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MISSOURI
ST. LOUIS
EX-SLAVE STORIES
ANN ULRICH EVANS

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WED FOR ECONOMIC REASONS

Although 94 years of living have dimmed her eyes a bit and the burdens she's packed through the years have bent her wiry frame Ann Ulrich Evans, a former slave, is still able to carry on. She lives in a rear apartment of the slum district at 1405 North Eighth Street with her daughter, Eliza Grant.

Ann declares she's had eleven children of her own and that from them have sprung so many grand children and great grand children that she's entirely lost count of them. The story of the incidents that have filled her life but have still left her able to love mankind and smile follows substantially in her own words:

"I was born March 10, 1843 on Dolphin Street, Mobile, Alabama. My mother's name was Charlotte Ulrich and my father's was Peter Pedro Ulrich. I am the mother of 11 children and we has over 100 grandchildren. Dere is so many great grandchildren and great great grandchildren we jes' quit countin' when we comes to dem. I has four generations, and dey give me a party three years ago, and so many of my off spring come der wasn't any room for half of 'em and even dat was not de beginning of de lot of 'em. I got a gang of 'em I never did

Evans, A.
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see, and never will see, I don't reckon. Dey just write and tell us dey got 'em.

"My father was owned by a rich old boss named Captain Bullmāy. He owned a raft of boats, and my father was a cook on one of dem boats. Mamma only raised two of her children. De Ulriches sold me when I was a girl to Dr. Odem in de same county, and I worked in his field, spun thread to make cloth, pulled fodder, put de spinning in, and after a while, I don't know how long, he swapped me off for two boys. My new owner was Gilbert Faulkner. He was a railroad section man. I worked in de field for him until we was sot free. I had some good times and some bad times both. De man I married worked on the railroad for him. His name was Moses Evans. Dat was in Helena, Arkansas. My husband's been dead more dan 30 years now. I got four daughters and three sons living and a host of grand and great grand, and great great grandchildren living. Since my husband died, I just live from one child to the other and some time de grandchildren takes care of me, I havn't done no kind of work since my children got big enough to work. Dey been pretty good to me all my days.

"Bout a year ago de government done started giving me a pension, \$11 a month. It helps some, but don't very much, every things so high, honey. When freedom come I asked my old owner to please let me stay

on wid dem, I didn't have no whar to go no how. So he just up and said 'Ann, you can stay here if you want to, but I ain't goin to give you nothing but you victuals and clothes enough to cover your hide, not a penny in money, do no nigger get from me.' So I up and said, 'why boss, dey tells me dat since freedom we git a little change', and he cursed me to all de low names he could think of and drove me out like a dog. I didn't know what to do, or where to go, so I sauntered off to a nearby plantation where a colored slave kept house for her bachelor slave owner and she let me stay with her, and her boss drove me off after two days, because I kept company with a nigger who worked for a man he didn't like. I was barefooted, so I asked Moses Evans, to please buy me some shoes, my feet was so sore and I didn't have no money nor no home neither. So he said for me to wait till Saturday night and he'd buy me some shoes. Sure 'nough when Saturday night come, he bought me some shoes, and handkerchiefs and a pretty string of beads and got an old man neighbor named Rochel to let me stay at his house. Den in a few weeks me and him got married, and I was mighty glad to marry him to git a place to stay. Yes I was. 'Cause I had said, hard times as I was having if I seed a man walking with two sticks and he wanted me for a wife I'd marry him to git a place to stay. Yes I did and I meant just dat. In all my born days I never knowed of a white man giving a black man nothing, no I ain't.

