

Jane came over from the doorway, to talk to the handsome stranger. She wanted to meet the young man. Jane joined the conversation before Sarah could answer his question.

"Mister Phillan. Your search for gold could be very dangerous, when people are fighting to end slavery."

Philan stood as Jane walked over to the bench. He liked the look of the tall Negro woman. He was pleased to see Jane and Sarah were good friends.

"I fear colored people will only be free chose their white master. They will not be free to live as white people. Colored people will always have problems."

Sarah was not surprized by his strong words, and she was pleased with his manners. She thought his good manners would be a good influence on the boys. She wanted to introduce him to Jane before discussing a job on the farm.

"Jane, this is Philan Willams. He worked for my cousin on his farm. He was a friend of the Malone family, when they lived with us on the farm."

Jane smiled at the young man and thought about his words on being free to serve white people.

"People say, they are fighting to free the colored slaves. I hope this is true and we will go free."

Philan smiled at her comments. He did not think the war was about slavery. Philan felt this fighting was about power and control over white people. He knew the war was not about freedom for colored people. Philan believed the white people in one area wanted to control white people of another area. The fighting started with white people, in the smaller and weaker area, wanting to separate from the stronger group.

"I hope your words are true and slaves become free."

Sarah knew Philan was a friend of the Malone family, who lived on their farm. She remembered he was a man with strong feelings about certain items. Sarah felt Philan did not like white people, but she knew he was a good man and good worker.

"Philan, I would like you to work with us on our farm until the end of the fighting."

"We need a strong hard working man around here. The farm needs a man to help and teach the boys."

Philan thought about working on the farm. He knew Sarah would be fair with the work. Philan thought about being able to choose his master. He thought about working for a woman.

"If I work for you, where will I sleep? How will I be paid for my work? Will the boys be able to help me?"

Sarah felt he understood their needs with the farm. She needed to make a deal to pay him for his work. She wanted to be very fair with him and her grandmother.

"Philan, this farm belongs to my grandmother. She got the farm when my grandfather died. It has been in the family for a long time. We can only pay you from the money we earn from the crops. My grandmother should get a share for her land."

Philan interrupted Sarah. He wanted to know how the old woman was doing. Philan knew Phoebe as a small boy.

"Excuse me, Miss Sarah, but how is Mrs. Phoebe doing?"

Sarah was pleased Philan remembered her grandmother with some interest in her well being. Sarah could tell by the mad look on her face that Jane did not like his interruption.

"She is not doing well. She is very tired and stays in the bed for most of the day. Jane helps me. We try to move her around as much as we can."

"My grandmother and my uncles worked the farm for many years. My uncles died years ago. I been helping my grandmother with the farm. We have no money. Before the fighting, we were getting a little money from the family and the church, but now we are not getting any money. We need our crops to take care of my children."

"We can share the money from the crops. You can stay here and live with us as part of our family. At the end of the harvest, we will split the money between the three of us. Grandmother will get a share for her farm. You and I will get a share for doing the work."

"I will split my share with Jane for helping me do my part of the work."

Philan looked at Sarah and turned toward Jane. It was a fair offer. He knew the boys would be able to help with some of the farm work.

Philan needed the work and agreed to share the money from the crops. He would stay in the shed and live with the boys on the small farm.

Many of the Negro slaves, as the fighting turned against the southern forces, constructed fortifications in Petersburg and earthworks near Richmond. The rebel troops abandoned the capital city of Richmond. Southern forces in Petersburg were under siege by the northern forces led by General Grant. The city of Atlanta was burned by the union troops led by Sherman with the northern forces. Most white people in the area felt the southern forces were losing the War.

Union troops arrived in the town of Lawrenceville during the autumn months of 1864. They granted freedom to the Negro slaves and permission to leave the farms. Many of the slaves continued to live on the plantations. Northern troops raided local farms and took most of the food as the spoils. Slaves, who fortified Petersburg and Richmond, returned to the fields and continued to live on the fields.

BATTLE NEVER ENDS

The weakened rebel troops in Virginia, led by General Lee, surrendered to the strong union troops, led by General Grant, at Appomattox in April 1865. Rebel troops in North Carolina, led by General Johnston, surrendered to the union troops, led by General Sherman. Southern supporters assassinated Lincoln after his Inauguration for a second term as the leader of the northern forces. The civil war between the states ended with the destruction of the southern gentry.

The fighting in the Civil War decimated Brunswick County with many of the large farms in ruins. Homeless white people wandered aimlessly throughout the southside area. A sad life of poverty was typical for many of the white people living in the area. Brunswick County was among the poorest communities in Virginia. Local conditions forced poor widowed women with children to seek work to care for their families.

The emancipation of slaves changed the health, religious beliefs and social order of southern white communities. Most white people were able to accept the thought of slavery being wrong, but they denied the justice of emancipation for slaves living in the south. There was bitterness toward Negroes and other colored people, in most southern white communities, due to the total defeat of the southern Confederacy.

The Union government established the Freeman Bureau with the end of the War, to provide relief for refugees and former slaves. The agency provided food and clothing to hungry poor people in the area. The Agency also took over land abandoned by owners serving in the Confederacy.

Farm land, seized by the occupying Union troops, could be distributed in tracts of forty acres to some refugees and any former slaves on a three years rental basis. However, former rebel soldiers from the southern Confederacy were pardoned by the new President and permitted to recover their property.

Consequently, very little farm land became available for the former slaves. Colored people worked to secure some land as unscrupulous carpetbaggers came into the area seeking farm land. A few of the landowners hired some former slaves to be sharecroppers or tenant farmers. These tenant farmers worked the fields with their families and shared their proceeds from the crop sales with the large landowners.

Most of the large white landowners took unfair advantage of the former slaves. A typical arrangement required the new tenant farmers and their families to work in the fields for a third of the crop proceeds, after deducting the total cost of seeds and fertilizers. The landowners received two-thirds of the farm proceeds in return for use of the soil and some farm tools. Some landowners provided credit to the tenants to buy items needed to support his family and work the fields.

Phoebe died in November of 1865 leaving Sarah and Philan to share the work on the farm and support the family. Phoebe recorded a Last Will in 1859. The final Will transferred all of her property to Sarah as her one grandchild. The property included her land from her 1837 court settlement on the other side of the county. The Will did not include the family farm with its two hundred acres, from her husband's estate.

Large land owners and the local authorities, as a result of the war damage, challenged the land ownership of most poor farmers in the area. There were some attempts, by the greedy white people, to claim land abandoned for the rebel cause. A few local politicians were able to obtain the land from naive farmers by improper County Court actions. The Freeman Bureau did not acquire any land for former slaves in the area.

Sarah went to the County Courthouse in December of 1865, to settle her grandmother's estate and record the family farm in her name. The County Clerk at the courthouse transferred the seventy-six acre tract to Sarah. The land was awarded to her grandmother in a 1837 settlement by the Court.

The family farm, started by Daniel and Mary in 1786, was recorded in the estate of Richard Harrison, by a County Court after his death in 1813. There was no clear owner, after the death of his wife, Phoebe, in 1865. Some local white farmers questioned Sarah's claim of land ownership. The County Clerk agreed to review the ownership of the Harrison family farm.

There was no word on Sarah's claim for the farm by March of 1866 from the County Clerk at the Courthouse. It was time for planting some cotton and tobacco crops. Sarah decided to visit the Clerk with her claim for the family farm. The boys got the wagon ready for her trip to town. Sarah loaded three of her children into the wagon for the trip to Lawrenceville.

The War altered the role and status of most women in the southern region. The women were more independent with energy and more intelligent compared to most men. Women were suing for divorce, going to work and speaking out in public. There was an increased individuality mood, among the more assertive women, which threatened some traditional values of the men.

Sarah drove into Lawrenceville and stopped the old wagon in the town square at the Courthouse. She tied the rope from her mule to a pole. Sarah picked the children out of the old wagon and walked into the Courthouse.

Lawrenceville was a small town in 1866 with a few houses scattered along the bottom of a hill. There were some stores and a few mills near the top of the hill. The Courthouse was at the center of the town and the County Court was the source of local authority and power among the white people living in the area. Union troops, unlike most other southern counties, did not perform the County Clerk duties in Brunswick County.

The County Clerk greeted Sarah and her children as they entered the lobby of the building.

"Good morning Miss Sarah, what can I do for you."

Sarah smiled at the short man and looked around the room in search of a place for the children to wait. Sarah pointed the children toward the corner of the room.

"I am here to get my farm recorded in my name."

The directness of Sarah's comment surprised the Clerk as he offered a chair next to a table. He knew she was there to claim the Richard Harrison farm.

"Miss Sarah, I told you in December that I can not put the farm in your name. I need to search my records and check to see who has rights to the farm."

"I know the farm belongs to the Harrison family."

"I can not simply give it to you because you claim it belongs to you. I need to check the County records."

Sarah knew the old stubborn Clerk resisted her ownership claim and he was not willing to let the farm go to Sarah.

"Sir, I know my grandfather owned the family farm and his father purchased the land. My grandparents are dead and there are no other relatives. All my uncles and aunts are dead with no living children. There are no other relatives, but me. The land is my property."

