

Marcy said her Grandpa Bagsby raised tobacco. It was his main crop. Marcy chortled, “When we were kids, we’d roll us a cigar.” Her grandfather reserved one of the four big rooms in his house for storing the cotton or tobacco.

The Move

Marcy said that when Bentley Young began selling his property, her father went to work for Lillian McDonnell (Parcel A-24) and Sara Wilson. They moved to a house on McDonnell land that had three big rooms and a front porch. She said, “It was like an ‘L’ in the back, so my daddy added two more walls and then that made another room.” A cemetery was across the road from the house. Marcy said Lillian McDonnell inherited the land from her family, and “the whole place was covered with sharecroppers. She didn’t live there; she had a fine house in town and lived with her sister.”

Marcy mentioned a neighbor who lived “up past McDonnell’s.” She pronounced his name “Jh-ro.” Marcy added that he was the father of Wynn Jones (Parcel A-13). She said:

Mr. Jones was rich. He got mad at a man who sharecropped with him, Archie Meers. He fired him. He [Meers] came back and burned the barn down. He came in drunk. He went to the pen.

Marcy’s Husband

Marcy’s story about how she met her husband also adds insight to life “back then.” Marcy’s parents “took on another boy to raise.” He was the son of a family named Langford. “Mr. Langford gave my parents his second son [it is unclear from which wife] because he had fathered 23 children in three marriages.” The adopted Langford boy and Marcy later married each other.

Quilts

Marcy said “back then” women made quilts. She was young when she began making quilts, over 75 years ago, and she continues to make quilts. Each one is a beautiful design with fine stitching. Some quilts she has made with her “own colors.” She said:

A real old Black lady taught me how to make colors of my own [when Marcy was young]. You dig down below the topsoil and then get the red clay. You put that in a wash pot and boil it and strain it. Then you put your material in there and put salt and vinegar in there. Then you put your quilt lining in there, and it would make an orange-yellow color for your lining. Or you could dye a bunch of different colors and make a quilt top.

Marcy sews when she is not working in her garden and “putting up” vegetables or fruit. She is a petite woman, past 90 years old, who grew up working hard and has never stopped.