

## Early Childhood Incidents and experiences

Deserted by father at 2½ years,  
shortly before brother's birth.

Mother was with her semi-invalid parents

Grandfather's playing with my  
brother and me. He was an ex-slave  
of Scotch-Irish descent, African  
ancestry either remote or non-existent.  
He died when I was six years old.

Mother taught school in the rural community

where we lived. ~~XXXX~~ moved through the country  
burning <sup>negro</sup> churches, schools, flogging  
and killing. Grandfather stayed  
up to wait for them to come to  
our house. He kept his shot  
gun within reach hand reach  
at all times. My aunt, a widow,

and her five small children came  
to our house at night. We could  
not undress and go to bed at night.  
The doors and windows were  
boarded and nailed tight from the  
inside. I stayed awake many

nights, keeping vigil with Grandpa. I wanted to see him kill a Ku Kluxer. He declared the first to invade our home would surely die. This when I was six or seven. ~~none~~ <sup>was</sup> came in our house.

My mother, a very beautiful woman and a good mother to us, also a devoted daughter of her own parents. She was attractive to ~~her~~ men and there was one, I was so fond of that I wanted him for my father. He was a tall, handsome bachelor who was ~~found~~ <sup>mysteriously</sup> murdered. ~~though~~ I don't know what their relationship was or might have been; his death was a great loss to me.

As grandpa, already crippled and hardly able to walk, became more feeble, I stayed ~~with~~ <sup>near</sup> him more than ever. I washed his feet at night, soaking his rheumatism twisted toes and stiff legs <sup>& ankles</sup> in Mullen water and various concoctions

and remedies that people said were good for the rheumatism. This was my special duty and I was always ready with the basin to make sure no one else would do the foot washing. He was tall, thin and very Caucasian in appearance. He had long, very straight, thickly growing white hair that I liked to comb.

He taught me to plant corn, chop and plow cotton, milk cows etc. I learned to cook, by observing my grandmother and could prepare a simple meal almost as soon as I was tall enough to see the stove top. I learned to sew by piecing quilts, made the first one when I was six.

Mother was away from home much of the time working. I adored my brother and never wanted him to get a whipping for being naughty. Being a normal boy, he was inclined to be playfully

mischievous at times, He was spoiled  
and after really naughty. It seemed  
that I received more whipping  
for not "telling on him" than for  
doing things myself that may  
have provoked punishment.  
Once when he was just 1 year old,  
Grandmother was going to  
spank "Brother." I pleaded  
with her to leave him be,  
for "he was only a little baby  
who had no mama and no  
papa." (Mother was away working  
and my father <sup>never returned to life with us</sup> ~~was still away~~)  
She spared him that time.  
Grandpa was especially  
devoted to my brother and  
Brother was equally fond of  
him. He was not afraid of  
Grandpa as ~~the~~ as the  
rest of ~~the~~ grand children  
my cousins and I. He had  
a loud voice and could  
speak roughly when angry.

Grandpa talked with Brother as man  
to man.