

Negro Sayings

RP Tarr
Winston

Hope is de sumpin dat holds a
pussen up but hit ken be 'bused.
De lazy man am full uv hope
en sets in de shade while de buzy
man whut aint got so much chops de
weeds outer de cotton.

Dare never wuz er man dat wuz such
a dead beat dat he could stan' off de
collector of death. When nature presents
de bill de man doan dispute de figgers.

When er man aint got no money it is
de very time dat folks wants him to
pay er debt. Ef he's got plenty of
money hit doan make so much difference.

De tongue dat will tell a lie will
lick 'lasses dat don't b'long to hit.

Hit aint de littlest person dat is de
mos no er count. Sometimes de bigges
stalk in de fiel' aint got no corn on hit.

Winston

Negro Sayings - continued

In de eyes of de world de deatte uv
a po' man am a pity, but de death
of a rich man is a c'lamity.

I spize ter see folks pay mo' tenshun
ter de 'oman whut is de bes' dressed.
De pea cock is got finer clothes dan
de dominicker hen, but she aint
half so good ter have round de house.

NOW is the time for all GOOD men to come to the aid of THE party.
(Appears like ALL the GOOD men and BAD men too, came.) 46 to 2.
As MAINE goes, so goes VERMONT! " JAF

Negro Customs etc

The raccoon, considered inedible by white people, is deemed a choice morsel by Negroes; ranking next to 'possum.

In some sections of the South collards are called "WIDOW GREENS" by the Negroes; since, they say, this vegetable always thrives best in a garden owned and worked by a widow. Singularly, observation bears out the theory. (Possibly an explanation may be found in the fact that widows are, as a rule, energetic persons, and may work their gardens better than other people.)

The idea of permanent waves for white women strikes the rural Negro women as very amusing; " Us tryin ter git de kinks outen our hair, and dem white womens trying ter git um IN deyrn! "

The Negro considers a braying mule on Sunday a personal insult; " Quit yer laffin at me, yer crazy mule, jes cause hits SUNDAY en I cyant plow yer!")

Negroes consider it "bad luck" for a dog to stay in the house at night; so, regardless of weather, the dogs are routed from the hearth and put out of doors at bedtime.

Much of the death rate among country Negroes could be lowered, if they would regard the doctor's instruction regarding administration of medicine; but they pay attention, instead, to the patient's whims and often give certain foods in strict violation of the physician's orders - at the same time, omitting the medicine prescribed. They are moved more by sympathy for the patient, rather than a regard for his welfare. Typhoid fever is particularly fatal among them on this account.

Although generations removed from Africa, the Negro is immune against sunburn. He can go to sleep and sleep soundly in the hottest sun.

Week ending Dec. 4, 1936

NEGRO SUPERSTITION

Many years ago Ester Yates, a negro woman, shortly after her boy Ben was born, planted a pecan nut saying - "Ef dis hyar tree gro' an' flurish, dis chile lib an' prosper, ef de tree doan gro' den he don't."

to
From the pecan nut referred[^] above, a large tree has grown and for a number of years has borne a good crop of nuts. The boy Ben, now a man, is the only child left to care for his aged, blind father and his rheumatic mother.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This story was told to me by Miss Edmonia Churchill Warren of Toulminville, Mobile County, Ala., who knows Ester Yates and has heard her tell this story.

NEGRO SUPERSTITIONS OF MOBILE AND VICINITY.

(Collected by Mary A. Poole.)

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Coon bones, are extra good for baby to cut teeth on; also a string of hog-weeds cut like cone-shaped beads, and worn around the baby's neck for teething.

"A Posthumous child can cure pain by rubbing place affected with bare hands!"

By blowing their breath down the throat of anyone suffering from sore throat, they will effect a cure.

Hair taken from their head and plaited into a strand and worn around the neck of a person who has a goitre, the goitre will disappear"

BIBLIOGRAPHY: The above was given to the writer by
Rose Franklin Brown, 60 years. Prichard, Ala.

Week ending Jan. 8, 1937
S-242-Other folklore-
superstition.

François Ludgère Diard,
Identification No. 0149-5252
Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 6.
WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.

SUPERSTITIOUS OLD AUNT EMMA PINETOP.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

One of the negro servants employed by the Diard family of Mobile to wash windows and sweep the yard was a half Muscogee mulatta woman named Aunt Emma Pinetop. The surname of "Pinetop" was given the negro woman by the Diard children, because she always went around bareheaded with her wooly hair standing out in rolled braids resembling pine burrs. Old Aunt Emma was a very peculiar negro woman, more so than the average superstitious negro, and always carried her wardrobe and bed-clothing with her wrapped in a huge bundle, which she carried on her head. When asked why she always carried her clothes around with her, she replied that if she left them at home "de niggers" would steal them from her. She was always accompanied by a little "pickaninny" when she went out for a day's work, who bore the name of Susie Lou, and who was said to have been born to Aunt Emma in middle life, for Aunt Emma was a woman of more than fifty-five years when Susie Lou was born.

One day Aunt Letitia Ford, the ex-slave servant assisting Aunt Bell (black as the ace of spades), the cook ~~of~~ the maternal side of the Diard family from ante-bellum days, was sick, and old Aunt Emma Pinetop was used to substitute her. Aunt Emma was put to scraping Irish potatoes to be used in various ways in the day's cooking, but refused flatly to have anything to do with the potatoes, unless a cup of table salt was put into the pan of water she was to wash and scrape the potatoes in.

Mrs. Diard asked old Aunt Emma what was the salt for, that it was not necessary to wash and scrape Irish potatoes in salted water.

Old Aunt Emma still persisted in having a cup of salt in the water, and to please the old negro Mrs. Diard yielded, but first insisted she ^{le} told what the salt was for.

Week ending Nov. 6. 1936.
S-242
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Federal Writers' Project, Dist. 6.
WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.

COINCIDENTS AND SUPERSTITIONS.

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STORY OF RAIN IN MOBILE ALABAMA.

(Compiled by Mary A. Poole.)

In the 80's in Mobile, there was an organization known as the "German Relief Association", and affiliated with it was a band of athletes, members of the Mobile Turnervereine. These latter performed all kind of feats in Callisthenics, among which were men of unusual skill on the bars and in jumping and tumbling.

On May 1st the German Relief gave a picnic and it was a standing joke, that Mobile would have rain when the German Relief had their picnic. However, they held to their date of May 1st even though it usually meant not only one but sometimes two postponements. One year, it was an extra dry spring season, and a Mr. Homer, a farmer living on Old Shell Road / about three miles from the city, wrote to the German Relief asking them to have their picnic earlier, so the Mobile farmers could have the badly needed rain for their crops, promising them \$100.00 if they produced the rain. They agreed, arranged for picnic, and it rained a regular down pour. At first it was all taken as a joke, but the Association held Homer to his agreement, however, he paid cheerfully saying it was one of his best investments as his crops and those of his neighbors profited by it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Conversation with old Mobilians.

