

English 213 Week 9
Post-Plantation Fiction

UNCLE REMUS

HIS SONGS AND HIS SAYINGS

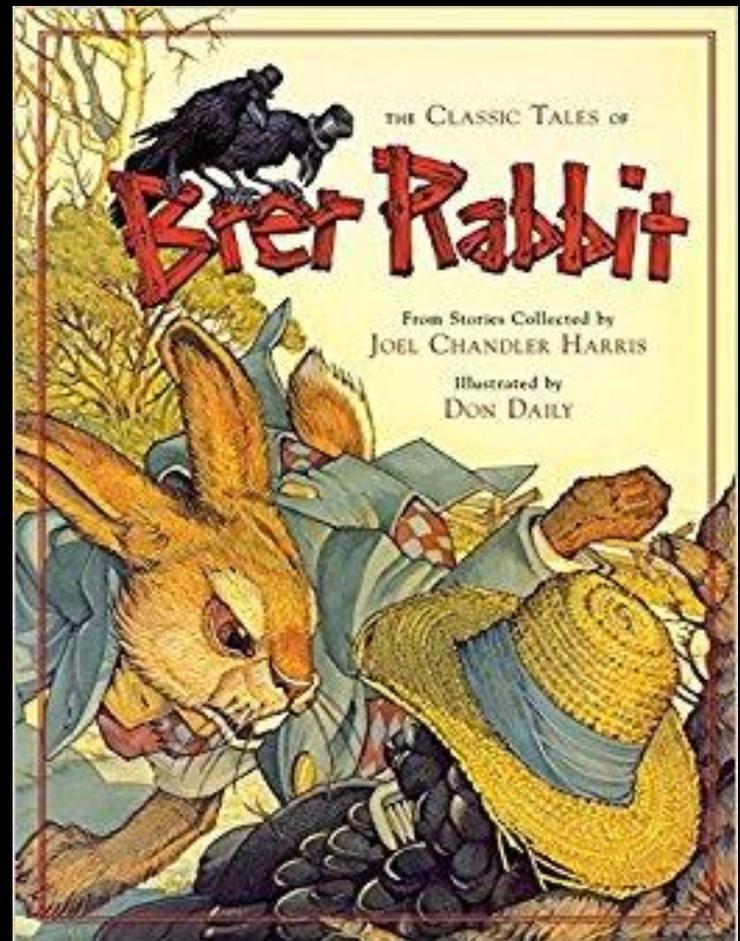
THE FOLK-LORE OF THE OLD PLANTATION



By JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY FREDERICK S. CHURCH AND
JAMES H. MOSER

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET
1881





Problem 1: Romanticizing Plantation Life

“Dem wuz good ole times, marster – de bes’ Sam uver see! Dey wuz, in fac! Niggers didn’ hed nothin’ ‘t all to do – jes’ hed to ‘ten’ to de feedin’ an’ cleanin’ de hawses, an’ doin’ what de marster tell ‘em to do.”

Thomas Nelson Page, *Ole Virginia* (1896)

“ONE afternoon, in the autumn of 1872, I was riding leisurely down the sandy road that winds along the top of the water-shed between two of the smaller rivers of eastern Virginia. [...] **Their once splendid mansions, now fast falling to decay, appeared to view from time to time, set back far from the road,** in proud seclusion, among groves of oak and hickory, now scarlet and gold with the early frost. Distance was nothing to this people; time was of no consequence to them. They desired but a level path in life, and that they had, though the way was longer, and the outer world strode by them as they dreamed.”

-Thomas Nelson Page



“His beard an' hyar wuz all nyawed off, an' his face an' han's an' neck wuz scorified terrible. Well, he jes' laid Ham Fisher down, an' then he kind o' staggered for'ad, an' ole missis ketch' 'im in her arms. Ham Fisher, he warn' bu'nt so bad, an' he got out in a month or two; an' arfter a long time, ole marster he got well, too; but he wuz always stone blind arfter that. He nuver could see none from dat night.

Marse Chan he comed home from college toreckly, an' he sut'n'y did nuss ole marster faithful—jes' like a 'ooman. Den he took charge of de plantation arfter dat; an' I use' to wait on 'im jes' like when we wuz boys togedder; an' sometimes we'd slip off an' have a fox-hunt, an' he'd be jes' like he wuz in ole times"



Problem 2: Racial Stereotypes



Illustration of “The Wonderful Tar Baby Story”

