

TUGALOO

a novel by
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Copy # 2, Part II.

ADVENT OF TUGALOO HOUSE

By autumn of 1820, when the ^{Johnsons} had been there for four years, Tugaloo Plantation had taken on a settled and well-ordered air. Roads and fields were clearly-defined. Fences grew longer. When Mordecai bought out several adjacent small-farmers, Simon showed Erasmus how to number and identify the logs of the little cabins. The cabins, then dismantled, were moved to the old Indian village (now the slave quarters) and re-assembled. Thus they had fifteen cabins in the village with Simon and Sophronia still in the old chief's cabin. Now, each young family had its own cabin.

Mordecai was prospering beyond his most sanguine dreams. He decided the time had come to build the new Big House. The many fine lumber trees they had saved were dry and seasoned and if left too much longer in the fields, might be attacked by insects and rot, to say nothing of the damage done by the busy woodpeckers.

Mordecai and Martha had discussed at length where and what the new mansion should be. They had chosen a site with a commanding view near the Pow Wow Oak. At first they thought of building a newer version of old Nansemond House which had started as a large farm house, solid and elaborate, in Georgian style.

Then they saw some of the new plantation houses being put up along the river. The Greek Revival style was sweeping the country. Soon, every planter with any claim to affluence had to have a modified Greek temple in which to live. In the old eastern states, Eighteenth

Century houses were being remodeled into Greek temples. Here in Alabama most of the great plantation houses built before the Civil War would have the pediments and pillars of the Greek temple. So it was at Tugaloo. There were itinerant architects with some fairly standard plans, who, during the next forty years, (the prosperous days of the "Cotton Kingdom,") would go up and down the Southland building plantation houses for the newly-rich planters.

While visiting the Antrim Plantation, the Johnsons had met one such architect who was building a Greek Revival mansion for the nearby Laidley Plantation. They met the architect, Jean-Louis Renaud, son of an old Charleston Huguenot family, at a gathering in the Antrim house. Young Renaud was overseeing the completion of the new building and suggested they all ride over to see it.

The Antrims were making do with their large log house to which they had made several additions, but they came along out of curiosity.

As the Johnsons and Antrims drove their carriage into Laidley Plantation, the first sight of the new house quite took their breath away. The great white pillars gleaming with fresh paint in the morning sun, the symmetry, the restrained classical ornamentation, the bulk of the new house, all this could only dazzle these frontier people who had been living for several years in forest cabins with Indians and wild animals for neighbors. They grew silent contemplating the beauty before them.

Then, when Jean-Louis led them through the high-ceilinged rooms

where walls, cornices and floors shone resplendently with new paint and varnish, Martha was beside herself. She realized she had had enough of living in their dark little cabin at Tugaloo.

"Mordecai," she urged, "This is exactly what we must have! Isn't it a grand sight! Could we afford a house like this? There is so much room, so much light and air, and see the beautiful floors! We could get our furniture finally from Cousin Claiborne. Oh, it would be so delightful in a house like this. I yearn for a house like this. I covet it, I pine for it, I crave it." She was remembering some of the words Sophronia had taught her. "Please, please, Mordecai, let's have a new house just like this!"

Mordecai and the others were much amused by her enthusiasm, but Mordecai also liked the house so well that he was pleased to say, "If you want a house like this, my love, you shall have it!"

Then, after further visiting, Mordecai had talked business with Jean-Louis who finally agreed to come to Tugaloo to build a new Big House for them starting in April 1821.

Jean-Louis first came up to Tugaloo in October to see the site, and make preliminary plans. In April, he would bring along the crew of workmen which he had assembled, and which during the winter would build some small houses in Selma. In April they would be ready for the job at Tugaloo. He had some slave craftsmen whom he hired from their masters, and he had some white workmen also. They would burn brick on the site for the massive vaulted foundations and chimneys. He would send his brick-maker over to look for suitable

clay. Once they had decided they wanted the new house to face west, he staked out the site so that before April Mordecai could have his men excavate the basement and foundation area to a depth of twelve feet.

Jean-Louis had a book of plans and elevations which they and the Ramseys carefully perused for days. Mordecai and Martha decided to have a house pretty much like the one they had seen but incorporating some good features of other houses they knew.

Jean-Louis, a small man with bright, intelligent black eyes, inspired confidence, as well he might, since he had studied architecture in both London and Paris, and was a master-craftsman in his own right. Though only thirty-three, he had designed and built many houses including a few in the new Greek-Revival fashion. He knew all about materials and tools. Riding with Mordecai to see the available timber, he marked trees he wanted especially and showed Maximus how to whip-saw out the beams and planks they would need. He said he would come over every month through the winter to oversee the preparations. He would order a load of specially-milled lumber and moulding from a new saw-mill at the Falls of the Chattahoochee. He knew of Unterdorf's New Emporium which he said could provide them with the finest panelling, paint, doors, windows, and brass and iron hardware from Philadelphia. Mordecai advanced money for Jean-Louis' commission, and paid for these initial purchases. Everything was going to be first quality.

Martha was filled with joy thinking and planning for the new house. She had had a fourth child in August (another little girl named Jane,) and the double cabin seemed too small for them now. Randy and Louise had a baby girl, Sarah, about the same time so Louise was able to nurse both new babies as she had done with her own little Becky and Martha's older daughter, Laura Lee. But all these babies were too much for the cabin.

There would be no end of room in the new Big House. The ceilings would be high--fifteen feet on the ground floor, twelve feet on the second floor, and the numerous rooms would be commodious. The ground floor would have a great hall running sixty feet from the front to the rear of the T-shaped house with a curving staircase to the second floor at the side. The rear protrusion of the house would have a two-story gallery on three sides and the front would have the great two-story Greek portico with four white pillars surmounted by a pediment. Windows and doors would also be pedimented.

On the ground floor they would have two large parlors with wide doors between to be thrown open for parties. On the other side of the great hall would be a twenty-five foot square dining room and a serving room. The kitchen, as at most plantations, would be a separate building of brick about one hundred feet from the Big House but joined with a covered gallery. This would reduce the danger of fire.

On the second floor would be four large bedrooms and four smaller

bedrooms arranged around another large central hall. There would be four fireplaces on each floor.

Then on the third floor where the ceilings sloped under the roof, they would finish several small bedrooms for the servants or guests, and have space for more if necessary.

The whole structure would have a braced heavy-timber mortise and tenon frame and would sit on an elaborate vaulted brick foundation and basement.

Mordecai decided they would have a wooden office building opposite the kitchen and that one end of the brick kitchen building could be a spinning and weaving room for the women. Later, to use some of their great store of perishable lumber, he would decide to have Jean-Louis build a new wooden overseer's house a couple hundred yards to the west in a clump of trees. Thus they would all have easy access to the little creek that meandered down the slope toward the river. When they had the bricks in the springtime, he would have several wells dug and lined with brick so their water supply would be assured.

Later, when the Johnsons had moved into the new Big House, they would move the little school into the double cabin, for Sophronia was still teaching Martha and Louise, sometimes Kader, and starting Martha's little boys. She enjoyed the teaching, and had also accepted three young Grantley boys who came down on horseback each day accompanied by a black man from their father's plantation one mile

north. They were all under ten years old. The black man would leave them and return for them in four hours. Mr. Grantley paid Sophronia for her tutoring and she was planning to conduct a regular school for the white children of the neighborhood. She tutored Louise and Kader when the Grantley children were not there, since it was known that Frederick Grantley, their father, was outspokenly opposed to teaching blacks. Sophronia and Mordecai decided Grantley need not know what they did at Tugaloo.

Increase production, so they built a new more scalding machine, enabling three crews to work simultaneously. The young men would take turns doing the work and they would have contests between the crews to see who could produce the most good plates in a day. Forteau and Simon would reward the winner with extra time off or with special food and clothing.

The piles of prepared lumber grew through the winter, and periodically, Jean-Louis would visit with his lists of what would be required. They could make wide, thick planks, or narrow, thin boards--whatever was needed, and they were also making vast piles of shingles.

When the building crew arrived in April, Marueau didn't want them held up for lack of material. They must have plenty of four buildings--the Big House, the office, the kitchen, and the overseer's house. The Big House and the overseer's house would have brick bases and the kitchen would also have a brick storage cellar for foodstuffs.

RAW MATERIALS

Maximus built a sturdy scaffolding about ten feet high which would support the great logs. Then, with a "pit saw," about eight feet long, operated by two men, one above and one under the scaffolding, great planks could be sawn lengthwise from the logs. This was slow, laborious work. First the logs were squared and then the squared timbers marked with straight lines above and below to guide the sawyers.

It quickly became apparent to Mordecai that they would have to increase production, so they built a couple more scaffolds enabling three crews to work simultaneously. The young men would take turns doing the work and they would have contests between the crews to see who could produce the most good planks in a day. Mordecai and Simon would reward the winners with extra time off or with special food and clothing.

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Jean-Louis and his brick-maker had found satisfactory clay on the plantation in several places near the little Tugaloo Creek that trickled by their cabins. This was fortunate since it needn't be hauled a long distance. Moreover, ^{Mordecai} realized that after the clay was dug out, he could let the pits fill up with water to create ponds for bathing, for watering the stock, and for the ducks.

Starting in April, they would build kilns, then burn the brick on site, then proceed with building the foundations. So the lumber wouldn't be needed before June.

MAKING THE BRICK

It was late in March, 1821, after a winter that had scurried by, and when most of the new cotton crop had been planted, that Jean-Louis drove up to Tugaloo with three wagons, bringing his four-man brick-making crew, their tools and materials. They pitched a tent for temporary living quarters, but a new log cabin was begun immediately for the workmen, since their job would last for several years. After the brick-makers were through, there would be masons, then carpenters, plasterers, painters, each in their time.

As the pressure of spring planting eased, Mordecai and Simon detailed various of the Johnson blacks to help with the new construction jobs. Simon realized that the young blacks liked variety in their work so he would shift them back and forth from the fields to the construction site, giving them some choice in their day's work.

Automatically, Maximus, now twenty-five and a highly-skilled carpenter, joined the new activity. Also, Duke and Kader, who were twenty-one and fourteen, generally worked with Maximus as they learned the carpentry craft. Of course the pit-sawing of planks continued, but Maximus more often than not now acted as foreman, seeing that others did these jobs properly.

Through the winter the Johnson blacks had dug large mounds of clay from the sites chosen by Jean-Louis, since it was known that the winter frosts and weathering improved the clay for the molding process. These heaps and mounds were near the little creek.

Jack Grant, a free black man husky and tall, was the chief brick-maker. Jack, who was thirty-five, had worked for Jean-Louis for several years, during which time he managed to buy his freedom from his former master. With Jean-Louis' help, Jack hoped soon to buy freedom for his wife and three sons who lived on a plantation fifty miles east. In a few days when Jean-Louis returned to Selma to complete his other jobs, he left Jack Grant as boss of the brick works.

Jack lost no time getting his work started. The brick yard and all its activities would be centered near the creek and the clay mounds. They set up a long, sturdy molders' bench, capable of holding great weight, where the bricks would be hand-molded. Stations were prepared at the bench so three molders could work simultaneously. At each molder's station was a four-foot-square

stand to hold a pile of prepared wet clay called "pug."

Helpers using hand-barrows would keep the stands supplied with pug. Maximus built a number of these hand-barrows (flat, square frames with four projecting handles) on which two men could carry a load of wet clay from the "soak pit" where it was prepared, up ramps to the molders' stands.

These men were not aware that they were engaging in an art that went back to the dawn of civilization. Babylon had been built of bricks five thousand years before and some scientists believe men were making bricks twelve thousand years ago.

