new plantation proceeding methodically as the weather permitted. The fields were taking on their new and permanent outlines with the zig-zag fences pushing through the old forest. Brush was piled around tree stumps and set afire, making dense smoke clouds and smoldering for days. This burned out some of the stumps but many would not yield so easily and remained to plague the plowmen of later years.

New buildings and shelters took shape, although nothing so grand as the two-story barn at the Antrim Plantation since Mordecai was not certain their skill was equal to that. But they built more low structures to shelter animals, wagons and farm implements.

When the ground dried sufficiently and days were lengthening into the early southern spring, the rich primeval mould was disturbed for the first time by the plow.

Soon it was the middle of March. Zach Antrim, bringing his family, had come up for a few days to help them put in the first cotton crop. The Antrims stayed on one side of Mordecai's double cabin, Martha and Sabrina getting to know one another.

After the Antrims returned home, the cotton planters continued until they had seeded three hundred acres. Another three hundred acres among the old stumps were planted to corn, the rows finding their ways around the countless obstacles.

About ten acres of the old Indian fields nearest the cabins was their new vegetable garden protected from the deer by a high

wattle fence of interwoven stakes and twigs. Later, they would find this was an ineffectual barrier to the high-leaping deer, and Kader or one of the others, hitting a piece of iron on the bottom of an old pan, would be stationed there to frighten away the deer. Sometimes Primus would shoot one of the hungry visitors to add to their meat supply.

Now was the time of surpassing fertility. All the farm animals were bringing forth their young--calves and foals abounded. Porcine mothers taught myriads of piglets how to find the delicacies of the forest floor. Busy hens and stately ducks and geese introduced their broods to the wonders of the new barnyard.

Not to be outdone, most of the young women were with child. Arbutus' twin sons in December were followed by a girl for Cassie and a boy for Lady. Even Quamona, whose pregnancy had not shown, had a small baby girl in March.

Ellen's baby son, born April 25th, caused a brief stir of conjecture in both black and white households. Ellen might have had a trace of white blood, but this child was altogether too light of hue to be Primus' son. Four days later, while the curious were still mulling over the possible paternity of Ellen's baby, Louise brought further consternation with the birth of her beautiful fair daughter, whom she named Becky. The last fruit of the North Carolina transgressions was Marcy's baby, son of Robbie Ingram, born late in May. Ellen's son was, in a manner of

speaking, an uncle of Marcy's son, though such familial intricacies remained hidden.

These three mulatto children, after the custom of the South, were of the race of their mothers and they were slaves, though they took their genetic heritage from both parents.

The three husbands, Primus, Randy and Arthur, accepted with good grace their dubitable fatherhood, quickly displaying for these babies all the pride and affection they would have for their later unquestioned offspring.

Through the summer new babies continued to arrive. Little Kate, still fifteen, had a son, fathered as she admitted to her mother, Quamona, by Rector during the trip from North Carolina. Rector had been spurned by several of the older girls but he was successful with Kate. Kate's baby and Quamona's would grow up together. No one thought anything about it. It was natural. There was food, shelter and plenty of work for all of the blacks, regardless of when and how they were born.

Rena, Virginia and Bellareen all had babies that summer. Such fecundity marked all life at Tugaloo in those days. Each year or two the young women would have new babies. Little black children rolled and tumbled on all the cabin floors.

Up in the double cabin near the Pow Wow Tree Martha also had a child that July--her first daughter with Bertha and Betty acting as mid-wives. The blue-eyed mite with corn-silk hair named

Laura Lee Johnson would be wet-nursed by Louise along with baby Becky. Louise was now the regular mammy for the Johnson children.

SOPHRONIA TELLS ABOUT NAMES

One afternoon, early in July, Martha, now big with child, had walked awkwardly to Sophronia's cabin for the school session. She often came early before the others got there so she and Sophronia could sit knitting and talking in the shade of a handsome black walnut that overhung the old chief's cabin.

