

HENRY H. BUTTLER, 87, venerable graduate of Washburn College, Topeka, Kansas, and ex-school teacher, was born a slave to Mr. George Sullivan on his 300 acre plantation in Farquier Co., Virginia. Henry and a number of other slaves were transported to Arkansas in 1863, and Henry escaped and joined the Union Army. He now lives at 1308 E. Bessie St., Fort Worth, Texas.

must realize that there were no authentic records made of slave births. I estimate my age on the work I was doing at the commencement of the Civil War and the fact that I was large enough to be accepted as a soldier in the Union Army, in the year of 1864.

"I was born on the plantation of George Sullivan, in Farquier Co., Virginia. The plantation was situated in the valley at the base of Bull Mountain, and presented a beautiful picture. The plantation consisted of about 30 acres, with about 30 slaves, though this number varied and sometimes reached 50. Mr. Sullivan owned my mother and her children, but my father was owned by Mr. John Rector, whose place was adjacent to ours.

"The slave quarters consisted of a group of one-room log cabins, with no flooring, and very crude furnishings. There were bunks and benches and a table and the fireplace provided the means for cooking and heating.

"The food was wholesome and of sufficient quantity. In that period about all the food was produced and processed on the plantation, which eliminated any reason for failure to provide ample food. The meat[Pg 180] was home cured and the ham and bacon had a superior flavor.

"On the Sullivan place there existed consideration for human feelings but on the Rector place neither the master nor the overseer seemed to understand that slaves were human beings. One old slave called Jim, on the Rector place, disobeyed some rule and early one morning they ordered him to strip. They tied him to the whipping post and from morning until noon, at intervals, the lash was applied to his back. I, myself, saw and heard many of the lashes and his cries for mercy.

"One morning a number of slaves were ordered to lay a fence row on the Rector place. The overseer said, 'This row must be laid to the Branch and left in time to roll those logs out in the back woods.' It was sundown when we laid the last rail but the overseer put us to rolling logs without any supper and it was eleven when we completed the task. Old Pete, the ox driver, became so exhausted that he fell asleep without unyoking the oxen. For that, he was given 100 lashes.

"The slaves were allowed to marry but were compelled to first obtain permission from the master. The main factor involved in securing the master's consent was his desire to rear negroes with perfect physiques. On neither plantation was there any thought or compassion when a sale or trade was in question. I have seen the separation of husband and wife, child and mother, and the extreme grief of those involved, and the lash administered to a grieving slave for neglecting their work. All this made the marriages a farce.

"In 1863 Mr. Sullivan transported about 40 of us slaves to Arkansas, locating us on a farm near Pine Bluff, so we would not be taken by the Federal soldiers. The general faithfulness of the slave was noticeable then, as they had a chance to desert and go to free states. But I think I was the only one [Pg 181] who deserted Mr. Sullivan. I went to Federal Headquarters at Fort Smith, Arkansas, and was received into the army. We campaigned in Arkansas and nearby territory. The major battle I fought in was that of Pine Bluff, which lasted one day and part of one night.

"After I was mustered out of the army, I set out to get an education and entered a grade school at Pine Bluff. I worked after school at any job I could secure and managed to enter Washburn College, in Topeka, Kansas. After I graduated I followed steam engineering for four years, but later I went to Fort Worth and spent 22 years in educational work among my people. I exerted my best efforts to advance my race.

"I married Lucia Brown in 1880 and we had three children, all of whom are dead. There is just my wife and me left of the family, and we have a \$75.00 per month Union soldier's pension