The Clerk suspected Sarah was right, but he wanted to be sure of her farm ownership. He was not willing to accept her claim of inheritance from the Harrison family.

"It has been in the Harrison name for a long time and the County must do what is right for everyone."

"You say everyone is dead with you as the only heir to the estate, but I also know some people in the Harrison family. They are good people and the farm may be their property. I need to check my records and talk to some people about the records."

Sarah was losing her patience with the man. She was not lose about her temper in front of her children.

"The farm is my property. My grandmother told me the farm would become my property after she died. I know it and you know it."

"You can check your records and you can talk to other families, but you will not find a single person with a good claim to my farm. Good day!"

Sarah gathered her small children and quickly walked out of the Courthouse. The Clerk turned and slowly looked across the lobby at his assistant working at a desk.

"Look at her with those colored children. The old farm belonged to white people for over a hundred years."

"She wants to give it to her colored children. It will never happen in this county. I need to stop her."

Sarah walked away from the Courthouse and toward the old wagon with her children. She placed her children in the back of the wagon. Sarah considered her next move to get the farm recorded in her name. She knew the family would need help to keep the Harrison farm. She decided to find a lawyer and get help from the County Court. She told her children to stay in the wagon. Sarah warmly wrapped them in a woolen blanket for the cool weather.

Sarah walked across the square to the law office. Sarah hoped to find a lawyer. Sarah wondered if any lawyer in town would help her. The War hardened many of the white men against women and people of color. The town was under the control of union soldiers and most colored people were afraid of causing trouble with the white people.

Sarah walked into the office building for lawyers. In a room near the front entrance of the building, an old tall man was standing near the window. Sarah entered the room.

The old man walked over to her with a smile. He looked around to see if anyone followed her into the his office.

"Good morning, I hope you are doing well. May I be of some service to you on this cool windy day?"

Sarah was troubled by his quick smile, but she got a warm feeling from the respect shown in his refined manners. Sarah did not trust his smile, but she knew he was friendly and she felt he was probably harmless.

"Good day sir, my name is Sarah Jane Harrison."

"I live about fifteen miles outside of town on a small tobacco farm. It belonged to my grandfather."

The old man smiled. He looked out through the window at her children sitting in the wagon. He turned and offered his hand to Sarah.

"I know your name, Miss Sarah. I knew your grandmother, when she worked the farm. I also knew your mother."

"You come from a good family. How are the children?"

Sarah was surprised by his comments. She did not recall the old man ever visiting her grandmother on the farm. Sarah wondered how the old man knew her mother.

"Please forgive me, but I do not know you. I believe we never met. How did my grandmother know you?"

"Were you a friend? How did you know my mother?"

The old man smiled at Sarah and pointed to the seat next to a large wooden desk. The room was relatively large with a desk in each corner and some old pictures on the wall. There were papers on each desk. The wooden furniture was dusty and the room smelled like a tobacco barn. Sarah sat in the chair and watched as the old man moved toward another chair.

The old man went around the desk, as Sarah slowly waited for answers to her questions. He sat across from Sarah as he looked into her blue eyes with a serious expression.

"Oh, forgive me. My name is William Kelly. I was the farm Commissioner for your District during the War."

"I met your grandmother when she needed a lawyer."

Sarah knew her grandmother went to Court with the family because of her claim on land owned by a relative. Sarah knew her grandmother also went to Court seeking child support from the County. Sarah heard Phoebe went to Court to settle their estate, when her grandfather died.

"My grandmother did not tell me about you."

Bill Kelly sat across from Sarah and began looking in his desk for a pipe. He found it, as expected, in the desk with his tobacco.

"Miss Sarah, there was nothing to tell you. She was my client and I was her lawyer. I kept her trust and held her words in confidence. It was my job and my duty as her lawyer. I was saddened to hear about her death."

"Phoebe was a good woman, who had more sorrow than most women. Miss Sarah, where are your children?"

Sarah stood and looked out the open window. She started walking to the door. She wanted to get the children.

"They are outside in the wagon. Not all of them came with me. Some are at home on the farm."

Kelly stood and moved toward Sarah. He opened the large door to his office and smiled as he reached for Sarah's hand.

"Go get them and bring them into my office. I would like to meet them. I want to know their names."

Kelly watched as Sarah went outside and got the children out of the wagon. She brought the children into the building and introduced each child to the lawyer. Kelly talked to the children and played games, while Sarah described her problems with the County Clerk. He listened as she told the sad story of family members dying at young ages.

Sarah talked about Phoebe, her grandmother, working with her children on the farm for fifty years. She recalled a few of her cousins visiting the farm, but none claimed it.

Kelly remembered Phoebe telling him about poor Sarah and her babies. He knew there would be problems with her farm.

"Miss Sarah, you do have a big problem. The land may be your birth right, but these are hard and uncertain times for all people. Your farm is not a small matter for some people in this town. There are bad feelings about colored people. It may take time to get the land as your legal right."

Sarah did not understand the need for her to wait to get the family farm. It was her birth right to the land owned by her grandfather and grandmother.

"Why do we need to wait. My family lived and worked on the farm for almost a hundred years. It belongs to me and my children. I am not going to let people take it from me without a fight."

Kelly turned toward the three brown children sitting and playing on the wooden floor. Kelly looked at the young white woman, who was their angry mother. He knew she would need to fight for her rights as the heir to the estate. Kelly wanted young Sarah to understand some battles never end for those in power, with greed, seeking revenge against other people.

Kelly thought of the town people being against colored people getting land from white people.

"Miss Sarah, as I said these are hard times. Many good people lost their farms and everything because of the war. They are angry and they have powerful friends who want to help them. A woman of your means does not need enemies in powerful positions. You need a friend, who can help you get the farm and the land in your name."

Sarah looked away from the old man. She did not know if she

could believe the old man. Sarah thought of his kindness shown towards her children. She felt he was good and honest.

"Mister Kelly, why would you want to help me?"

Kelly smiled at Sarah and reached for her hand. He held her hand in his two hands like a small delicate flower.

"Miss Sarah, I am a man of the Law. I know the people suffering in these hard times. They and I fought a war for what we though was our right as free people."

"We were wrong. Some of us knew in our hearts, we were wrong to hold people as property."

Sarah understood his comment on slavery or war being the cause of trouble for many white people in the area. She felt her farm and land was not part of the troubles.

"What does my farm have to do with their troubles?"

Kelly looked at the mulatto children and turned to Sarah with a small smile. He knew she was right.

"Miss Sarah, your family always knew it was wrong and your grandparents were not afraid to say it. My father told me about your grandfather being against slavery."

"I know your family supported our troops in the war."

"The War is over and we need to work with the Law to get things in the proper order. You will need to stay on your farm and work it as your property."

Sarah did not want to wait for the land rights. She was angry about people trying to take the farm from her family.

"The farm is my property. I have lived and worked on it for my entire life. How can people say the farm is not my property? Who else can claim it?"

Kelly looked at Sarah. He thought of Phoebe being her grandmother. Kelly wanted to help her get the farm.

"Any white man with Harrison as his name, who can prove his blood is the same as your grandfather, can claim the farm. The Court could legally give the farm to him as his birth right."

Sarah did not accept the idea of being a white man would make a

difference to the Court. She knew any woman could own property just like a man.

"Why would any man get the farm instead of me?"

Kelly decided Sarah needed to understand the feelings of the local white people about her and the Harrison farm.

"The farm was owned by a white man who died fifty years ago with a white wife and three white children. Some people in this town think the Harrison farm should stay with white people."

"Your mother was born after your grandfather died and there are people who say the colored hired worker was the father of your mother."

Sarah considered the thought of her grandmother sleeping with another man, while her dying husband rested on their bed in the cabin. Sarah felt it was shocking.

"How can people say this about my grandmother?"

Kelly let go of her hand as he started to see some water in her eyes. He needed to finish with the whole story.

"Some of those same people say your father was another colored man who worked on your farm with your mother and her brothers. They believe you must be a colored woman with a colored father and colored grandfathers."

Sarah wiped her eyes so the small children would not see the tears. She was angry about what people were saying.

"I guess these white people must think I like black men because I am a colored woman. White men could never imagine that a white woman might want to judge men more by the color of their skin. A woman may consider more than how they look or what other people think."

Kelly stood and offered to help Sarah stand, but she did not accept his gesture. Kelly looked at the mulatto children and thought of the colored man living with Sarah.

"The color of your skin does not matter to me in this situation. The Law will find you are the only living grandchild of Richard and Phoebe Harrison. The farm and the land belong to you. I will work with the Court and get the land in your name as your birth right."

Sarah stood and started to gather her children for their trip back to the farm. She and the children moved toward the door. Sarah thought of paying the lawyer for his work.

"How much money will it cost me to get your help?"

Kelly smiled at Sarah and the children. He knew she was angry about his crude comments. Kelly knew Sarah felt better at getting some help. He thought of Sarah and her children of color living on the family farm.

