

**REMINISCENCES OF THE LATE LON SLAUGHTER
AS TOLD TO MRS. E. D. WALL,
SEPTEMBER 3, 1920**

I WAS BORN IN MACON, now Bullocks County, Alabama. My parents were Henry Pendleton Slaughter and Prudence Bickerstaff. On September 26, 1859, my father, who had already purchased a section and a half land in Phillips County, started from Macon on the long overland journey to the new home site in Arkansas. With him came his family, and a number of relatives and friends—about 200 persons in all—white and black, old and young.

Our family consisted of father, mother, and their six sons, Henry, George, Arthur, Will, Jim and Lon. Then there came my sister, Sarah, and her husband, E. L. Black; my brother-in-law, A. A. Bryant and family; my uncle, Bob Bickerstaff and family, and the Longs, who were not related to us.

Father brought 50 odd negro slaves. The able-bodied negroes walked all the way but the babies and aged were loaded in the wagons along with our household stuff and food for the journey. These wagons were pulled by mules and oxen. There were several buggies and my mother's carriage, which made 36 vehicles in all.

We crossed the Alabama River at Montgomery, passed through Tuscaloosa, then the capital of Alabama, stopped at Oxford, Mississippi, and I remember that we were held up two days at Coldwater by a snow storm. Winter came early in November that year and we had to have the oxen shod, because their hoofs split so badly on the frozen ground. My mother rode with a lighted lantern under the laprobe.

We shot ducks and small game all along the road for fresh meat and we set up tents to sleep in after the weather got cold. I remember we met a party of movers in the Mississippi bottoms just across the river from Helena headed southeast. We asked them where they were going and they replied, "Back to God's country, back to Alabama, and if you folks are going to Arkansas you'll find it the damned-est Saw you ever saw in your life."

However, we kept on our way and on December 24 we

reached the Mississippi River at Helena. We were all day getting the party ferried across the water to the Arkansas side.

On December 27, 1859, we halted in the woods one mile north of Aubrey, at the place now called Seelig. We cut every foot of the road from Spring Creek to Seelig, a distance of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

We set up tents to live in while we erected our home house, barns and cribs and cleared land to make a crop, come spring.

The boards for ceilings and floors we cut with a whip-saw. The sawmill on the Cypress Creek operated by Judge Thomas Pierce was not so far away as miles go, but the so-called roads were rivers of mud and every mule we had could not pull a load of lumber over them. We were so busy, it seemed only a little time till the war was on us. My brothers, Henry, George, Arthur and Will enlisted right off in the 3rd Arkansas Cavalry. Times were hard and my father gave help to everybody far and near. He even sent a load of corn to some poor people away over on Indian Bay.

Stonewall Anderson, so long president of Hendrix College and a noted Methodist preacher, was born in a log cabin on my father's place. My father and mother moved Mrs. Anderson there in order to look after her and her small children while her husband, Captain Rufus Anderson, was in the army.

In 1863 my mother sent me to Marianna to buy some wool from Mrs. Green whose house stood in what is now Bob Jarrett's garden (at this date F. N. Burke's garden). I was riding a colt I had raised myself and I considered him a very valuable animal. Helena was occupied by Federal troops at this time and scouting and foraging parties were always popping up around the country. I fancied every Yankee in Eastern Arkansas coveted my pony so I kept a sharp lookout for the enemy. After all I was nearly surprised. Just as I was starting my errand to Mrs. Green, I spied a party of Yankee troopers coming over the hill where the Presbyterian Church now stands. I didn't tarry. I tore out down the lane to Calvin's Hill, then out through

the woods for home. I don't remember whether we ever got that wool or not.

1864 was hard for us. The Yankees had raided us so often there was very little of anything left. In the spring a Yankee gunboat brought a barge up the L'Anguille and tied up at Greasy Point. Cotton was slipped through the woods at night and traded at the rate of \$1.50 per pound for shoes, salt, and quinine. I remember my father paid \$150.00 in gold for a barrel of salt.

Yes, a good bit of a skirmish took place in what is now Lee County, about a half-mile south of LaGrange on the Watson place, between 200 Yanks and a handful of Johnny Rebs. No one was killed and no one was injured too seriously to get away.

Mike Kelly's horse got out of control and plunged into a dozen or so Yanks who whacked and beat Mike with their sabers. He was considerably bruised but lived many a day to brag how he charged and dispersed single handed, a whole "company" of blue coats. It grew to be a "regiment" before he died—Mike was an Irishman.

The reconstruction days were worse by far than war times. The Ku Klux was all that saved us from being ground into dust. Yes, I could tell you a great deal about the activities of the Ku Klux in Phillips County. A few living now can recall the Root and Cameron debate scheduled to come off in Helena one Fourth of July shortly after the war. Root was the Republican speaker for that occasion but some how or other he just didn't speak. Something happened and I've good reason to believe the Ku Klux had something to do with it.

We had six Klans in Phillips County: Spring Creek, E. L. Black, leader; North Creek, Captain Bill Weatherly, leader; Hickory Ridge (Marvell), Jesse Clopton, leader; Helena, Jesse Clopton and General Govan, leaders; Marianna, Dr. Gray, leader. Another Klan near Spring Creek, Colonel Paul Anderson, leader.

Our neighbors at Spring Creek in those early days were the Shackelfords, Billy Brown, Perkins Brown, Jack, Sam and Billy Wilkes, Ham and Billy Cotter, the Willerfords, McNultys, Bonners, Walthals and Kings.