Simon had found time to build some chairs for which Sophronia had made cushions stuffed with feathers. It was pleasant for the ladies to sit there giving thanks for such little cooling breezes as came their way.

Sophronia, with quiet smile and bright blue eyes, was telling the story of some of the names of their people. "Now there's Cuffy, for example. He is really 'Cuffy the Younger or Cuffy Junior' since his father was a black man straight from the coast of Africa who kept his African name. Back in Virginia we called them 'Old Cuffy' and 'Young Cuffy' until Old Cuffy died when a horse kicked his head. 'Cuffy' means a boy born on Friday. "Quamona, we think, was an Indian name, since her mother or

grandmother was an Indian. She lived at Longwood Plantation until Old Master Ingram bought her when Cuffy fell in love with her. Old Master Ingram was always partial to Cuffy after he discovered how the old overseer, Tom Jarrett, had whipped and mistreated ~~the boy~~. Master Ingram was about as even-tempered as it's possible to be, but they say he was furious that day. He told Jarrett to pack his bags and get off the plantation before sundown.

"That's when we came to Cypress Creek because Simon got the overseer job and Master Ingram made it clear he didn't want the blacks mis-used. 'We are all God's children, Mr. Ramsey,' he would say. 'Bad enough that they are slaves. No whipping if you please. See they do their work, but you also take good care of them. I'll be watching to see you do a good job.'

"Goodness, that was thirty years ago! We were there all those years while our family grew up, and some of the blacks would die and others be born. Old Master Ingram did watch Simon for a while, but as the years went by he trusted us more and more until for the last fifteen years it was truly Simon who ran that plantation. He kept all the records, did the buying and selling, made the decisions.

"They would never buy or sell blacks after Quamona, and Master Ingram and his wife, Miss Julia, would stay most of the year at Williamsburg where they had a fine brick house. There was a good deal of social activity at Williamsburg with the governor, the assembly, and the rich families gathered from all around."

Sophronia chuckled and said, "Maybe you wondered how Daddy Handle got his name? The story was that even back about 1750, when Handle was born, Master Ingram and Miss Julia were spending their time at Williamsburg. They never stayed much at Cypress Creek. We heard that the Ingolds and other families would have 'soirées musicales' or evenings of music at their homes where the great composers' music would be played by musicians from London.

"About that time, one of the black women at the plantation had triplets--three boys, and that was a most unusual event. Master Ingram and Julia decided the boys should be named for three of their favorite composers--Scarlatti, Bach and Handel. As years went by, Scarlatti became 'Lotty,' Bach became 'Back,' and Handel became 'Handle' spelled HANDLE. Lotty and Back died years ago, but Handle had a big family and became 'Daddy Handle.'

"I suppose Daddy Handle never heard the music of Handel, but Bertha, his wife, probably did. She used to be at Williamsburg for months at a time to be trained, first as housemaid, then later to be housekeeper. For the last twenty years she was housekeeper at the Cypress Creek big house. It was mostly just keeping it in readiness in case the Ingolds came for a short visit! But Bertha should be quite useful to you if you build a big house here. She is a gem--knows all about keeping things clean, tidy and in good order, and she can supervise others."

Martha listened with close interest to all this long recital of life in old Virginia, then asked Sophronia where her own name came from.

"Sophronia is Greek for 'sensible,' with a bit of wisdom and skill thrown in," Sophronia laughed, "I've had to work hard to try to live up to that!"

But Martha gave her a long, serious look and remarked, "Believe me, I couldn't think of a better name for you. Tugaloo is going to be a much better place with you and Simon here." With a start, Martha realized she felt something akin to a daughter's love for this tiny, bright, gray-haired woman. How pleasant to have her nearby, filling Martha's need for a woman's companionship.

As they visited, Martha learned that Sophronia was a birth-right Quaker, born in Loudoun County in northern Virginia. Sophronia, when she was a girl, had been sent for three years to a Philadelphia seminary. Later she had been a good Quaker in Waterford, where her family were members of the Fairfax Monthly Meeting, but one day she had gone with her father into Leesburg, the county seat, and that's where she met Simon.