"It will not cost anything to you, Miss Sarah. I will do it as a favor to an old friend and as a gift to a new friend. Take care of yourself. I will see you after I see the Court. Good-bye."

Kelly filed a claim and used Phoebe's Will with a record of her marriage to Richard as proof of Sarah's claim.

Sarah became the owner of the family farm in 1868. Farm land, acquired by her great grandparents in 1784, was finally her property. Sarah wanted her family farm combined with the tract of land inherited from her grandmother. The two tracts were separated by six miles. Sarah exchanged the smaller for a tract, owned by Emma Green, located next to her farm.

During her three year struggle to survive and gain title to the Harrison Farm, Sarah endured harsh and cruel treatment by a few of the local white citizens. There was considerable resentment toward Sarah and her mulatto children. Sarah went to town on rare occasions. Philan accompanied her on some of the trips town with her children. Most of the town people in the area did not care about Sarah and her racially mixed farm from Ante on the southside of the county.

SOUTHSIDE LIVING

After the war between the states, white people living in the southern states resented the tough political and economic ramifications of the Reconstruction Act, which was imposed by the Union government of the victorious northern states. Most northern leaders expected Negro and other colored citizens to become an unintimidated work force. Former Negro slaves were free to pursue market wages and better living conditions.

The Freeman Bureau established a free school for colored children of Brunswick County in 1868. They located the black school in the

upstairs of a tannery in the town. Many of the colored children attended the state school to learn the basic skills for reading and writing. A white married couple, from the State of Maine, taught the children at the school. A few of the colored children learnt to read and write well beyond the normal six grade level.

Sarah sent her sons, Ben and Sam, to the free school for the term, during the autumn and winter months. She supported education for the boys with money borrowed from the merchants in town. Sarah used her land for collateral. The money paid by the parents and students covered school supplies and other expenses for the teachers.

The Freeman Bureau discontinued the school in 1870, when the state government authorized public schools. There was no support in the white communities for building or funding free education for colored children. Consequently, black churches started public schools for the colored children. Eventually, the local governments established separate public schools for colored children with money from the state government.

Sarah continued to support education for her sons, after the closing of the Freeman schools, by sending them to a free school at the Poplar Mount Baptist Church. Rich attended the public school for colored children. Sallie, like most of the farm girls, did not attend any school. Consequently, she was not able to learn basic reading and writing.

Sarah walked out of the cabin, at the end of a long day, and sat on the tall bench in the front yard. She looked over as Philan joined her on the bench holding a hot cup of coffee in his hand. Sarah suspected there was something on his mind regarding the former slaves and their families.

"Philan, I would like to ask a question, but you need not answer it. I am curious about your feelings toward white people. How do you feel about white people?"

Philan turned toward Sarah and looked into her deep blue eyes with a smile. Philan thought of his hard feelings towards most white people and not all white people.

"Your skin is white and I like you. I like all of your mulatto children. My parents were mulatto or mixed with some of their people being white."

"Some of your brown children have white skin."

"I do not hate white people. Many white people, like you

and your grandmother, were good to my people and other colored people. White people are also my people."

"We are all people of color in the eyes of God."

"I do not like most white people for what they did and continue to do to me and other people of color. Negro people and Native people suffered poorly."

Sarah looked at Philan and thought of his harsh words, but she wanted to know more about his feelings.

"Philan, I know you do not hate people by the way you treat and talk to the children. I know you to be a good man with a good heart. I want to know your feelings toward other white people in general."

Philan knew Sarah wanted to make the point on caring for everyone. Philan slowly looked away as he recalled the story of African slaves. He knew Sarah wanted to hear the truth.

Sarah sat quietly, waiting for an answer from Philan, as he looked around the old log cabin.

Philan decided to share his feelings with Sarah. He was not certain about his feelings, but Philan wanted some people to understand his feelings as a colored man.

"Negro people lived in another place called Africa for thousands of years without white people. They were peaceful and friendly people living in small villages with their families. Native people hunted and planted their crops on the land for thousands of years without white people. They were peaceful and friendly people living in small villages with their families."

"White people destroyed the Native people and enslaved the Negro people because of their greed and hate toward people of color. Colored people live with black, white, brown and red skin, but white people can only accept other people with white skin."

Sarah felt the comments and the tone of his voice showed his strong feelings. Sarah expected he learned black history from Native and Negro people. She heard many Native people attacked and killed other Native people and colored people did the same fighting and killing in Africa. She knew most people of color believed differently about these things.

"I believe you do not care for white people, like I do not care for some types of food. Sometimes I eat some food that I would prefer not to eat. I simply do not care for it because of its taste. I rather not try it."

"I wanted to know how you felt about white people as plain folks. I know you like the children and you care about me. There are white people in my family."

"How do you feel about white people, who you do not know? "Do you think most white people are evil?"

Philan felt good people were capable of doing bad things and bad people were capable of doing good. He believed every person makes choices in their life between being good or bad, but some things were outside their control and power.

"Native and Negro people are my family, but so are white people. I care for people of color because we suffer under the control of white people."

"Some of the colored people, may be free, but they will not be free to live in peace. They will only be free to do what white people want or permit them to do in life."

"What is your true color for white and colored people?"

Sarah considered the question of color and thought about his harsh comments. She understood his callous feelings, but she felt there was some good in all people.

"Groups of people are not good or bad. Any person can do good or bad things to others. They may think the bad things are really good things. Many white people, who owned Negro slaves, believed they were good to their slaves. They gave food to eat, clothes to wear, and a bed for rest. They cared for their slaves."

"I am sure most of these white people felt they were good people. They were doing the right things."

Philan felt Sarah could not understand the problems with being a Negro slave in white America.

"I am sure some of the slaves felt their white owners were good. The truth is white people were not good to the slaves or the native people. Some white people were cruel and brutal to most colored people of color. The white people did not care about other people."

"They took what they wanted by force and kept it."

Sarah understood his deep and hard feelings toward white people. Sarah knew Philan was not angry, but his feeling was very strong. Sarah thought of her family.

"This land was taken from the Native people. Should we give it back, when my great grandfather paid money for the land and built a farm?"

"My great grandfather owned one slave from Africa. We did not help his family get back to Africa."

Philan smiled, he felt Sarah was too white and too young to truly understand these matters. But Philan was willing to share his feeling with Sarah. He expected her children would be treated as colored people by white people.

"Most white people will always be unfair to black people and people of color. What is your color?"

Sarah thought about the question of color. She felt her parents were white people with a white child. Sarah knew the white men wanted her to be colored with a mulatto mother.

"The color of my skin is dark in the summer and light in the winter. There are no black or white people in my family, we are colored people."

Philan knew their skin color was more important, to most people, than their physical appearance.

"Colored people will no longer be slaves. We can not fix the past. The chains have been removed, but we are not free. The white man will not accept colored people in their world as their equal."

"I am a person of color in a world owned and ruled by white people. My skin color is brown, but my soul is black. I know we are divided between white people and black people. There is no room for people with color."

"When the farmers started to free their slaves, they freed mostly the colored slaves. The colored slaves with white blood were freed, because they were related to the white families. The feelings have not changed between white and black people."

"People with mixed blood, like the children, are caught in a world of hate. Their existence, as colored people, is proof of the race mixing by white people. Some white people see colored people as the seeds of destruction for the white race. Colored people accept mulatto children into their families. Most white people would never accept colored people into their family."

Sarah felt Philan was wrong about black and white people not being able to live together. She knew people could learn to live together with love and mutual respect. Sarah saw her children growing and learning to live together as a family on the southside of the county. Sarah stood and started walking back into the cabin.

Sarah was confident and proud of her four boys, who were growing into young men. She was recovering from the death of her grandmother. Sarah and Jane continued to visit with each other at their homes. The women worked together. Jane moved into a house working as a housekeeper for white families.

The older boys took on more responsibility with the farm as the time past. Philan continued working in the field, but he knew the boys were growing into young men. Philan trained the older boys to be self-reliant farmers. He watched as the younger two, Sam and Rich, learned from their older brothers.

Sarah and Sallie were removing the dry clothing from the ropes hanging between large trees in the yard. Sarah watched as Philan entered into the yard. She felt Philan was getting restless and thinking about leaving the area. Sarah moved to the cabin as Philan sat on the bench next to the cabin.

Philan sat with his broad back resting against the cabin wall and his feet in the air. He thought about Sarah and her sons, who were growing into young men.

"Your sons are doing fine. They will finish their work in the fields by the end of today. The boys are growing into fine young men. It is getting to be time for me to leave the farm. You need to start thinking about your sons getting married and starting families."

Sarah sat on the long bench next to Philan. She knew he and her sons were getting restless. Sarah also knew her boys were visiting young girls in the area.

"They have been talking to you. Are they talking about a family? They are too young to marry."

Philan felt Sarah was right about her mulatto sons being too young to marry, but he also knew they would soon be young men. They would be held responsible for their actions. They would not be treated as children by others in the community.

"They are men in eyes of everyone, but you. You think of them as children, but I see them as men with the same needs as other men. Your sons will be leaving in a few years I think you need to talk to them before it is too late. They will need your help."

