

Simp Campbell

SIMP CAMPBELL was born January 1860, in Harrison County, Texas, He belonged to W.L. Sloan and stayed with him until 1883, when Simp married and moved to Marshall. He and his wife live in Gregg Addition, Marshall, Texas, and Simp works as porter for a loan company.

"My name is Simpson Campbell, but everybody, white and black, calls me Simp. I's born right here in Harrison County, on Bill Sloan's place, nine miles northwest of Marshall. I got in on the last five years of slavery.

"Pappy was Lewis Campbell, and he was sold by the Florida Campbells to Marse Sloan and fotched to Texas, but he allus kep' the Campbell name. Mammy was Mariah and the Sloans brung her out of South Carolina. She raised a passel of chillen. Besides me there was Flint, Albert and Clinton of the boys, and— let me count— Dinah, Clandy, Mary, Lula, Liza, Hannah, Matilda and Millie of the girls.

"The Sloans lived in a big house, but it wasn't no shanty. They was fixed 'bout as good as anybody in the county and driv as good hosses and rigs as anybody. They wasn't a mean streak in the whole Sloan family.

"The slave quarters sot in rows right down in the field from the big house. They had beds made to the wall, and all the cookin' was on the fireplace. We raised all our meat and corn and garden truck right there on the place and Marse Sloan brung wheat and other rations from Shreveport. The nigger women spinned all the cloth and pappy made shoes by hand, when they kilt a beef. The beef was dried and jetted and hung in the smokehouse.

"Marse's place civered a thousand acres and he had over a hunderd slaves, with a overseer, Johnson, and a nigger driver. Us niggers was treated well but the overseer had order to whip us for fightin'. If the[Pg 192] nigger driver hit too many licks, the overseer sold him off the place.

"We worked from four till six and done a task after that, and sot round and talked till nine and then had to go to bed. On Saturday night you'd hear them fiddles and banjoes playin' and the niggers singin'. All them music gadgets was homemade. The banjoes was made of round pieces of wood, civered with sheepskin and strung with catgut strings.

"They wasn't no school but Marse Bill larnt some his niggers readin' and writin' so we could use them bookin' cotton in the field and sich like. They was a church on the Sloan place and white preachers done most the 'xhorting. Mammy allus say the cullud preachers had to preach what they's told— obey you master and missus.

"I seed Yankee sojers and wagons comin' home from Mansfield. Marse Tom sot us free right after surrender, but my folks stayed on with him till he died, in 1906. I lef when I's twenty-three and marries and made a livin' from public work in Marshall all my life. I worked as day laborer and raised two boys and two girls and the boys is farmin' right here in the county and doin' well.

"When I's eighteen they got up a 'mendment to the Constitution and got out a "People's Party Ticket." It was a Democratic ticket and control by Southerners. They told us niggers if we'd vote that ticket we'd be rec'nized as white folks, but I didn't 'lieve a word of it. Old Man Sloan told all his niggers that and they all voted that ticket but two—that was Charley Tang and Simp Campbell.

"I 'lieve the young race of our people is progressin' fine. If they had priv'lege to use they educations, they'd make more progress, but the color line holds them back. [Pg 193]