SCREECH OWL

Many years ago there was an old man who, with his wife and two daughters, lived in a thinly settled but wooded section in the northwestern part of Butler county. Within a few hundred yards was an old graveyard known as Gilgal.

It had long been a sign of sorrow or death for a screech owl to come into a home or make its pitiful cries nearby.

This old man was taken sick and his illness was prolonged. During the most critical time, a screech owl would fly in the woods near by and screech most pitieously, especially at night. The bird finally gained entrance into the house, alighting on the headboard, then the footboard of the bed, where the sick man lay. The members of the family and friends were very anxious for by this time the old man's condition had grown grave. When efforts were made to force the bird out of the house it would fly from place to place continuously screeching. The old man had by this time grown delirious and he would reply each time to the screech owl saying, "I'm coming, I'll be there, or "It won't be long." The bird closely pursued, left the room and flew into the graveyard where it kept up its screeching until the old man died a few hours later. The last movements of his lips to be understood, he was replying to the screech owl saying, "I'm coming."

Consultant: Dena Thompson, Clarke County.

Maggie Boswell
10/21/36
200 Words.

NEGRO SUPERSTITIONS.

A crowing rooster is shoed away from kitchen steps, as an omen of COMPANY coming to EAT!

If ants bring up new material out of their holes, it will NOT rain ~~again~~ that day.

A SCREECH OWL'S weird sound is an omen of death, if in a tree in the yard; an omen of ill tidings, if near the house, but not in the yard. Throw salt in the fire to drive the owl away, never try to harm it.

If starting on a mission and turn ^{ed} back, make a cross mark in the path and spit in it - to avoid bad luck.

NEGROES DO NOT CAGE BIRDS! (one of the family will stay in jail or the penitentiary, as long as the bird is confined).

In lower end of Talladega County, is an aged Negro woman, Aunt Mary Simmons, who claims to be the reincarnation of Christ, and has worn no garments except white for 30 years. She subsists largely upon charity of her converts and the gratuity of white friends; but will not accept GIFTS of clothing, hats or shoes, in any color except WHITE. With no design to be blasphemous, she promises endless bliss to anyone who gives her even a small sum of money.

about once in a generation. The rural Negro churches are orthodox, in that schisms ~~never~~ develop among the membership; but, instead of pulling out and building another ~~church~~ house of worship, it is customary for the building to go up in smoke, when one side wins; then all hands get together and build a new church on same spot, and peace prevails for that generation. (Singularly, no lasting resentment appears to follow the obvious arson).

If a rabbit gets into the garden and nibbles vegetables, it must be chased outside the enclosure before being caught or killed - else the vegetables nibbled will be POISON, to whoever eats them.

A group of Negroes working in the field, hoeing cotton - for example, will carry on a theological discussion, participated in by all adults in the party, without missing a lick with a hoe all day long. Often these discussions take a humorous turn on account of ignorant misinterpretation of some Biblical passage. For instance: "Lazarus, come forth!" was construed to mean "come 4th," and an all-day discussion in the field followed the various explanations of who were the 3 persons preceding Lazarus out of the grave!

Week ending Nov. 13, 1936.

S-241 Other folklore superstition.

S-200 History.

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 WPA Project 3014, Mobile, Ala.

NEGRO SUPERSTITION ON RIGHT AND WRONG
 OF THE DANCE.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

In Mobile following the Civil War there were many of the ante-bellum negroes who still adhered to the ancestral customs of what was right and wrong in the pleasures participated in by earthly man. These customs were generally adopted from their white masters of the past. One night in January, 1878, following reconstruction times, the negroes of Mobile created quite a discussion about the right and wrong of the dance. Some of the negro preachers were so austere in their ruling of same, the non-church going negro element rebelled and laughed at them for their religious superstition. Among this latter number was Jim Thomas, an ex-slave who had belonged to Mrs James Roulston (née Lucy Adelaide DeLage), widow of James Roulston, the witty auctioneer of Mobile. Jim Thomas could neither read or write, but had a knack or gift for composing some of the sweetest negro songs of the Mobile vicinity and which have passed down to the generations following after him. He had a beautiful lyric tenor voice, played on both the banjo and guitar, and composed his songs verbally as he went along playing on his instruments. Some of Jim's songs being at times so sweet and others so comical, they were written down by different ones who heard him sing and play, and some of his listeners having talent for writing music also arranged some of these songs into proper musical arrangements. Some of these songs had as much as twenty verses or more, while others had only one or two. Jim had lost all his fingers on his left hand while working in Otis' Saw-mill on the Mobile River front, but with

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S-200 History.

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NEGRO SUPERSTITION ON RIGHT AND WRONG OF
THE DANCE.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

the remaining thumb and the stub of his hand he handled to perfection the frets of both the banjo and the guitar. Jim's parodies and satires in rhyme always fitted in the right place, so the thought of the negro clergy's austere ruling on the liberties of the right and wrong of the dance, gave Jim the idea to write the following parody in one verse:

mind
"Remember, masser--min' diz now--de sinfulness ob sin,
Is 'pending 'pon de sperrit wat we goes and does it in;
An' in a richus frame o' min' we's gwine to dance and sing;
A feelin' like King David when he cut de pigeon wing!"

While Jim Thomas was still in the employment of his previous owner and as well as that of other members of her family, The Mobile Weekly Register of January 12, 1878, printed this verse of his on the dance with a short notice.

Bibliography: Personal conversations in later years of the writer with Jim Thomas, the slave of his relatives, and who preserved some of the old negroe's songs.

Notice published in The Mobile Weekly Register of Saturday, January 12, 1878.

Week ending Oct.9, 1936.
S-242

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SUPERSTITION RELATIVE TO OLD MEDICAL COLLEGE
OF MOBILE ALA.

(Compiled by Mary A. Poole.)

"studiments", who to their thinking and even to some of the superstitious white people, sometimes robbed the graves for material, or if one died of a new or unknown malady, to learn the cause and effect of the disease.

For a few years after the transfer of Medical College to Tuscaloosa, the building was again used as a City Public School for Negro children.

Now by a turn of the wheel of progress the old Medical College has been taken over by the Federal Administration and converted into a Community House for the Negroes of Mobile, and where they once dreaded to set foot they spend many happy and educational hours.

Bibliography: Mobile, Fact and Tradition, By Erwin Craighead,
Copyright 1930. The Powers Printing Company 1930.

Personal conversation and observation with John Johnson,
Pleasant Avenue, Toulminville, Ala.

Week ending Oct. 9 1936
S-242

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SUPERSTITION RELATIVE TO OLD MEDICAL COLLEGE

OF MOBILE ALA.

(Compiled by Mary A. Poole.)

