



WPA Alabama Writers Project
FOLKLORE
Franklin County, #1

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For Mr. Waldrop's son, Christopher.



The general about this thing and that the feller
said that's to go look in that hollow tree. He
said maybe they was 'fraid, and he didn't see how grown men
could be 'fraid of a little thing like a hant. They
wasn't no men if they didn't go.

Two fellers listened, and they was drinking right smart.
They said: "Feller, close your trap. We air going." They
took down another drink from the jug they kept in the store there.
"We air going right now. Just to prove it, we air going."
"That's fine."

Ghost Story

They said there was one of them old hanted places
out towards the Rollin's Old Place. They said some mighty
^{funny} peculiar things about that there ~~tree~~ tree. You see
the tree was one of them holler trees, holler enough fer a
man to walk right in an' take a seat, if he happened to have
a stool or chair.

Some people didn't put no stock in that hant story, and
the fact of the ~~business~~ business is they was right as
rain. You know how some air; they're bound to believe things.
They just gotta.

One feller I knowed didn't believe in ghosts and hants,
and he was a devilish feller. He was always ~~laughing~~ laughing
and kiddin' down at the store, pulling some prank or 'nother.
He was full of mischief.

Well, this feller decided he'd have some fun, and he told
all the fellers there in the store on Saturday night that he was
plumb shore there was a ghost. They set around in the store,
around the stove in them days just a gassing---like fellers will.



They gassed about this thing and that thing, and this feller dared this'n and that'n to go look in that holler tree. He said ~~they~~ they was 'fraid, and he didn't see how grown men like them could be 'fraid of a little thing like a hant. They wasn't no men if they didn't go.

Two fellers listened, and they was drinking right smart. They said: "Feller, close yore trap. We air going." They took ~~them~~ another drink from the jug they kept in the store there. "We air going right now. Just to prove it; we air going."

"That's fine."

Well, them two fellers set out down to the Old Rollin's Place. They was drunk, and it ~~was~~ was a good thing; fer they would have shore turned back. Fer the bull frogs was croking down in the pasture branch, and there was all kinds of them little ~~noises~~ noises you hear in branch bottoms and in low places.

They tried to talk big and everything to keep up the spirits in them. One 'lowed as how he wished he'd taken 'nother drink from that there jug. The other 'lowed there wasn't no use thinking 'bout that.

The feller in the store that had sicked them on waited til them two fellers had done gone, and he took him a ~~drink~~ drink, and tole them there in the store to go ahead gassing, but his wife was plumb mean about wanting him to come home early this Saturday night. He tole them fellers there to tell him how the ghost hunters made out. He went out, and cut through ahead ~~of~~ of them fellers; fer he knew a short-cut.

He runned ahead, and jumped in that holler stump, crowded back there, and he waited fer them fellers to come along. The



hollow stump give him sort of jitters as he waited; fer it was rotten and full of spider webs and things. It was sort of smelling bad to; fer the place was damp and all, and the ^{mud} stuff was oozy at his feet. But he 'lowed he'd have to stay now.

'Fore long them fellers come 'long. He could see them in the light of the moon, huddling close together. He knew they couldn't see him, but he took out his big white handkerchief and tied hit over his face just below the eyes. That would make him more scary, he figgered.

Them drunks come up, and one of 'em leaned against the ~~side~~ hollow tree, and the ~~other~~ t'other looked over his shoulders. They was a long time a-looking. Pretty soon one of them fellers said softly and 'fraid like: "I see one of them hants."

The t'other drunk looked in there, and he said softly and 'fraid like: "I see, too."

That feller in the stump he froze up, and he said: ~~My~~ "My God," and runned out there, but them two drunks was cutting out ahead of him already. They was knocking the cowtracks dry and leaped them rotten logs wors^{er} ~~than~~ anything. The feller yelled: "I'm one of you!" but that didn't mean nothing ~~to~~ to them drunks tearing out ahead, ^{except} ~~but~~ "I want one of you!" And they was plumb busted 'fore they'd let no ghost have one of them. ~~So~~ So they kept on a knocking the cow tracks dry and leaping stumps. They run so fast their coats rose up, and their hair dragged behind in the wind.