The "pug," (a new term they learned,) was the brick-maker's raw material. The clay was kneaded, worked and tempered with water until it was just the right consistency. At the base of the mounds of weathered clay they had created shallow pits called "soak pits," into which clay and water could be introduced as needed. The mixing and kneading was accomplished by the blacks treading and hopping about with their bare feet. They also brought over some ox teams which they drove around and around in the soak pit. Jack Grant kept an eye on this process so that when the clay was just right, he would have it carried on the hand-barrows to the molders.

Each molder had a large box of sand, fine like table salt, and they had found suitable sand in the pine forest up behind the Burial Ground. From his pile of "pug" the molder would pull a

lump of material, throw some sand over the lump, work the lump into a "warp" which he would then throw into the mold. They had mold-frames, open top and bottom, each of which would form four bricks, and which had handles on the end for transporting.

The bench was kept covered with sand. The mold was immersed in water then coated inside with sand and finally the four openings filled with clay, the excess clay being removed from the top.

The sand kept the new bricks from sticking in the mold or to the bench top.

The helpers would take the molds with the four new bricks to a drying yard nearby where they soon learned how to arrange the bricks in rows on the ground without damaging them. The molds were then dipped in water, cleaned and returned to the molder to repeat the process.

There was much excitement on the plantation as the great new project got under way. Everyone wanted to take part--men, women and children, and they made an extended picnic out of it. More often than not they were singing, dancing, hopping in rhythm while tossing bits of mud at one another, for what human has not wanted to play in a mud puddle? Even Mordecai himself jumped into the soak pit one day. That was the day he had asked Chief Tugaloo and the Indian villagers over for a pow-wow feast so they might see Mordecai's big new lodge take shape. Mordecai's sons had been begging to be allowed to play in the mud hole. Now he, his sons

and many of the black and Indian children had a fine time wallowing in the mud under the warm May sun.

Chief Tugaloo knew Mordecai well enough now so that he wasn't surprised by this unseemly loss of dignity in the plantation owner.

After the mud bath, the participants lay down in the clear water of the creek to wash the mud away. While it was a very muddy year at Tugaloo, still all the people may have been cleaner than usual since they all had daily baths in the evening when the muddy work was over for the day.

In those days, bathing, even among the wealthy, was not common. William Hone, an English writer of the period wrote, "They that bathe in May, will soon be laid in clay," meaning they would die and be buried after the severe shock of a bath in May. At Tugaloo that May of 1821, the performance was reversed, with the people being first "laid in clay," then hopping forth to bathe!

It was said of the first Queen Elizabeth that she bathed once a month whether she required it or not! But see how much more fastidious she was than her Twelfth-Century predecessor King John, who bathed only thrice a year. Such attitudes toward bathing, even among the wealthy classes, were common until the mid-Nineteenth Century. In the American Republic as in western Europe in 1821, the importance of bathing was generally ignored. The new Tugaloo House would have no bathroom, no toilet, no plumbing. Indeed the White House, home of the American presidents, would not get bathrooms

until the middle of the century. In an excess of delicacy, the wealthy might bathe occasionally in portable tubs filled laboriously by servants with water heated in fireplaces.

But let us return to our story. Jack Grant had shown them how to lay out the new-formed bricks to start drying in rows on the ground. First the bricks were laid flat-side down. After a few days they were set on edge, then, when hard enough to handle, they were dressed with a knife to remove imperfections, then stacked loosely in long, low walls open at the sides but covered against rain with boards or a kind of thatch. Later when the burnt brick became available, it was used as the first tier of these walls to protect the soft clay from rain and ground moisture.

The sun and wind dried the bricks sufficiently in several weeks to be ready for burning in the kiln. The brick-makers were fortunate in having everything necessary at hand--the clay, the sand, the water, the space, and also they had unlimited fuel, since they were just next to Maximus' lumber yard where branches and discarded pieces of hard wood lumber, thoroughly dry, were stacked in enormous piles.

Jack Grant and his workers built the first kiln of unburnt brick with the first firing early in June. Fireboxes were built around the rectangular kiln with flues to carry the great heat through the bricks stacked openly inside for burning. Once the openings were plastered over with raw clay mud, the fires were started, first with

gentle heat to carry off lingering moisture in the bricks, then a hot fire, then an alternating heating and slaking which they continued four days and nights. The voracious fires required astounding amounts of fuel, but Mordecai was happy to see the remains of the forest being put to good use.

At last Jack let the fires die, though production of raw bricks was continuing at top speed. Then, after five days cooling, the day came when they opened the kiln to see the first result of all of their work. The new-fired bricks were brought out--beautiful, rosy-red, well-formed, some partly glazed. Everyone was excited. Jack and the others had not known for certain how well the local clay would work.

Now, with the new-fired bricks, they built two more kilns. When the second batch of bricks was ready, (a big batch from all three kilns,) Jean-Louis' masons arrived to start building the foundations.

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS

Excavation by that time had been completed at all four sites which Jean-Louis had outlined with stakes. Now they brought over loads of limestone from the outcropping at the west side of the plantation. The stone, mixed with cement mortar, was dumped into the deepest trenches to make broad footings for the brick foundations. Soon, the masons were laying the first courses of brick. Jean-Louis was spending more of his time at Tugaloo now

making certain the foundations, especially for the Big House, were done properly. The masons had considerable experience and they had only recently done the job at the Laidley Plantation where the new house was quite similar to this one. But Jean-Louis took his job as architect seriously--he was the "chief-builder," the designer, and he was responsible to see that it was all built with the best materials and the best workmanship. The masons were skilled slaves whom he hired from their owners. He paid their masters about two hundred dollars a year each for their services and the slaves got small additional wages for themselves. Jack Grant had managed to buy his own freedom by scrupulously saving these little wages. But the other slaves either belonged to masters who would not sell them, or they failed to save their money, preferring to spend it on fine clothing or little gifts for women they met on their jobs.

Jack Grant, with his special and highly-developed skills, was paid three hundred fifty dollars a year, which, as a freedman, he could keep for himself. He was being helped by Jean-Louis in buying the freedom of his family. His former owner had agreed to sell Grant's family for nine hundred dollars--six hundred for his wife and one hundred each for the three small boys. But the owner, in need of cash, had said if Jack could find the money before Christmas, he could get the whole family for eight hundred dollars--a bargain, so to speak. So Jean-Louis had said he

would advance Jack's 1822 pay so that by year's end Jack would have enough to attain his goal. In return, Jack had agreed to continue working for Jean-Louis for at least the next five years.

When Jack had finished his work for the day, he would lie on his rough bunk in the workers' cabin thinking of how it would be when he and his family were reunited. As it was now, he could get away only for brief visits two or three times a year when Jean-Louis didn't need his services. He would always carry his freedom paper with him since there was a real danger he could be caught and returned to slavery. Some unscrupulous whites would think nothing of catching him and selling him in Mobile or New Orleans--freedom paper notwithstanding. It was a risk taking that fifty-mile trip east in those days when a black man alone was usually thought to be a run-away.

So Jack would lie there thinking how, in a few months time, he would bring his family over to join him and they could all live together, maybe in a cabin all their own. His oldest son, whom they called "Jackson,"(because he was Jack's son,) was nine years old and longed to be with his father and learn his father's craft. So it would be wonderful when they were all together--Jackson could be with him through the day and the boy would learn to be a brick-maker like his father.

By late summer, Jean-Louis ended the brick-making when they were certain the supply was ample for all the jobs. Then the brick-

makers joined the masons to get all the masonry in place before frost. They completed the thick, vaulted foundations for the Big House and the footings for the fireplaces, the chimneys and pillars. The higher brick work would be completed next year after the house took shape. The kitchen building stone was completed to the roofline along with its great fireplace and brick chimney, and the less ponderous brick basement and foundations were finished for the ten-room, two-story overseer's house and the office building.

Maximus had been busy for months building scaffoldings and supports for these jobs. Duke and Kader were his helpers. When the kitchen walls were completed, Maximus and his helpers built the roof structure, then shingled the building, so that by Christmas it was nearly finished. He had installed windows, doors, ceilings, woodwork, and a heavy plank floor.

In September Jean-Louis had brought over his three carpenters-- two skilled black carpenters whom he hired from their masters, (since Jean-Louis didn't own any slaves,) and a big German-American master-carpenter who, though born in the Valley of Virginia, was, like the Unterdorfs, from an old "Pennsylvania Dutch" family.

This Solomon Schneider seemed to know everything there was to know about carpentry, the different woods and their uses. Jean-Louis had total confidence in him so that Solomon was the boss of all the carpentry operations when Jean-Louis wasn't there.

These carpenters had helped Maximus install his first window, and with hanging doors and raising roof-beams. Then they left him to complete the kitchen building. Maximus was a good carpenter, but being young and less experienced than they, he learned from them.

Solomon and the others started building the overseer's house with Maximus working with them much of the time since Mordecai wanted him to gain valuable experience. Duke and Kader continued to work with their older brother.

The normal agricultural activities of the plantation were now a well-organized routine. Each year the crops were better and bigger. The ~~big~~ garden produced more than they could use, and Mordecai allowed each black family to tend small private gardens and keep pigs and chickens near their own cabins. Everybody was well-fed and fairly-contented and their contacts with the outside world were minimal. This was the beginning of the glory days of the "Cotton Kingdom," when the planters gained unparalleled wealth and power.

The Black Belt land around Selma was occupied and much altered by these planters. The deer retreated as the forest cover was destroyed. Now when Primus shot a deer, he had to go some distance to hilly forest land.

The Indians, like the deer, were puzzled and fearful as they saw the changes in their ancient environment.

DESPAIRING DEPARTURE OF THE CREEK VILLAGE

Though he had not taken part in the Indian War, Chief Tugaloo discovered that even his own village land had been lost to the whites, and some of the settlers had been threatening his people with guns, telling them they must move. Tugaloo came over to talk with Mordecai under the Pow-Wow Oak.

Mordecai was greatly upset when he heard of Tugaloo's plight. They had been good neighbors and friends. So Mordecai rode down to Cahaba (then the Alabama capital) eight miles south, to see if anything could be done for the Creek villagers. But white officials, both federal and state, reflecting the predatory greed of the whites at that time, insisted Tugaloo's villagers must go.

"The Indians were on land ceded for white settlement. They must move to the area in southeast Alabama reserved for the Indians.

It would be even better if they moved out west of the Mississippi," these officials said, "then the whites could have all the land!"

Mordecai sought out different influential persons, even writing to his senators, but he soon realized the Indians had almost no advocates, aside from himself, among the whites.

With great sorrow he told Tugaloo that the Indians would probably have to quit their village and join their cousins who lived over toward Ft. Mitchell. At last, Tugaloo and the old ones in his tribe decided they had no choice and must go. When Tugaloo asked to borrow a wagon from Mordecai to move their belongings and food, Mordecai gave him two wagons, two ox teams, and several horses.

And so one day that autumn, led by a solemn-faced Tugaloo, now somehow bent, smaller and older, the forlorn little Indian band with their dogs, their horses, the two wagons heaped high with their moveable possessions, filed slowly past the bustling plantation, the old defeated way of life meeting for one last time the new vibrant order. Mordecai and Martha had gifts of food and smoked hams for them.

Then, once more they sat under the great Pow-Wow Oak. Conversation was difficult with Mordecai knowing only too well the feelings of the Indians who were being forced to desert forever the home of their ancestors.

In the formal way they always addressed each other, Mordecai said, "I regret I am unable to help you keep your old home, but if there is a way I can make your move easier, you must say so."

Tugaloo smoked his pipe and stared at the trees by the Burial Ground. He had deliberately faced away from all the furious activity of the new buildings where Mordecai seemed bent on changing the earth itself. There the little stream was scarred with muddy ponds, the trees hacked to pieces, the ground trampled hard and bare, with piles of earth and gaping holes where the foundations would go. It seemed the Great Spirit had forgotten this place.

