

Alonza Fantroy Toombs

Interview with Alonza Fantroy Toombs

—Gertha Couric, [HW: Eufaula?]

HE BELONGED TO BOB TOOMBS OF GEORGIA

"Missy," said Alonza Fantroy Toombs, "I 'se de proudest nigger in de worl', 'caze I was a slave belonging to Marse Robert Toombs of Georgia; de grandest man dat ever lived, next to Jesus Christ. He was de bes' stump speaker in de State, an' he had mo' frien's dan a graveyard has ghosts. He was sho a kin' man, an' dere warn't no one livin' who loved his wife an' home mo' dan Marse Bob.

"Missy," Uncle Lon continued, "he was near 'bout de greates' man dat eber come outen de South. He were a good business man; he were straight as dey make 'em, an' he sho enjoy playin' a good joke on someone. I useta see him a-walkin' down de road in de early mornin' an' I knowed it were him f'um a long distance, 'caze he was so tall. I guess you knowed all 'bout his a-servin' in de State legislature an' in de United States Congress an' a-bein' a gen'l in de war an' him bein' de secretary of State in de 'federacy.



Alonza Fantroy Toombs, [TR: Eufaula?], Alabama

"I was bawn on Marse Bob's plantation in de Double Grade Quarters. My pappy's name was Sam Fantroy Toombs an' my mammy was Ida-Belle Toombs. In de slabery times I was too young to work in de fiel's, so my job was to hunt an' fish an' feed de stock in de evenin'. My pappy was a preacher an' Marse

Bob learnt him to read and write, an' would let him go f'um plantation to plantation on de Sabbath Day a-preachin' de gospel. He was Marse Bob's carriage driver.

"Yas'm, white folks, Marse Bob was a good provider, too. Us niggers et at home on Sundays, an' us had fried chicken, pot pies, bacon, beef, pork, an' hot coffee. On de udder days, our meals was fixed for us so dat de time us got for res' could be spent dat way. On Sadday us stopped work at noon an' would come wid our vessels to git flour, sugar, lard an' udder supplies. My mammy's pots an' pans was so bright dat dey looked like silver, an' she was one of de bes' cooks in de lan'. She useta cook fine milk yeast bread an' cracklin' bread. All us slaves on Marse Bob's place was cared for lak de white folks. We had de white folks doctor to treat us when we was sick. We had good clothes, good food an' we was treated fair. Dere warn't no mean peoples on our plantation.

"White lady, I 'members Marse Bob's smokehouse bes' of all. It had ever'thing in it f'um 'possum to deer; an' de wine cellar! Don't say nothin'! Dat was de place I longed to roam. But Marse Bob, he drink too much. Dat was his only fault. He hit de bottle too hard. I couldn't understand it neither, caze he lef' off smokin' in later years when he thought it warn't good for him; but he keppa drinkin'!

"I been ma'ied twice, Mistis. De fus' time to Ida Walker. She died at childbirth; de little fella died too. Den I ma'ied Alice James, an' she's been gone nigh on to twenty year now. My pappy, Rev. Sam Fantroy ma'ied me both times.

"Atter de S'render, nary a slave lef' Marse Bob. He gib eve'y nigger over twenty-one a mule, some lan' an' a house to start off wid. Yassum, Mistis, I kin read an' write; my pappy learnt me how. I'm eighty-six year' old now an' still goin' strong, ceptin' 'bout six years ago I had a stroke. But I come out all right. I lives here wid my sister an' she's good to me. De only thing lef' for me to do is to wish dat when I cross dat ribber I can slip back to de ole place to see some of my frien's."