

got back from serving in the Army in World War I. The land they bought is a small piece of the large plantation that once belonged to their grandfather, William Timmons. Their grandmother, Luisa, was his slave. Their sister Lizzie Ward told me about their grandmother.

Luisa had four children by John (Jack) Horton. They took the name of Joiner, a man she later married after she was freed. But she still lived in the cabin where she'd always lived, there on the Timmons plantation. She continued to cook in the fireplace, make ash cakes, and sweep her floor with a sage broom.

The house Percy lives in was on the land when he bought it; he added to it. Claudie built his own house. He had an old steam engine sawmill, and he milled his own timber to build his house. Most men don't own their own land, so they clear someone else's land to have use of it for five years. Then, the land goes back to the owner. When men clear the land, they usually gave the logs (timber) away, which was how Claudie got the timber he milled to build his house.

Claudie rented land to use for growing corn, down where the Army will one day put a recreation area. He had a corral there where he could leave his working stock. When the men worked down there, Parthenia, his wife, took them hot food. One of the men who worked for Claudie Joiner lived in the house of his father Alex, and one lived in a little house on Percy's land. Claudie always called his brother Buster, not Percy.

Claudie continued to cut wood and sell it. He sawed timber into 12 inch cross tie stock, and then he carried it to Hobbs Island, where the NC and S&L Railroad

had a place on the river. The timber was put on a barge and pushed upriver to Guntersville. From there it went by rail to Gadsden.

The tradition of sending cargos to Gadsden this way goes back to the 1800's when paddlewheel steamers docked at the depot. They were the Huntsvillian and the Guntersvillian. Mary Cobb Morris was the first station attendant at the Hobbs Island Depot.

Just like Claudie did, but decades before him, men loaded wagons with their cargoes and traversed dirt roads to reach the depot. One thing hadn't changed—the roads turned to mud when it rained. The men carried long wooden poles to pry the axels out of the mud.

At the depot, the Mercury and Chase railroad had boxcars 40 feet long to load up with the cargo. The boats were 200 feet long, and two or three boxcars were put on each side. The trip to Guntersville was about 20 miles.

Well, sad to say, Claudie Joiner is dead now. He kept on milling trees and working hard, and he died of pneumonia. He is buried on down further to the south, past where the old Timmons slave quarters used to be, in the Timmons Cemetery. Some of the old folks call it Timmons Cemetery because that is where Timmons slaves were buried. After slavery, people who lived nearby continued to be buried there, so it went from being a slave cemetery to a community cemetery. Claudie's son, Walter Joiner, has driven stakes in the ground and put a wire fence around his father's grave. Claudie would have been proud of his son—he works on the farm, and he's going to high school.