Tugaloo remembered the ancient tranquility that had reigned here. His people had lived here happily for many generations, maybe forever, although they had a legend that the Creek Nation had come

here from the west. They lived in harmony with the forest and the land. They were part of a scheme, not trying to alter the work of the Great Spirit. It had always been so, and only five years earlier he had thought it would always remain so. He thought of old friends, old warriors, grand-parents, people who had known this place. Now they were mostly in the Burial Ground.

He sighed once, twice, then recalled Mordecai's offer. "You have been a good friend and we have had some fine feasts and pow-wows, but the white man's ways are different from those of the Creek people. There is one last thing you can do for us."

Then he asked if Mordecai would permit Rector to go with them. Two years before, Rector had sought and received Mordecai's permission to marry Tugaloo's niece, Ocmulana. After they were married, Rector lived at the Indian village but still worked at the plantation. Now he had a little one-year-old son who was a grandson of Tugaloo's dead brother. Rector had been adopted into the tribe and they gave him the name "Pulabamu." His little son was called "Pulallee."

Mordecai, quick to show his friendship for Tugaloo, agreed to free Rector, who had been a good and valuable worker during the years in Alabama. So Rector was given freedom papers.

Now the Indians visited for a last time the old Burial Ground, reminding Mordecai of his own family's parting from Nansemond.

When at last they were ready to go, all the Johnsons, white and black, and the Ramseys, were gathered to wave good-bye. Not just Mordecai had tears on his face, though he sensed better than the others the historic melancholy of that day. Mordecai noticed that Tallega and the strong, young black warrior, Pulabamu, were now leading the group. Tugaloo sat hunched on one of the wagon seats, his eyes downcast, and thus they slowly made their way down the trail to the river.

Through the winter months Jean-Louis had the carpenters concentrate on the overseer's house now that the kitchen building was virtually complete. It would be a much larger house than Simon and Sophronia wanted or needed, but Mordecai tactfully pointed out that they "might have visitors" and in the future, some overseer might have a large family. Mordecai wanted to take advantage of the presence of the master-builders and the great supply of fine lumber. Never again would there be an opportunity like this.

So the big, ten-room, two-story house took shape with its wide galleries and some Greek Revival refinements in the window and door treatment, inside and out. It had its own brick kitchen attached at the rear and Mordecai had a well dug and lined with brick near the kitchen gallery. There were four brick fireplaces and chimneys.

By March 1822, the plasterers and painters had completed their work since it had been decided to rough-in, but not finish the four bedrooms on the second floor. Sophronia said the six rooms of the ground floor would be more than they needed.

They had talked about the Johnsons moving into the overseer's house since it seemed improper to the Ramseys that the overseer should have a fine new house while the plantation owner lived in a humble cabin. But Mordecai and Martha said they could wait another year or so until the Big House was completed, and they didn't care to move twice. In March, therefore, the Ramseys left the old

chief's cabin and moved to their handsome new house. Then Jack Grant, who had succeeded in buying his family, brought them to Tugaloo and they moved into the vacant chief's cabin.

Now the carpenters and all the workers concentrated on the Big House. The site blossomed with scaffolding, derricks and booms with ropes, block and tackle, and ox teams for hoisting heavy beams to their places. Each day the stout mortise and tenon frame grew, solid and square.

When the walls reached the roof line, the masons built the fireplaces and chimneys. The carpenters had the roof timbers in place by August 1822, then the hipped roof was completed since they wanted the new building sheltered from the autumn rains. The roof had four dormer windows to the front and two to the rear. The great portico area was a mass of scaffolding since the four pillars which would support the Greek pediment required brick cores. These were completed by the masons before the carpenters built the pediment, the elaborate cornices and roof.

Now the carpenters sheathed in the walls with clapboards. The rains had started but were intermittent, and there were plenty of jobs inside and out to keep them busy. One week, Christian Unterdorf had delivered several wagon-loads of finished building materials that they had ordered from Pennsylvania. These were their "eight over eight" double-hung window sash, their full-

length French windows for the ground floor, their brass and iron hardware, and some doors, special panelling, paint components from which they would mix their own paint, and hogsheads of lime for the plaster.

From the sawmill at the Falls of the Chattahoochee had come a load of heavy louvered shutters that would be hung at all the windows and doors. Also the mill sent specially profiled and finished molding as ordered by Jean-Louis, to be used in building the wainscots and the restrained but handsome cornices, capitals and pilasters that would distinguish the windows, doors, and the house itself. All these wooden materials were stacked inside the new Big House on the newly-installed, rough-plank sub floors.

There the painters applied priming coats of paint to all the wood.

All Jean-Louis' workmen were busy there now, using their primary skills when required, but with sufficient versatility to do other construction jobs as well. The brick workers would remain until the spring of 1823, when they would move to another construction site east of Selma, where Jean-Louis would build yet another plantation house. Meanwhile, they worked with the carpenters and painters, and they also dug wells, lining them with brick.

When Jack Grant, who had heard from Kader and Duke about Sophronia's reading classes, asked her if he might join them, she readily agreed. Until the Grants departed in March of 1823, she taught Jack and also his wife and son, Jackson. The Grants were free blacks

now, but the white slave owners generally opposed teaching reading to any blacks, slave or free. Laws were enacted against teaching blacks, but as before, Sophronia, with Mordecai's acquiescence, continued to believe that a literate Negro was a net improvement over an illiterate Negro. So the school went on, now meeting in one of the big bright rooms at the new overseer's house. If Sophronia had her way, all the blacks would go to a proper school, but she was enough of a pragmatist to recognize what was possible in the circumstances. So she went on sowing little seeds of learning here and there in the intellectual wasteland fostered by the slave culture.

Everyday, Martha and Mordecai would visit the new house to see it take shape. Their sons, George and Stephen, now eight and six years old, when they were not asleep or in Sophronia's classroom, loved to be at the Big House, climbing ladders, peering down wells or out dormer windows, getting spattered with paint or showered with sawdust. The workmen were uneasy when the boys were there, fearing they might get hurt, but nothing and no one could keep them away, not Mordecai, not Martha, not Louise. Often they were followed by the two inseparable little five-year-old girls, Becky and Laura Lee. Louise had more control over these two, usually managing to lure them back to safety with promises of molasses cookies or other delights.

The house became safer when Solomon Schneider built the fine curving staircase from the hall to the second floor and then the less-imposing stairway to the top floor. The stairways were roughed-in, and since there would be much traffic up and down of workmen carrying material, the banisters would be added later as part of the finishing.

The carpenters installed the wainscoting and ceiling cornices, the windows and doors with their Greek pilasters, pediments and architraves. Then the plasterers were busy. Jack and the brick-masons were skilled plasterers also, knowing how to mix and apply the material. After the finish coats, fires were lit in the new fireplaces, with windows kept open to hasten the drying.

As the great job neared completion, oak floors smoothed and sanded in random-width boards, were laid throughout the house and up the stairway and the walnut banisters were installed.

Fine Empire-style wall paper imported from France, had been ordered from New Orleans and brought up the river to Unterdorf's on one of the new river steamboats. The painters and plasterers now became paper-hangers, finishing their work early in March.

The four square brick pillars had been cased with cypress planks and painted white like the remainder of the house. The window sash and shutters were a deep, forest green. Tugaloo House made a beautiful and impressive sight, improving in the following years when the kilns were removed, the grounds plowed and landscaped and Martha's rose garden re-established. (She had brought some of

her favorite roses in tubs from Nansemond.) The little Tugaloo Creek with its new ponds flowed clear once more.

The carpentry crew after completing the Big House, built Mordecai's office building in three weeks, since it was a simple structure with the brick work already finished.

Then the time came for the builders to go. Since they had made friends among the plantation people who had enjoyed the diversion of the building activities, a melancholy air hung over Tugaloo.

Jack Grant and his family were especially sorry to leave. They had all profited from the few months in Sophronia's school. It was improbable they would find anyone else who would help them. Also the reception given free Negroes by strange whites ranged usually from indifferent to downright hostile. Even the slaves, ever fearful of what the whites would think, were guarded in their relations with the free blacks. So the Grants had their freedom such as it was, a scant freedom in isolation. True, Jack's great skill in his craft gave him an advantage. He could do well what most men could not do. Whites grudgingly granted him their respect. But once his job was done, the whites didn't want him around, since they thought he gave the slaves "uppity" ideas.

Working for Jean-Louis was not bad, since the architect valued Jack's exceptional abilities and his vigorous, intelligent approach to the work. Jean-Louis effectively protected his workers, especially Jack, from many of the unpleasant realities of black life in slave days. He knew if he lost Jack that he might not find another

brick-maker and his business would halt. That's why he helped get freedom for Jack's family, and now, at the new work site, he made sure Jack would have a family cabin of his own. Further, Jean-Louis planned to raise Jack's annual wages.

Sophronia had bought some books from Christian Unterdorf's traveling emporium. She quickly read Scott's Ivanhoe and James Fennimore Cooper's The Spy (just newly published,) and when the Grants were leaving, she gave these books to them (along with a little dictionary) and urged them not to forget their reading.

In the strange quiet that followed the departure of the crews, the blacks moved the Johnson furniture and possessions into the new Big House. Seeing their little pittance of furniture from the cabin made not the slightest effect in the great mansion, Martha collapsed with laughter. True, the four-poster bed looked grand in the new bedroom on the second floor, but the great rooms downstairs were mostly empty. Months ago they had sent a letter to Cousin Claiborne asking him to ship their old furniture from Nansemond. They didn't know when it would arrive, but Claiborne wrote he would try to get it on a coastal vessel going to Mobile. Although there was almost no furniture, the house was a sensory delectation with its rich colors, its light and shadow and its fine clean smell of new wood, plaster, paint and varnish. In the great dining room they had a tiny table and a few chairs. Upstairs there were also beds for the children and for Louise and her daughters

Becky and Sarah.

Now Betty and Bertha were cooking in the new kitchen building. Some of the younger black women would bring the meals to the serving room next to the dining room, then the Johnsons would be served. No one failed to see the humor of the setting--the great shining room, lit by three or four candles, and lost in the center, the rough little table.

But the building of the Big House had restored the enormous social and economic gulf between the blacks and their master. Gone was the kind of democracy that had developed when they all traveled together, getting wet and soiled together, living in humble cabins, sharing the same food and celebrations. It would never be like that again. The Big House was for whites only. Celebrations there would be for ruling-class whites invited from other plantations. Most of these white masters, who would be friends of the Johnsons were less indulgent than Mordecai, some were downright cruel to their blacks. All the planters were united in an ironclad system to keep blacks forever in bondage.

In all its imposing beauty, Tugaloo House, like the other great houses across the South, etched out for all to see the vast inequities of the slave system. For the black workers, hovels and unending labor, for the whites, mansions and leisure.

The first steam riverboats had chugged up the Alabama River in 1821, stopping at Selma landing. All the way, with their noise,

their showers of sparks and clouds of black smoke, they attracted the attention and admiration of the whites and not a little fear and amazement of the blacks and Indians. Some had even staged an unintended show by exploding and sinking when their boilers were overtaxed.

It was one of these river stern-wheelers that brought the old Nansemond furniture one day late in 1823. Mordecai and Erasmus with a crew of blacks hitched up the two Conestogas and brought the furniture out to Tugaloo House. They found the furniture in relatively good condition but in need of waxing and polishing after standing neglected in the old house for nearly seven years.

Young Jeff Gallagher, Claiborne's overseer, (and little Becky's absentee father,) had married soon after the Johnson's departure and he moved into Nansemond House, but used only four rooms on the ground floor. The other rooms with their fine Eighteenth Century mahogany, cherry and walnut furniture, some from England, some from Philadelphia, were simply closed up.