Sarah asked Sallie to take some water to her brothers in the garden. Sallie picked up a pail and filled it with water from the well. Sallie started walking toward the garden with the pail of water. Sam and Rich were working in the garden.

Sarah suspected Philan was thinking about the fathers of the boys. She realized the boys needed to know about the men and their other families.

"Do you think I should tell my sons about those men, who were responsible for their birth? Should I tell them about the other families, before they marry a sister?"

Philan chuckled at her questions. He never believed the five boys were real brothers, by blood, with the same parents and family. Philan felt Sarah was the mother of Sallie.

"You should tell them about their families and the truth about you. They are young men and they should know the truth about their family blood."

Sarah quietly listened and waited for a reaction. There was no change in Philan's facial expression.

Sarah smiled and looked away. She felt Philan was right about talking the boys. Sarah would need time to think about what to say. She agreed that the truth would be best for the boys and their families. Sarah decided to speak to each son, when they were together on separate occasions.

Union soldiers came to the farm during the summer months to count citizens for the Federal Government Census. The men recorded Sarah Harrison as the head of the household with six white children. They counted Sarah as a forty year old white woman, but her actual age was thirty years. The men recorded the ages of the children from eight to fifteen years. Philan was listed as Philan Williams, a thirty-five year old colored field worker hired for the farm.

IV

MULATTO BOYS AT HARMONY (1870-1880)

The Virginia State Legislature in 1870 agreed to support free public education for most children. Schools established in 1866 for the education of former slaves and other children were discontinued. There was little or no interest among the white communities in providing free education for the colored children in black communities. Black leaders started schools in their black churches and private homes with church leaders and concerned white citizens, who supported education for all children in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

There were, eventually, twenty-five government supported schools in the County with eight schools reserved for colored children. The state schools were opened to children for five months between October and March. County public schools were divided between seventeen white and eight black teachers with roughly seven hundred white and five hundred colored children attending separate schools.

The white public schools enrolled most white children at or under the age of fifteen years. A few white children were able to attend private schools. Most parents supported their children obtaining a six grade education with the reading and writing fundamentals. Average daily attendance rates were at about thirty percent for white children and at twenty percent for colored children in the black public schools.

Ben and Sam learned to read and write at the free County school established by the Freeman Bureau. Sarah sent Rich to the free public

schools for colored children, but kept Sallie at home to help with the house work. This was the custom for most young girls living on farms. Sallie worked in the cabin with Sarah, while the older boys worked in the fields. Sarah was concerned with the boys getting restless on the farm.

Philan spent most of his time working with the young men in the fields. He was restless and ready to leave the family farm. Philan liked working with the boys. John and Jim were talking to the young girls in the area. The boys were seeing young girls from other farms. Philan expected the boys would soon want to marry and start families.

The boys were friends with the children from other farms in the area. Former slave children were included among their friends as well as some white children.

The Harrison boys became friends of Robert Powell, while they attended public school for colored children. Robert was born as a slave in July 1854. Juanita, his mother, worked on a plantation owned by Martha Powell. The farm recorded slave births as property additions for taxes at the end of the year at the Courthouse. The plantation was a very successful farm for selling cotton, tobacco and slaves. The slave women were able to produce one or more slave births each month. Juanita gave birth to five healthy baby boys between 1850 and 1860.

Milton Powell, the colored father of Robert, worked on a large farm owned by Jeffrey Powell near Ante. Milton was the colored son of a Negro slave and a native mother. His mother was a descendant from the Chowan Tribe and Tuscarora Tribe of central North Carolina. Milton was very proud of his African and native heritage. Benjamin, another Negro son, also lived with Milton and Robert Powell on a small farm in Virginia.

The breeding and selling of Negro slaves were profitable activities before the emancipation for slaves by the northern union government. There were many Negro, mulatto and colored children living in the County, before and after the civil war between the states. Forced breeding of slaves disrupted many colored and Negro families. It also altered the relationship between men and women. Many of the men resisted marriages to the slave mothers of their colored children after the war.

Milton and Juanita shared a cabin with two of their sons on a small farm in Ante. Milton and Juanita were the parents of Guy, Ganies, Robert, George and Edward. The family worked and lived on several small farms. Three of the sons lived in the same cabin with their

parents. Robert, George and Edward worked as farm laborers on the farms. The neighbors included others, such as Guy and Mary, living next to Ben and Alice as part of an extended family.

Robert, who was called Bob, visited the Harrison farm to see Jim and Ben. They shared an interest in fishing and they often worked together for money in the cotton fields. Sallie admired the tall, muscular, friend of her older brothers. As they visited each other, the young men were usually joined by little Sallie. Sarah noticed the interest of her daughter in the young colored man. She was not concerned with the gentle infatuation of a young girl for an older man.

Sarah was impressed with Bob's hard working attitude and his family pride. She was interested in his heritage and his opinions about other people. Sarah often talked to young Bob during his frequent visit to the farm. They talked about the relations between the white people, colored people and native people in the area.

Bob was visiting the Harrison farm and talking to Sarah, while waiting for Jim and Ben. He was told by the old people that Sarah was a white woman with colored children, but white people claimed Sarah was a mulatto girl.

"People say your father was colored. He worked on your grand-father's farm. Your grand-father was white, but your father was colored. What is the truth?"

Sarah suspected Bob was probably wondering about being a white woman with colored children.

"Most people say I am a white woman. My parents were considered to be white people and my grand-parents were white people. My skin is like most white people, but you might say I am a person of color with fair skin."

Bob turned away from Sarah. He did not like or care for her white ancestors, but he liked Sarah. He wanted to accept her as a mulatto woman with colored children.

"How do white people feel about colored people?"

Sarah knew Bob was aware of the cruel and poor treatment of Negro slaves and other colored people by white people.

"Most white people like colored people, but they do not believe colored people are their equal. In order to understand, you need to know the history."

"When white people came to America, they found native people living in the area. The natives were considered to be very different. The white people tried to live and work apart from the natives. The native people generally avoided most of the white people. The mutual avoidance fostered mistrust, which eventually resulted in hostility between native people and white people."

Sarah noticed Bob was disturbed by her comments on local native people. Bob knew the difficulties of the local native people with white people. Sarah understood his feelings, but she decided to continue with her story. Sarah wanted to give a clear picture of the situation to Bob.

"The natives were strange people to the white people from England. As more white people came to America from other countries in Europe, the local native people were identified as the source of problems. A big problem was the claim on the land needed by the white people. There was not enough land to share. The local native people were forced to leave and move further west."

Bob quickly responded to her comments on not enough land for white people to share with local native people.

"There would not have been a problem with sharing farm land, if the white people had not taken the land from native people for their farms. They were too greedy."

Sarah smiled because she understood his feelings. Sarah was pleased to hear the strong comments from Bob.

"Yes, they were greedy. In Europe, only the rich could own land. Here, in America, everyone could buy land and most white people wanted as much as they could work as a family. They took the land from the native people."

"The problem was people learning to live together in one place. White people and native people were living in separate worlds. Neither group would accept and respect the other. As time passed white people became stronger, in numbers, and their way prevailed. It was neither fair nor good, but it was the way of man."

"Families have problems living and working in the same area. Life is full of problems and opportunities for conflict. We are all different as individuals. Some people tried to

prevent the differences from dividing white people from native people and Negro people."

Bob thought about some of the small problems with living and working together as one family. He felt the problems for white people came from their selfish greed.

"I understand there are problems in life, but life is not one big set of problems. Everyone is not fighting to take all they can get in life. This is not a dog eat dog world. Some people are trying to live in peace."

Sarah knew Bob was right about some people wanting to be peaceful without fighting to take all they can get.

"Life is not a problem. Life is a chance to do better with others. We all want to do better, its part of our nature. But life can be a joy or a sorrow depending on the circumstances. We learn to live with the struggle."

Bob was frustrated with Sarah and her old comments about life and its problems. Bob wanted to be polite.

"I do not understand your comments about native people and their struggle. How does their struggle relate to the treatment of colored people. Negroes were slaves."

Sarah understood each group was caught in their struggle for survival. She knew each group wanted survival with their people. Sarah was ready to talk about white people and Negro slaves living together with other colored people.

"When the Negro people came to America, they were very different from white people and local native people in the area. The Negro people acted differently and white people did not understand their behavior. Most people stayed away from each other and did not want to know each other. Negro people were described as animals."

"The tobacco and cotton farmers with large plantations needed more field workers. Some Negro people were hired as indentured servants. The ability to get more land meant more field workers were needed. There were not enough white emigrants or local natives to work the big farms, so farmers started buying Negro slaves."

"More slaves meant more work and more work meant more money for the farmers. More money meant more land and

more land meant more slaves were needed. It went in circles as more meant more and more."

"People thought the Negroes were animals, thus they were not capable of intelligence or integrity. The views of white people changed in time from Negroes being property to colored people being children and the responsibility of their owners. White people started seeing colored workers as people, but less than white people."

Bob was the son of a slave woman. He knew she was being treated as property. Bob knew a few slaves were freed by the owners after the Revolutionary War.

"Why did white people free only some of the slaves after they got their freedom from the English?"