That feller kept chasing them, and pretty soon them two fellers ~~came~~ fell to the ground, panting like hound-dogs,



tongues a-lolling out.

That feller comed on up, and he dropped down beside him, and he reached over and slapped one of them fellers, and said: "We done had a bully race, ain't we now?" He sort of cackled the way a tired feller will. Them fellers looked at that feller with the hankerchief, and they rose like a jumping frog, a-yelling:

"Yea Sir, and we air going to have another'n. ~~right~~ right now!"

~~U~~

Source:
Mrs. R. V. Waldrep

R. V. Waldrep, Jr.
Editorial Department



ASHCAKE

Stingy Man Perry was the tightest man in town. He used to give his kids a nickel to make them go to sleep, and he'd steal it back when they slept. He didn't even tolerate people coming and a-staying all night with him, but when he came to see you, the first thing he'd say was: "Show the table and the jug to me." He just didn't take one swig, he took two swigs from the jug when you gave it to him. But nobody ever saw his jug or his table.

The folks all over the county got plumb done out with him. They wanted him to tote his end of the load, but Stingy Man Perry wasn't about to do that.

Finally a fellow said he'd go over to Perry's and he'd be treated like a white man, or know the reason why. He told old Perry he was going to stay all night, and old Perry hemmed and hawed, but this fellow said he was going to stay.

The fellow said: "Old Man Perry it's time to eat." He switched his eyes around for something that a person could eat.

Stingy Man Perry laughed: "I've already eat, hours ago. Time to go to bed. I always go to bed about this time." So Stingy Man Perry made his bed and put down a pallet for the fellow that was staying all night with him.



Just as soon as Stingy Man Perry was asleep, the fellow got up. For he was hungry as a bear cat. He was gnawing in the stomach. He slipped out of the house. Stingy Man Perry was bound to have a garden and some vegetables in it. The moon was up and he could see tol'ble well. He skipped over the garden fence, whipped out a knife, and begin to hack down a cabbage.

Old Man Stingy Perry was right there. He grabbed the fellow by the scruff of the neck: "What you mean stealing my neighbor's cabbage?" he shouted. Of course, the fellow had to quit right there. And they went back to bed.

Then the fellow heard Stingy Man Perry slipping up. He saw the old man rake out the hot coals from the fire, and put down an ashcake. He watched as old man Perry slipped back to bed to wait for the ashcake to cook. Then the fellow let that ashcake get nearly done, and he got up. But old Perry jumped up too.

"What you gettin' up for?"

"I've been figuring. I can't sleep until I figure things out."

"What you figuring on?"

"My Pa's made a will, and I'm trying to figure out what my part is."

Here the fellow grabbed up the poker, squatted before the fire. Old Man Perry was right behind him, looking at those ashes spread on the hearth.



"Suppose this is my father's farm," said the fellow, marking a circle with the poker in the ashes. Here's Brother Bob's share, here's Brother Pete's share, here's Brother Oscar's share, here's Sister Oma's share---" He was marking out wedge-shaped pieces in the circle of ashes--"here's Brother Peter's share, here's Brother Buck's share, and here--" he lifted his poker high and poked it right in the middle of the ashcake-- "is my share!"

8/25/39

S.J.

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GOOD OLE BOSSY
Folklore
Source: Mrs. Floyd Waldrep
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Editorial Department



GOOD OLE BOSSY

On Sundays Big Bob takes his ole cow out grazing, and he looks fer the best clover there is. On most days he sets out there in the lot a currying old bossy with a corn cob, and looking at ole bossy like his heart was just 'bout to bust from puore love. Sometimes he scratches that ole brindle cow with his cob, and then rubs the stiff black hair on his own ole head.

People get plumb put-out with Big Bob, a-taking on 'bout that ole bossy 'til they find the cause of hit all; then they low they don't blame him much fer taking-on over her, putting sorghum in her feed, cutting tender corn fer her, and sich-like stuff.

Now Big Bob was over in Tombigbee Bottom a-looking fer his cows one day, and hit was so cold he didn't know how he kept from freezing up like a water-bucket in December.

He allus turned his cows into the Bottom to feed on them cane, 'cause then he wouldn't have to buy feed fer them. But he had to go fetch one of them, and he struck out. His wife was



a-telling him:

"Yore gonna have a hard time, and if I wuz you I call hit off and go when the sun comes out. Them cows ain't worth all o' that cold."