Claiborne and Jeff had carefully crated the furniture for the difficult journey to Alabama. It had gone part way by wagon, part by barge down the Neuse River to New Bern, and then by coastal sailboat around Florida to Mobile. Now, as the old pieces were moved into place in the new house under Martha's direction, it was clear they needed wax and hand-rubbing to make them glow

as did the house itself.

This was the kind of job that Bertha knew well from her long training. But Bertha was now sixty-two. They had decided she would be the housekeeper of the new mansion as Sophronia had recommended, but Martha also chose Ellen to be Bertha's first assistant, training to take Bertha's job in a few years when Bertha would be too old. Bertha and Daddy Handle had left several older married children in North Carolina, but Ellen, now twenty-five, was the oldest of their daughters who had come to Alabama. Back at Cypress Creek Plantation, Ellen had often helped her mother in the plantation house and was always considered a "house slave," that aristocratic and enviable state among the blacks. House slaves, always thrown in contact with the white owners, were commonly better treated, better fed, clothed and housed than the field hands. Not infrequently they had some white blood and with possibly a bit of haphazard education, their English was better. Ellen and Bertha, as well as Louise, had learned to read and write in Sophronia's school.

At the rear of the new mansion, behind the big dining room, was a large service and pantry room, and behind that, opening on the rear gallery, were two small servant's bedrooms. Bertha and Daddy Handle moved into one of these.

Louise was moved into one of the small second-floor bedrooms so she would be near the Johnson children who were in her charge.

Louise's children were supposed to sleep in their grandparent's cabin but in actual fact little Becky and Sarah could often be found sleeping with their mother in the Big House, and sometimes they would even sleep in the bedroom of the Johnson daughters, Laura Lee and Jane. Martha didn't object very strenuously to these arrangements since Laura Lee was much happier when her dusky-skinned playmates were nearby.

Louise's husband, Randy Handle, (who had not been consulted,) wasn't pleased to have his wife away from his cabin at night, and since he was not allowed to sleep at the Big House, he and Louise had to fit in conjugal visits at odd, quiet hours of the afternoons. But Randy found there were certain little emoluments for those married to house slaves. Louise brought him candy, cake, and half-bottles of wine from the master's table. Randy decided to make the best of a situation he couldn't change.

Ellen and Primus were moved into the second little servant's bedroom next to Bertha. In the great vaulted basement, they placed several pallets for various blacks whose services might be required at one time or another. Of course, the slave quarters were nearby but a young black was useful at the Big House to carry messages around the plantation or for fetching the master's horse.

In those first years when Tugaloo House was occupied, Kader, now seventeen and still a favorite with all the Johnsons, would sleep in the basement.

Ellen's light-skinned son by Claiborne Ingram, little Milton, (he had been named by Sophronia,) who was now six years old, would also sleep there with his big yellow dog, Grandon. Milton could take messages and recently was allowed to lead horses. Sometimes the boy would wake up in the night, surrounded by the cavernous blackness of the basement, and he would lead Grandon up the steps to the servants' room and then feel his way into his mother's bedroom to pass the remainder of the night in his mother's bed.

In the daytime, Kader was working as carpenter's helper with his brother, Duke, who had become the plantation carpenter, when the architect Jean-Louis hired the services of Maximus. Maximus went with Jean-Louis' building crew and since he belonged to Mordecai, Jean-Louis paid Mordecai two hundred fifty dollars a year, plus an additional one hundred dollars to Maximus himself.

The carpentry jobs remaining at the plantation were simple, such as fence-building, or making lumber from the trees they continued to cut as the fields expanded. From time to time, Mordecai would send them into Unterdorf's with a load of newly-cut lumber. There was a ready market because of much building activity.

Duke built small log bridges on the road to Selma and he built a covered passage from the brick kitchen to the Big House. This passage was paved with bricks from the dismantled kilns and Martha planted jasmine vines to climb the supporting pillars.

Maximus stayed with Jean-Louis for four years. He learned all that Solomon Schneider could teach him, and for the last year became chief carpenter when Solomon decided to return to Winchester, Virginia. Duke and Kader each spent a year working with Maximus on Jean-Louis' building crew. Mordecai wanted his workmen to be skilled, since they became far more valuable and could be rented out at premium wages.

When at last they all came home, Tugaloo had some of the finest carpenters in the county--the start of a tradition with the Johnson blacks, for some of each generation thereafter mastered the craft.

Maximus had married an Indian girl named "Nolachee," and thought of trying to buy his freedom from Mordecai, but after he and his wife lived at Tugaloo for a year, they decided to remain. Maximus had learned from Jack Grant that being a free black in Alabama wasn't an altogether attractive option. Mordecai agreed not to send Maximus far from the plantation. Sometimes he would work in Selma or on a neighboring plantation but generally, he could be home at night. As a skilled worker, Maximus got special treatment.

It was 1827 when they came home. Some memorable events had happened during those years. There were, of course, many new babies,

mostly healthy, but Martha had two still-born infants in 1824 and 1827.

In 1825, Mordecai had declared a holiday for the entire plantation when the great revolutionary hero, the Marquis de La Fayette stopped in Selma. La Fayette was making a triumphal fiftieth anniversary tour of the nation. Almost all the blacks and whites from Tugaloo visited Selma that day to see the arrival of the French nobleman. La Fayette disembarked at the Selma landing and was taken to Mike Woodall's Hotel at Green Street and Water Avenue to be entertained by all the local gentry. It was a happening all would remember for the rest of their lives.

That autumn, old Morgan and Minerva both sickened and died to become the first of the Johnson blacks in the Burial Ground. It was remembered later as the "Year of La Fayette." "Morgan died in the Year of La Fayette," they would say.

The following year, a great flood covered the low-lying land along the river. As the waters withdrew, stagnant ponds bred clouds of mosquitoes, bringing a widespread malarial epidemic. Mordecai thought they would be safe at Tugaloo but he was wrong. The terrible fever seemed a scourge from heaven, aimed especially at the children. Many of their neighbors quit their plantations, taking the steamers upriver, hoping the hilly country in northeastern Alabama would be free from the disease.

At first, all seemed well at Tugaloo. They had heard that the fever was receding. Then one day, Fred and Lady's nine-year-old son, Albert, developed the high fever that they feared. He was a healthy boy, but he died on the third day despite all they could do. Everyone was uneasy, since many had died in the Selma area. For a couple days, all seemed well, then four more black children were deathly sick. Then three others. Only one would recover.

Mordecai and Martha discussed sending their own children upriver, but before they decided what to do, little Laura Lee complained of not feeling well. She was flushed with high fever and soon delirious. They had some quinine from Unterdorf's, but Laura Lee wouldn't take it--her teeth closed tightly together.

Louise, Martha and Ellen hovered at the bedside, trying somehow to comfort the suffering child. Becky, who had been told to go elsewhere, kept peeking in at her friend, her little, fair face a tale of fear and woe. "Mama, is Laura Lee going to be all right?"

Then Louise would say, "Becky, you run out to the kitchen and stay with Grandma Betty. We's doin' all we can for Miss Laura, but she be awful sick."

Becky would start downstairs for the kitchen, then, as though drawn by a magnet, she would return to the post outside Laura's room. They had moved little Jane down with Bertha. All the world was upset. Twice, while Laura Lee lay dying, her eyes seemed to focus on her mother and she whispered, "Mama, can Becky stay here tonight?

"Where is Becky? Please Mama, I want Becky."

After a couple days, she died. Martha and the others collapsed in a rush of weeping. Duke, who had just made a coffin for Albert, now had to make another.

When they had dressed little Laura in a silk nightgown and placed her in the coffin, her older brother, George, now twelve, started having alternate chills and fever. They knew he had the disease, now growing familiar. Then, to complete the desolation of Mordecai and Martha, their second son, Stephen, became deathly ill. Three more days and both boys were taken. Only little Jane survived of all their children! They had built all their hopes for the plantation and the future of their family around their healthy, fine-looking sons. Death ignored their plans. With greed and fine impartiality, it took both black and white.

Martha was pregnant, but went into severe depression with the sudden loss of three of her children. This prolonged, acute despondency may have caused the second still-birth in 1827. Martha continued to brood over their cruel fate. She had been pregnant six times, but they had only one little child left. Still, such child-mortality in those days was not uncommon.

But now it became essential that they save little Jane. They mustn't lose her also. They thought of taking her to her Uncle Horatio, now a successful doctor in Pennsylvania, but that was so far away. Mordecai decided to take Martha and Jane upriver to a

resort in a spur of the Appalachians. Louise and Sarah would go along. They thought the higher altitude would be safe until the cool weather of autumn abated the epidemic. Becky begged, and then was allowed to go along. She was in despair without her beloved Laura Lee.

(1826) The Old Burial Ground saw much activity that summer. Mordecai's three children were buried on a little hillock near their still-born brother. Down the slope, seven forlorn heaps marked the graves of black children who died before the grim toll was taken. Curiously, no adults died at Tugaloo that year.

Intent on saving the remnant of his family, Mordecai left the plantation in charge of Simon and Erasmus. Taking Martha and Jane, with Louise and her two daughters, he took the river boat to Montgomery and then a stage to the Beavertail Springs Resort, which was a collection of rental cabins on a mountainside near the upper Tallapoosa. It was almost two thousand feet altitude, free of malaria. They settled down for the remainder of the summer in this rustic spot.

Laura Lee's clothing had been given to Becky who was the same size. The pretty, little, mulatto girl, dressed in finery, was the object of some idle speculation among the visitors at the resort. Some of the guests were sure she was Mordecai's daughter, especially when they had seen Mordecai on the porch of his cabin, helping the three children with reading lessons.

They had been in Sophronia's school and Mordecai, with little to do here at the resort, had instituted three-hour reading sessions each morning. Martha would sit quietly nearby sewing, often with tears streaking her face, for she couldn't forget the loss of her children.

When, at long last, the epidemic had run its course, the forlorn family returned to the plantation. But Martha now suffered from prolonged episodes of depression, during which she would neglect her dress, refuse to eat, and fail to respond to those around her. Though still only twenty-nine, she felt her life was over. It was not uncommon for her to sit for hours staring vacantly at a wall or a tree. The best efforts of Mordecai, Sophronia or the black women usually got little response.

Mordecai, still young and vigorous, found marital relations with her almost impossible. "You must snap out of it," he would tell her. "We will have more children. We can re-build the family. Martha, come alive! Your husband is still here. I need you!"

But she seemed to have lost her desire to love him. The vibrancy and spontaneity of the love act was gone. For several years Mordecai hoped for a return of her mental health, and sporadically would make love to her. But Martha's part was totally passive. Mordecai had even grown angry at one time, saying, "It's like making love to a statue or a fence post." She could find no rejoinder. She just lay there absently running her hand along the pillow.

Then in about 1829, Mordecai found a mistress in Selma. She was a handsome woman of mixed blood, a Cajun, wild and free, up from Mobile. She was Angélique Rouelle. She delighted in giving him the attention he craved. He bought a little log house for her and she opened a French bakery, doing the baking in an open lean-to where she had a brick oven built. He would spend many of his nights with Angélique, happy enough times for him, until a certain tension arose between them because she wouldn't reserve her favors just for him. She enjoyed the company of certain of the river boatmen. Sometimes Mordecai would find a boatman at the cabin. There would be words and threats. Angélique would remind him that she was free and white, whatever he might think, and she would do precisely as she pleased.

Martha didn't seem to notice he was not always home. Because they slept together only rarely after that, there were only two more children: Grace Lee in 1830, and what was almost a miracle, Geoffrey, a fine, healthy, strong, gray-eyed boy, who arrived in 1840 when Martha had long thought she was through with child-bearing.