In 1853, Dr. J.C. Nott and Dr. George A. Ketchum, founded the Mobile Medical College. A whole square bounded by St. Anthony, State, Lawrence and Cedar streets was secured and a handsome building erected. The state gave fifty thousand dollars and the City of Mobile, as much more. Dr. Nott went to Europe and purchased its fine collection and museum, and in 1859 the college entered on its long career of usefulness, later becoming part of the State University. Many names of eminent physicians of the State of Alabama, who were prominent in their profession in almost every section of the United States, will be found among the alumni of the Mobile Medical College.

In 1865 when Federal troops were in Mobile, the military authorities commandeered the Medical College, and a school opened for negroes. This school lasted one year and was transferred in 1866 to the old Blue College on Government street.

The Medical College again opened in the building and was later transferred as part of the State University to Tuscaloosa, Ala. During the years following 1866 as the Medical College, this section of the City was shunned by the superstitions of the negro race, they going out of their way to avoid passing within even a block of the Medical College, especially after night-fall where "medicated studiments could easily grab one, give dem a dose from dat 'black bottle," and use their body for dissection, or one might meet a "hant" of some poor fellow who could not rest after being cut in many pieces, and separated, how could such a one rest until he got together again. They would even refuse to go to the City Hospital for fear of being given a dose of the "black bottle", and their bodies turned over to the

SUPERSTITIOUS OLD ANNT EMMA.PINETOP.

(Compiled by François Ludgère Diard.)

"Yo' see, Miss Sarah, bac' yonder in slav'ry times us niggers always used salt water to wash an' scrape de Irish 'tatoes in".

"But why?" still persisted Mrs. Diard.

"Hit's dis lik' dis, Miss Sarah, de salt tak's de Irish out o' de 'tatoes".

.....

Another day old Aunt Emma Pinetop was sent to the Central market just a block or two distant from the Diard home to get a small cabbage, to go with another one for making cold slaw. She was given ten cents, the approximate price of a small cabbage at the time; and when she returned with a very small cabbage all withered and hardly suitable for making slaw, she was asked by Mrs. Diard:

"Surely, Aunt Emma, you didn't pay a dime for such a tiny, withered cabbage like that? ~~White~~ cabbage is only suitable for making cold slaw".

Old Aunt Emma Pinetop only grinned, and said:

"No, M'am, Miss Sarah, I'se didn't gib a dime fo' dis here cabbage, I'se gib two nickles."

The old negro woman had never learned the denominations of money, or how to make change when buying articles. Thereafter she was always looked upon as the dumbest of the dumbest by the other negro servants working in the Diard family.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Personal observation, the writer being a witness to the above happenings.

Week ending Jan. 15, 1937.
S-242

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~~These~~ SUPERSTITIONS OF MOBILE AND VICINITY.

(Collected by ~~Mary A. Poole.~~)

It is bad luck to put arms up over head with clasped hands resting on top of head.

"To make children cut teeth easy" - Rub gums with the brains of either a rabbit or a black hen, brains must still be warm, after animal of fowl has been killed.

A Child should wear a string of small beans or seeds, called Job's Tears around the neck for easy teething.

Coon bones, are extra good for baby to cut teeth on; also a string of hog-weeds cut like cone-shaped beads, and worn around the baby's neck for teething.

"A Posthumous child can cure pain by rubbing place affected with bare hands"

By blowing their breath down the throat of anyone suffering from sore throat, they will effect a cure.

Hair taken from their head and plaited into a strand and worn around the neck of a person who has a goitre, the goitre will disappear"

Mary A. Poole
Mobile Writers Project

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Rose Franklin Brown, 60 years. Prichard, Ala.

Alabama

Sent to Wash. 11/20/37

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Mary A. Poole
Mobile Writers' Project.

Conjure doctor.--Case of old woman sick and gypped out of \$10 by doctor who buried human hair, graveyard dirt and bones in ~~XXXX~~ path to spring. Recovered.

Case of woman in Montgomery who owed debt and was fleeced out of \$10.

"Raw head and bloody bones" well known ghost. Sometimes carries head in arms and if he stops in doorway it is sign he is looking for some one and means death.

Contents of conjure bag usually a small piece of asafetida, a copper coin, a rusted nail, always a piece of copperas or bluestone and rosin. These used to treat disease, but main purpose of conjure doctor is to bring vengeance upon an enemy.

Negro beliefs:

If you shivver a rabbit is walking over your grave.
Step over a child and it will not grow any more.
If you cut a child's fingernails before it is a year old it will become a thief.
To cut its hair before it is a year old is a sign it will die.

If the younger sister should marry before the elder, the latter should put on green hose and stand behind the door.

Mrs Fowler,
Fruithurst, Ala-

While I was visiting up in the mountains this summer, we were awakened by an owl screeching just outside the window. I was sleeping in the room with my hostess. Presently she sat up and seemed to be in some trouble. I said, "Can I help you?" "Oh, no"-she said, I am just trying to turn the heel of my shoe up, to stop that owl." "Will that stop it?" I asked. "Yes," she said, and in a few minutes the screeching stopped. Whether it was caused by the heel of the shoe being turned up, is food for thought. The next morning, she said to the negro girl in the kitchen, "Viola, our visitor was much amused because I turned the heel of my shoe up, to stop that hoot-owl"-

Viola's drawl came--soft and musical-"Yas um, but it sho will do it- An ef yo put a hairpin down the chimney of a lighted lamp, or turn yo over-all pocket wrongside outerds, it sho will stop 'em-"

(Personal)

Marriage Days: Monday for Health,
 Tuesday for Wealth;
 Wednesday the best day of all.
 Thursday for Losses;
 Friday for Crosses,
 Saturday, no good at all.

If a rabbit crosses your path from the RIGHT, good luck; from the LEFT, bad luck.

A bright (precocious) child was not expected to live to maturity .

To make a medicine for a horse's eyes.

To make a medicine for a horse's eyes to have the eyes open
 in ten days.

To make a medicine for a horse's eyes in the night. 3 Gallons.

The treatment of a horse colored horse two days with
 yellowish & colic and 50 cents.

To make an excellent medicine for a horse
 about 1 dollar and 50 cents.

To make a prescription for horse and also one
 again 1 dollar.

To make a good medicine for a horse that
 get well 1 dollar and 50 cents.

To give a horse one day on the horse - 100
 dollars.

Total is 50, one and 25 cents.

A NOVEL BILL

The following is vouched for as a genuine document presented to a horse owner by Hancock, Veterinarian on January 4th, 1873 - given in the Gainesville Dispatch, 1876.

"Too medikle advice twice 3 dollars.

Konsultation over a ded mare sed to have the eppyout 75 cents.

Go in' to see two sick hosses in the night 2 dollars;

Too treatment of a kream colored hoss two days with medicuns 4 dollars and 50 cents.

To making an obstetrikul examinashun of a hosses throt 1 dollar and 50 cents.

To writin' a preeskripshun for botts and also one spavin' 1 dollar.

To holdin' a post mortum examinashun on a horse that got well 1 dollar and 50 cents.

To giving my opinion one day on the street - too dollars.

Total 15 dollars and 25 cents.

