

Gabe Lance

Interview with Uncle Gabe Lance, age 77

Sandy Island, Murrells Inlet, S.C.

—*Genevieve W. Chandler*

BORN AND LIVING ON SANDY ISLAND

"Great Peace! Missus, have to study up that!"

Uncle Gabe had just arrived from Sandy Island at the country post-office, having rowed over for his month's supply of sugar and coffee and things he cannot raise. After the five or six mile row he must needs walk three miles to the office.

"I could remember when the Yankee boats come to Montarena—gun-boats. 'Bout ten o'clock in the morning. Soldier all muster out and scatter all over the island. You know that cause-er-way? Gone over that two by two, gun on shoulder glisten gainst the sun! Blue-coats, blue pants, hat all blue. Come back to landing 'bout five o'clock. Have hog, geese, duck! Broke in barn. Stole rations from poor people. My Grandfather the Driver—slave Driver. Name Nelson. Maussa—Frank Harriott. Maussa gone in swamp. Hid in woods. My Grandfather take old Miss Sally—Miss Sally Harriott—count she couldn't walk with rheumatism—Grandfather took old Miss Sally on he back to hid 'em in the woods where Maussa. Yankee stay but the one day. Ravage all over us island. All goat, hog, chicken, duck, geese—all the animal but the cow been take on the Yankee gun boat. They broke in Maussa big rice barn and share all that out to the colored folks.

"Some my people run away from Sandy Island. Go Oaks sea-shore and Magnolia Beach and take row-boat and gone out and join with the Yankee. Dem crowd never didn't come back.

"Any slave run way or didn't done task, put 'em in barn and least cut they give 'em (with lash) been twenty-five to fifty. Simply 'cause them weak and couldn't done task—couldn't done task! 'Give 'em less rations to boot! Cut 'em down to

1 qt. molasses

1 lb. meat

1 pk. corn for a week

"Good Master all right. Give plenty to eat. Reasonable task. Task dem time one-fourth to one half acre. Ditching man ten compass. Got to slush 'em out. Got to bail that water out till you kin see track.

"All dem rice-field been nothing but swamp. Slavery people cut kennel (canal) and dig ditch and cut down woods—and dig ditch through the raw woods. All been clear up for plant rice by slavery people.

"Beat my Pa and Ma to death and turn me loose! Ought to take care 'o me! I send off my 35 ct. fust (first) time, next time twenty-five cents I put what little I have in it. Ain't hear no answer. Some ten or fifteen head round here send off blank and don't get no hearing! Take what little I have and don't send me nothing 'TALL! I tired with that now! Ain't had a hearing!" (Referring to 'old age compensation')