But Big Bob 'lowed it was warm enough, and he figgered he was man enough to ~~take~~ ^{take} anything. So he got his pipe and his tobacco, and a hand-full of matches. He lit that big corncob with hit stuff ~~with~~ ^{ed} tobacco, and he puffed away as he cut out through the bottom.

He walked and he walked, his ears a-listening fer the cowbells. But there weren't no bells, and he had to light up his pipe again. And it ain't no telling how many pipes of tobacco he smoked all that day. And he was gittin' into them there bottoms deeper and deeper. The trees was thick, the ground miry. And he got to feeling hit growing colder fer it was 'bout dark. He smoked him another pipe, and he decided he'd better build him a fire; so he knocked out his pipe, and got to gathering sich dry stuff as he could fine: twigs, stuff the river washed in on overflows. He had a right smart time with the chill a biting at his bones, and numbing his fingers, and making his ears hurt.

Big Bob got it all piled up, and he stuck one of them stiff hands in his jeans, and he nearly dropped puore dead. "There ain't no matches, ~~at~~ ^a tall," he said and knowed hit were true. He looked some more.

"I' got to git out'n here, and that right now." He ~~begin~~ begin looking, and the cold, well hit turned from cold to freezing. Hit was so cold that the limbs of the trees begin popping in agony.

~~Hit was so cold that the limbs of the trees begin popping in agony.~~



Hit was so cold he didn't like to breathe; fer hit hurt his throat, that air cold did.

Big Bob begin to git scared and all; fer he shore didn't know how to git ~~out~~ out'n that bottom. He couldn't set down; fer he would shore freeze to death. So he picked him out a little tree, and he cleared the bresh from 'round hit, and he made him a little runway. He got to running, and 'round and 'round that tree Big Bob got to going. He wasn't goin' slow neither. He just run fast and fast and fast. He run 'til his bones aches and his legs say ouch, but he run some more. Fer he shore didn't want to freeze plumb to death. It was puore cold, and Big Bob, he was puore tired...

He runned and runned, and the river hit freezed over whole he run. The ground was hard like rock with freezing. His ears done froze and quit hurtting, and he wasn't about to touch them.

Big Bob he runned 'round that tree till he had a race-track, and he had a path, and he wored his shoes ~~off~~ through. But Big Bob he runned some more; he couldn't pay no 'tention; fer he didn't want to die. What would happen to that ole woman of his'n if he stopped and went to sleep? No, he had to run, and he runned. His side hurt, his legs hurt, and his feet hurt. But he runned.

The stars comed out, the ~~moon~~ rose and hit set, and he runned. 'Bout morning, the sky begin to break. He runned on, but he sort of lagged 'nough to listen. He thought he heard a bell. Shore it was a bell. Hit was a cow, and Big Bob he runned that way, and he seen that ole brindle, a walking in with a bag full of milk.

Bob runned up and she comed up. Big Bob he got down and he milked his self a mouth full of milk, and he felt better. But hit was shore cold and he got up, and runned 'round and 'round that ole brindle. She sort of looked at him and moosed right low like she didn't understand.



"Hit has tuh be," he said to the bossy.

She switched that ~~tail~~ ^{tail} of her'n, and Bob he saw that tail all full of them Tombigbee Bottom cockle burrs. He runned and looked at that there ~~tail~~ ^{tail} and Big Bob he latched on to that ~~tail~~ ^{tail}. He caught it tight and firm, and ole Bossy looked at him, and she kicked at him, but Big Bob was a-hold and he was a-gpin' tuh ~~stay~~ ^{stay} a-hold. Big Bossy she moved up, and Big Bob he followed up. Bossy, she trotted and Big Bob trotted. Bossy, she 'lowed she'd run the legs of him, and Big Bob 'lowed that was fine too.

Bossy got dogmad and she begin to run like she mean hit. She runned through briars and br^esh; she leaped them logs and stumps, but Big Bob he hung on. Bossy got madder and madder; She snorted and she bucked, but Big Bob hung right on.

He hung on 'til Bossy carried him right to that lot fence.