Sarah looked away and thought about the need for slavery on the farms. It was a good question for the farmers.

"The plantation owners with slaves were not willing to give away their property. Most farmers did not own slaves, they sympathized with their fellow farmers on the right to keep their property. Most of the white people did not know any slaves or colored people beyond seeing them working in the fields."

Bob thought about her comments as Jim and Ben arrived in the yard with Sam. They decided to walk to the river. Sarah waived good-bye as she started walking back toward the cabin.

John and Jim continued to work on the cotton and tobacco farms for money. They were sitting and resting from the heat of a hot summer day, while Philan was talking about women and the responsibilities of men. As Philan told it, he was kind, respectful and honest with every woman. His father was taken from the family during the days of slavery. Philan knew most black marriage customs and the role of the extended family.

Jim was a tall man with curly black hair. His eyes were brown and his skin was a light brown color. Jim smiled as he spoke to Philan about young girls.

"Uncle Philan, I have a question. I have been seeing a girl, who lives on a farm down the road. I know she likes me, but I do understand her feelings about what she wants from me. She will not tell me. What does a girl really want from a man? To get married?"

Philan looked at the young man and thought about some of the women in his life. He smiled, then looked at Jim.

"Women find pleasure in many things. The love of their children, the loyalty of their friends, and the support of their family. Simple things will make a good woman happy with her man. A woman does not need a lot from a man, she simply needs his love and respect."

John sat listening to Jim and Philan. He was a tall man with fair skin and brown hair. His eyes were blue like Sarah and Sallie. John wanted to hear more on women and marriage.

"What about getting married and having a family? A man needs some money to support a family".

Philan thought about the boys and their mother. She was poor, but Sarah did not need money to keep her large farm and take care of her children.

"If you believe money is needed, you should learn from your mother. Where is her money? I have been living here for almost ten years. Where is her man?"

Jim looked at Philan. He had never thought of his mother as a woman. Jim felt Sarah was a special person.

"Uncle Philan, I do not want to know about Mother. We want to know about the other women, the young girls."

Philan knew John and Jim were very sensitive about their mother. He suspected Sarah was a special woman. Philan felt they were fortunate to have a strong woman for their mother.

Philan knew some women were evil and cruel just like the men. He worried about the boys not being ready for these bad women as they sought a wife.

"The other women want a little more. They want more of what you have. They want more than you can give them."

"The other women will never be happy with any man, but the wrong man. They want everything and nothing."

Philan stood and walked toward the cabin without another word. John and Jim looked at each other, then watched Philan walked down the path toward the cabin. They were confused by his comments, but the mulatto boys were becoming young men.

ANOTHER FAMILY

While most white people recognized colored people as individuals, the white communities maintained an economic and social hierarchy based on race and gender. Sarah visited the colored families in the area to hear the local news or gossip about white people. Sarah was accepted as an unmarried white mother of colored children by most of her neighbors in Ante.

Jim, the oldest son at nineteen years, was growing eager and restless on the small farm. Jim thought of leaving Sarah and the local area. Sarah wanted her sons to settle and live as a free men, but she worried about the future. She decided to tell the truth to her children about their families.

One summer afternoon, Sarah asked Jim to go to the river with her to catch some fish for supper. Jim was surprised by the request to go fishing. She generally took the young boys with her on trips to the river. The little children were not going on this trip. Jim gathered several poles and Sarah got her fishing basket with her supplies. They slowly walked and talked on the dirt path to the Meherrin River.

Sarah wanted to control the discussion during their walk to the river. She felt Jim could think about her comments at the river, while he was fishing. Sarah expected Jim to think about his future and understand the truth about his mother by birth. Sarah looked up at the old tree covering path.

"I never told you much about your father because I am not sure who was responsible. As far as I was concerned you never had a father. I raised you without a husband and without a father for you. The man who planted the seed of life was only a lover."

Sarah waited for a comment from Jim. She looked over at him for a sign, but he kept walking down the path.

"A woman can become a mother twice, if she is blessed in her life. A man can only be a father once."

"When a woman is pregnant she carries the baby for nine months. She must be a good mother for her baby or the baby may die before it is born. Then she must eat for two people, and she must rest for two people. She must care for the baby before it is born."

Sarah looked to see Jim's expression. She continued her talk about women and motherhood.

"Women do not become mothers with the birth of their babies. Most women become mothers before the birth of their babies. They need to be good mothers or their babies may be lost before they are born. They could be born crippled because they did not get proper care by their mother. These things can happen even when the woman has been a good mother."

Jim was feeling very uneasy with the strange comments by his mother. He wondered about the purpose of her comments on their way to the river.

"Mother, why are you telling me this. I do not have a wife. I do not have anyone pregnant with my child."

Sarah smiled at Jim. She knew he would be uncomfortable with her comments. Sarah was determined to finish.

"Not yet, but you probably will get some girl pregnant, soon or latter. That will not make you the father. You will simply be the man responsible for the baby. A man becomes a father after the baby is born when he helps take care of the baby. A man becomes a father when he helps raise and support the child. I hope you will be a good father and a good man."

Sarah and Jim reached the edge of the river bank. Sarah put her basket down and sat down on a fallen maple tree near the river's edge. She pointed to area next to her for Jim to sit down. She took a deep breath.

"I am your mother. I raised you from birth, but I did not give life to you. You have another mother. She is a good woman and she loves you, but she could not be your mother after your birth. She was a slave."

Sarah felt the air leave her body as her confession to a son made her feel empty. She paused for a reaction from him.

"When you were born, your mother could not keep you because of the law. You would have been born a slave like her and her family. The owners wanted you to be free, so they gave you to me. I became your mother."

Jim slowly sat looking at his mother's blue eyes and her small smile.

Jim thought about the other mother with another family. He noticed Sarah looking worried and concerned about his reaction to her statement of truth. He turned toward the river and started unwinding the fishing poles he was carrying on his shoulder. There was a serious look on his face.

"Who were the people responsible for my birth?"

Sarah thought about the old white man, who visited their farm with Jim as a baby. Sarah looked at the muddy waters of the Meherrin river. She knew the man was a cousin.

"I do not know who was your mother. My grandmother said your mother was a young slave girl and the man was her cousin. He was part of my family. The slave girl gave you life when she was too young to be a mother."

Jim thought about another woman as his mother, by blood, and the possibility of being part of another family. Jim was surprised the woman was a slave and the man was also Harrison by name. Jim suspected his father was a white man.

"As far as I know, I only have one mother. The woman, who raised me as a child, is my mother. You became my mother and you will always be my mother."

Sarah watched as Jim continued to unwind several fishing poles. She thought about Jane, her friend, who gave birth to children as a former slave girl.

"I will always be your mother, but as you go through life you will meet many families. Those people may be members of your family. I know you will do what is right. Your natural mother may not want you to know the truth about your birth. She may not want to talk about the man, who raped her as a child. Other people may tell you more about your blood relatives."

Jim felt bad for his slave mother. He had always wanted to know about his blood parents. Jim felt Sarah was good for taking care of him and the other mulatto children.

Jim wondered about the other mulatto children with their blood relatives not being known to them.

"Mother, I will do what is right as I see it. We can not change the past. I want to find my blood mother because she may need my help. We will keep her secret so she can

live her life in peace. What should I tell the other children? They should know the truth."

Sarah thought about his question. She wondered how they would go forward with Jim and her other children.

"I will not tell them a thing. There is nothing for them to know. They will always be your family. This is about you and your life. You can tell them, when you are ready to talk about it".

They stood and quietly moved in separate directions with each taking a couple of fishing poles. Sarah sat down on the ground and put her lines into the water.

As the evening got darker, Sarah packed her fishing gear and Jim pulled a line of fish from the water. They walked to the cabin talking only about the fishing.

The next day, Jim told John about his talk with Sarah as they worked in the fields. The brothers became curious about others in the family. John wondered about his two parents by blood. He was pleased Jim was related to Sarah. They talked several hours at the end of the day about the family.

Jim and John always knew they could not be brothers with the same mother. John knew Jim was born in May before he was born in October of the same year with different parents. The boys believed Sarah was not their mother by blood. They felt she took the children as babies to raise on her farm.

Philan was getting curious about the mulatto boys living on the farm. Philan was walking toward the cabin while Sarah was working in the yard. He wondered about Sarah being their natural mother. Philan decided to ask Sarah about the boys.

"Miss Sarah, I have a number of problems. I can not make them add up to the right numbers. I just do not know how to make the numbers work to make it right."

Sarah was confused by Philan comments for adding numbers to make it right. She did not know what he was saying.

"What numbers are you talking about?"

Philan knew the age and birthday of each child. He also had a good idea of Sarah's age.

"The numbers are the ages for your children. Jim was born in May of 1854. John was born in October of the same year. I figured your age was about fifteen. I can not see how a fifteen year old girl could be the mother of two babies in the same year."

Sarah smiled at Philan and thought over his problem with the number of years for her and the boys.

"When the government was counting people, I told them my age as forty years. What makes you think I was fifteen when Jim was born? How could John be born in the same year with the same mother?"