Negro Superstitions

1. To wrap tightly a small bunch of child's hair will raise his palate.
2. To take the rings off one's fingers will cause heart trouble.
3. If you hear the first dove's cry, take your shoe and slacking and inside the stocking will be found a hair the color of the man's hair you are going to marry.
4. The first person a cat looks at after licking himself, is going to be married.
5. If you put a kitten under the bed cover and leave it till it crawls out itself, it will never leave home.
6. If you walk through a place a horse wallows, you will never have a headache.
7. If a woodpecker raps on a house someone there is going to die.
8. If an owl screeches, turn your apron pocket inside out, tie a knot in your apron string and he will stop.
9. If a rabbit runs across the road in front of you to the left, it is a sign of bad luck; if to the right, a sign of good luck.
10. If you cut a child's fingernails before it is a year old, it will steal when it grows up.
11. If a cow lows early at night, or a whippoorwill cries at midnight, someone is going to die.
12. If you put your hand on a dead man's head, you will never worry about him, he will never haunt you, and you will never fear death.
13. After a death if the pictures are not turned toward the wall some other member of the family will die.
14. If you see a dead man in a mirror you will be unlucky the rest of your life.
15. To keep away bad luck after someone has died, stop the chef.
16. If a dead man's nose bleeds, it is a sign he has been killed.
17. If a dead body does not grow stiff at once someone else in the family will die.
18. If a grave is dug before the dead is to be buried another death will take place. An open grave at midnight causes death.
19. If a piece of a dead man's hair is put in a certain place, you

- will always know where the spirit is, and if you remove the hair, you will be haunted.
20. If you walk backward 9 steps and then dig in the ground, you will find a hair the color of that of your husband to be.
21. If you call 3 times toward the call of the first dove you hear, your headache will be cured.
22. If you hold a mirror over a wall at 12 o'clock on May 1, you will see the image of your future husband. A reflected casket is the sign of death.
23. Shivering without being cold ^{is a sign} you are in love.
24. If you lose a finger through an accident and the finger is buried instead of burned, the place will still hurt until the buried finger takes root.
25. After taking a splinter from your hand you run it through your hair, the place will not hurt anymore.
26. If you find a hair pin and hang it on a pine tree, you will surely have a letter by the next mail.
27. Unless your bed is pushed straight against the wall, you will have bad luck.
28. If you sneeze before getting out of bed, someone is coming. If you sneeze while eating, you must rinse out your mouth or there will be a death in the family.
29. If you cut a baby's hair before it is a year old it will become "weak-backed" and will die.
30. Rubbing a baby's knees with greasy dishwater will make it walk early.
31. To prevent death after a rattlesnake bite, split open a frog or young chicken and put on the bite (chicken must be hot) or when it turns green put on another.
32. To cure earache or abscess take off a cockroach's head, split it, press the juice in the ear, and put cotton in to retain the juice.
33. Stear a match in your hair to keep from having headaches.
34. To cure rheumatism, tie a dried rattlesnake skin about the affected part.
35. A narrow leather strap worn on the wrist prevents cramps; a copper wire band will prevent rheumatism.
36. It is bad luck to burn sassafras wood on the house; it may be burned in the yard under a wash-kettle.
37. A bluegum negro is a bad negro.
38. Never sweep under the bed of a sick person or he will surely die.
39. Never clean the fingernails after dark.

negro superstition

The child who picks up the poker to get the soot from the chimney back is going to get a whipping. The negro believed that red peppers hanging from the cabin, sunflower growing at the gate, or cotton cards crossed over the bed head are all signs of good luck. In spring every girl plants slips to see if her beau's love is growing.

The negro's signs that winter has passed on are when the beans are sowed in the light of the moon, and the root crops are sowed in the dark of the moon, are taking hold in the ground. The flying ants are out in swarms. The negro's chief thought is to laugh and have a good time. The past sorrows never bother him and he never thinks of the morrow or looks ahead.

Plantation Songs - Martha Young
New York. P. H. Russell Publisher

Whenever something happens to a negro they feel that it necessary to know whether they were hurt or "conjured" and to know the cure. Negroes feel that there's an ailment of some sort in almost every cabin and there is a need for diagnosis. The negroes believed that witch Menie lived in Dollyhyde in a house surrounded by squirrels and talking owls. She knew how to practice conjuring.

Plantation Bird Legends - Martha Young
New York and London - D Appleton and Co.

1916

Cunjuw Woman

At her da Carter way 7 she burned 7 candles
all night long May 1. This was repeated on 7
successive May 1's and by that time she was a
Cunjuw woman with the name "Seven Sisters".
The author of "Stars Fell on Alabama" went
to see her. He was sick of his wife, but she
could always bring him back. Seven Sisters
said she could do this by getting a thread out of
his pants on a dirty string from his drawer
and tricking him so he couldn't get away.
She might put some fish bait worms and
boil them and strain the water

Conjur Home

Uses of May Water and the John the Conqueror Root.

May water first caught off the roof from the first rain in May mixed with John the Conqueror root it makes you successful in business, lucky at gambling. Drinking it will make a gambling hand. Drinking May Water will bring you health and good luck.

Mix ~~May Water with~~ John the Conqueror Root with a lodestone and it will draw demes right off a counter, unless they are fastened down.

Never let John the Conqueror Root come in contact with snuff or tobacco; that will kill its effect.

To revenge yourself on an enemy

Catch a snake, cut off its head and hang up the body by the tail of a long-leaf pine sapling. Take the first drop of blood dripping from the snake and mix it in whiskey, or something to kill the taste and smell and offer it to your enemy. If he drinks it the snake will grow under his skin and he will die. When he dies all the snakes will crawl from his body unless you get somebody to kill the spell.

In the same way substitute a spider blood for snakes blood and spiders will grow under the skin.

In the same manner lizards or ants may be made to go under the skin, killing the victim and forsaking him in swarms at his death.

Plant 9 needles in something and slip it under the house right under the head of the bed. They will cause 9 pains to the person sleeping above them and kill him.

To know when you have been Tricked

Hear a demes on either side of which the no. 3 or 7 appears twice, on a string around your ankle. When it turns black you'll know someone is trying to play a trick on you. Go to a conjur woman and get it untricked.

Take 2 pods of pepper and one tablespoon of salt and put them in your right shoe, take 1 pod of pepper and 1 tablespoon of sulphur and 1 of salt and put them in your left shoe. Then whenever you walk over any conjur balls, bad luck plants, buried needles, powders etc your feet will burn and warn you.

If the conjuration is very bad sometimes the sole will burn right off. Go and get it untricked

To Cure Warts

Tie as many knots in a cotton string as there are warts and suspend this string under the eaves of the house so that the water dropping off the roof will run down this string and wash the warts away.

Cut a slit in the wart and pass through it a string dipped in kerosene oil and lighted.

If it is a large wart it should be penetrated with a small brass pin, which should be thrown away or "hid from yourself," and after 3 days the wart will disappear.