Simon wasn't a Quaker, and what was worse, he was an overseer on a slave plantation in the southern part of the county. The Quakers had long since disavowed slavery and considered it against God's law. But Loudoun County was precisely where the free North met the slave South. The Quakers had come there from Pennsylvania

and New Jersey about 1734, settling in colonies which quickly became prosperous as the result of their own free labor and sober good husbandry. The southern part of the county was settled by Tidewater aristocrats with great plantations and throngs of slaves.

Young Simon had fallen in love with the little, gray-clad Quaker girl and she soon loved him also. Her family and the Quaker Meeting did everything to persuade her to give up Simon. It was customary for Quakers to marry other Quakers, but further, the Meeting found Simon's occupation particularly offensive and unacceptable.

However, young love would not be denied, so they eloped to Alexandria to be married by an Episcopal minister. Then Simon had taken the job at Cypress Creek in southeastern Virginia so that they might avoid the quiet censure of her family and Quaker friends each time they went to town.

After a time she and her family were reconciled and they met occasionally, but the Friends' Fairfax Meeting resolutely removed her from its membership for "marrying out," as it was styled, and worse, for marrying a man with such an odious occupation.

Sophronia herself disliked slavery. She had never hidden that, but she accepted the world as it was, trying to make little improvements where she could, and since Simon was just, thoughtful and kind, rejecting violence in a profession where such qualities were rare, she had managed to live a happy life surrounded by slaves.

Martha, who had always considered black slavery an immutable part of life, marvelled at Sophronia's open opposition to that institution.

CHRISTIAN UNTERDORF

Over at Moore's Bluff that spring, three Scottish merchants opened shop. One of them, Matthew McLaughlin, would prosper and remain for many years, though the two others would later move a few miles east to other locations. Mordecai heard also that a German with a difficult name had acquired an abandoned cabin at the Bluff and would soon start a trading store. This proved to be Peter Unterdorf, the Pennsylvania Dutchman who had sold him the Conestoga wagons in North Carolina. Peter had listened carefully the previous year when Mordecai told him about Alabama and its commercial possibilities. From Pennsylvania he had brought down a ship-load of goods which he had stored in a warehouse in Mobile.

In June, Mordecai took time to visit Unterdorf's New Emporium, (for so it was called.) Peter had roofed-over two log enclosures adjoining the original cabin and here he stored and displayed his extensive supply of stock. This was a general store where could be found everything a settler or an Indian might need. Peter had glass, plows, foodstuffs, hardware, paints, clothing, nails, firearms, candy, tools of all kinds, innumerable items brought with some difficulty in barges up the river. He was training a younger son named George to run the store since Peter soon would be returning to Pennsylvania.

In just a few short months, activity along the river had heightened noticeably. In the winter Mordecai had worried about where he could get essential supplies, but now, there were several good trading stores

only a short distance from the plantation and boats of all description could be seen daily on the river. About this same time, forty miles east, two little villages, New Philadelphia and Alabama Town, were founded at the Indian camp ground called Econachattee or "red ground." After some rivalry the two would join forces and become Montgomery.

During the year 1817, a group of wealthy planters headed by William Rufus King organized the Selma Land Company which promoted land sales and development around Moore's Bluff. Not until 1820, however, was the name of the little settlement changed to "Selma," at the behest of King, who had read in the legendary poet Ossian about "Selma, kingly city atop a shining cliff."

At Tugaloo, the days passed quickly by. Autumn came with their first harvests. Mordecai had no difficulty getting the cotton to Mobile. When he did his year-end reckoning, deducting for the barge-transportation downriver and for all the expenses, he saw that the plantation was already a success. Tugaloo, in one short and busy year, was much more profitable than Nansemond had been in his memory. Their move to Alabama had been a wise one. Of course, the work of clearing the forest to enlarge the fields would continue, with a larger and more profitable cotton crop each year.

