

[Mrs. Lula Bowers, II]

W10160

Beliefs & Customs - Customs

Accession no.

10160

Date received

10/10/40

Consignment no.

1

Shipped from

Wash. Off.

Label

Amount

4p.

WPA L. C. PROJECT Writers' UNIT

Form[md]3

Folklore Collection (or Type)

Library of Congress

Title Social Customs. Mrs. Lula

Bowers II

Place of origin Hampton Co., S. Car. Date 6-28-38

Project worker Phoebe Faucette

Project editor

Remarks

8882

Project #-1655

Phoebe Faucette

Hampton County [?] 390552

Records of the Past

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Mrs. Lula Bowers , II

“The holidays were celebrated then the same as now. All had the turkeys, geese, hogs, etc. Had servants. The last act of my grandmother's life was out overseeing the butchering of a goose. She came in, took her pipe out of her mouth, lay down, and never got up again. On the Fourth of July they generally had a big muster, and a big eating. That was when Uncle Jesse Peebles was killed. Then on New Year's there was always a big 'to do'. All sat up and watched. They celebrated Memorial Day. I've carried bouquets a many a

Library of Congress

time to Lawtonville to put on the soldiers' graves. Got so they don't celebrate it any more. Been about ten years since they had a celebration.

"They'd go visiting more in the old days than they do now. But they'd always finish their work first. They'd set themselves a sort of task of work and when they had finished they'd go visiting. There's a great change now. Now they hardly ever go to see anybody.

"And children now are not raised like they used to raise them. We were taught to say 'Aunt' and 'Uncle' to the old Negroes. But there was one old colored woman who said that she didn't want us calling her 'Aunt'. Said that she wasn't old, and that we must call her 'Betta'. But we said Aunt Lucinda, and 'Aunt' to all the rest.

"There is a great change in the men and women, too, from what it used to be. It used to be that the men tended to all the business. Now most all the business is tended to by the women!

2

I remember the first woman free dealer. She was Mr. Ned Morrison's grandmother. She was the first free-dealer I ever heard of. Her husband was an excellent man but no business man. He had a large farm to manage after the war, with free labor. He'd get so mad with the negroes that he'd just let them go, and give up. So she had to take charge. She went to the courthouse and got an appointment. She was the only woman I know that got an appointment to run her own farm. Now women run their farms if they want to.

"The churches and schools wasn't much. They got free-schools for three months then. Now they get it for nine.

"The roads weren't good either like they are now. And it was so hard to get anybody to work on the roads. Each farmer had to send a certain amount of hands to work the roads, and someone had to oversee the work. My father was generally the one.

Library of Congress

“In slavery time we had three slave quarters - ten houses in each quarter. The houses were kept nice, kept clean. And there was one special house where they kept the children and a nurse. The houses were log-houses, and they didn't have any windows more than ten or twelve inches square. And they had shutters, not sash. The hinges for the shutters were made in the blacksmith shop. They wouldn't have but two rooms. Very often they wouldn't have lumber enough to put in the partition, and would have to hang up sheets between the rooms.

3

They'd ceil them with clapboards from the woods. Their furniture was just anything that they could get - little stools, and little benches, and just anything. They'd use the back of their old dresses for quilts.

“The clothes of the slaves were spun at home and made by their mistresses. They'd weave them white, then dye the cloth. They'd go in the woods and get bark and dye them.

“The slaves had bread and hominy, and what little meat they could get hold of now and then. There were a lot of cattle in this country. And they raised a lot of geese, and guineas, and such like. Most of the slaves were doctored by their owners. Dr. Nathan A. Johnston was the first doctor I knew anything about. They'd rake soot off the back of the chimney and make a tea out of it for the colic. Called it soot-tea. I've seen my grandmother do it a many a time! The slaves didn't have any education in that day. They'd have Sunday Schools for the white people and for the slaves. The old people would write down what the children had to say. They had no books then, and paper was so scarce they sometimes had to use paste-board. When the slaves wanted to go off on a visit they were given tickets, and allowed to go for just so many hours.

“After the war, military rule was oppressive for a while; but they got so they dropped that. There was much lawlessness. There was no law at all, and they couldn't manage the negroes at all. There was a man that came from Beaufort named Wright, and he controlled

Library of Congress

them. He was a northerner but he was a 4 good man. He and his wife came. They stayed in three different homes when they were here. Only three homes would take those people in! One of them was a relative of mine. She said one night Mrs. Wright said she would make a pudding for them all - what she called Hasty Pudding. So my aunt got out the sugar, and eggs and seasonings for her; but the 'Pudding' proved to be just Fried Hominy - cold hominy sliced and rolled in egg and flour and fried. They had a son and a daughter. After a while they came, too,"

Source: Mrs. Lula Bowers, 79, Luray, S. C.

(Second interview.)