Put 7 grains of corn on the wart, then feed the corn to the chickens.

Pick the wart with a brass pin, let 1 drop of blood fall on a stone, cover the drop with another stone and then bury them secretly.

Kill a black cat, take it to a graveyard at midnight, and rub it on the wart.

To Cure "Misery in de Back"

Dig up some pine roots in a road where there has never been any corpse, burn the roots, and then apply the "rosin" to your back.

Stars Fell on Ala.

Superstitions of the Alabama negro

Negroes believe implicitly in dreams and spirits. Sometimes they seem to go into a trance and tell of going to heaven and perdition and seeing persons they knew in life. They believe that witches come only on dark nights and cannot be seen by mortal eye, you only know of their coming by evidence they leave behind. Betty Hamilton tells of her old plantation nurse finding her hair unusually tangled and saying the witches had tied hard knots in it. The negro mammy wanted to fix the witches so she flung some salt over her left shoulder into the fire to keep them from coming back. She had a way of throwing salt in the fire to keep old Satan down.

The plantation negroes were very suspicious of one another. They practiced witchcraft or "conjurer bag" on someone they suspected of wanting to thwart their plans. Sometimes they place a "conjurer bag" or bottle containing a mysterious mixture in the direct pathway of a person. If the person walks over it she is "conjured" and is under the power of the one who placed the bag in her pathway. But if she throws the "conjurer bag" away into swift running water the stream will carry away all the wickedness it might have wrought. If she wishes revenge, she may throw it into the fire and the harm intended to her will rebound upon the "conjurer." Miss Hamilton also describes a "conjurer bag" she once saw. The bag was made of plain unbleached domestic and tied with an old leather string. As well as she could decide it contained pieces of human hair, sheep wool, horse hair, bones, teeth, splinters of pine, particles of salt, red pepper, grains of corn, wheat, pieces of straw and shucks and old woollen strings, all packed with sand, ashes, and lampblack. The conjurer bag is always in an ~~air~~ atmosphere of mystery. It fills one with a superstitious fear and apprehension of the conjurer who is seeking to do some secret

and underhanded injury. Persons have actually been known to pine away and die under the delusion that they had been "conjured." One negro said you must be born in the right time of the moon to know how to conjure. This negro said she had seen folks who had been conjured and who knew who had done it too.

A superstitious negro will never kill a cat as he believes it has 9 lives and will come back and haunt you as often as it dies. It's bad luck to move a cat - it should be given to a friend or left to find its own home. It's good luck for a cat to make its home with you.

A negro wears blood beads round her neck to keep her nose from bleeding. Men and women sometimes admit that they wear leather strings or bands toward off disease and to add to their physical strength.

At the sound of the 1st whip-ford will's noted in spring, the superstitious negro will immediately take off his coat and turn it wrong side out to bring him good luck the rest of the year. Retracing your footsteps also turns luck in the right direction - as when you leave a house and have occasion to return, you make a cross or mark and spit in it (spitting in the face of Satan, as it were) then take a seat before leaving the house again in order to make a fresh start.

The horse shoe personifies good luck and their belief in it is far stronger than white people's. They hang it over their door and in various places; a dozen failures would not shake their faith. The rabbit is held in great esteem and awe. It is considered bad luck for a rabbit to run across your pathway especially late in the afternoon. To break the spell walk backwards 9 steps and turn your pockets wrong side out.

Southern Character Sketches - Betsy Hamilton
Atlanta Ga. The Dickert Co. 1921

Ala. negro superstitions cont.

When a squirrel crosses the road in front of you, regard it as a good omen - your journey will be safe.

If your right hand itches, you are going to shake hands with a stranger; if the left hand, you may expect to receive a present, or money. If either foot itches, you will soon walk upon strange land. When the eye itches you will cry before sundown.

When the rt. ear burns, someone is speaking good of you, if it should be the left ear, they are speaking evil of you. Old Hully used to say that when the owl hollered close to the house, she stuck the shovels in the fire and when the shovels got red had the owl hushed. Then she turned her shoe over and her apron wrong side out to change the luck. If a turtle dove moans that's a sign of death as well as the squinch owl holler. To put a horse shoe in the fire keeps the hawks off of the chickens. A rooster crowing is a sign of good luck. If he crows on the door slip Monday, someone is coming every day that week. If you drop the dishrag someone is coming hungry. If you carry a hoe and spade through the house it's a sign of death. Hearing cows in the latter part of the night, dreaming of crossing muddy water, dreaming of losing a tooth, and seeing the moon over your left shoulder, are all sure signs of trouble.

Negroes preach the funeral service a year after the person dies. A negro will drop every-thing anytime to go to a funeral.

The mountain people are also very superstitious. They carry about bunches of sage, sassafras and other kinds of herbs, said to be affective in warding off disease; and a rabbit foot from the left hind leg of rabbit caught in a graveyard. They believe that if their nose itches someone is coming, and that it's bad luck to pay salt back. They also say that smoke follows pretty people. To break a mirror is bad luck.

The mountain people go by the moon for hog-killing. They kill the hogs when the moon's on the increase, so the meat won't stink up. They kill some hogs when the moon's on the decrease so the meat will go to grease when beans and turnips and cabbages are boiled with it. The mountain folks also believe in dancing to the music of the fiddle. The mountain people believe in parties and dances as well as anyone does. The boys would send word to the girl and that they were having a party at her house and then they would tell everyone to come. They believed implicitly in kissing under the mistletoe. There were big fire places, ^{almost} across one side of the house and they would fling on huge hickory logs. They wouldn't need candles. The girls would bring cakes and custards; and the boys, candy and raisins. They would also serve all kinds of hog meat. They would play games with 2 fiddlers playing constantly. Two of the boys would take turns calling dances. (quote.)

"Get yo' pardners for a cavtillion! Han's all round! All promenade! Forward and back! Fus' couple t' the right! Swing them corners! Second couple t' the right! All han's round! All promenade! Salute yo' pardners, an' seat the same!

They sometimes drew straws for the dances. One of their dances was the Virginia reel.

At the quiltings the younger people would dance and play kissing games. A boy would be blind-folded and have 3 guesses to see which girl kissed him. Sometimes ~~the~~ girls would fool the boys and let a negro mammy kiss them. Sometimes after the quilt was finished, they would fling it over one of the girls' heads. This was a sign she would be the next to marry.

Southern Character Sketches - Betty Cornille
Atlanta Ga. - The Dickert Co. 1921

From a paper called "Folklore in Ala." by
Billie R. Harrison.

Like the Negro's song and dances,
the negroes were full of rhythm. They got infinite
delights from trying to outdance each other
while some of them played the banjo. They
had songs about everything that concerned them,
about their masters, the plantations, and so on.
They would sing about the cotton and potatoes
as they worked upon the plantation. The negroes
would try to out-street one another in their
Coke walks. Many of the negro songs were quite
fantastic; others were founded upon the "Bible"
and religious songs such as the negro spiritual.
Some of their religious songs are quite imaginative
and give their ideas of about heaven
and sinners. These negro songs were written in a
distinctly in negro dialect, and ones fall
right into the rhythm of them as first
reading them. The negro songs were sometimes his
origin by how they came about or why it was
sorrowing or storming. Some of the folk lore
came from songs the negro ma'mams sang to
the white children on the plantations.