Uncle Remus and the Legends of the Old Plantation (1881), Joel Chandler Harris

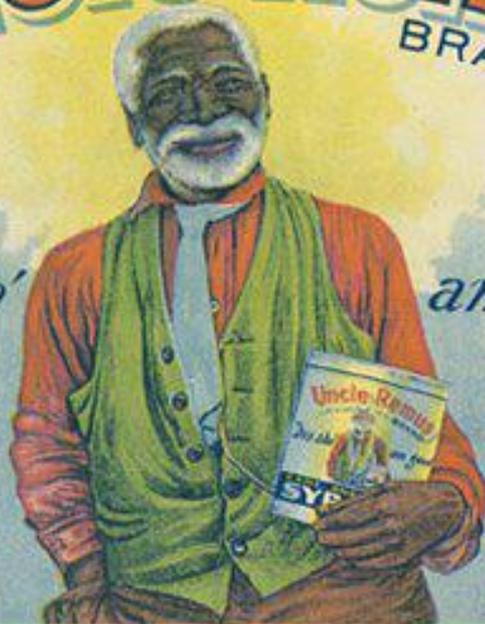
Ber Rabbit is going to find out why he gets no answer.
He hauls off and takes a big swing at the tar baby.



Uncle Remus

BRAND

"Dis sho' am good"



SYRUP

SandyTov

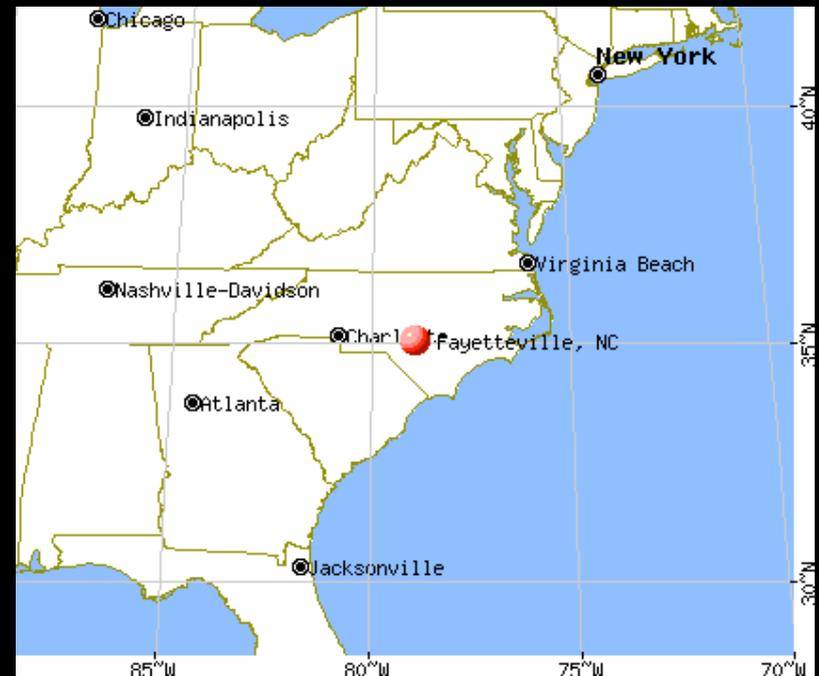




Charles Chesnutt
(1858 – 1932)

1858 Born in Cleveland
1867 Moves to Fayetteville, NX
1878 marries and moves to NYC to
Escape the poverty of the South
1899 *Conjure Woman* Published

“Some years ago my wife was in poor health, and our family doctor, in whose skill and honesty I had implicit confidence, advised a change of climate. [...] The doctor’s advice was that we seek a permanent residence, in a warmer and more equable climate. I was engaged at the time in grape-culture in northern Ohio, and, as I liked the business and had given it much study, I decided to look for some other locality suitable for carrying it on. It occurred to me that I might find what I wanted in some one of our own Southern States. It was a sufficient time after the war for conditions in the South to have become somewhat settled; and I was enough of a pioneer to start a new industry, if I could not find a place where grape culture had been tried. I wrote to a cousin who had gone into the turpentine business in central North Carolina. He assured me, in response to my inquiries, that no better place could be found in the South than the State and neighbourhood where he lived; the climate was perfect for health, and, in conjunction with the soil, ideal for grape culture; labour was cheap, and land could be bought for a mere song”

