

took her to Jackson. The Samsons fired Katie Nelson and told Bessie she had to leave the place. Bessie had a house full of children, but still they told her she had to leave. They knowed Jacques wasn't any good, but still they couldn't let Bessie get away with it. They told her if she didn't have so many children they would have put her in jail.

#### The Travels of Miss Jane Pittman

Not too long after Harriet went to Jackson, I joined the church. She went to Jackson that Spring, I joined the church that Summer.

I had been fighting with my conscience for years and ~~years~~ years. Fighting with my conscience ever since Ned was killed. Before then I reckond I didn't think too much of the Lord. Oh, yes, I thought about Him, thought about Him every day of my life, but I didn't think too sincerely about joining the church. Just at times. At times--yes; at times--no. But nothing definite till I moved here. When I first moved here I was living 'side Unc Gilly and Aunt Sarah and across the road from Grace Turner. Grace was married to Ta-ta then, and she was staying over ~~there~~ there with Ta-ta people. Me and Grace used to sit out on the gallery at night and listen to the singing up the quarters. We didn't have a church then, the church wasn't build till much later. At that time the people

had service in one of the houses. Across the road from where the church is now. The house isn't there any more; corn there now. Like corn will be all over this place in the not too long future. Me and Grace used to sit out on the gallery--me on my gallery, Grace on her gallery--and listen to the singing up the quarters. Pitch black but we used to talk to each other from the gallery. "You hear all that good singing up there, Jane?" she would say. "I hear them up there," I would say. The night was so black we couldn't see each other, but that never stopped us from having long conversations. Sometimes Grace would come over to my place and sit there with me, but more than often we would just talk to each other over the road. One day Grace came up to me and said, "Jane, I'm going to join church." I said, "Oh, Grace, I'm so happy for you." She said, "Jane, why don't you join with me. You a nice, decent person. You belong up there." I said, "Grace, you don't know the times I been thinking about doing just that." I said, "Give me a week or two and let me think."

Nancy Williams was praying for religion, too. Me, Nancy, Grace. I think Va'rice--yes, Va'rice was in there. Who else was there? I think Lobo was there. Yes, Lobo was there; Lobo had that crazy travel where he saw Manny Hall running Rosa up a tree. Lord, the church was dying laughing with Lobo standing there telling his travels. Everybody laughing but Rosa. Rosa mad as she could be. Right there in church she called Lobo a

lying dog. "You just a' old lying dog, you ain't seen nobody running me up no tree. I don't even know how to clamb no tree." Lobo said, "That's what I seen, all right." Everybody said Lobo was half drunk that night. Just standing up there telling his travels and sweating. Lord, the church died laughing at Lobo. Come time to talk for baptism, no Lobo. Everybody, "Where Lobo, where Lobo?" Next day Lobo show up. Said he was scared Rosa might get one of them deacons to drown him out there in the river.

Nancy came through out there in the field. We was picking cotton then. She started whooping: "I got it, I got it, I got it at last." She was picking cotton by herself way down the row, and when we heard her hollering we all knowed what had happened, and we ran down there where she was. She said, "I got it, I got it." We was so glad for her, we told her to go home and get herself ready to talk tonight. She dropped the cotton sack right where it was and took off for the quarters. Running and whooping.

When Jacques came out there to weigh-up, he asked us wwhere Nancy was. We told him she had gone home because she had found religion. He said, "What I care 'bout her and her find 'ligion there?" He said, "Find that 'ligion at night, find them cotton boles in the day. And that go for the rest of y'all hunting 'ligion round here, too."

When Jacques said that, Grace broke away from the head-land and ran down the field. Jacques said, "They got another

one there finding her 'ligion." I broke after Grace and I found her kneeling down in one of the rows. "You done come through, Grace?" I said. "Come through nothing," she said. "I'm praying to God to keep me from killing Jacques Toulouse. The no good dog." I said, "Grace, now you praying for religion and you can't think evil." "I know," she said. "But times like this I wish I had let Bessie chop his head off with that hoe." "Grace," I said. "What's God going to think hearing you talk like that. Don't you know Jacques Toulouse was sent here by the devil to work on your mind?"

We went back where Jacques was weighing cotton. He said: "Well, you find Him down that patch?"

I could see Grace getting mad again. "Grace," I said.

But a week or so later Grace did find religion. And it looked like everybody was finding it except me. I told it to Grace. She said, "Just pray harder, Jane." I said, "I'm praying hard as I can now. Maybe I'm just not fit for Glory." She said, "That's nonesense. You just keep praying."

I used to pray all day and all night. Long as I was up I was praying. Sometimes I used to go in the field so tired and so sleepy I could hardly keep my eyes opened. Then one Thursday morning--I won't ever forget it long as I live-- I was on my way in the field when it hit me. Looked like a big load just fell off my shoulder.