Ain't no reason in the world fer Big Bob not taking that ole brindle out to graze on clover, air there?

LAWYERS AIR SMART
Folklore
Source: Mrs. R.V. Waldrep

R.V. Waldrep, Jr.
Editorial Department



LAWYERS AIR SMART

Ole Jake had heard-tell of them lawyer fellers all his days, but he ain't never put no stock in 'em ~~unt~~til one day he went up^{to} that there Countyseat. He allus stayed out there in his farm an' raised his hay an' his corn an' his cotton. He jest minded his business. He figgered he wus gittin' 'long 'bout as good as anybody, lawyer air no lawyer. But one day Ole Jake fetched his old lady 'fore him, and he tole her some of his thinkings:

"Sally," he 'lows, "I'm dog-tired hearin' 'bout lawyers. Turner Bonds over there on the crick was a-tellin' as how a lawyer did something fer him. Jim Fites says as how one of them lawyer-fellers got his estate figgered out. All my life I've heared sich-like 'bout them dad-dratted lawyer-fellers. Way people talk the Lord's done gone and 'nointed them air something. I ain't one to stay in th' dark 'bout nothing, and I ain't ~~no~~ a-goin' to now. An' if these lawyer-fellers air as good as Jesus Christ I



want to know."

"Jake, you air plumb right there. Them lawyer-fellers must be as good as Moses air Elijah, 'cordin' to how I heared-tell of. Now, you git yoreself down to th' Countyseat, and you take a look fer yoreself. You air got a field of ~~hay~~ hay waitin' fer the rake, but this here is mighty important too. Tomorrow ~~you~~ you kin put in a rale day of work in that hay... Now, don't let none of them there smart fellers hookwink you. You watch, d'here?"

So Jake, he put them there boys of his'n a-working in th' corn, and tole 'em he'd help with th' hay tomorrow. He got out that buggy of his'n, and that mare of his'n, and Sally, she stood at th' door and seen to hit that he got his fried fat-belly and his biscuits and fræed eggs all right. She watched her man and his frisky little mare go 'round th' bend o' th' road, and top Coon Hill on the t'other side.

Jake, he went to th' Countyseat. If them lawyer-fellers wus prophets and better he was a-goin' to find out. So he driv in by dinner, an' hitched his mare to the t'other side of town at th' waterin' trough, an' footed hit to th' Courthouse Square. He seen all them politicians settin' 'round gasin', but he didn't pay them no mind. He was a-lookin':

THOMAS BROWNE, Lawyer, wus what he seen, and he pushed open that there door, and waited 'til he could see them lawyer-feller. Purty soon a lady pînted to a chair, and he got in it. Course he took off that old hat of his'n, and smoothed out that there hair of ~~his'n~~ his'n.

The lawyer feller was ~~friendly~~ friendly as all git-out, a-smiling, and a-sticking out his hand. Jake, he figgered that was all right, an' he shook hands right hearty.

"What's yer name? Ain't I seed yer some'r's, ha'n't I?"

Jake he wasn't aimin' to be led out no sich way as that. He jest chewed his 'bacco, and spit in th' can. What was he astin' him fer? He knowed everything, didn't he?

"Wale, m'good man, what air yer business?"



Jake didn't min' a-tall. Hit tickled his gizzard t'see the lawyer a-working, but Jake---he wasn't ~~doin'~~ doin' no talkin'. The lawyer-feller was ~~goin'~~ a-goin' to do th' talkin'. Jake, he squirted a a yellow stream toward the can, and he fetched his eyes out'n the window, thinkin' 'bout his hay and his corn and his wife and boys.

The lawyer-feller looked at Jake, and he narrowed his eyes. "Wale, m'good man, I see as how you ain't goin' to talk." By now that lawyer-feller had figgered out what was ailin' ole Jake. He squinted up his eyes, and stood up, and hooked his thumbs in the vest of his'n. He begin a-walkin' 'round th' room, lookin' at Jake out'n the corner of his eyes.

Ole Jake chewed on. Hit was up ~~to~~ to th' lawyer.