For the next several years they would add about two hundred acres a year to the cotton fields--building fences, roads, and such structures as they needed. During this time, Mordecai also acquired several small adjoining farms when the poor settlers, who had no slaves and

no money, were unable to pay the government for their land. Nordecai paid them for their cabins and improvements and they were able to find other less-costly land in the hills to the west.

In this way Tugalo grew from its initial size of one cabin and

In 1819, Nordecai cleared his title to the land and by paying it at the government land office in nearby Tuscaloosa,

During these years Alabama had become an organized territory and then in December 1819, it was admitted as the twenty-second state to the Union. People, white and black, had flooded in in the biggest migration this country would see until the California Gold Rush.

Moore's Bluff, the old "High Soapstone Bluff," grew rapidly with many new businesses and cabins. In January 1818, Mike Woodall built a big log house at Green and Water Streets where he opened a hotel and restaurant. The hotel, which would last for many years would have a moment of glory when the Marquis de Lafayette was entertained there during his historic 1825 visit to the United States. In 1818, the first frame house was built at Moore's Bluff, and in 1820, the village got its new permanent name--Selma.

Unterdorf's New Emporium was expanding since young George had proven to be an astute manager who quickly exploited the ready market for high-quality Pennsylvania merchandise. Still another Unterdorf, George's younger brother, Christian, had come out to help him. George would load samples of their merchandise on a wagon, and Christian would drive the wagon with a team of mules around the surrounding countryside selling shovels, buckets, bolts of cloth, guns, dishes,

harnesses and tools, while taking orders for larger items such as plows and wagons.

Christian would be out for several days or a week, then return to re-load. It was slow-going with the dismally poor roads, but the business boomed. It wasn't long before the twenty-two-year-old Christian, (a pure German, though his family had been in Pennsylvania for 120 years,) was known for forty miles around for he had covered his wagon with striped red, white and blue canvas, and he hung tinkling sleigh bells on the harness and cowbells on the wagon so that when his branch emporium was moving, it set up a musical clatter not to be denied. He was undaunted by bogs, fords, fallen trees, or bad weather. He would go to the most remote farms, plantations and Indian villages.

This merry, strapping, giant boy with unruly, straw-colored hair protruding from under a broad-brimmed black hat, was often smiling or singing in a booming bass voice. His big ruddy face, fringed with a short brown beard, and his bland, light-blue eyes lent a strikingly ingenuous quality to his appearance. Notwithstanding this naïve air, Christian was a good businessman, and also a good showman.

He traveled with Hansel, a large brown dog, who liked to ride on the wagon seat, having learned the trick of jumping on and off the wagon using the wagon wheel as an intermediate step. This big dog had soft brown eyes and like his master, was everybody's friend.

Christian also brought along his fiddle, for he knew many German and American tunes and could give impromptu concerts along the route. Hansel often would join the entertainment with yelps or lugubrious howls. They provided a veritable circus at each stop, what with bells clanging, the brightly-colored canvas, the singing, the howling, the high, nervous energy and insistant rhythm of the violin, and people running from all around to see the merchandise spread out on hinged tables dropped down from the sides of the wagon.

More often than not, Christian and Hansel would get free meals and a place in the barn to make their beds for the night.

Unmarried girls longed to be noticed by this handsome young northerner, while calculating parents weighed his chances for success, but he was not thinking of marriage yet.

The customers in their isolated homes would hear Christian coming and they were always glad for the visit of the personable itinerant merchant who brought news of Moore's Bluff, of the river and all the country around. Many had no money, but since others were prospering, especially the planter families, his sales mounted. There was nothing the Unterdorfs would not undertake to provide.

From Pennsylvania old Peter kept the goods flowing to his sons in Augusta, and in Moore's Bluff through the Mobile warehouse. A lively correspondence kept them informed of new products while they sent him orders and told him of special needs.

Such enterprise could only end in success.