Minute Dramas - Martha Young
Montgomery Ala. - The Paragon Press - 1921

Like negro sang of himself, his own interests, of his work, ^{his} ^{freedom} ^{freedom} his freedom, his love. He sang songs uninfluenced or undirected by any individual so far as we know. Before the civil war they might sing sad and pathetic songs all of which were rooted in religion. They were largely influenced by environment, music of white people, this negro folk lore is of first importance in any folk music. There were 2 types of music the simple sweet song as "Swanee River" and the saul's songs of the slaves which burst into cokes walks, blues, and jazz of today. The Southern people were great lovers of soft sweet music. They are ~~born~~ raised in an atmosphere of music and born with a talent for it, therefore, it's not surprising that we are interested in it.

Newspaper article March 26, 1927. "news"
"Local Daquerrestype of Reconstruction Days"
Presented by Whites.

Superstitions

1. If the younger sister marries, ^{before} the elder, the elder sister must put on a pair of green hose and dance behind the door, to avoid the catastrophe of becoming an old maid.
2. Tell a dreadn before breakfast and it will come true.
3. To find a pin, pointing towards you means good luck.
4. If a ground hog see his shadow on the second of Feb, he goes into his hole, and it means there will be 6 more weeks of winter.
5. If you carry an umbrella, it will scare away the rain.
6. Pain before 7, clear before eleven.
7. Knocking on wood ~~averts~~ averts disaster.
8. To keep a dog at home, cut off the tip of his tail and bury it under the steps.
9. A whistling woman and a crowing hen always come to some bad end.
10. Kissing a baby will cause it to stammer.
11. Kissing a baby will cause it to stammer.
12. Kiss your elbow and you will become a boy.
13. Ears down and some - about you.

man and wife - Go home - taking your shoes - multiply
and replenish the Texas country. The pair poured back
and were pronounced by all to be the best ^{married} pair they
had known in a long time

History of Alabama - Miller
Published by the author - 1901

13.

superstitions)

1. Feed a dog gun powder and kawe meet to make him
savage.
2. If you kill a load your milk will go dry.
3. A whippoorwill's swaying near a house means
a death in the family.
4. Animals can talk at midnight on Christmas Eve
5. If a cat washes herself in the usual fashion, the
weather will be fair, but it will be bad if she
licks herself the wrong way or washes above her
ears, or sits with her tail toward the fire.
6. A hooping cough can be prevented by swallowing 3
small living newtoms.
7. Measles may be avoided by swallowing 3 bullet shot
each day until they have been taken
8. To cure "sore mouth" among children, give them 7 sips of
water from the heel of a shoe that has been worn by one
who was born after their father died.
9. If one dreams of crossing muddy water some of the
family will soon die
10. If a dove flies over the house a sad message is
coming.
11. If a mouse cuts a hole in a house, someone who is
related to the owner must patch it. If the family patches
it he will have bad luck.
12. If you hear a turtle dove, ^{call} in the morning, you
will move in that direction soon.
13. If a butterfly comes into the house, someone will
come that day wearing a dress the color of the butterfly

Stars Fell on Ala - Carl Carmer - New York - Farrar & Rinehart
Inc. - P 34.

At the Des Sota first entered Maubila with the king at the
head of 300 mail clad warriors, they were received with
songs, music on Indian flutes and dancing by a host
of beautiful brown girls. In the fight that followed
between Tussalage and Des Sota, nearly all the
baggage with their clothes, stocks, medicines, etc
(things that couldn't be supplied in that wilderness)
were destroyed. The apparel of an Indian man
consisted of a breech clout, common to savages of all
lands; and a mantle or blanket woven of tree bark, a species
of hemp, or wild animal's skin. All except the clout was
dispensed with in battle in the chase, and in athletic
games. The better classes during the whole year and
others in extremely cold weather wore leggins and
moccasins of dressed deer skins. The woman's dress
was about the same except for a skirt. They adorned
themselves with trinkets, sea shells, and glancing
pearls. The warriors wore eagle feathers in their
hair the no. and arrangement of which denoted the
standing of a chief. In times of war they painted
themselves look as terrible as possible and perched
on ^{their heads} dried heads of ferocious wild beasts on their
occasion of Thanksgiving to the great spirit and of feasting
and amusement.

An extract from Pickett's History gives an account of
a marriage in yr. 1800. The house of Samuel Mims, the most
wealthy and spacious house of an Indian Countryman was the
place where the young and gay flocked to parties and
to music furnished by Mobile Creoles, for the country
abounded in fiddlers. Daniel Johnson and Eliz. Linder
had loved each other for a long time. She was rich, he was poor
so parents objected to their pairing. While at a party at Mims
the pair left there and rowed to Fort Stoddart. Chambers
was employed to marry them. He protested but finally
consented saying "I shall never do hereby pronounce you

Folk Dress and Songs

The people on the plantations usually got two suits of clothes a year, one in winter and one in spring. Farm hands were given another pair of "stitch downs" in spring. Shoes of the heaviest kind were worn. The negroes were not encouraged to sing while working because it slowed their work, but they had to sing to get through their day's work. The Ala. negro took part in the negro spirituals and negro baptisms at moonlight. At the negro baptisms the preachers standing in the midst of the water, led the singing, and the negro onlookers answered back in song. The white shuted negroes were dipped under the water.

In Nokomis, Ala, Uriah Smith is supposed to have married a girl from there and built a house at the top of the hill. Soon he became a drunkard. One night he came home drunk and started toward the spring. He fell dead with his head caught in a forked branch of a tree. The negroes singing and in their best clothes perform a ritual about it to make their crops grow. The leader tied a feather above the fatal fork of the tree. The negroes with sticks in form of a cross and other articles, passed under it. The negroes continue, swaying and singing a song in the form of a lurge. These rituals take away the bad luck on the land and promises a good crop the next year.

Alabama Mountain Superstitions

1. If a baby teethes early it's making way for a new baby.
2. If you cut off a baby's fingernails it will die before it's six mo. old.
3. A baby's looking in a mirror caused bad teething.

4. If anyone sweeps in front of you, you will not be married.
5. If you drop your dish cloth someone is coming hungry (your sweetheart)
6. Throw a locust-vine on a bush; if it grows your sweet heart loves you.
7. If you shiver without apparent reason, someone is walking over your grave.
8. A Buckeye is very potent as a preventive of headache.
9. Bend horse-shoe nails into a ring to avert rheumatism.
10. Stepping on ants or spiders brings rain.
11. The cry of a rain-crow after a drought is a sure sign of rain.
12. Put your feet in a bowl of water during a storm of lightning will not strike you.
13. If a cat sucks your breath you will die.
14. If you sew on Sunday you will have to prick out your stitches with your nose.
15. A turtle or a crawfish will not let go till it thunders.
16. If you sit on a feather bed lightning will not strike you.
17. If you point your finger at a grave, you will be the next to be buried in the cemetery.
18. A couple will never prosper until the wedding clothes are worn out.