Sudēen-like, the lawyer-feller unhooked the thumb of his'n, and boomed like he was 'dressing a picnic crowd: "Don't never put off 'til tomorrow what yer can do today... That there's two dollars, mister!" Ole Jake peeled off th' two-dollars, his eyes poppin', an' juice a-runnin' down his chin. "Good day, ~~my~~ m'good man," said the lawyer-feller, and ole Jake went out'n the Courthouse, unhitched his mare, and driv home.

He thought and he thought: "Don't never put off 'til tomorrow what yer can do today." Ole Jake driv on, thinkin' that. When he topped Coon Hill, and could see the house and lot, an' his ole lady standin' in th' door, a-shadin' her eyes, he thought

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he had hit.. He driv 'round th' ~~corner~~ bend, jumped out'n his buggy, and runned to the th' house.

"Sally," he yelled at the top of his voice, "git them boys out'n th' corn, git yer bonnet. We gotta git that there hay right now! The lawyer-feller tole me. He tole me!"



Jake was dog-tired atter that trip, and he wanted to eat his supper and hike-um to bed, but he'd done gone and spent two dollars, and he couldn't let that there go to waste just fer them tired bones of his'n.

He got them there stroppin' boys of his'n a-working, an' by th' ~~time~~ time th' moon was supposed t'be out, he ~~had~~ had that there hay out'n th' field and in th' barn.

He fetched the boys to th' house, and 'fore you knowed hit, he seen what that lawyer feller was driving at. Fer a ~~storm~~ ^{storm} come up, th' sky got black, the lightnin' reached in, an' th' thunder rumbled.

Jake was shobe convinced about lawyer-fellers. He tole his old lady that.

SHE NEVER SWORE
Folk Stuff

Source:
Mrs. R.V. Waldrep

R.V. Waldrep, Jr.
Editorial Department



SHE NEVER SWORE

Miss Petunia was standing in her door dusting the flour off of her hands when she saw one of the Peters' boys loop a rope around one of the preacher's cows, and sneak her off into the pine-thicket next the house. She thought it was strange, but she didn't it no mind, ~~as~~ as she was a homebody, never got out much, and didn't know anything much.

But next day the police come out there and the preacher was with him, and Miss Petunia knew right away that while she was making jelly last night somebody was making away with the preacher's cow. She let the police say his piece, and she said right ~~away~~ away that she knew who that thief was. ~~She~~ She said she wasn't no busy-body, just a homebody, but she thought a lot of the preacher, and she liked his praying, and she was glad to say that it was one of the Peter's boys, the oldest, that stole that cattle.

"Miss Petunia," said the Sheriff, "that is a

serious charge you have just gone and made.... Are you willing to swear to it?"

Miss Petunia's eyes popped: "Swear?"



"Yes, Miss Petunia it is the custom to swear to the truth..."

Miss Petunia was a Christian woman, but she looked at the preacher and thought how scoundery it was to steal a preacher's cow, and she bit her lip, and decided she'd do it for him.

The Police said all right, and it looked like he wasn't going; so Miss Petunia said: "If I was at your house as you are at my house, I'd journey my way home..." She slammed the door, and thought the matter over.

Miss Petunia had never swore and it bothered her a lot. She sat and read her bible, sat and looked out the windows. She even quit her canning and her fruit-sunning. Since she had to swear, she decided to make a good job of it. And she thought along these lines until Court day came.

She got her best bonnet, her big-check calico, and buttoned her shoes to the top. She set out with her umbrella.

People were pouring ~~in~~ in from everywhere. Miss Petunia had never seen so many people before. It frightened her to think she was going to have to swear before all these people. But it was for the preacher's sake that she was going to it.

She went around to the police's place, and she told him she was ready, and he told her everything was fine, just get over there with the rest of the ~~girls~~ witnesses. Miss

Petunia gathered her skirts and got there where she could look out on the court room. She was nervous, and kept saying things under her breath.

She was the first witness; she got up there, and she looked that Peters' boy right in the eye, and she was tight, as she waited for the swearing.

"Now," said the man, "Miss Petunia we'll swear----"

That was all she wanted. She looked right at the Peters' boy, and she glared, and chirped:

"Hellfire and damnation
All around the plantation..."

Here her eyes bored into Peters' boy, as she pointed with her finger and boomed: "There, By God! is the man that stole the preacher's cow."

