

Susan Dale Sanders
#1 Dupree Alley, Louisville
JEFFERSON CO
Byers York

The following is a story of Mrs. Susan Dale Sanders, #1 Dupree Alley, between Breckinridge and Lampton Sts., Louisville, an old Negro Slave mammy, and of her life, as she related it.

I lived near Taylorsville, Kentucky, in Spencer County, nearly all my life, Except for the last four or five years I've been living here.. I was born there in a log cabin, it was made of logs, and it was chinked with clay and rock. My mammy was raised from a baby by her master, Rueben Dale. He was a good ole master and was always good to my mammy. Master Dale owned a big farm and had big fields of corn and tobacco, and we raised everything we had to eat. Ole Master Dale was a good ole Baptist, had lots of good ole time religion. Ruben Dale had lots of slaves, and every family had its own cabin. As he raised my mammy as a slave from a baby, she thought there was no one living better than her master, Dale.

MOTHER ON ONE PLANTATION, FATHER ON ANOTHER

The next farm close to the master's was owned by a man, Colonel Jack Allen, and he had a big farm and owned lots of slaves. And Mammy was allowed to marry one of the Allen slaves, and my father's name was Will Allen. You see the slaves had the same name as the masters, as he owned them. My mammy had seven children and we all grew up on our master Dales farm. My father had to stay at his master's, Col. Jack Allen's, and work in the fields all day, but at night he would come to my mammy's cabin and stay all night, and go back to his master's, Col. Allen's fields the next morning.

Yes, I grew up in slavery times. I used to carry tubs of clothes down to the old spring house, there was plenty of water, and I washed all the clothes there. My sisters and I used to wash and sing, and we had a good time. I can't remember much of the old songs, it's been so long ago.

I had two brothers, and they joined the war and fought in the army. One was named Harry and the other Peter. Mammy worked hard, did all the cooking, but ole Master Dale was so good to all of us children we didn't mind it.

I was a mischievous gal when I was growing up. I would get a licking most every-day. I always liked to fight the other children, and I would say, 'Mammy, she hit me!', but I was bad and I got my whipping.

On my master's farm we killed a lot of hogs for our meat, had a big trough, that we cut the meat up in, and put the hams and shoulders together, and the middles together, then put them down in salt for about six weeks, and then hanged them up in the smokehouse and smoked them with hickory chips. And left them all the time till we used them up. We had an apple house we used to fill every fall with the best apples. The ole master sure had an apple farm. Inside of the house there was a big hole in the ground, dug deep, and we use to fill it full of apples, then cover it over with a straw, and oh Lord, we would have apples all winter when the snow lies deep on the ground.

Sure I wish those old days back.

Some of the other old masters, who had lots of slaves on farms close by, were so mean to the slaves they owned. They worked the women and men both in the fields - and the children too. When the ole master thought they weren't doing enough work, he would take his men and strip off their shirts, and lash them with cow-hide whips until you could see the blood run down the poor niggers' backs.

The Nigger traders would come through and buy up a lot of men and women slaves, and get a big drove of them and take them further south to work in the fields, leaving their babies. I never can forget. I knew some mean ole masters.

Our ole master Dale that raised my mammy and her family never was hard or mean like that. He would let us go to church, have parties and dances. One of the ole slaves would come to our cabin with his fiddle and we'd dance.

AFTER THE WAR

After I grew up, I worked for Mrs. Susan Lovell, who was the ole master's married daughter. She lived down the road from his farm. She was good to me! You see I was named after Susan Lovell. It was while I was working for her when the war ended. She told me I was free after the war was over. I got happy and sang, but I didn't know for a long time what to be free was, so after the war she hired me and I stayed on doing all the cooking and washing and all the work, and I was hired by her for four dollars a month.

After the war was over my father died. And it wasn't long after that, I married Wm. Sanders and we had six children. I got a government pension, as my husband was in the army during the Civil War and he was wounded in the body, but he lived a long time after the war ended.

In the olden days we used to sing and go to church, sing the old time religion, and when we danced we sang: 'Who's been here since I've been gone, Ah, that gal with the blue dress on.'

I still believe in lots of good and bad luck signs, but forget most of them, But if you drop a knife on the floor someone is sure to come to see you, and if you dream of money that is good luck. To sneeze at the table is bad luck, to sneeze when away from the table good luck. If you dream of the stars is bad luck.