

Martha, was living in the big house, too. Juanita remembers the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) people boarding at the Big house while she lived there. (According to Sam Harris Jr., TVA acquired about 200 acres of the Harris property.) She thought maybe the “CCC people” (Civilian Conservation Corps) people had stayed there at one time, too. She remembered a lot of boarders staying with the family.

Juanita said the family kept a bottle of quinine in the middle of the kitchen table to take every day. This was used to “fight off” malaria. She said mosquitoes were quite a problem in Pond Beat before TVA drained off some of the areas where they bred.

Juanita said Martha Harris had an ash hopper through which rain water would be drained. This produced lye, which is the main ingredient in homemade soap. Martha made liquid soap in big iron kettles and it would be used for laundry in the washhouse. She said the washhouse was part of the old slave quarters and was located off the back porch and joined to the house. There was a fireplace in it. Juanita said:

Go upstairs, off the back porch, it was connected to the house, and it was in back of the kitchen. Up stairs were two rooms. The first room had bars sticking out with chains [later described as stocks]. The second room was entirely dark. Neither room had windows, although the first room had a skylight. It was used to detain slaves that were being punished.

The validity of Juanita’s story is not known, but she told it with certainty. Her description fit the two rooms that were the original section of the house. It is feasible that after the front section of the house was built by Lee in 1841, the two rooms in the rear, which had been the first structure built, became quarters for slaves who served in the household. Corrine Harris Shovelton said servants who worked for the Harris family stayed in the two rooms. This was described earlier in the description of the house. Corrine, who is many years younger than Juanita, said she did not know of any room where slaves were kept.

Sarah Malaspina, a Huntsville resident who retired from working for the DOD on RSA many years ago remembers going with officials from Building 112 at RSA to look at the house before it was sold. She remembers going down the stairs into the basement. She said there were metal pieces on the wall. She said she remembered thinking because of their height and placement, they appeared to be what shackles would have been attached to in order to chain slaves to the wall. It is probable that shackles were used during the time Charity Cooper owned the plantation. The following advertisement was published in the *Huntsville Democrat*, June 16, 1838:

TEN DOLLARS REWARD. Ranaway from the subscriber, a negro woman named Sally, about 21 years of age, taking along her two children—one three years, and the other seven months old. These Negroes were PURCHASED BY ME at the sale of George Mason’s negroes, on the first Monday in May, and left *a few days* thereafter. Any person delivering them to the jailor in Huntsville, or to me, at