The birth of Geoffrey seemed to awaken some spirit in her. Now, she could be seen occasionally smiling once more. The infant received total adulation from everyone. His parents, of course, and his ten-year-old sister, Grace, his twenty-year-old sister, Jane, and all the Tugaloo blacks. Geoffrey was the long-awaited crown-prince. He would inherit the plantation. It was for him that everything

had been created. It even seemed like Mordecai and Martha could now re-build a happy marriage.

Much had happened over these years. Among other things, little Becky had grown to be a very beautiful young woman. She had always been a house servant, often getting Jane's cast-off clothes, and usually helping Ellen, who was now the house-keeper at the Big House. Becky was educated almost as well as the white girls. She had always lived in the Big House with her mother, Louise.

At seventeen, she had married Augustus, a young slave, half-black and half-Indian, from the Grantley Plantation. She moved into a little cabin on the north side of Tugaloo. Augustus could come over only Saturday and Sunday nights. Mr. Grantley was strict about that. So Becky spent many evenings alone. That's how the strange affair developed between her and Mordecai in 1840. She was about twenty-three, with a five-year-old daughter. Mordecai's connubial affairs were again unsatisfactory. He began going to the little cabin to talk to Becky who had been fond of him since childhood. He found her a willing and understanding listener. That it should develop into passion was not their intent, but it did.

For some six months, Mordecai was a regular visitor. Then Becky found herself pregnant a second time. In 1841, she had a very fair daughter, in almost every respect a white baby. The baby had singular gray eyes. It could only be Mordecai's child as everyone knew.

This beautiful child was Lucille, who would tie together with her life the story of Tugaloo Plantation.

Mordecai silenced any open discussion about Lucille's paternity. She was ostensibly the daughter of Augustus. Augustus wasn't himself so very dark, but he was certain he was not Lucille's father.

Mordecai could not have explained the complicated psychological relationship between himself and Becky. The attraction was more than just physical. Some of the affection he had for his daughter, Laura Lee, he had transferred to Becky when Laura Lee died. The little girls, still unaware of race differences, had been close friends. He remembered the days at the mountain resort when he had busied himself teaching Becky and Jane. Now, the physical love seemed somehow incestuous and he felt some shame and reluctance, yet, he was overwhelmed by his loneliness and Becky's attraction.

For a decade, Angélique, the turbulent Cajun, had kept Mordecai busy and satisfied, but in 1839 she took a down-river steamer and didn't return. Typically for her, it must have been a sudden impulse. Mordecai found French bread still warm in the oven. He could only discover that she had gone to New Orleans with a boatman and then the trail disappeared.

Now, he was almost fifty with an indifferent wife and an errant mistress. So he would go at dusk to talk to Becky in her little cabin hidden in the trees. He would walk there, not taking a horse.

He hoped people would not know he was there. It started with innocent talk, then they became lovers, rather to the surprise of each. Becky might have become his permanent mistress, but one day, when she went to the Tugaloo Creek for a bucket of water, a tiny yellow, red and black-banded snake, startled by her presence, bit her on the arm. She didn't know what to do. She dropped the bucket, ran back to the cabin to pick up Lucille and called to her daughter, Augusta, to follow. Then she ran to Tugaloo House. She had been bitten by a poisonous coral snake. The exertion and excitement had spread the poison through her body, stunning the nervous system. In a few moments, to the horror of the household, she was in the throes of death. So there was another body for the Burial Ground. Becky, the fair daughter of Jeff Gallagher and Louise, was buried near her great-grandparents, Morgan and Minerva.

Of course, by 1841 after twenty-five years, there were numbers of blacks and whites lying in the Burial Ground along with the Creek Indians. Daddy Handle had died the previous year, aged ninety and mourned by his extensive progeny.

Simon Ramsey had retired as overseer in 1832, but not until he had trained his son, Simon Junior, to take his place. Simon Junior, with his half-grown family, came out from Virginia, moving into the overseer's house with his parents. They finished some of the upstairs rooms so there was plenty of space. Then Simon Senior died in 1838 and was the first Ramsey in the Burial Ground. Sophronia, still

conducting her classes, remained with her son's family.

Mordecai saw that Simon Junior would soon be as valuable an overseer as his father had been. He was thankful that the younger Ramsey had been able to leave his former overseer job to come to Tugaloo. The plantation was prosperous and well-run with the Ramseys making most of the day-to-day decisions.

Erasmus was now seventy-one, a grandfather and great-grandfather many times. He prided himself on still doing a day's work. The plantation had more than the usual complement of skilled workers--carpenters, blacksmiths, farmers, cooks, because Mordecai emphasized training likely young blacks, and could then profit from selling their skilled labor to the neighbors. Most of the blacks were happy, grumbling little, since they could easily hear how things were at the neighboring Grantley Plantation where the owner, an overbearing disciplinarian, made life miserable for the slaves. Only one example of his tyranny was not letting young Augustus stay with Becky on week-nights. Becky's cabin was just outside the edge of the Grantley Plantation. So Frederick Grantley said Augustus must stay at the slave quarters except on Saturday and Sunday nights. The whip was used liberally at Grantley, making the Grantley blacks fearful and sullen. It was this same Grantley who would cause untold trouble if he knew some of the Tugaloo blacks were taught to read and write. Southern law was on Grantley's side. Blacks must not be taught to read.

It was a Wednesday when Becky was buried, so Frederick Grantley told the overseer that Augustus couldn't go to the burying. Augustus ran away from the cotton field and showed up at the Tugaloo Burial Ground to tearfully throw dirt on Becky's simple coffin when they lowered it into the ground. He knelt by the grave, hugging little Augusta and crying down to the coffin, "Becky, Becky, how can this be? Becky come back, come back!"

The Johnsons, the Ramseys and the Tugaloo blacks, with Louise holding the tiny Lucille, tearfully watched this pathetic scene.

The Augustus, kissing his frightened little daughter, hurried back to the Grantley Plantation. He wasn't lucky enough to escape punishment for his one-hour absence. He received a fearful beating from the burly slave-driver (who was black but who did the bidding of Mr. Grantley.) Grantley evenly remarked to the overseer, "We told him he couldn't go, but he went anyway. We can't allow that kind of insubordination. I want you to make an example of him so the others won't get the idea they can do as they please."

So for the next few weeks, the overseer and the slave-driver gave Augustus daily beatings.

When Mordecai heard of this treatment, he offered to buy Augustus from Grantley. Grantley said, "Well, I would like to be rid of him, but you're far too easy on your niggers. If I sold him to you, all my niggers would : figure they just have to

disobey me and then they'll get sold to Tugaloo and be in nigger-paradise!"

A couple weeks later, Mordecai heard that Grantley had sold Augustus to an itinerant slave-dealer who took him to Mobile. Mordecai sent Simon Junior to Mobile where he found and bought the badly-beaten Augustus and brought him back to Tugaloo. When Grantley heard of this transaction, he was furious. The two neighboring plantation owners became bitter enemies. Periodically, Grantley, who made an art of vindictiveness, would attempt to create difficulty for Mordecai. Grantley was wealthy, powerful and influential in the ruling planter-class. Fortunately, Mordecai, being equally wealthy, but much more liked personally, could hold his own.

Paradoxically, this Grantley, now about sixty, who could be so mean and petty with white neighbors, and cruel and dangerous with blacks, was a loving family man. He doted on his children and grand-children. He loved to sit on the wide veranda, one grandchild or another on his knee, reading fairy tales or planning parties and gifts. He gave horses to each of the children when they were old enough.

His three sons (who had attended Sophronia's little school) had married and lived in the big plantation house. Some of the grandchildren had been tutored also by Sophronia, but when Grantley became angry with Mordecai, he kept all his family home and found a series of tutors for them. The tutors wouldn't stay long since Grantley was insufferably arrogant and parsimonious. As tutor after tutor would depart, Grantley

would identify some imagined defect in the tutor, saying, "We're lucky to send him packing. He was a bad influence on the children!" Since good tutors (or even mediocre ones,) were not easy to find, the Grantley children suffered from these constant turnovers.

Once Augustus was at Tugaloo, they tended the sores on his beaten body and showed him that there could be kindness and compassion in this world for black people. For good reason, Augustus feared going near the Grantley Plantation, so they moved him from the little cabin where Becky had lived, down to the slave quarters. He moved in with Maximus and Nolachee, who were childless. Mordecai had Maximus build another room on his cabin for Augustus. Augustus joined the field workers since that was all he knew how to do. His little daughter, Augusta, came to live with him. Nolachee, who was a free Indian, kept house, making their meals. Augusta spent much time at the Big House with her grandmother, Louise, who had taken the infant Lucille. Louise had cared for numbers of children over the years. Now she had two new babies--Geoffrey Johnson and Lucille. They were both fat, healthy, beautiful babies, - Geoffrey, about a year older, his head covered with curly, white ringlets, and Lucille, her wavy hair a shade darker, but each with great, wide, gray eyes that could admit of no father but gray-eyed Mordecai, master of the plantation.

RETURN OF CHIEF TUGALOO and DEPARTURE OF THE GREEKS

One very important addition to the rich mold of the Burial Ground was the body of old Chief Tugaloo. The Indians had reluctantly moved to southeastern Alabama in October, 1821. They lived over near the Chattahoochee on land still belonging to the Creek Nation. But Chief Tugaloo had not been happy. He would sit morosely gazing at a little campfire. The whites were now trying to remove the Greeks completely from Alabama. The officials said the Indians must go out west beyond the great river. Tugaloo could think only of the catastrophe that had befallen his people in the last ten years.

"I just wait to die," he would say. Then, in 1824, by some premonition, he knew his time had come. "I will die soon," he said. He asked Tallega and Pulabamu (formerly Rector) to take him in a wagon back to the Tugaloo Burial Ground. They tried to dissuade him but he insisted. The three started west with the old chief lying on a blanket in the rear of the wagon. One day east of Selma, the old chief died. He had made them promise to bury him with his ancestors. He said he didn't want any stone marker with white man's signs on it.

So that year, the old wagon, (one that had come west with Mordecai,) with its two drivers and its pitiable cargo, pulled into the drive leading up to the great new Tugaloo House. Mordecai had called all the plantation people together for the funeral. The old friend,

Tugaloo, was wrapped in his blanket and lowered into the earth still wearing his headband decorated with seashells and some silver British, coins, Spanish/and American. Then Mordecai personally brought over a sapling from the great Tugaloo white oak and he planted it on Tugaloo's grave. He knew the importance of the great oak to the Indian people.

Many decades later, black Johnsons would not remember where Tugaloo was buried, but the little oak thrived in the rich, well-turned earth, watched over by Mordecai until his death in 1860. A century later it had become a giant.

Rector and Tallega stayed several days visiting old friends at the slave quarters, then they returned east.

It would be twelve years later, in 1836, when the Johnsons would see Rector for the last time. He and Tallega led their group of Indian Territory Creeks west to/ ~~Alabama~~ to settle when all the Creek lands in Alabama were relinquished. They made a little detour for a bitter-sweet visit to the Burial Ground and their old hunting ground. It was not a happy visit for many reasons. The terrain, all in alien hands, was so altered that the older Indians couldn't recognize it. Only the Burial Ground seemed unchanged.

Then too, the United States Army had made it clear they were not to tarry, even if they had wanted to do so. As part of a big Indian migration, they were being escorted by military detachments. The army officers had orders to get them to/ ~~Alabama~~ as quickly

as possible.

The ten or twelve decrepit wagons of Tugaloo's old Creek band turned into the plantation road followed by assorted Indians afoot with their stock and dogs. There was considerable excitement and confusion for a time as the wagons stopped near the barns. There were perhaps sixty Indians including many children, seven of whom belonged to Rector-Pulabamu and Ocmulana. Pullalée, Rector's sixteen-year-old son, was already a tall, muscular, serious youth who might one day be a chief. Rector himself was now an athletic, middle-aged man with considerable authority in the tribe.