"Now child, let me tell you right here, I was always a heap more scared of dem Ku Klux dan I was of anything else. 'Cause de war was to help my folks. But dem old Ku Klux never did mean us no good. Honey, I used to make pallets on de floor after de war for my children, myself and husband to sleep on, 'cause dem Ku Klux just come all around our house at night time and shoot in de doors and wirovindows. Dey never bothered nobody in de day time. Den some time dey come on in de house, tear up everything on de place, claim dey was looking for somebody, and tell us dey hungry 'cause dey ain't had nothin' to eat since de battle of Shiloh. Maybe twenty of 'em at a time make us cook up everything we got, and dey had false pockets made in dere shirt, and take up de skillet with de meat and hot grease piping hot and pour it every bit down de front of dem shirts inside de false pockets and drop de hot bread right down dere, behind de meat and go on.

"One night dey come to our house after my husband to kill him, and my husband had a dream dey's coming to kill him. So he had a lot of colored men friends to be at our house with guns dat night and time dey seed dem Ku Klux coming over de hill, dey started shooting just up in de air and about, and dem Ku Klux never did bother our house no more. I sure glad of dat. I'se so tired of dem devils. If it nadn't been for dat dey would have killed everyone of us dat night. I don't know

how come dey was so mean to us colored folks. We never did do nothing to dem.

"Dey go to some of dem niggers' house, and dey run up de chimney corner to hide and dem low down hounds shoot 'em and kill 'em in de chimney hole. Dey was terrible. Den de next bad thing happened to us poor niggers after de war was dis. De white folks would pay niggers to lie to de rest of us niggers to git der farming done for nothing. He'd tell us come on and go with me, a man wants a gang of niggers to do some work and he pay you like money growing on trees. Well we ain't had no money and ain't use to none, so we glad to hear dat good news. We just up and bundle up and go with this lying nigger. Dey carried us by de droves to different parts of Alabama, Arkansas and Missouri. After we got to dese places, dey put us all to work allright on dem great big farms. We all light in and work like old horses, thinking now we making money and going to git some of it, but we never did git a cent. We never did git out of debt. We always git through with fine big crops and owed de white man more dan we did when we started de crop, and got to stay to pay de debt. It was awful. All over was like dat. Dem lying niggers caused all dat. Yes dey did.

"I don't know what to think of this younger generation. 'Pears to me like dey jest ain't no good. Dey is too trifling. I often times tell

'em dere chances today side or mine in my day. Dey jest say dey wouldn't take what I been through.

"But dey is just a hopeless lot, just plain no good. All I can say is as you say, some is some good but so few 'ginst de masses, take so long to find 'em, I just don't bother 'bout trying to hunt 'em out.

"I voted once in my life, but dat's been so long ago I don't 'member who it was for, or where I was living at de time, I never had no friends in politics to my knowing. All I 'member dey told me to put a cross under de elephant, and I did dat. I don't know nothin' more 'bout it dan dat. Don't know what it meant or nothing. After all I been through, honest chile, I love everybody in de world, dose dat mistreat me and dose dat didn't. I don't hold nothing in my heart 'ginst nobody, no I don't. God going to righten each wrong some day, so I'se going to wait with love in my heart till dat day come. Den I speck I will feel plenty sorry, for what's going to happen to dem dat mistreated me and my people and all other helpless folks. 'Cause I seen white folks in my day, have 'bout as tough time in a way as black folks, and right now some of 'em rairing just 'bout like me.

"I 'member how de old slaves use to be workin' in de field singing 'Am I born to die, And Lay Dis Body Down.' And dey sing, Dark was de night and cold de ground, on which my Lord was laid, Great drops of

blood like sweat run down, in agony He prayed. Another song was 'Way over in de promised land my Lord calls me and I must go'. And 'On Jordan's Stormy Banks I stand, and cast a wishful eye. To Canaan's fair and happy land, where my possessions lie. All o'er those wide extended plains, Shines one eternal day; There God, the son forever reigns, and scatters night away, No chilling winds, nor pois'nous breath, Can reach that healthful shore; Sickness and sorrow, pain and death, Are felt and feared no more. When shall I reach that happy place, And be forever blest? When shall I see my father's face, And in his bosom rest?' I am Bound for the Promised Land.'

"I am a member of the Sanctified Church. I was a Baptist for years."