

LUCILLE ROOKS

(Born in 1925)

Interviewed in 1999

Being a responsible caregiver, Lucille Rooks had been sitting in an adjoining room and listening while the researcher talked with her aunt. Realizing that her aunt's answers had been limited, she told the researcher that she "knew about some of the things she'd been asking about."

Lucille Rooks is the granddaughter of Alexander and Pearlie Joiner. Lucille added the information Luther and John Albert had been "white." Another son, Elijah had been "dark." Lucille said her father, Percy Joiner, was born and reared in Morgan County. Her mother was Ellen Lacy. [Note: Percy Joiner and his brother Claudie Joiner bought parcels of land on the Timmons farm, near where their father, Alexander Joiner, was born after Claudie returned from World War I.]

Lucille discussed the foods that the people ate and grew. She said:

From the 1900's, probably to the 1940's, people ate turnip greens, sweet potatoes, and other vegetables they grew. They ate peanuts, too. They had boiling meat or game or possum or squirrel, coon, and rabbits. It was put in a black pot and hung over the fire. There was peanuts, too.

Lucille added, "You knew when you came home from school what you'd have—collard greens, baked sweet potatoes, green beans, pickles, berries."

Instead of sugar, we used molasses (dark). When we made a cake, we used flour and eggs, but instead of sugar, we'd use molasses. We had a wood stove. It was a big stove, a Home Comfort. It was made of cast iron. There was a tank on the side for heating water. The bottom was for browning. We cut wood from the woods to put in it.

[Did you have a smoke house?] It was just out the back door. You stepped out the back door to the smoke house—it was just a few feet away.

[Did your family cure meat?] Yes. After the meat cured you could rub it in sugar cane salt. Season it out—let it stay so many days in regular salt, about a month. You couldn't lay meat on the ground. Daddy had a long bin made out of boards. The weather was what made the difference. Daddy killed the hogs when the weather was coming in so the meat wouldn't sour.

You'd hang up the sausage. My mother used jars for the fruit. She had a bin. She'd take the cottonseeds and put them over the jars to keep them from freezing.