Mordecai wanted to have a big celebration and feast as they had often done when they were neighbors in the early days. Rector thought how he had first seen Ocmulana at such a gathering. But Tallega, now chief in his father's place, said they could stop for only the briefest time. They wanted their children to see the Pow Wow Tree and Burial Ground before they went further west.

"Moreover," Tallega said, "We are a defeated people. We have nothing to celebrate. All is changed. We will go quickly and perhaps the Great Spirit will be good to us in the new land. We are here only to say farewell to our ancestors."

Mordecai was abashed. Of course, a feast would be inappropriate, with guests in forced peregrination whose overriding thoughts were of their lost patrimony. Mordecai, though he personally had tried to be an honest friend of the Indians, was flooded with remorse and

guilt for what his predatory race had done to these unoffending people.

The Indian band in a half-hour had accomplished their ritual farewell at the Burial Ground, then briefly they sat with their friends under the Pow Wow Oak.

Tallega told Mordecai they would not pass that way again. He thanked him for protecting the Burial Ground and the Pow Wow Oak, and for planting the young oak on his father's grave. "While we live, we will remember the spirits of our ancestors. Once we are gone, only ghosts of the Muskogee people will remain."

A young army officer on horseback appeared, red-faced and obviously upset that the Indians were "loitering," as he termed it.

Mordecai, with his best formal style, introduced himself. "Whom have I the pleasure of meeting, sir?" he asked.

The young lieutenant sputtered, "Lt. Henry Winston, U. S. Cavalry, sir, at your service."

Mordecai said, "You must be very warm from riding, sir. Please dismount and come with me to the Big House for some refreshment." He led the flustered officer to the elegant mansion where he left him subdued by opulence and cooling off with drinks administered by Sophronia, Martha and Jane.

Then Mordecai returned to the pow-wow with his Indian friends. Within the hour, loaded with gifts of hams and corn from Mordecai, and leaving only some traces of their blood and some names on the land, the Indians were gone forever.

The plantation was well-run, its prosperity apparent to any visitor. The broad, fertile fields produced ever-larger cotton crops. Great harvests of corn fed the animals, and Mordecai had plenty left to sell in Selma.

The landscaping and lawns of Tugaloo House extended up the incline around the base of the Pow Wow Oak and almost to the thicket of trees surrounding the Burial Ground.

Months and seasons stretched into years after Becky's death in 1841. Mordecai and Martha patched up their marriage. The ardor of youth was gone--replaced by a complacent, middle-aged familiarity. Mordecai no longer looked for other women.

Although Martha knew (like everyone else) that little Lucille was Mordecai's daughter, she showed no resentment and treated the child as a favored member of the household. Lucille became the constant playmate of Geoffrey and the parents found it convenient to teach her as they taught Geoffrey, and to dress her as a little, white daughter would be dressed.

In this time, Jane Johnson was already a young, somewhat-withdrawn woman, pale and blond, but with the striking Johnson gray eyes. The other surviving Johnson child was Grace Lee, born in 1830, and now half-grown. She had been taught by Sophronia and later was a boarding student for several years at the Dallas Female Academy in Selma. She would return for Sunday visits to the plantation. She was bright and out-going--

very different from Jane.

Mordecai liked his wife and daughters to be dressed in beautiful clothing. A good deal of time and money would be spent at Unterdorf's choosing fine materials, and examining patterns of new Paris and New York fashions. Most of the clothing that Lucille and sometimes Augusta would receive were these fine gowns cut down to size. The little girls, though considered black and slaves, were seldom required to work, and their fine dress and light skin set them off conspicuously from the blacks in the slave quarters.

Since their dispositions were sweet and unspoiled, they were loved by black and white both, despite their anomalous state. Augustus was proud beyond measure of these two little girls. He had little to give them but his unstinting father's love. When he looked at them, he saw his beloved Becky. Also, since his rescue by Mordecai, he had a dog-like devotion to the master who he felt could do no wrong. If the master dressed the girls in silks and taught them writing, so much the better.

Sophronia, eighty-four years old in 1850, was still teaching a few young people, particularly Geoffrey, Lucille, Augusta and her own granddaughter, Josie, but she had become too fragile to have the regular large groups as formerly. She tired easily.

It was that summer that the great Pow Wow Oak was destroyed by lightning. Sophronia, after the storm, walked across the wet grass to see the broken landmark.

Augusta had come knocking at the overseer's house door. "Miss Phronie, come out. Miss Phronie, come see what the lightning done!"

Sophronia reached for a shawl. "What the lightning did!"

Augusta responded, "Yes, what the lightning done!" They walked slowly through the trees and up the rise to see the havoc of the storm.

The high black clouds, rolling and boiling as they receded northward, were hit by the rays of the evening sun, creating an exciting palette of colors, lilac, mauve, gray and gold. A perfect great rainbow formed. The frail old lady in her gray Quaker dress started reciting, "My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky..." She clung for support to Augusta, a pretty fifteen-year-old, thin and active. "That's Wordsworth, Augusta. I think tomorrow we will try to memorize some poems. We have so much to learn." Her wrinkled face lit with a quiet smile. "They say there's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow!"

Augusta looked puzzled. "Do that be a pot made of gold or a pot full of gold?"

Sophronia laughed. "We can't be sure since nobody's found it yet. We don't know where the rainbow comes down to earth!"

All the people of the plantation had gathered to see the shattered remains of the Tugaloo Oak. Sundered parts of the trunk were still upright, but most, split in lengthwise pieces, lay for 200 feet on the ground, a mass of broken limbs at crazy angles, leaves a-jumble.

Erasmus, now eighty, and Mordecai were there. Mordecai was trying to hold back tears. They remembered better than anyone

the significance of the old oak. But all, taking their cue from the master, felt the solemnity, the loss.

Geoffrey and some of his black playmates, out with their dogs by the Burial Ground, had seen the great flash that destroyed the tree. They rushed in the direction of the light and found the wreck of the tree burning and smoking. Scurrying to the Big House, they summoned the family. That's when Lucille, who was in an upstairs bedroom heard of the demise of the oak. It was a story she would tell many times to later generations.

"We must save what we can," said Mordecai. The little boys were running up and down the fallen trunk busying themselves putting out sparks and smoldering splinters.

The younger people remembered nothing of the Indians for it was now nearly thirty years since Tugaloo's band had moved away, fourteen and it was twenty-six years since Tugaloo's burial, and ~~sixteen~~ years since the tribe had made its hasty last visit on the way to Oklahoma. The young people could not know what a loss was suffered that day. But Mordecai called them together and told once more the story of the Pow Wow Oak, of its importance to the native people now gone, and how he and Erasmus had sat there in its shade with the Muskogee chief thirty-four years earlier, buying the land and agreeing to protect forever the Pow Wow Oak and the Burial Ground.

"Now the great tree has fallen. We can only save some of what is left." That's when he asked Uncle Maximus to cut up the trunk into planks. Maximus happened to be home then although he had spent much of his life doing carpentry in Selma and on neighboring plantations. With help from some younger blacks, Maximus started the job that same day. Within the week the planks were curing in a barn. The site had been cleared except for a four-foot stump on which Martha placed an iron urn in which she grew flowering plants.

On the evening the tree fell, Sophronia had felt faint, so Augusta helped her back to her house. Sophronia was saddened by the death of the big tree for she remembered the Indians and knew that another precious link with the past was gone forever. But she was also exhilarated by the extravagant beauty of the sky with its scuttling, polychromatic clouds. Thinking of some nature poems she would have the children read next morning, she lay down, propping her head with an extra pillow. Now she could watch through her window the evening sunlight on those banks of billowing clouds--it did seem like the entrance to God's Kingdom.

Thoughts crowded through her mind. How strange it all was that she, who so disliked slavery, had spent most of her life living among slaves and slave-owners, that she had been happy living with a husband and sons whose occupations were at the very

center of the slave system. She had defied the system in her own little way. She had taught generations of blacks how to read and write. It had been easier for her in the benevolent environment of Cypress Creek with old Master Ingram, and later here at Tugaloo with Mordecai. The masters were just and kindly. Her dear Simon had been a good man who exercised his great power with restraint, even as her son did here now. So perhaps they had done a little to alleviate the burden of an evil system.

She thought back sixty-five years earlier, when she was still Sophronia Janney, daughter of Mahlon and Rachel Janney. Her father had built his stone farmhouse a mile from the Fairfax Monthly Meeting House in Waterford. There, she and her seven brothers and sisters had grown up, good Quakers all, who believed that man must trust in God and work hard for his bread. Slavery was anathema to them.

In their little Quaker community, the families were mostly inter-related many times over, since they had come there as a colony in about 1732 from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and even back in England, fifty years before that, they had been neighbors. They were all cousins, uncles, aunts, and they all hated slavery. But they were on the "front line," so to speak, since Tidewater planters had settled in the south of Loudoun County. Slavery was only ten miles away.

She thought of the old families--the Taylors, the Houghs,

the Janneys, Cravens, Yardleys, Noges, Hollingsworths.

In the Society of Friends the custom was for a Friend to marry another Friend. She knew that many of her cousins had moved west to western Pennsylvania, then to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois or Iowa. They often moved in groups to new Quaker colonies. Almost none had moved south as she had done, since they despised slavery. Indeed, many southern Quakers had left the South, moving west to escape the slavery system. Many Quakers in the border states helped runaway slaves to escape to the North or to Canada.

What would she have done if a slave had begged her for such help? She had not personally known any black who had ever tried to escape. She was not sure what she would do, except that escape here in the Deep South was extremely difficult, with the slave empire extending for many hundreds of miles in all directions.

She remembered how ill-treated Augustus had been at the Grantley Plantation. She sighed as she thought of stories of mis-treatment of blacks at Grantley and other neighboring plantations.

She still received occasional letters from her younger brother, Jacob Janney, who lived in Jefferson County, Ohio. Jacob was a leader among the Abolitionists. He wrote how the Quakers

were sheltering escaped slaves on their way to Canada.

Jacob was right, of course, but it was all such a great and awful problem. She felt that God would deal with it in his own way sometime, perhaps soon. But she was a powerless, little old thing.

She dozed, then awakened when her ten-year-old granddaughter, Josie, knocked at her door. "Grandma, mama says come to supper, we're just ready to sit down."

"Tell mama I'm not hungry, Josie. I just think I'll lie here and rest a while. Come give grandma a kiss."

When Josie had gone, she thought of all the people she had taught over the years. Some of the blacks were very bright despite what was often said of them. The system of keeping them in ignorance was so wrong. She smiled as she thought of her bright pupils. Little Kader was among the first here at Tugaloo--sharp as a whip and could have been a U.S. Senator given a chance. He had become a skilled carpenter like his brothers Maximus and Duke. Louise and Ellen had been good students too, and Ellen's little Milton, but they were never permitted to learn more than the simplest reading and writing. Mordecai would draw the line there, saying, "We will only make them unhappy if we educate them too much."

No doubt he was right, given the system.

She thought of Martha, mistress of the plantation and like

a daughter to her. Even Martha had been her student thirty years before. Those had been happy days! The little log school-house where age and color didn't matter! She had taught Erasmus then too. She mused, "Erasmus is eighty years old now! Those happy days before the Big House was built, with the Indians coming over for feasts! They were all on a level, black, white and red. It was good."

Then she thought of beautiful little Becky and sweet Laura Lee-- both tragically gone, as well as Mordecai's older sons, George and Stephen.

Now she had the latest generation--eleven-year-old Geoffrey Johnson, her own granddaughter Josie, and Becky's daughters Augusta and Lucille. She didn't have the stamina to teach any more students. Now, they came to the overseer's house each morning for lessons. In the autumn, Geoffrey would go into Selma to the Dallas Male Academy.

