

I was born in Fairfield County, South Carolina, ~~on~~ <sup>on</sup> the 2nd of March, 1863, or two months and ~~two~~ <sup>one</sup> day after President Lincoln has issued the Emancipation Proclamation setting ~~free~~ the negroes of ~~the~~ America free from the bondage of slavery. As a result I was free born.

My mother, a mulata, ~~was~~ served in the home of her owner from childhood to womanhood. For this reason she never experienced the hard labor of the other slaves.

My mother could neither read nor write, but could spell <sup>only</sup> one or two syllable words, ~~but~~ yet she was considered fairly intelligent. She could recite the Child's Catechism, <sup>the Lord's prayer.</sup> She had also learned ~~and had learned~~ <sup>from memory</sup> quite a number of hymns. ~~Her~~ ~~owners~~ were

Presbyterians. She was taught the Child's Catechism by her owners who were Presbyterians. At the close of the war she moved to another plantation where she was employed as a cook. Not knowing the exact ages of her two children, ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> sister Mary and myself, ~~my sister Mary being~~ <sup>three years</sup> ~~older than~~ she went to her former owners to learn the date of our births. She was given a written statement of our births. Had it not been for this thoughtfulness of



my mother, I would never have known  
the date of my birth. This written  
~~statement of our births was kept and~~  
~~shown to us~~

Eight more children were born in  
the family, <sup>thus</sup> increasing the number  
to ten.

My mother continued ~~employment~~ <sup>the service</sup> of  
cooking while my stepfather and children  
worked a <sup>poor</sup> rented farm from which  
sufficient support for the family was never  
realized. Some of the children had <sup>to</sup> work  
on neighbor <sup>farms</sup> ~~to supplement~~ for  
money to supplement the small income  
from ours.

At that time the state was not  
providing any public schools in  
the county (Linn, B.C.) for Negro  
children. A white woman volunteered  
to teach a private for Negro children  
for a small to be paid by parents.  
This arrangement continued for  
a few years. This school however  
did not mean much to me since I  
could not be spared from our to  
attend school except when the ground



was too wet to work. I studied every night however being assisted by the children of the community who the school in the day. When fifteen years of age I learned of a ~~2d~~ private school in Winnsboro operated by Rev Willard ~~Richardson~~ Richardson, assisted by his wife and daughter. This family had come from the North into the South as missionary teachers. At this time our family lived in the country about 12 miles from ~~at~~ Winnsboro.

Realizing that I was getting from the land had ~~not~~ no education opportunity, I said to my mother I want to go to the Willard Richardson school in Winnsboro. She said if you think you can ~~can~~ get a small job on the farm to ~~pay~~ get a expense for board and lodging I will try raise more chickens than usual so that I can ~~pay~~ help pay your bills with chickens & eggs.



After spending three years in the  
Richards school during ~~which~~ which four  
years' work of the curriculum was  
covered I ~~went into the country~~ the  
principal at an emergency call  
for a teacher ~~in~~ <sup>for</sup> a rural school  
requested me to accept the position  
which I did. After having taught  
~~two years~~ four months term per year  
for two years at a ~~salary~~ an  
salary of \$18.00 per month I  
matriculated in the High School  
Department of Biddle (now Johnson Co. Smith)  
University at Charlotte N.C., October  
1886. In 1895, the work of the High  
School College of Liberal Arts and  
~~the~~ <sup>Theological Seminary</sup> having been completed I was  
appointed teacher in the High School  
Department where I began as a  
teacher nine years prior to that time.  
~~The~~ My work in this Department covered  
5 1/2 years, three as assistant teach and 2  
as principal.



I served in that ~~capacity~~ —  
capacity from 1901 to 1907  
when I was appointed President  
of the institution to succeed  
The Rev. Daniel J. Sanders,  
the first Negro President, ~~of~~  
of the ~~institution~~ University.  
Realizing the boundless needs of  
the institution, having connected  
with it as student and teacher for 21  
years, ~~it~~, I accepted the appointment  
with fear and trembling.

It was by faith in God that I  
accepted the task and by abiding faith  
in Him for His enabling grace  
through 40 years something has  
been accomplished which will at  
least serve as a stepping stone  
for future builders in years  
~~to come~~ to come.