One morning back in 1915, shortly after I arrived at Berry Schools, the dean of the Girls' School sent for me to come to the office. She told me I was to go to Oak Hill (Miss Martha Berry's home) to do some domestic work. Some very important guest was arriving to see the school. Miss Berry often entertained in the home to interest people in giving money to help build her school.

The dean had the horse "Black Beauty" hitched up to the buggy and she drove across the highway to the big white house on the hill. As I got out, I heard a great commotion at the back. "Shoo! Yo' nasty chicken!" With squawks and fluttering of wings, Aunt Martha grabbed some small broilers out of the coop and wrung their heads off. "Now I got yo' ready to scald." She turned around and saw me.

"Chile, whey did yo' come from?"

"Aunt Martha, I was sent over from the school to help you today."

"My goo'ness, chile, yo' ain't big enough for nuthin'. Ain't deys got some biggah girls at dat school?"

"I don't know, but here I am."

"Grab dat bucket o' hot water, and don' you scald yo'sef or ah'll have mo' trouble dan I got."

I picked the feathers off, singed and cleaned, and Aunt Martha showed me how to cut them down the back and salt them; then they were ready to put in the old black iron skillet on the wood stove.
I got the turnip greens ready to cook. I had to pull the big stems out. They had to be real delicate, so I was told. The iron pot was on the stove with some fatback (potbelly) cooking. I added the greens. I put stove wood in the stove. I turned around, and Aunt Martha smiled. Next, I made the dessert, kiss pudding. I scalded the milk, put a pinch of flour into the sugar and mixed well. I beat the egg yolks till golden yellow and added to sugar and flour, then added to scalded milk and let cook till done, then poured into pan. I beat the egg whites, adding tablespoons of sugar till they were stiff, and put this on top of first mixture, and put in oven to bake.

While I was doing this, Aunt Martha was churning. We had to have fresh butter and buttermilk for dinner. That was always a must in days of long ago at the Berry home on the farm.

The corn pudding and corn sticks were my next chore. I got then ready to put in the oven to bake. I realized it was almost time for the guest to arrive. I made my way into the dining room, set the table as best I knew how. I was brought up in a big family and my mother had given me good training.

As the years went by Aunt Martha and I grew to be good friends. She was born a slave girl. She came into the Berry family very young, before the Civil War. She lived on the Berry Estate till her death. She was one hundred and seven years old. All of her relatives had passed on. She lived right outside the big house. People from far and near came to see her.

Aunt Martha was a great soul. She blessed all who crossed
her threshold. The outside world was brought to her door through
listening over her radio.

In her later years, she could not see with human eye;
God gave her understanding and sight from on high.
In her little cabin she would sit from day to day,
Dreaming of the past in a wondrous way;
When Sherman's men passed through Rome she could tell
The ham and silver they hid in the well.
Martha Berry was her soul's delight;
She thought and prayed for her day and night.
Her philosophy of life was best of all,
She had a kind word for great and small.

When the day came for her to pass on, she did it quietly and
peacefully. All arrangements were made beforehand. The funeral
was in Mt. Berry Chapel. She is buried on the north side of
the Chapel.