Sophronia thought of some poems and quotations she could use in the morning. Since all had been affected by the fury of the storm that day, she wanted something to do with the beauty and occasional violence of nature. In Measure for Measure Isabella said, "Merciful Heaven, Thou rather with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak Than the soft myrtle." That was to the point.

Sophronia planned to arise early in the morning to search

through Wordsworth. There would be something appropriate there besides "My Heart Leaps Up."

She thought of the witches in Macbeth. "When shall we three meet again, In thunder, lightning, or in rain?"

And she thought of King Lear. There were many references in Lear to thunder and lightning.

She felt a pain in her chest. Perhaps it was her position with the extra pillow. She eased the pillow aside.

She remembered the journey with Simon from Loudoun County down to Cypress Creek Plantation. They had ridden horseback with a couple pack-horses carrying their worldly possessions.

Simon was big and handsome, amused by her Quaker ways and expressions, but so good with practical things and so gentle that she always felt safe and comfortable with him. They had a fine honeymoon sleeping under the Virginia stars in woods or in log barns with ramshackle roofs and curious farm animals nearby. They rode east along the Potowmack past where Washington City would one day be created. They went through Alexandria toward Fredericksburg and past Mount Vernon where General Washington was living in retirement, not yet called to become first president. All those years ago! It was 1786. The Continental Congress ran the country in a haphazard way. The Revolution had been won, but the U. S. Constitution not yet written.

When they got to Cypress Creek, Master Ingram had quickly let Simon know that his overseer must be kind and just with the blacks--firm, yes--but no violence, no mistreatment. This was Simon's way also. They hit it off splendidly and within a year or so, Master Ingram let Simon run the plantation. Most of the time, the Ingolds would remain in Williamsburg, only rarely visiting the plantation in Isle of Wight County.

So she and Simon had settled in, raised their big family and she had grown accustomed to slavery in its more benign form as practiced there. Thirty years they were there until their next memorable journey when in the winter of 1816-17 they drove their wagon to Alabama. Then it was a new plantation and a new master although many of the blacks were the old Ingram blacks. They had had a happy life here. Now Simon was up in the old Burial Ground for twelve years. She would join him soon.

She had visited her children in Virginia a couple times but had never gone back to Loudoun County. The Quaker Meeting could not understand how she could live in the iniquity of a slave plantation and a visit would only be painful for everybody. Now her family and old friends were long-since scattered or dead. But she had tried to remain true to Quaker tenets. She was loving and thoughtful with black and white both. She had delighted in teaching them, particularly the bright ones.

Another sharp pain in her chest made her cry out involuntarily. She turned on her side and noticed once more the light of the setting sun on heaped-piles of fluffy, cumulus clouds. It must be almost nine o'clock. Summer days were long.

She knew slavery would end some day. But what kind of great national storm would it take to finish it off?

Now the shadows were deep in her room. The mirror over the fireplace--just a hint of reflected light there. She thought of those beautiful children, Geoffrey and Lucille. How intelligent they were, and how like one another. Irseparable they were also--though boys and girls of that age seldom sought each other's company. Now, they were both downcast when they thought of their forthcoming separation--Geoffrey would be going away five miles to school in Selma. He would be home only on Sundays.

The plantation people were all certain that Mordecai was father of both children, but he would never allow any talk about Lucille belonging to any father but Augustus. Sophronia had taught both children for six years. She thought of their relative abilities. If anything, Lucille was the brighter in every way except for mathematics. They would sit there side by side each morning, (one the master, one the slave, in this reprehensible society) and each stamped with a remarkable physical resemblance. The children seemed wholly unaware

of a familial relationship. That they loved each other, (even at that early age) was clear when they fastened those striking, great gray eyes on one another--those eyes, clear, bright, intelligent, unblemished. They were the Johnson eyes--that whole family except Martha had those eyes!

"I'll look over King Lear in the morning, too. The children should learn some good quotations about storms and lightning with that great storm fresh in their minds." There was another brief pain where her heart must be. She heard her son's family going upstairs to bed. Then she closed her eyes.

Next morning, Josie found her grandmother dead, a tranquil little smile tucked among the wrinkles of her old face. The going had been easy and if Sophronia could have told the story she might paraphrase Bryant thus: She had wrapped the draperies of her couch about her and with unfaltering trust lay down to pleasant dreams.

All the plantation and the county for miles around was distraught with the loss of the tiny Quaker lady who had been everybody's good friend, her love and selfless good-will having touched them all. She had taught a couple generations of white children from many of the neighboring families. Mordecai closed down the plantation for her funeral so everybody was there at her burial. He spoke a heartfelt eulogy. Even the Grantley

boys came to the funeral with their wives, and old Frederick Grantley relaxed his vendetta long enough to send over a large bouquet of flowers.

Martha felt like she had lost a mother. Her mind went back thirty-three years to the exciting day when Sophronia had first driven up in the wagon with Simon. Almost immediately she had learned to love the little, unassuming Quaker. She remembered their reading lessons, their conversations under the trees. Now it would truly be lonely without Sophronia. She had no other close friend. She had tried to be friends with her daughter, Jane, but Jane seemed more withdrawn each day. Conversation with her was well-nigh impossible. Today, Jane shut herself in her room and didn't come to the funeral. But then, Jane too, had lost her only friend. Only Sophronia had had the patience, love and understanding to penetrate Jane's barriers.

On those rare occasions when Jane felt moved to talk with anyone, she would seek out Sophronia or perhaps send Augusta or Lucille to ask Sophronia to visit her in her second-floor bedroom. At the age of thirty, Jane was well on the way to being an "old maid" and a recluse. She had rebuffed any tentative attempts at wooing by neighboring planters' sons. She had, for several years, been taking her meals in her bedroom, a habit at first deplored, then accepted by Mordecai and Martha

since Jane managed to throw an embarrassing pall over every conversation.

Now, without friend, and in that day before psychiatrists, Jane's alienation could only intensify.

GROWTH OF SELMA

Selma had become decidedly more lively in 1848 when three hundred German immigrants settled there. They were refugees from the failed revolutions that swept Europe that year. Politically, they were liberal or socialist and often well-educated and well-read in their own language. They brought their families and their skills. They were mechanics, artisans and iron workers who soon developed small manufacturing plants.

There was talk of a rail connection ^{to join} Selma to Rome, Georgia, and thence via Atlanta to Savannah and Charleston, South Carolina. Through the 1850's, steamboat traffic on the river increased, though the rails were slow in coming. Fifteen years later during the Civil War, this combination of location, good transportation and human skills would make Selma a principal arsenal of the Confederacy, with the naval foundry located there.

HORATIO JOHNSON PLANS A TRIP
Horatio Johnson Returns

It was in the autumn of 1850 that Horatio Johnson returned for his first visit to Tugaloo since going north in 1816. He had kept his promise to write to Mordecai, the two brothers exchanging news about twice yearly. Horatio had become a medical doctor settling in Chester, Pennsylvania, about fifteen miles south of Philadelphia. In 1825, he had married Aurelia Pennell, whose father and uncle were both doctors. The Pennells were one of the oldest Quaker families, having come to Chester about the time William Penn

changed the name of that old Swedish colony from Upland in 1682. They were intermarried with all the old Quaker families in the same way as Sophronia's family in Loudoun County, Virginia. These Chester families were also related to the Quaker groups in Virginia and elsewhere west of the Alleghenies.

When Horatio first asked Aurelia to marry him, she told him that although she considered him an altogether attractive and eligible young man whom she would certainly marry under ordinary circumstances, she knew that the Chester Friends' Meeting would disown her for marrying a non-Quaker. She could not, of course, give up her religion, her family and her friends. Horatio thought about that for some weeks then asked Dr. John Pennell, her father, if he, Horatio, might not become a Quaker. Dr. John liked this enterprising and introspective young man with the soft southern accent. Dr. John was an influential member of the Chester Meeting as well as of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, so by a word here and some gentle persuasion there, he smoothed the way for Horatio to be accepted at last as a "Friend by Convinement" in the Chester Meeting. Horatio diligently learned the ways and beliefs of the Society, so impressing Aurelia that finally one day they married in the time-honored Quaker way.

Soon they built a two-story, fieldstone house, handsome, symmetrical, Georgian-style, on twelve acres given them as a wedding present by Dr. John. A hundred yards back from the road

they built the house in a grove of tall elm trees. Behind the house was a new stone barn and further up a gentle rise were four acres of young apple trees extending back to a seven-acre woodlot. A neighboring farmer tended their orchard which had Roxbury Russets, Newtown Pippins, Baldwins with their white blossoms, and the Winesaps with pink blossoms in springtime. All the family, Aurelia especially, loved to sit on wooden benches placed under the apple trees, breathing the scent of the flowers in spring and the ripe windfalls in autumn, or just whiling away lazy summer days when the work was done and the children played quietly in the apple shade under the great blue sky with its scattered white clouds.

They had a root-cellar dug into the side of the hill and lined with stone. When the apple and potato crops were ripe, they were stored for winter in the cellar. The farmer took many of the apples then brought them back barrels of apple cider.

At that time the Religious Society of Friends had reached a stage of unseemly conflict and decline resulting in the Hicksite Schism of 1827, when Quaker Meetings across the land were split into liberal Hicksite groups and the more conservative Orthodox groups. They were plagued with misunderstanding and un-Quakerly lawsuits about meeting houses and property.

The Pennells had gone with the followers of Elias Hicks.

Horatio was honestly converted. His family, the Johnsons in North Carolina, had an Anglican background but were not much concerned with religion, nor did they often bother to travel to church on Sundays. Now Horatio was genuinely attracted to the silent, good Quaker people of the "Inner Light," who believed the Divine Spirit lives within every living person.

The Quaker meetings were not expanding in those days though the nation was growing rapidly. They did not actively seek new members and they tended to "disown" more of their "birthright" members each year for a multitude of reasons, most often for marrying non-Quakers. Thus, this religious group which had been so important in colonial times, (even controlling five of the colonies at one time,) had grown numerically ever weaker and long since had withdrawn from political activity.

To their everlasting credit, they worked away quietly at humanitarian programs they considered important, such as improved treatment of the native Americans, the insane and the imprisoned. Their greatest on-going struggles were against war and slavery.

Because they had actively opposed slavery for generations, the Chester Quakers were deeply concerned about Horatio's youth in a slave-owning southern family. For months before the wedding, some of the most "concerned" Quakers had "labored" with him.

Aurelia's great-uncle, Caleb Sharpless, had asked Horatio to dinner at his big, old farmhouse. Uncle Caleb and Aunt Hannah were each about seventy years old with plump, pink faces and shining dark-blue eyes, and both wore square, reading-glasses resting part-way down their noses. They were both ministers at the Chester Meeting, meaning they would occasionally rise in meeting to verbalize what they believed was the will of God. There was an almost tangible aura of good about them.

The elderly Quaker had questioned him closely about his position on slavery. "Thee must know that the Friends have shunned the unseemly wickedness of slavery for fifty years, since the time of John Woolman. At one time, Friends owned slaves, but for many years the Society has recognized the iniquity of one man owning another. Many years since, the Friends persuaded all their members to renounce slavery and free their slaves. Further, we would see the practice of slavery abolished from the nation. Now, therefore, since thee would join our Society, we would know how thee stand in this. It is said thy family owns slaves."

Horatio answered frankly, "My father and grandfather owned a few slaves--all of them in one family--but I have not personally owned slaves, though I grew up on the plantation. Now my brother, Mordecai, has inherited all the slaves and acquired more, but I asked my father and brother to simply pay for my medical education

and I would renounce all claim to the plantation and the inheritance.

