

Lina Anne Pendergrass

Interview with Lina Anne Pendergrass

Union, S.C., Rt. 1

—*Caldwell Sims, Union, S.C.*

"I'se born 10 years befo' Freedom on a

Christmas day. Marse Tom Sanders, whose place I'se born on, lived in Chester County. One of my first 'memberances is a dream. I though' I saw my little sister, Sars, laying on a cooling board. I was five years old at dat time. I woke my mother up and tole her 'bout it, but it was jus' a dream an' wasn't nothin' to it.

"I never had no schooling and the Ku Klux sho scairt me. They took my daddy; my brother was too young. It was on Sat'day night. Next day was Sunday, and dey didn't fix de doors what de Ku Klux broke down. Us nebber did see pa no mo'.

"As it was in de day of Noah, so shall it be in de coming of de days of Jesus Christ. Peoples fitting and a-killin' and a-scrappin' all de time now, kaize dey don't take no time to go to prayer meeting. My grandfather had a prayer-meeting house. All de niggers on de plantation went to it ever Sat'day night. Dey sot on benches, and den dey would git down on dere knees and pray. I was a little gal, and me and de other gals would fetch water for dem to drink. Us toted pine when it was cole, and us'd take coals 'round fer de ole folks to light dere pipes wid. Atter while, dey git to singin' and shoutin'. Den de Spirit done come down and tuck hole of dem. Dat would be when everybody would get happy. De ole rafters creak and shake as de Spirit of de Lord sink deeper and deeper in de hearts of the prayin' folks. Tate Sanders, de preacher from Lowryville, would come in 'bout dat time and raise his hands 'bove de congregation and plead wid de Lawd to open de hearts of de wicked so dat de Holy Spirit could come in. Wasn't no killin' and scratchin' going on in dem days. De ole folks tell us chillun dat if we do wrong, de Lawd gwine come down in His wrath and punish us on dis earth. Sides dat, He gwine send us to torment whar we's live in 'ternal hell fire. De worl' is so wicked now dat I'se looking fer de locust to come and stay five months and sting everybody in de fo'head dat ain't got religion. Den people will be so 'shame of deself fer dere wickedness dat dey will seek death, and dey won't be able to get no death.

"De Lawd, He is a-pressin' me on up. Yes, Lawd, Revelation is wonderful. De comin' out of smoke, dem's de devil's angels. When you reads de Word of de Lawd, take an interes' in it. De people dat I knows is so wicked dat my heart keeps anguished.

"I learnt myself how to read. My pa brought a Bible from de war. I has dat and I reads it. My pa got shot comin' from Mississippi. Marse Sanders hear about it and he sont and brung him home. Den us lived 15

miles from Chester on Broad River. My pappy was named Henry Dorsey. When he was young, he was Marse Sander's butler boy. He got well from de shot. Den de Ku Klux got him for something. I ain't never knowed what. I don't know what dey done when I was a baby.

"I'se nussed since I was a little gal. My ma made me make teas to cure folks' colds and ailments. She made me fetch her water and towels and other things while she wait on de sick folks. Dat's de way I was broke into nussing. Nineteen-eighteen laid out folks at Monarch. I started right after breakfas' wid two dollars. Git home at night with narry a penny. Git folks soup and milk. Everybody dat didn't get sick worked hard. De folks died anyway like flies. De Lawd give me strength to stand up through de whole time. When de flu pass on and de folks get well, den dey pay me for my services.

"Millie Nash, Andy's wife, she look atter me since I'se got ole. She gooder to me dan anybody I know, but at de same time, she's aggravation to me kaise she drink likker. Millie sho does git drunk, but I keeps on prayin' fer her. Dis mawnin she's gwine to a funeral. She was poling 'long 'hind me and drapped her pocketbook. When us git ready to go into de church, she stopped and grabbed hol' of me and say, 'Lina, whar my pocketbook?' I looks at her and say, 'Nigger, how does I know whar'bouts you throw dat thing down? You stayed 'hind me all de way from de ice house. Didn't I tell you to let dat dram alone befo' you left de house?' I sot down in front of de church and Millie turned around and went down de street toward de ice house. She seed her pocketbook where she drapped it, 'bout half way twixt de ice house and de church. When she come 'long whar I was sitting, I 'lowed to her dat I'se gwine up to de relief office. I lef' her and here I is. Won't be long befo' Millie be here, too. De funeral done marched on when Millie got back to de church.