Philan heard the comments by Sarah to the soldiers about her white children being between eight and fifteen years. He knew their ages from talking to the children over the years.

"I know some of your children are not white and their ages are not spread evenly between them. I remember your family, when I was a child. I knew you as a small child. I am older than you. Jane is the same age as you. She is not in her forties. We both know that."

Sarah was amused at Philan figuring her age and the age of her children. She decided to play with him about her age and the ages for her children.

"Okay, if Jane and I are younger than you, the numbers are wrong. We need to fix them so the numbers will work for you. I do not know how old Jane is, but I was born in May 1937. I had my first child when I was fifteen years old. I had a child every two years."

Philan was not amused by her game with some numbers. He did not want Sarah to change her age so others would not know the secret about her children.

"Miss Sarah, I do not need to know your age or the ages of the children. I want you to tell the truth to the boys about their families."

Sarah started to laugh because Philan knew her story was a lie. He was curious about her sons. Sarah felt she should tell the truth about her children, but it would have to wait.

"I imagine the numbers will never be right. I guess the numbers will never work for you."

Philan stood up as he was getting no place with the talk with Sarah. He started walking toward the garden so he could help the boys gather vegetables. Sarah needed to be alone.

Later, Sarah prepared the bath water for Sallie with hot water from the wood stove. Sallie washed her body and played in the warm water. She dressed for bed as Sarah got ready to wash. Sarah stood in the tub and washed her body with her daughter sitting nearby in the corner of the cabin. Sallie was full of questions about her brothers. She heard Philan talking to Sarah about the boys yet did not understand the comments about their ages, but she noticed the differences in their appearance and color of skin.

"Mother. Why do the boys have dark skin and we have light skin? Do boys have different skin?"

Sarah looked and smiled at Sallie. It was a little girl question. Sarah decided to answer the question.

"A baby is born into two families, the family of the woman and the family of the man. You and your brothers are part of my family, but each of you also have another family. The man does not always stay with the baby like the mother. Mothers must take care of their babies."

Sallie looked at Sarah standing in the wash tub with her pale white skin contrasting with her tanned skin.

"We are all from the same family. Why do they have different families? There is only one family."

Sarah was amused by Sallie's questions. She started to dry her body with a small wash cloth.

"Everyone comes from two families. Their skin is dark because people in their other family have dark skin and your skin is light because people in your other family have light skin."

Sallie understood a baby is created by a man and a woman as a act of love in marriage, but she knew her mother was not married to any man. Sallie decided the family of the man was the other family, which was responsible for the skin color.

"My other family must be white. My skin is fair like white people, but our family is colored."

"We must be colored people with white relatives. Our skin is fair, but we are not white people."

Sarah realized Sallie was asking too many race questions about skin color and her brothers. She suspected Sallie knew more than she was telling in her questions.

"We are colored people living with other colored people in a white community. There are no white people in this family. We are all the same people."

"We were born to be colored and we will die as colored people with no difference between us as a family."

"No more questions, we need to get to bed. It is getting late and there is much to do in the morning."

Sallie moved to her bed and Sarah quietly dressed for an early evening. Sarah was concerned with Sallie noticing race differences from the skin colors of her brothers. Sarah knew the truth was coming to light for the Harrison family.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Sarah was sitting on the bench in the front of her cabin on a warm morning. She noticed a fair skinned man walking to the cabin from the path to the cabin. Sarah smiled at him as she sat, drinking her coffee.

"Good morning, son. How are you doing with that new job? Do they need help in the tobacco fields?"

John smiled and took the straw hat off his head. He sat next to Sarah on the bench. He looked around the open yard.

"Where is everybody. I was told, you wanted to see me before going to the field."

Sarah had sent Sallie and Rich to the general store down the road. Jim, Ben and Sam were working in the fields.

"They are doing some chores for me or working in the fields. I sent the children to the store."

John expected his mother wanted to talk to him about one of the girls he was visiting. She was expecting a baby.

"Mother, what do you want to talk about?"

Sarah sat quietly, drinking her coffee with two hands on the warm cup. She thought about John and the man responsible for his fatherless birth. Sarah looked toward the yard.

Sarah turned and smiled at John sitting next to the side of the old cabin. She wanted to talk to him about the family and the man from his other family. Sarah felt John needed to know more about his people and the history of their family.

"John, my grandfather served in the Revolutionary War when he was your age. Our family has been in Virginia for more than two hundred years. This is our Land. We have worked on this farm for a hundred years."

"The Harrison family were able to have a farm because we got the opportunity as white people. We were able to work with white people in power. We knew they would only share the wealth with their kind."

John was confused and surprised by his mother's comments on the family. He was not expecting to hear about her family and their history with the farm.

"Mother, are you saying our family was white? I know your family was white. We may have the same name with the same religion, but we are not a white family."

Sarah smiled because she knew John thought of the family as being colored. She was not surprised by his comment about not being a white family.

"This land has many good things. There is plenty of room to grow and plenty of food to eat, but life should be more than a place to sleep and something to eat. We need to grow like a strong tree reaching for the sky with our feet planted deep in the soil."

John could not understand her tree comparison. He lived and worked in a poor farm community. John wondered what were the choices for him in life. He knew things were simple with farming. He wanted things to stay simple in the family.

"There are no choices for me. I may choose to marry and find me a wife. It will be my choice."

Sarah looked at the young man with no direction to guide him in life. She wanted to talk about his future as a man.

"John, there is an old saying that birds of the same feather flocked together."

John appeared to be surprised by this apparent change in subject by his mother. He knew the old saying.

"I understand. Birds, that are alike, fly together."

Sarah smiled as she realized John understood the saying, but not the whole meaning of the old phrase.

"It is more than flying. The birds flocked together to support each other as a group. The birds fly and care for each other like a family."

John was more confused by Sarah's comments. He felt she knew about his girl expecting a baby.

"Mother, what are you talking about?"

Sarah sat back on the bench and looked into the blue sky over the cabin. It was not easy to talk as the mother of six children from different families.

"John, this is about being a colored man in a white world. Being colored can be a problem. You must know race and color are important to most white people."

"Every family should make things better for the next family. The Harrison family is our family and we should be proud of our people. We always cared about others. We tried to help the natives and the slaves in our community. We were not able to change their fate, but our family made the right choices."

John was confused about being a colored man. He thought of himself and his family as being colored. He was told they were mulatto with mixed blood from white and Negro people.

"Mother, your people were white. We are not white."

Sarah did not want to look at him as she looked away and continued to talk about his paternal family.

"John, you are mixed in blood. I am your mother. The man, who got me pregnant with you, was colored. He was born slave with a free father and a slave mother."

John expected his father was a slave. John was confused by the comments about being colored in a white world. He was also surprised to learn Sarah was his real mother. John knew she wanted to talk more about his colored father, who was her first lover. Sarah kept the names of her lovers as a secret.

"Mother, a man needs to know something about his father"

and other members of his family. A man must know the truth about his family"

"I do not know a thing about my father and his family."

Sarah realized John was right on needing to know the man responsible for his birth. She wanted to be honest and offer the truth. Sarah did not think a man was a father, if he did not support his children and care for their mother. She knew the man, James Malone, was the father.

"I had a lover, when I was a young girl. He was a very young boy, who lived with his father. His father worked on our farm with my grandmother. His mother was a Negro slave, so his father bought him from her owner. He also had a little sister, who stayed with us. I acted as the mother for his sister and became his friend."

"It was easy for me to see him on our farm. Nobody knew about us. When I became pregnant with you, most people thought one of the local white boys was responsible."

"John, I decided not to tell you about the man and your family until you were old enough to understand, but you have a right to know the truth about your people."

John heard about the hired colored man, who worked for a few years with Phoebe on the farm. He was surprised to learn the man was his grandfather and a former slave was his father with Sarah, a white woman, as his mother.

"What was my father's name? What happen to his sister?"

Sarah did not consider James to be a father to John, but she knew he wanted to claim a father. Sarah decided John had a right to know the name of the man responsible for his life.

"The young boy responsible for you was James Malone."

"He was the son of a colored man, who worked on our farm with my grandmother. His sister was Julia, who lived on our farm. The family moved away after you were born."

"I believe a boy can not be a man or a father, If he leaves the girl alone to raise their child."

John understood Sarah's feelings, but he felt his family was colored and the name was Malone. John knew it was better to know the name of your father.

"Mother, it was different when you got pregnant. He was a colored boy with a young white girl. They would have killed him if he had stayed and tried to be my father."

"The family needed to leave the area to protect their children, including my father."

Sarah knew John was right, but she never received a word or any messages from James. During the War, she lost contact with his family. Sarah felt, in her heart, James should have found a way to see their son.

"John, you are right. He had to leave the area."

Sarah looked over at John and thought of James Malone as his father. She knew other members of the Malone family were good people in the area. Sarah felt John wanted to be in the family as the son of James Malone.

"John, you need to find your family and meet all of your relatives. There were some members of the family living in the area. They may help you find your father."

John was surprised by Sarah's desire for him to find his father. He wondered about the birds of a feather comment.

