

~~"Well, some of them are all right,"~~ Chuck said. "The others--
twangy voice bitch. ^{Be nice} ~~il wish it was Steiner~~ ^{il had been Steiner."}
"You do look like a Steiner," Bill said.

"Shut up, will you, Bill?" Chuck said. "I don't think
it's funny."

"Miss Jane worked up here for years and years," Kenny said.

"That ought to be interesting," Chuck said.

When we got out to the road we looked back and saw Laura
taking clothes off the line.

"I bet you she's cussing us out up and down," Ken said.

"We'll make it up to her," Chuck said. "We'll do something
nice for her before it's over. Should we go back and tell Miss
Jane?"

"I think we ought to," I said.

"What a day."

"It's all history."

We have tried to retain the rhythm of Miss Jane's speech,
and at the same time we have done all we could to avoid dialect
spelling. We feel that dialect is very hard to spell accurately
and, too, it is very taxing on the reader who tries to pronounce
the words properly. However, there are instances when we could
not find a suitable substitute for the word Miss Jane used, so
we are asking our readers to please be a little tolerant. We
spent the rest of the Summer, plus September and October with
Miss Jane, seeing her twice each week. All of us feel that we
could not have gotten a better course in American Studies in
any university in the world. We used eighteen thousand feet
of tape--using both sides. The reader might ask: "Then why is
the book so short?" The book is short because we deleted a lot
of material that we did not feel was absolutely important to
Miss Jane's story. We left out many of the comments, jokes,
laughter by others who were at the house each time that we were

taping these interviews. We have deleted all the conversations that went on while we were eating ice cream, watermelons, or drinking coffee and eating tea cakes that Mary had for us each time that we came. If we had included all that we would have a book three times as long. At the same time, we want to say how grateful we are that the people were always there. Many times they would recall names of people and places that Miss Jane had long forgotten. We ~~are very grateful~~ ^{express our thanks} to all these people whose names might not be mentioned in the book.

We got along fine with the children, also. We promised them that if they did not make too much noise when we were talking to Miss Jane we would spend a half hour with them each day after the interview. They agreed and played so far away from the house that we could hardly hear them. But when the time came for us to let them talk, they came by the dozen. ⁱⁿ Where they all came from, we did not know. ~~But~~ ^{and} seeing that there were only ~~six or seven~~ ^{seven or eight} old houses still ~~standing~~ ^{left} on the place, we were sure that ~~they~~ ^{did} the children ~~could~~ not all come from here.

Now, about the book. The material was transferred from tape onto paper after Miss Jane's death. Our last interview was the first week of November 1963, ~~and~~ ^{and} Miss Jane died seven months later, June 6, 1964. We all ~~thought~~ ^{felt} that it was ~~necessary~~ ^{important} that the world ~~knew~~ ^{is aware} about Miss Jane Pittman. And, too, we wanted to buy her a tomb for her grave. But, later, we remembered how much she loved the earth, and we told ourselves that she would much rather go back into the ground than to be confined in a box of cement. So we only bought her a little headstone that marked her approximate age, one hundred and eleven. And we had inscribed on the headstone these four words. "A Great American Lady." The rest of the money from the book we will put in ^a ~~the~~ bank for keeping up the grave and putting flowers around it ~~twice~~ ^{once} each year. The flowers are to be put there on the anniversary and at La Toussaint.

When we heard that the entire place, including the cemetery, might be plowed under one day, we went to the Samsons and asked them if that was possible. Robert Samson told us that this was nothing but nigger talk, and this would not happen ~~as~~ long as he or Mrs. Samson was alive. We believed him. But we also ~~know~~ ^{know} that when he and Mrs. Samson ~~die~~ ^{die} Gertrude will inherit the place. Knowing what Gertrude ~~think~~ ^{think} of the human race, we ~~are~~ ^{are} trying to get permission, in case that the place is plowed under, to have the remains of Miss Jane Pittman laid beside the grave of her son Professor Douglas. We would also like to find and get ~~permission~~ permission to have the remains of Joe Pittman placed beside that of Professor Douglas.

Another ~~note~~ ^{comment} that, we, the editors, would like to ~~add~~ ^{make}. We do not claim that from a factual and statistical point of view that the names of places and people and dates are absolutely correct. We ask our readers to remember that Miss Jane was recalling some things that happened nearly a hundred years before. But if the names and incidents are not accurate from a historian point of view, we truly doubt that anyone else, ^{given Miss} ~~the~~ Miss Jane's position, using only memory, could have done better. Someone else could have interpreted things differently--we all look at things with different eyes--but we, the editors, doubt that it could have been better. As far as we are concerned nothing here is un-true. She was such a true, sincere person herself that we feel every word she spoke represented some facet of our American way of life.

The editors,
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