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Carl Carmer - New York

Farrar & Rinehart Inc. 1934

The main diversions of Alabamians are love-making and gossiping. The majority of Alabama gentlemen take a strong interest in people that is not unlike that of a novelist. "Visiting" is a happy recreation in Alabama.

Fiddlers of the Ala. hills have translated the life they and their neighbors live into notes. Fiddle songs are the folk music of their generation. To the uninitiated ear all sounds alike, but the mountaineer dancer can recognize each one by a phrase. The Negro cries of wild animals, the sound of work etc. The mountain people from the countryside gather together to see who can outfiddle the others. They play in unison with no idea of what anyone of them is playing. Each one plays something different with an entirely different rhythm. It kills the fiddlers decide who is the best fiddler, the floor is made ready for a dance.

Carrner tells of an all day singing in the Alabama. Everyone sat on plank seats in the Church and a man led the opening prayer. The song book was entitled "Original Sacred Harp". All the songs were supposed to be founded on Scripture text, Quotations and Citations from the Bible. To a considerable extent the sacred song book of this section was badly tainted with afferative secular and ragtime strains of music forms.

The man announced that they would begin by singing the "Bride's Farewell". Everyone sang at the top of his voice in a minor wail. The notes were in the form as follows - mi was a diamond; fa was triangular; so was round; la was square. Another song was the Dying Californian. At noon everyone ate huge picnic lunch they had brought along.

The French settlers moved from Mobile to the Tombigbee
and established the town of Montpelier. The women still
in their latest Parisian gowns put themselves to washing
and ironing, doing the rest of the work. After the tedious
days the nights would be spent in music and dancing in the
log cabins. The narrow streets of the village till a late
hour of the night. The French had come to Ala. to raise
olives and grapes. As the land was not suited for this
they immigrated in other directions.

Most of the original Ala. settlers immigrated from
Virginia and the Carolinas. They were not altogether
well prepared for what they found. There were no conveniences
to be had. Tools and clothing were scant. The pioneers often
had to hack their way through forests to settle. Clothes would
soon become a grave problem, but grotesque garments could be
made from animal hides and the feet could be wrapped in
strips of hide with the fur turned inward. Possession of a pair
of real shoes was an obj. of envy. They were only worn on
special occasions. For a long while in Ala. it was the custom
to carry your shoes into church under your arm as shoes
that looked well were so prized that they would attract attention.

In 1825 La Fayette came to Alabama. When the Indians
learned he was coming they became ~~excited~~ ^{excited} as he was a warrior
and a friend of Stakelinton. A body of painted warriors with
gay plumage and stained bodies and bearing red and striped
blankets insisted on becoming part of his escort. When he
reached Montgomery there was a grand acclamation with
band playing, bells ringing and everything that made a
noise was used.

Makers and Romance of Alabama's History
Published by the Author 1914

Margaret M c Clure

Folk Lore of Alabama
dress, dance, song,
and superstitions

Mrs. Morrow of Dickerson Street states that she and her husband believe in the things that can't be explained, in fact, she gives several experiences of theirs.—

"My grandmother up in Shelby county told me and I know it's the truth, that lots of nights she'd wake up by a loud noise. She'd get straight up and a real dog would be lying at the foot of the bed, when she'd get up the dog would too, and then he'd just rub hisself up against her and then he would vanish away. Grandma would know that was a sign of bad luck and most of the time after seeing one of them dog's she'd have bad luck".

Mrs. Morrow relates:

"You can't get my husband to take a cat away no wheres for nothing cause he says it'll sho bring bad luck. One time I made him take off a cat cause he got on the table. Right after that he was taken down sick and like to die.— He syas that was sho the reason of his sickness".

"My Pa, who's name is Mr. Schuffert, he lives up in Shelby county. Well, him and a man had a big fuss— So this man conjured 7 black cats. Them cats went to Pa's house and walked all 'round his bed one after the other. He liked never got them to go away".

There is an old adage in Alabama if a baby is born with a veil over its face that child will have a foresight of coming mystic events. Such a person is Bell Barnes, of Coopers, Ala. Her sister-in-law, Mrs. John Schuffert, 325 Bell St. gives the following:

"She is always seeing things, and anything that is coming to pass, such as deaths, she always know it. The house that she lives in now, near Coopers, she sees things there.

One night she waked up late and saw a figure all dressed up in white over by the fireplace. She screamed real loud and it disappeared. Another time she saw a wreath hanging on the wall. Her mamma taken sick right after

that. Her bed was moved over near the fireplace, and she died. Lila Bell knows she was warned of her Ma's death.

"I use to live down in Coffee county. The house we lived in was hainted or folks said it was. I don't know whether it was nor not,- but I know me and my sister went out in the yard one night and we saw a great big white something; it liked to scared us to death, and we never did find out what it was. Some negro boys use to pass by the house every night and they'd see little children playing on the porch. All kind of things were seen. Guess it was because the man who lived there a long time ago was rich and before he died he buried gold. I've heard since I left there that a tree was cut down and at the roots was a bucket of gold. Guess the haints won't come any more".

Consultants:

Mrs. Morrow, 216 Dickerson St., Montgomery, Ala.

Mrs. Schuffert, 325 Bell St., Montgomery, Ala.

Mabel Farrior
Lois Lynn

1/14/37
904 words.

SUPERSTITIONS

5-240 ✓

A spider web formed over the doorway is a sign of a death in a few days. "It sho' is true fer we had one over our door and in a day or two my aunt died". Also, "if a dog turns over three times on his back there will shortly be a death in the family".

Mrs. Morrow is sure that if a cow loo's after midnight continuously for three times there is sure to be a death in the neighborhood. She said, "One night not long before Mr. West died, my husband "waked up" in the middle of the night and a cow was loo'in'--he said, "lis'n there's sho' to be a death in the neighborhood, and sho' nuf in a day or two, less than three days Mr. West died.

"Up in Shelby County a man died with smallpox. The same night my husband had to spend the night in this same house where he died and all during the night little balls of fire played about over the bed and floor. The man wuz said to have plenty of money, buried about, and these balls of fire wuz signs tryin' to show my husband where the money wuz".

A Hanted Place.

In Jefferson county hit us'ter be called the G. P. crossing, but now I don't know the name 'cause I'se ben way frum theres 35 year, but my bruther lived theres 8 year, and they seen things. If it ever has ben a house that wuz hanted that house wuz,- my mother really seen things ever nite.