"Gracie?" I said. She was walking little bit ahead of me. "Gracie, I got it."

"Oh, Jane," she said. "Jane, you feel light? You got to feel light now. You feel light?"

"I feel light," I said. "I feel light, Grace."

"That's it then," Grace said. "If you feel light that's it." She said, "Go back home. Don't go out in the field today. Go back home and prepare yourself for tonight."

That night I told my travels.

I had a load of bricks on my shoulders and I wanted to drop it but I couldn't. It was just weighing me down and weighing me down, but I couldn't let go of it. Then a White man with long yellow hair--hair shining like the sun--came up to me(he had on a long White robe) and came up to me and said, "Jane, do you want to get rid of that load?" I said, "Indeed, Indeed. But how come you know my name? Can you be the Lord?" and He said, "I will not reveal my true name unto you, now, but to get rid of that load and be rid of it for always, you must take it cross yon river."

I looked where He was pointing, and, behold, there was a river. I turned back to Him, and He was gone. I started toward the river with the sack of bricks on my back. And briars sprung up in front of me where briars had never been, and snakes crawled round my bare feet where snakes had not been, and wide ditches and bayous with green water stood before

me where they was not before. And a man, jet black and shiny, with cuckleburr for hair, stood before me and told me he would take the sack. I told him no. I told him the White man had told me to cross yon river with that sack, and I was going to cross yon river with it. And just like that, this man turned into Ned. "Ned," I said. "Ned, is that you? I thought you had gone from me forever?" He said, "Give me the sack, Mama." I said, "Is that you, Ned? Though not of my flesh, but ~~kk~~ truly son of my heart, is that you, Ned?" He said, "Give me the sack, Mama." I said I don't believe it's you, Ned. I believe it's nobody but the devil trying to fool poor Jane. If it be you, Ned, tell me what you carried all them days when your mama was killed." I peered into the face of this devil playing Ned and I saw him straining and straining to think of what Ned had carried, but he couldn't remember. And I knowed for sure it was not Ned, because Ned would never forget this, and I went on. It was hard to go on because the warmth of seeing his face had brought to this old heart, but I knowed I had to keep going. And when I came up to the river I looked, and, behold, there stood Joe Pittman, and he was like he was before he was killed--still young. "Give me the sack, Jane," he said. "I want to cross the river, Joe," I said. "Give me the sack, Jane," he said. "No, Joe, I must cross the river," I said. And when I didn't give it to him on the third time he asked for it he disappeared. And I moved down into the water, and all round me

alligators snapped at my legs. I looked and, behold, snakes: hundreds and hundreds of them swimming toward me. But I kept moving with the sack on my back, and with each step the water got deeper and deeper. When it came up to my neck I looked up toward the bank to see how much farther I had to go, and, behold, there was Albert Cluveau. He was sitting on the horse that had killed Joe Pittman, he was holding the gun that had killed Ned. I looked back toward the other bank, and, behold, there was Ned and Joe standing together beckoning for me to come back to them. But I would not turn back. I would go on, because the load I was carrying on my back was heavier than even the weight of death. When I got near the bank, Albert Cluveau raised the gun to shoot me down. But when he saw I was 'terminated to finish crossing, he disappeared just like the other man and Ned and Joe had done. But soon as my feet touched solid ground my Savior was there. He smiled down at me and raised the load off my shoulder. I wanted to bow to his feet, but He told me rise, I had been born again. I rose, and I felt light and clean and good.

That was my ~~travel~~ travels. That's how I got over. And that's what the church sang that night. They was always so happy when an old person or a young person made it through. They just sang and sang and sang. Like this:

"Tone the bell  
Done got over  
Tone the bell  
Done got over  
Tone the bell  
Done got over  
Done got over at last.

Plucked my soul from the gate of hell  
Done got over  
From the gate of hell  
Done got over  
From the gate of hell  
Done got over  
Done got over at last.

My Jesus glad, old Satan mad  
Done got over  
Old Satan mad  
Done got over  
Old Satan mad  
Done got over  
Done got over at last.

#### Two Brothers of the South

I stayed in the quarters and worked out there in the field till the first war. At the beginning of the war both Uncle Bud and Aunt Hattie died, and I went up to the yard to take Aunt Hattie place. It was Tee Bob got me up there. I wasn't too crazy about going because I still liked the field. I liked the open, the fresh air. I still does. I like the sun and I like the little breeze every so often. I reckon that's why I been going so long. I feel close, close to nature--the sun and the wind. But they thought I was slowing up and said I would do better at the house. Tee Bob was the one. He was