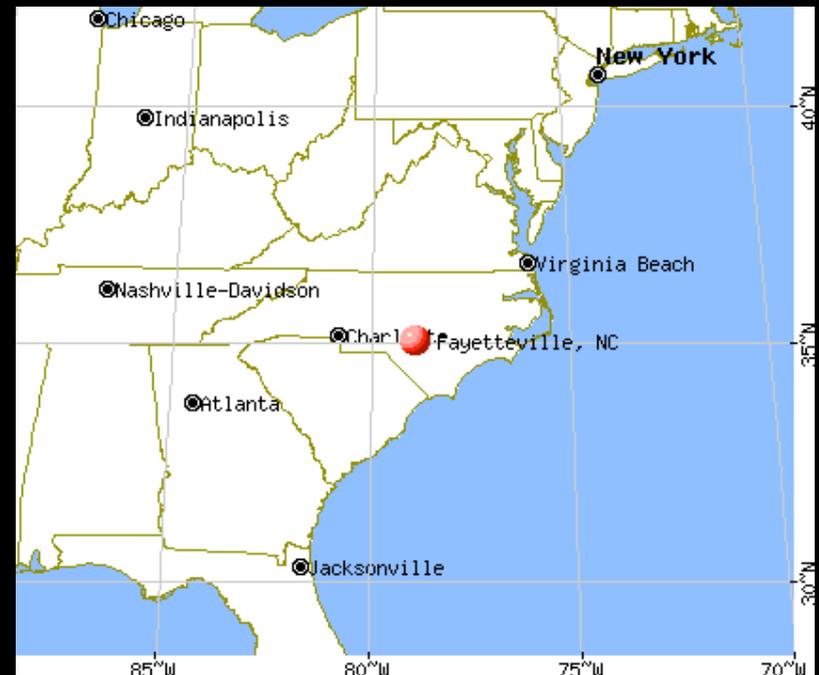


“We drove between a pair of decayed gateposts – the gate itself had long since disappeared – and up a straight sandy lane, between two lines of rotting rail fence, partly concealed by jimson-weeds and briars, to the open space where a dwelling-house and once stood, evidently a spacious mansion, if we might judge from the ruined chimneys that were still standing, and the brick pillars on which the sills rested. The house itself, we had been informed, had fallen a victim to the fortunes of war

[...]

Upon Annie’s complaining of weariness I led the way back to the yard, where a pine log afforded a shady though somewhat hard seat. One end of the log was already occupied by a venerable-looking colored man. HE held on his knees a hat full of grapes, over which he was smacking his lips with great gusto, and a pile of grape skins near him indicated that the performance was no new thing”

(7)

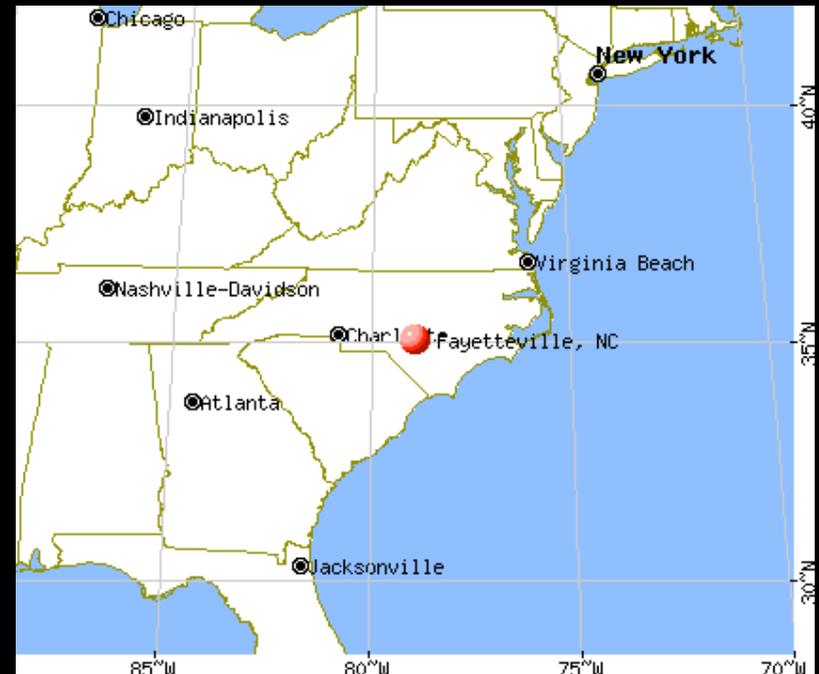


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“it wuz mighty hard wukl fe of all de sweekin’, en moanin’, en groanin’, dat log done it w’iles de saw wuz a-cutting’ thoo it. De saw wuz one er dese yer ole-timey, up-en-down saws, en hit tuk longer dem days ter saw a llog ‘en it do now. Dey greased de saw, but dat did n’ stop de fuss; hit kep’ right on, tel fin’ly dey got de log all sawed up” (23)

“ ‘what a system it was,’ she exclaimed, when Julius had finished, ‘under which such things were possible!’

‘What things?’ I asking, in amazement. ‘Are you seriously considering the possibility of a man’s being turned into a tree?’

‘Oh no, she replied quickly, not that’”

“John, I don’t believe I want my new kitchen built out of the lumber in that old schoolhouse”