A Captain of the War (Between the States) lived thar once an' he wouldn't let his wife go out doors after dark for tha' wuz a nigger without any head walkin' 'bout. Me and my husban' an another lady an her husban' lived thar an my husban' said he wuz sho' goin' to git them one nite an he lied down flat by the door and heard knocking an tried to see them but he sed he knowed hit wuz hants. My chillun was all borned up thar.

Are there ~~rodeos~~, joustings, log-rolling contests?

Never a rodeo. Jousting and log-rolling contests were of the long ago.

Are there legalized ghost stories, witch stories, etc?

Ghost Story.

"On Marse Eli's place, a big brown daug would come, then go, 'taint no daug, it is a ha~~int~~, when the sun goes downthat daug would come. That night my old man died. These are the words of "Aunt Mae", an old ex-slave.

This is the story told by negroes living on this plantation.

When ever this dog appeared, it was "sure death", he always came at sun down, and he never barked, but this dog has "haunted" this locality since slavery time.

Jack O Lanterns.

On Chaneyhatchee Creek three miles south of Eufaula, "there are Jack O Lanterns and if you see one, make a cross on the ground, and go to the West, not in direction of Chaneyhatchee, "if you do you are lost", the Jack O Lantern will lead you into this creek and you are destroyed.

Screech Owl.

"Screech Owls" come from the cemetery and if they come to your house, its a "sure sign of death".The screech owl is a small owl, and build their nest in the trees on the banks of rivers and creeks. When you hear this "call", its the mating call, tie a knot in your sheet, and "death will go away".

Ghost Story, "Ball of Fire". Cook Patty.

The Van Hunter family went away for the Summer, leaving their cook as care-takers of the home. She was left with supplies of food and a five gallon can of kerosene oil for her lamp, with special instructions to be very careful. Instead she held the five gallon can over the stove, pouring the oil to kindle the fire. ~~The can exploded and her clothing caught fire.~~ The can exploded and her clothing caught fire. . Help responded to her screams. She ran all over

the place, a burning blaze, When caught, she was burned to a crisp, cooked flesh falling off her bones, she died in agony. Until this day the negroes say at any night you can see a ball of fire rolling over the path which she had tread. The house finally burned and still this "rolling ball" of fire was there. The negroes would say, "I seen Paddy last night". This happened in Eufaula on "the hill", and this story was told in New York.

Witch Story.

Ellen Payne, negro, Eufaula's witch, died several years ago. She lived on Van Buren Street and was quite a noted character. She was black as the "ace of spades", and walked with a long stick, and was always followed by her big black dog. She was a member of the Catholic church, the only negro in the County being a Catholic. She said she "Didn't sociate with niggers", and every negro in this community was deathly afraid of her, and no money could make them pass her house after dark, If she put "a spell" on them they would pay her any money to get her to take it off.

The Mothers of Eufaula controlled their children by saying, "If you are bad, Ellen Payne will get you". Ellen Payne is gone, to the delight of the negroes and the children.

13. Are there peculiarities of table service or dining routine, such as serving the husband first, serving of bread by the father? etc?

One peculiar superstition of dining routine is never serve thirteen at the table, if you do the youngest at the table will die. It is a hide-bound rule (in rural communities) that the father sit at the head of the table, serves the plates and does the carving.

SUPERSTITIONS

*Sent to
Washington
by J. G. C. 18*

A spider web formed over the doorway is a sign of a death in a few days.

"It sho' is true fer we had one over our door and in a day or two my aunt died".

Also, "if a dog turns over three times on his back there will shortly be a death in the family".

Who lives on Dickerson Street, Montgomery
Mrs. Morrow is sure that if a cow loo's after midnight continuously for three times there is sure to be a death in the neighborhood. She said, "One night not long before Mr. West died, my husband "waked up" in the middle of the night and a cow was loo'in'--he said, "lis'n there's sho' to be a death in the neighborhood, and sho' nuf in a day or two, less than three days Mr. West died.

"Up in Shelby County a man died with smallpox. The same night my husband had to spend the night in this same house where he died and all during the night little balls of fire played about over the bed and floor. The man wuz said to have plenty of money, buried about, and these balls of fire wuz signs tryin' to show my husband where the money wuz".

A Hanted Place.

In Jefferson county hit us'ter be called the G. P. crossing, but now I don't know the name 'cause I'se ben way frum theres 35 year, but my bruther lived theres 8 year, and they seen things. If it ever has ben a house that wuz hanted that house wuz,- my mother really seen things ever nite.

A Captain' of the War (Between the States) lived thar once an' he couldn't let his wife go out doors after dark for tha' wuz a nigger without any head walkin' 'bout. Me and my husban' an another lady an her husban' lived thar an my husban' said he wuz sho' goin' to git them one nite an he lied down flat by the door and heard knocking an tried to see them but he sed he knowed hit wuz hants. My chillun was all borned up thar.

Mrs. Morrow of ~~Dickerson Street~~ states that she and her husband believe in the things that can't be explained, in fact, she gives several experiences of theirs.—

"My grandmother up in Shelby county told me and I know it's the truth, that lots of nights she'd wake up by a loud noise. She'd get straight up and a real dog would be lying at the foot of the bed, when she'd get up the dog would too, and then he'd just rub hisself up against her and then he would vanish away. Grandma would know that was a sign of bad luck and most of the time after seeing one of them dog's she'd have bad luck".

Mrs. Morrow relates:

"You can't get my husband to take a cat away no wheres for nothing cause he says it'll sho bring bad luck. One time I made him take off a cat cause he got on the table. Right after that he was taken down sick and like to die.— He syas that was sho the reason of his sickness".

"My Pa, who's name is Mr. Schuffert, he lives up in Shelby county. Well, him and a man had a big fuss— So this man conjured 7 black cats. Them cats went to Pa's house and walked all 'round his bed one after the other. He liked never got them to go away".

There is an old adage in Alabama if a baby is born with a veil over its face that child will have a foresight of coming mystic events. Such a person is Bell Barnes, of Coopers, Ala. Her sister-in-law, Mrs. John Schuffert, 325 Bell St. gives the following:

"She is always seeing things, and anything that is coming to pass, such as deaths, she always know it. The house that she lives in now, near Coopers, she sees things there.

One night she waked up late and saw a figure all dressed up in white over by the fireplace. She screamed real loud and it disappeared. Another time she saw a wreath hanging on the wall. Her mamma taken sick right after

that. Her bed was moved over near the fireplace, and she died. Lila Bell knows she was warned of her Ma's death.

"I use to live down in Coffee county. The house we lived in was hainted or folks said it was. I don't know whether it was nor not,- but I know me and my sister went out in the yard one night and we saw a great big white something; it liked to scared us to death, and we never did find out what it was. Some negro boys use to pass by the house every night and they'd see little children playing on the porch. All kind of things were seen. Guess it was because the man who lived there a long time ago was rich and before he died he buried gold. I've heard since I left there that a tree was cut down and at the roots was a bucket of gold. Guess the haints won't come any more".

Consultants:

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Mrs. Schuffert, 325 Bell St., Montgomery, Ala.

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