I have never particularly liked the slave system, but it was all we knew and seemed the natural order when I was a boy in North Carolina. Since I have been at the North, my attitude has broadened and changed so that I feel now much as the Quakers do.

If I were a slave owner, I would free my slaves. That's an empty proposal, obviously, since I am not a slave owner. But I will do what little I can, and with conviction, to end slavery in the United States."

Uncle Caleb and Aunt Hannah were pleased with this sincere answer. After a lengthy, silent prayer, Aunt Hannah brought out the ample dinner.

They were well-impressed with Horatio. They and others helped school him in Quaker beliefs and customs so that at last, he was accepted in the Meeting. Then, at three successive First Day Meetings, he and Aurelia stood to announce their engagement.

Later they were married and their great parchment wedding document was signed by all the relatives and members present.

Soon after the wedding, Aurelia's uncle, Dr. Thomas Pennell, had decided to move to Mount Pleasant, Jefferson County, Ohio, where his children had settled in a Quaker colony. Horatio inherited Uncle Thomas' practice which was largely rural since Chester, though the oldest settlement in Pennsylvania, was only a village of four hundred or so. However, there were many prosperous farms

in all directions and the burgeoning suburbs of Philadelphia were but ten miles north. At first Horatio would ride a bay gelding to visit his patients, and later he used a light-weight, two-wheeled chaise made by the neighboring German Mennonites.

He was a good doctor, quiet, thoughtful, and more than a little inclined to bookishness. In their new stone house out the Philadelphia Road he had bookshelves to the ceiling of his walnut-paneled study.

The young couple were careful not to acquire expensive or luxurious furniture, since the Quakers believed in plain household furnishings, just as they chose plain speech and dress.

Mordecai and Martha, when they learned of Horatio's impending marriage in 1825, had arranged with Unterdorf's to buy and deliver as a wedding present the most exquisite and expensive silver service available in Philadelphia. Horatio and Aurelia had been embarrassed when it arrived, since it was just such opulence that they hoped to avoid. They couldn't hurt Mordecai's feelings by not accepting it or by selling it. Finally, they explained in Meeting that it had arrived, and from where, but that it was their intention not to use it since they had rejected ostentatious display. The Friends understood. Certainly there were many wealthy Quakers in the Philadelphia area who erred from plain living in more egregious ways.

Thenceforward, Aurelia kept most of the beautiful silver in

a cupboard. Each month, she set it out on a table, polished it, admired it, then returned it to the cupboard out of sight. When friends, (most of whom were Friends,) came to visit, Aurelia used a plain porcelain tea service, but she decided to use the sterling flatware, which had a simple, elegant design.

The beautifully-proportioned rooms in their stone house soon acquired a feeling of pleasant well-being. The simple furnishings and floors glowed with repeated waxings. From the garden came great bouquets of lilacs, fragrant peonies, and roses in season. Fireplaces, early-American style, warmed the rooms. Aurelia made certain Horatio's study was always warm on winter days for that was the favorite room of the entire family. Horatio had a large globe standing in one corner and a human skeleton hanging in another. His medical books, medicines and instruments were here. There was a couch for examining patients and a commode with a wash basin.

This room was intended for private study and doctor's office, but from the beginning Aurelia would sit there with her husband in the evenings, and after the children arrived, they also would gather there unless they got sent forth for being over-boisterous. It was a quiet place for study and reflection--well-provided with an ever-growing collection of books on all subjects. They had candles and whale-oil lamps for evening reading. If, on occasion, a patient came, the family would withdraw to other parts of the house.

Horatio preferred living in the North away from slavery.

They had a loving and peaceful home, blessed in time with three sons and a daughter. The children arrived one by one--first in 1827 came a boy, John Woolman Johnson, named for the Quaker "saint" who had lived across the Delaware River in the previous century and who had persuaded the Society of Friends to take a determined stand against slavery. The little boy with tight blond curls was dubbed "Wooly" by his father, over the objection of Aurelia who thought it a bit disrespectful toward John Woolman. Soon they were all calling the child "Wooly."

The next son was Pennell Ingram Johnson, born in 1830, named for his two grandfathers, and soon called "Penny."

In 1834 there was a still-born daughter, then, in 1838, a daughter named Phoebe Pennell Johnson. She was named after Aurelia's maiden aunt who had come to live with them. "Aunt Pennell," as she was called, was a great help to Aurelia, filling in as housekeeper, cook and nursemaid. Aunt Pennell, born in 1787, the year of the Constitutional Convention, was near fifty years old. The children loved her since she had a great supply of bed-time stories, she could hug and kiss away bumps and bruises, and she could bake superlative pies and cookies. Aunt Pennell knew all the intricacies of their Quaker ancestry and she soon set about learning from Horatio what he knew about the Johnson family from its American origins in Virginia.

Aurelia had one more son in 1804. This was Benjamin Rush Johnson, named by Horatio after the distinguished professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Rush, who had signed the Declaration of Independence and founded the first American Anti-Slavery Society, died in 1813 before Horatio came north, but he left a solid reputation in the halls of the medical school.

In 1806 Aurelia suddenly died from a severe attack of dysentery. Horatio buried her in the Meeting House Cemetery with a tiny stone marker bearing the letters "A. J." The Quakers generally considered tombstones as "worldly vanity," and those old cemeteries are full of un-marked graves. The Chester Meeting opposed use of markers, even calling for removal of those already in place. "God knows where true Friends are buried," they would say.

Horatio felt deeply the loss of his gentle and quiet wife, but life went on in the big stone house with Aunt Fennell as the competent housekeeper and surrogate mother. Horatio's practice was large, (especially since the retirement of Dr. John Fennell,) allowing him to ease the loss with constant activity.

Some of the comely Quaker girls of the neighborhood thought of becoming Aurelia's successor. Eligible young men were responding to the call of the great west. Husbands were harder to find, but Horatio was not interested in re-marrying.

First Wooly, then Penny went to Philadelphia to study medicine.

In 1850, only Phoebe and Benny were still at home. That was when Horatio got a letter from Mordecai telling about the end of the great Pow Wow Oak and the subsequent death of their Quaker tutor, Sophronia.

The Pow Wow Oak--it reminded him of their exciting trip west, (the big adventure of his youth,) the Indians, the pow wows and feasts, the mass marriage of Erasmus' sons, tutoring Martha. He remembered that dark winter day when he bade his brother farewell and floated down the Alabama River to his destiny. He had expected to return to the South, but it had happened differently!

Now he realized he wanted very much to see Mordecai again. It wouldn't be so difficult. The railroads were spreading across the land, though about half this journey would still be by stagecoach. Mordecai had written that wealthy Alabamans had invested in a proposed rail link from Selma to Rome, Georgia, but that was not yet built.

Horatio had thought of visiting Alabama with his family but had hesitated, knowing the terrible fact of slavery was always there between them. For over thirty years he had stood four-square with the Quakers in their opposition to slavery. Mordecai knew how he felt--he hadn't concealed it, but they both avoided discussing slavery in their letters. They hoped somehow to keep alive the old familial love.

Horatio thought of the years he had aided local Quakers in the "Underground Railroad," while giving a good part of his income to help escaped slaves get established in Philadelphia and further north. On several occasions, blacks from Virginia had been sheltered in his barn while he soberly gave slave-hunters confusing directions. After hearing Horatio's North Carolina accent, the hunters had dashed off on horseback in the wrong direction.

One evening late in August of 1850, Horatio sat in the study with Aunt Pennell and his two younger children. He told them he had decided that he and the children should make a visit to Alabama so they could meet their uncle, aunt and cousins. They could go for about six weeks starting in September.

He told them of his misgivings about visiting the heart of the slave empire--a place they had considered lost in iniquity, but that if they were ever to see their southern relations, they must go. Further, he told them there were degrees of evil in slavery--that the paternalistic relationship between Mordecai and his blacks was the least tainted. Many of the reported injurious practices of slavery were not present at Tugaloo. Families were kept together. There was no whipping and violence. The blacks were treated like children of the master, or so he thought, remembering Hansemond. He reminisced about his own youth on the plantation--he had almost never talked about it here in the North with the Quakers or with his family--it seemed like it required endless and fruitless explanation. Now he told his children how slavery seemed perfectly natural in North Carolina during his childhood. He had never met anyone who questioned it until he came to Pennsylvania. The Johnsons, while not big planters, had owned slaves at least as early as 1744, perhaps earlier. Their Uncle Mordecai was only continuing an old family tradition, but because of the cotton gin and different economic conditions, he had become wealthy and

successful.

Horatio said that for a long time he had wanted to see his brother once more but he feared that the issue of slavery would destroy forever their brotherly friendship. He asked his children if they thought they could visit Alabama and so govern their remarks and attitude about slavery to avoid an open breach with the Tugaloo Johnsons. He reminded them that they had been graciously and repeatedly invited by Mordecai and Martha, who were only superficially aware of the abolitionist beliefs of Horatio and his Quaker family.

"I want very much to go, but if we go, we must be very careful about expressing our beliefs concerning holding Negroes in bondage. We must not give a hint of what we do here in Chester to help escaped blacks. The southern slave-holders, including Mordecai, would consider us no better than common horse thieves. We should remember that a hundred years ago there were many worthy Friends who owned slaves. Then, bit by bit, the Friends were persuaded to renounce slavery and so at last by the time of the Revolution, they were clear of the institution. We hope that all blacks in the country will one day be freed by some non-violent means. Southerners think very differently from us. So that is why we shall have to be careful. If you feel you cannot guard your tongues sufficiently, say so, and you can stay here with Aunt Pennell. You understand why we must be careful? It is because

I love my brother Nordecai and want somehow to have an understanding with him. We will tell them only that we are Friends and we believe slavery must come to an end in our country. We needn't say more."

The children had not heard such a long talk from their father before. They considered it all then Phoebe said, "We have innumerable aunts, uncles and cousins here in Chester but we have never yet met our southern family. I think I understand all thee has told us. We shall say we are Friends, that Friends don't believe in slavery, but we shall say nothing further about it. But we shall keep our eyes and ears open and learn as much as possible. We will try to love our southern family as we love our family here, and we shall trust that God will speak to them in time and move them to free their slaves."

A great smile crossed Horatio's face. He seized and hugged his bright little Phoebe. She smiled shyly, blushing and looking down at the carpet.

Benny hurried over to crawl in his father's lap to share the hug. "I think just that same way," he cried. "We will tell them that slavery is bad, and they won't do anything, but someday God will tell them so and they will have to listen, then they will free their slaves! We won't tell them that we are helping God!"

Horatio and Aunt Fennell burst out laughing. It was decided the family would depart in September on the railroad to Wilmington,

North Carolina, thence by stage to Charleston, South Carolina and then, with some luck, they could get by rail to Rome, Georgia, and then by stage to Selma. The trains in that part of the world ran usually only in the day and schedules were erratic with a number of small, independent companies involved--but they would find their way!

Horatio Returns to Tugaloo

The trip south was an adventure for them all. It was Horatio's first holiday ever. They brought books to read, their clothing was in carpet bags, and Aunt Pennell packed a large basket with several days food for eating on the train. The train, still a novelty for most people, went to Baltimore, then Washington City.

On across Virginia they went, through Richmond, then North Carolina to Wilmington. They had passed within fifty miles of the old Nansemond Plantation and adjoining Ingram Court where Cousin Claiborne Ingram still lived. Horatio thought of making a visit there but it would all be so changed. His parents and grandparents were buried there, but all the living Johnsons, white and black, had moved to Alabama. So they didn't stop, but went on to Wilmington where the railroad ended in those days. The railroads were rapidly expanding all over the country but there was still a two hundred mile gap between Wilmington and the growing network of rails further south which connected Charleston and Savannah with Atlanta northwest Georgia.