

they grow cotton.

He is the middle child, and he can be spared to go on an adventure. He meets a ragged man when he is making soup, and Thomas shares his meal with him. The man tells him about an old plantation house, which is falling into ruin. "I hear there's a house on a hill not far from here. A rich man lived there years ago, but he died. Folks say the place's haunted. But the same folks say anyone who stays in it from sunset to sunrise will get the house and the treasure the old man hid before he died."

Thomas, no fool, asks, "Why don't you go and get the treasure yourself?" And the man says, "I'm scared-- That's the long and short of it. Folks say everyone who's tried to last the night has run away or died of fright. Now, no one'll go near the place." Thomas thought of his poor family at home. "I will," he said.

He finds the house and goes inside and starts a fire in the metal stove and makes some more ham-bone soup. He does not go near the stone fireplace and chimney, and just as well, because down the chimney comes a ghostly pair of legs! Thomas holds onto his pan of soup and does not admit out loud that he is frightened. The rest of the ghost comes down the chimney in pieces, and Our Hero does not run. In the end, he makes peace with the ghost of the old plantation owner, who shows Thomas where his treasure is buried. Thomas gives some of the gold coins to every poor family he meets on the way home, and the rest to his own family. They move into the abandoned plantation house and live happily ever after!

Whew! That makes me feel better. Hope these books make you feel better too, as Halloween approaches. Find them in the Children's Department at Pine Bush Area Public Library and have a Happy Halloween!