"Mother, why do you want me to find my father?"

Sarah smiled as she thought about John being born white, but growing up as a mulatto child in a colored family.

"John, I feel you may be lost. You do not know where you are going in life. A part of you wants to be a white man and a part of you wants to be a black man."

John looked over at his mother. He was not sure of what to say. John knew he was not black or white because he was a colored man with black and white blood.

"We are neither white nor black. My blood is mixed from both groups. I do not need someone to tell me what to do with my life. I know what I want for my life."

Sarah looked away into the open cotton fields. She felt something was missing for John in his life. Sarah hoped John would find it with the Malone family.

"I feel you are looking for something. I do not understand it, but I hope you find it with the other members of your family."

John placed his hat on his head and smiled at his mother sitting on the bench. He stood and walked toward the path to the road. John felt it was time to go.

"Mother, I may not know what I need, but I do not know what I want and how to get some help."

Sarah stood and waived good-bye to John. He walked over to the path and started back to the road. John continued his job and stayed on another farm. He took his father's name as his family name of Malone. Jim and the other sons worked the cotton and tobacco crops in the fields. Sallie shared chores with her mother taking care of the cows, chickens and hogs.

Philan decided to leave the farm and move further to the west for a new life. He knew Sarah understood his desire for a new life in the western states. Philan wanted to travel to the Kansas territory and start a family. He felt it was time to leave the boys. Philan entered the cabin to see Sarah and discuss his plans for leaving the area.

"Miss Sarah, It is time for me to leave. The boys have become men and the family does not need my help. There is plenty of help with the farm. Your sons are very strong and able to handle any problems."

Sarah was standing near the window cutting some potatoes for dinner. She did not want Philan to leave, but Sarah knew he was ready to go. She had hoped Philan could have been the man for Jane, but their relationship did not work.

"Have you talked to Jane? How does she feel about you leaving us. I thought she really liked you."

Philan smiled as he thought about Jane being a lover and a good friend. They decided there was no future for them.

"Jane and I talked. She was not ready for marriage or a commitment to me. Jane likes her independence and her freedom in town. I want to travel to the west."

Sarah smiled at Philan. Sarah felt Jane was not willing to marry anyone. She knew Jane was a free spirited woman.

"I know Jane likes her freedom and independence. She has been on her own for a long time. It is probably best for both to go your separate ways. When are you planning to leave us? The boys will miss you."

Philan looked around the cabin and thought of the family farm, where he lived and worked for the ten years. He wanted to watch the boys grow into men.

"I plan to leave at the end of the month. I will take my things and catch a ride with another family going west to Kansas. I do not know if I will be going all the way with the family. I may decide to stop."

Sarah walked to the table and sat down in a chair with a tobacco cup. She knew they would miss Philan and his counsel with the her young boys. She watched as Philan walked out of the cabin. Sarah said good-bye as Philan departed at the end of the month. She wondered, if she would ever again see him.

DARK FAMILY SECRETS

Lawrenceville was a small village community by 1875 with the County Courthouse surrounded by stores and several office buildings. The village included a general store, warehouses, two blacksmiths, a shoemaker shop and a saw mill. There were also flour mills, tanneries and other businesses in the area.

Sarah did not get many visitors, as Jane worked six days each week cleaning homes in Lawrenceville. Sarah became more dependent on Ben to help her with the farm business. She was sending him to town to buy supplies. Sarah only went to town on rare occasions, preferring to go fishing on the river.

Ben moved freely throughout the area and became known to most people in the area. Sarah worked the cotton and tobacco cash crops on the farm with the Jim and Ben. They took their crop yield to the local farm markets and collected money from the commodity buyers. Local merchants also would be there to collect their loans from local farmers.

One day, after a trip to town, Ben returned to the cabin with their supplies. He had stopped on his trip to talk to a few people in town and received the latest news and gossip.

"Mother, here are your supplies. People are still having difficult times in town. There is plenty of food, but not enough work to make a living in town."

Sarah looked over at Ben as she placed some items in her cabinets in the cabin. She wondered about the future for the town and its people. Sarah was not sure about the future.

"The people need to return to the farms. Poor people can not survive in the town without work and money."

Ben helped with the weekly supplies. Ben felt Sarah was being unrealistic to think poor people should return to their farms. Work for the colored people, who stayed on the farms, was not much better than slavery for the sharecroppers.

"Most people believe returning to the farms is like going back to slavery. They see no future on the farm."

Sarah believed sharecrops were unfair to farmers. Sarah knew a field worker would never receive fair compensation for the work performed by his family. She felt the field workers needed to buy land and work their property.

"They should take their money and buy land. The land will feed their family. Nobody is going to give them anything. The land can grow things like corn and cotton and tobacco to earn money."

Ben agreed with Sarah and felt colored people should buy and not sell the land to others. Ben knew the farmers needed to grow and work together on their farms.

"Mother, you are right. We should buy land to increase the size of the farm. Then we could clear more land to grow more crops. We could sell the cotton and tobacco for more money to buy more land."

Sarah was amused by his comment. She wondered who would work a larger farm. Sarah knew most of her children would be grown and ready to start families on their farms.

"Ben, if the farm was larger, we would need a big family to work the fields and take care of the farm."

Ben smiled as he thought about getting family members to work the fields. Ben heard many of the rumors and the gossip about himself and his brothers being orphans. He knew people were saying the mulatto boys were abandoned as babies. Ben wanted to know if there was some truth to these rumors.

"We could gather small children and raise them on the farm, like you and grandmother did with us."

Sarah was surprised by the comment from Ben. She looked at Ben with an empty expression. Her emotions moved from joy to sadness. It was time for a talk with Ben.

"What does that mean, like grandmother and me?"

Ben smiled and moved toward the door. Ben tried to walk away without getting into deeper trouble with Sarah.

"It was nothing. I was kidding. I heard some local gossip about being adopted by you and grandmother."

Sarah smiled at her son. Sarah wanted to tell the truth about his family. She decided the time was right.

"Do you want to know if the local gossip is true?"

Ben knew she was playing with him, but he wanted to know the truth about the family and his family.

"Why do we have secrets? What is the truth?"

Sarah stopped smiling as she sat near the small table at the center of the cabin. Sarah turned and looked at his blue eyes and fair skin.

"Sometimes the truth should not be told. It can hurt too much deep in our hearts. Some families keep little secrets because of their shame. Do people in town say we are not family? Do they say I am not your mother?"

"The truth is I am the woman who feed and raised you from a baby. I am the only mother, you knew as a baby."

"It is true I am not the woman who gave you life at birth. I do not know the man or the woman, who were responsible for your birth. A man from the church gave you to my grand-mother as a small baby."

"I do not know the truth about your birth. I know your name at birth was Benjamin Harrison and the year of your birth was 1857. I know the name of the man, who was responsible for your birth was a Harrison. The name of your mother at birth was also Harrison. I was told they were related."

Ben became sad as he looked toward Sarah. He felt empty and did not want to know more details, but Ben needed answers about his family by blood. He sat down across from Sarah.

"Mother, what do you mean they were related, and they were not married? They were cousins?"

Sarah became sad as she thought about poor Ben. She was afraid

to say more. Sarah noticed an empty expression on his face. She knew there was nothing to tell him.

"My grandparents were Harrison cousins before they were married. The church did not stop them or take their four babies. Your parents were more than cousins. The relationship was not proper for the church. There is nothing wrong with you being born out sin."

"The nature of a man can be evil and his actions can be very wrong. The man responsible for your birth was weak and evil. He was never your father. You may be have his blood, but you do not need to be like him. I was told he was cruel to his wife and his other children."

Ben did not like what he was hearing about his birth and being from a family with bad blood.

"Mother, my birth was a sin! I am the son of a living devil. Why did the family keep it as a secret? This evil man should have been punished for his act?"

Sarah looked over at Ben, who was sad. She felt Ben was depressed by the thought of the unfortunate girl giving birth to an unwanted child.

"Ben, what was the sin? Your birth was not a sin. It was a blessing for the family. The act of the man may have been a sin. I do not know. I know the man was weak and the church felt it was wrong. You should not judge them on the words of others."

"If you need to know the truth, you should find the man and the woman responsible for your birth. They may help you to find the truth about your family by blood."

Ben stood at the table and looked toward the door of the cabin. He walked over to the door and stopped.

"I do not need to find them. I do not want to know the truth. What was done by others in the past can not be changed. I can not worry about the past."

"I have one mother and that is you. I never had a father and I never will. I will take life as it is given. I will make the best of my life."

"Have a good day. I will see you in the evening."

Sarah watched in silence, as Ben walked out of the cabin and started down the path to the road. She thought about Ben and his feelings about burying the past. Sarah knew he would need time to think about the past and his future.

COLORED STRUGGLES

In 1876, Sarah became a grandmother at the age of thirty seven, with the birth of one grandson, James Harrison. James was the first son of Jim and Rosa Harrison. Jim married Rosa in a small and brief ceremony. Rosa was a young sixteen year old colored farm girl. They quickly moved to a small farm on the north side of the County. Sarah was pleased with Jim and his marriage to Rosa. Sarah wanted each of her sons to marry and start families with small farms.

