Trubble, Brudder Alligator, Trubble

By E. A. McIlhenny

E. A. McIlhenny lives at Avery Island, Louisiana, and is responsible for the extraordinary bird sanctuary there. As a child he and his brothers issued a kind of plantation magazine with Uncle Remus stories in it as told by the plantation darkies. Many years later the boy who had collected Negro folk tales became one of the foremost naturalists and conservationists of bird life in the South, his interest in the lore of the land having kept apace. When his intensely interesting book, *The Alligator's Life History*, appeared three years ago, the editor of the Texas Folk-Lore Society wrote him asking if there were not in the swamp lands of Louisiana a kind of alligator culture, a cycle of tales about alligators, a body of alligator lore analogous to the coyote, the rattlesnake, or the jackrabbit lore found elsewhere. The tale that follows is a part of the response.

In de ole time days, all de beasts en de birds en tings, dey could talk to each udder jis like folks, en dey used to have meetin's en rallies en tings jist like folks do. En each en every kind could unnerstan' de talk uv de udde kind. Dey wuz all frien'ly enough en didn't pester each udder none wen dey wuz togedder, but all de same, most uv 'em wuz er watchin' fer to see dat de udder didn't git de fus chance fer a breakfus er dinner off'n him wen he warn't lookin'.

Der wuz two uv dem beasts wut kep dey eyes on each udder more den de rest. Desse wuz Mister Rabbit en Mister Alligator. Mister Alligator he wuz always layin' roun de edge er de bayou hopin' to get er chance fer to make his dinnuh off'n some uv Mister Rabbit's fambly wen dey cum down to de water fer a drink. En many a time he gits his chance en knocks a nice, fat, young rabbit wid a swif' flop uv his tail, right down he throat en in ter he dinnuh bucket.
Trouble, Brudler Alligator, Trouble

"You ain't nebebr had no trouble, Brudler Alligator?" see Mister Rabbit. "You's da one you know wot trouble?"

"No, Brudler Rabbit," see Mister Alligator, "I ain' no trouble in my life, but I've had sum, cause I might be mighty good ef you've got so much uv it."

"So!" see Mister Rabbit, "you wants trouble, does you? Well, you jis laid right where you is, Brudler Alligator, en trouble will cum to you mighty quick." En wid what Mister Brudler Rabbit he slips off tru da long grass, en back to sleep go Mister Alligator.

Well suh, long 'bout tree 'clock dat afternoon men Mister Brudler Rabbit see Mister Alligator would be sleepin', hardest here cum Mister Rabbit jis er-lupin' down fum da white folks' yard, en in he hand he had a splinter er light wood he done rubb in da mole holes, en de end er de splinter or light wood wuz jis-a-'sleepin' er-blinin' en blazin', cause Mister Alligator had da white folks' house, en he run so fast and hold dat light wood splinter so high dat de fire nebebr had no chance to go out.

At de time Mister Rabbit gits to da marew whar he knowed Mister Alligator wuz a-sleepin' in de long tall grass wuz's mighty dry about now. He slips easy-like en fast in a big ruck, et goes into de grass an') en ricks a few jumps.

En de ring er fire wuz all wiz, Mister Rabbit he run to de edge er da gram, en he hollers, "Wake up, Brudler Alligator! Wake up! Trouble! Done cum!"

En de, he took a bale an' nigger en he hollers, "Mister Rabbit jis er-lupin' f'm de bire patc he's a-runnin'; an' he's axin' me to git him!"

By en de fire ring Mister Alligator gits so hot...
Coyote Wisdom

Brudder Rabbit. You is too heavy fer me to carry you er-cross on my tail.”

So Mister Rabbit he moves up Mister Alligator’s tail en he spraddle he-self on Mister Alligator’s back. Bout dat time dey is half way cross de bayou, en Mister Alligator ’gins ter settle he back down in de water slow-like en de same time he rize he head a little mo higher, en he say to Mister Rabbit, “Step up on my neck, Brudder Rabbit. You is putty heavy fer my back, en de water is so deep here, you is got me mos sinkted. Ef you step up on my neck, I tink I kin make it er-cross.”

So Mister Rabbit he steps up on Mister Alligator’s neck. Time he got dere Mister Alligator sink heself a little mo low in de water, en Mister Rabbit foots ’gins ter git wet ergin.

Den Mister Alligator sez, sez he, “You is mighty heavy fer my neck, Brudder Rabbit. Walk out on my head, en I’se shore I can git you er-cross.”

So Mister Rabbit he walks out on Mister Alligator’s head. But he’s watchin’ mighty close—caise he tinks Mister Alligator gointer play a trick on him. Now wen Mister Rabbit walks out on Mister Alligator’s head, dey wuz most to de udder shore. But Mister Alligator he ain’t nebber had no mind ter let Mister Rabbit git to de bank, en time Mister Rabbit gits on he head Mister Alligator throws he head high in de air en open wide he big mouf, speckin’ Mister Rabbit gointer fall right down he throat. But Mister Rabbit was a-watchin’, en time Mister Alligator throwed up he head, dat’s de time Mister Rabbit gives a big jump, en he lands most six feet up de bank on de udder shore.

Den he hollers, “Tanks, Brudder Alligator, fer gittin’ me outer trubble.”

En dat’s de way Mister Rabbit gits de best er de hound dawgs, en Mister Alligator, en Ole Man Trubble, all de same time.