

of land were lush with creeks, ponds, stands of timber and fertile fields. We even had our own cemetery which dad made available to the community.

This area of southwest Madison County was called *Threes Place*. All of the land at one time had belonged to whites. Now, if a Negro was able to, he could buy it. Between my mother's family and my father's, they together owned about 2,000 acres in close proximity. We had everything we needed. Most relatives lived within hollering distance. Mother's brother, Uncle James Horton, lived the farthest, about a half mile away. We had our own stores, schools and churches. The community was integrated, too, but the whites were not landowners. They were tenants.

Everyone was friendly and worked well together. They raised cotton to sell but the rest of the products were for themselves to live on.

I didn't see much use for school with all of life's bounty so close at hand. It is time I wondered about distant names and places like Chicago and New York that I would hear the adults mention. But still, I wasn't quite sure school was where you really learned about such things. My teachers wanted me to learn to read and write. These teachers were my aunts and cousins and they gave over to me, yielding to my shenanigans. They loved me but it wasn't any good for them to do this for me. When an outside teacher was hired, I had to calm down and get busy studying at school and at home. That was quite a jolt.

Uncle James Horton had six children, three boys and three girls. We all went to school and did everything together. Their names were James, Mae, Oroy, Leroy, Mildred and Willie. Like my father, Uncle James was a farmer, but he hired people to do his farming for him too. He was more of a sportsman and hired his service out to the white people who wanted to hunt wild ducks, geese and small game. The white men would spend the night in his large barn up in the hayloft. All the men, including my father, would make home brew and corn whiskey and enjoy it at hunting time. Sometimes my father and Uncle James would hide a keg of corn whiskey or home brew in the fields for the hungry hunters.

One hot summer day, cousin James Bruce and I were playing and wandered off into a cornfield. Lo and behold, we stumbled onto a keg of corn whiskey and decided to see that it really tasted like. I lay on my back and James Bruce put the