Sarah thought about the future for her other sons, after the marriage of her oldest son. Sarah knew John was visiting several girls with no plans for marriage. Sarah heard gossip about one of the young girls getting pregnant. Sarah decided it was time for another talk with John about his future. She sent word to John about visiting the farm to see her.

Sarah was sitting at the table, with a small fire in the fireplace, in the cabin. She held a cup of hot coffee in her hand. Sarah drunk slowly as a tall slim man entered her home and stood at the doorway of the cabin. He stood in the cabin with fair skin and long brown hair.

Sarah could see a clear blue sky over his shoulder as he slowly walked over to the table. Sarah looked up and smiled.

"Good morning, son. Get a cup of coffee and come talk to me. I have some questions for you."

John, the second son, was pleased to see Sarah, his kind mother, waiting to talk to him. John knew she wanted to talk about his baby. John looked around for the small children.

"Good morning, Mother. Where are the children?"

Sarah smiled at her firstborn, with brown hair and brown eyes, who was a very handsome man. She knew John was trouble for the young girls.

"The children went to town with Ben for supplies."

John walked over to the hot stove and got a large cup of hot coffee. He moved over to the fire and sat in a chair.

"Mother, what do you want to talk about."

Sarah sat quietly watching him and looking into the open fire. She noticed the fire slowly burning with a small flame on top of the logs. Sarah looked over at John.

"I heard your girl friend is going to have a baby."

John thought about his girl friend expecting a baby. He smiled and wondered about becoming a father. John knew Sarah would be concerned about marriage and supporting the baby.

"She is going to have a baby and I am going to be a new father. I will have a little family."

"I will need to support the baby and the mother."

Sarah took another sip of her hot coffee. She looked at her son as John drank his coffee. Sarah wanted to know about the baby and the plans for the child.

"Are you going to marry this girl and be a father for the child? Are you certain this child will be your baby with your blood?"

John looked at Sarah and nodded his head in agreement to her question. He placed his coffee cup down on a small table next to his chair.

"Yes, I am sure it is my baby, but I am not ready to marry her and help support her family."

Sarah turned from John, looking into the open fire. She was uncomfortable with the answer. Sarah knew he was talking about another baby without a father. She was concerned about the young mother and her future without John.

"What will happen if you do not marry this girl?"

John thought about the mother. He knew she was eighteen and pregnant, expecting her first child. John also realized the family of the girl was very poor with other children.

"She will need to stay with her family and raise our baby. She is a very pretty girl. She will get another chance to marry someone and have a family."

Sarah thought about her struggle. She raised six babies without a father for any of them. Sarah knew it was not easy for a young woman.

She felt John needed to marry the mother, but Sarah knew she could not force him.

"John, you should do what is right for you and best for the child. I know in your heart, you may not be ready to marry anyone, but children need parents."

"I can not tell you about being married because I was never married. I know something about women and she needs to be married. The baby needs a father."

"Marriage is more than taking care of a baby. It is about taking care of each other in little ways and big ways. You can easily marry for the wrong reason and be unhappy for the rest of your life."

"When I became pregnant with you, I did not want to marry the man. If the men wanted to marry me, they would have married me before there was a baby."

John listened quietly to his mother. John was surprised by her views on early marriage. He knew Sarah encouraged her children to plan for marriage and family life. John recalled his mother did not need marriage to raise and support her six children. He wondered how she felt about his refusal.

"Mother, are you telling me to marry Susan?"

Sarah saw the concern in his face. She wondered if John really cared about the mother and the baby. She concluded it was too late for a good and healthy marriage with John.

"You should do what is right for you and not what is right for others. If you are not ready to marry her, then you should not marry. It is your life."

John realized Sarah was not going to force a marriage on him with the mother of his child. He needed time to consider his plans and the future.

"Mother, I need time to think about my future. No matter what I decide, it will not be easy."

Sarah stood and slowly walked toward the door. She felt a need for fresh air. Sarah grabbed her old shawl and turned to John as he sat in the chair.

"Ask your friend to visit me. I would like to talk to her about my grandchild. I want to help."

John nodded his agreement as Sarah opened the cabin door to the outside air. He watched as she slowly walked into the cool air. John thought about his responsibilities as a young man and decided not to marry the young girl, who was pregnant with his baby. John accepted no responsibility for the young girl or her condition as an expecting mother. He stopped his visits with the farm girl and her poor family, which was very disappointing for Sarah, as the grandmother for the child.

The pregnant girl friend eventually visited Sarah on the farm and they talked about the future and the baby, which was due in a few months. The women agreed, after several visits, for Sarah to take the baby as her grandchild. A healthy baby girl was born. The young mother named the baby and gave her, as agreed, to Sarah, the grandmother.

Sarah was the grandmother of five grandchildren with two more grandsons, William and Matthew. William, a mulatto, was the first born of Ben and Mary, a beautiful colored girl, who married Ben at the start of the year. Matthew was the second son of Jim and Rosa Harrison.

John moved to a large plantation, while Jim and Ben were married and living on separate small farms. Sarah was living with three of her six children. Ben was living next to Sarah with Mary, his wife. Ben assumed responsibility for the farm crops and most of the other farm work.

Sarah was enjoying her role as grandmother. Sallie, her sixteen year old daughter, was taking care of Alice, the baby of one year. Sarah kept and worked a vegetable garden. They also kept a couple cows in the pasture and several small pigs near the creek. Chickens and other fowl walked freely in the yard eating seeds and small bugs from the ground.

Sarah sat, fishing on the river banks, during many quiet afternoons. Occasionally, she was joined by Sam and Rich for some small talk. Fishing at the river was one of the joys in her life of struggle. Sarah talked to her sons while fishing and cleaning the fish at the back of the cabin. The fish was fried over a hot fire in the yard and served with cornbread.

Sarah and Sam were cleaning the fish in back of the yard during the evening. Sarah decided to tell Sam about her life and the colored man responsible for his birth. She continued to think of the man as a former lover. Sarah felt he was not the father of her son. Sarah thought it was time to tell Sam about the difficulties of being a colored man.

"Life is always a struggle for poor people. Some things come easy for some people, but it is a battle for most people. Nothing worthwhile is easy in life."

Sam thought about living with Sarah, as his poor mother, while working on the farm. Sam felt the farm was always hard work to him and his brothers.

"Mother, I know life can not always be pleasant. We must enjoy the day as long as we can live and work in peace with other people."

"The old people say it is not supposed to be easy for good people. Life is a struggle."

Sarah wondered whether peace and order were possible for colored people living in the south, without the protection of the Union soldiers. The army was withdrawn from the area and the old leaders of the Confederacy returned to power with the local government. Many of these white leaders sought revenge against colored people for the war sacrifices of white people made trying to preserve their way of life.

Sarah wanted Sam to understand the struggle against evil people would be difficult for him.

"We may find some pleasures on this farm, but the battle to survive is still a hard struggle for most people."

"The struggle can be cruel for some people with many barriers in their way. You may find barriers."

Sam did not understand what she meant by barriers or how the barriers would make life more difficult.

"Mother, what barriers? What are you talking about?"

Sarah thought about the tall colored man responsible for his birth. She admired the man for his good looks and strong desire to succeed in life. Sarah knew the many problems with being a colored man in a white world. She wanted to tell Sam about the social and economic barriers against colored people and their efforts to succeed. Sarah felt he would not accept the barriers. She worried about problems with white people.

"The barriers are like fences in the minds of some people, but the fences can be real. Barriers are used to keep certain people in the place decided by other people. Colored

people have barriers blocking their way. These people do not get a fair chance at buying land or selling crops at the market."

Sam thought about Jim and Ben selling their cotton crops at the markets in Ante. Sam believed his ability to read and write would help with the merchants. He knew Ben usually got a better deal from the merchants, because Jim was not able to read or write. Sam was confident of his skills.

"I can read and write like Ben. I will not be stop by how people feel about me. We can work over and around the barriers. I will not bother white people and I will not let them bother me."

Sarah believed Sam understood the problems faced by most colored people. She felt Sam would be treated differently by white people because of his strong Negro features. Sam would be treated like Jim by the white merchants. Ben was accepted as a white man by people in area, even though they knew he was married to a colored woman.

"The color of your skin will be a problem for many white people in the area. White people will create problems for you. White people will limit your opportunities."

Sam thought about Negroes and other colored people being slaves before the War and the fight for their freedom.

"Mother, you believe skin color can be a barrier for success and happiness. My skin color is not a barrier for me. I see no difference between my brothers."

Sarah thought about her sons with their different colors of skin and hair. Sarah knew their blood came from different families. She also knew her sons were different in many ways including appearance and personality. Sarah felt each of her sons would face problems due, in part, to the black ancestry of their families.

"White people with power will always treat his people better and give them a preference over other people, who are different."

"This prejudice will keep most colored people from enjoying many of the good things. Life on a farm is more difficult for colored people because they will not get the necessary help from local merchants."

"The men responsible for Jim and Ben had light or pale skin like my skin. The man, who responsible for you had dark black skin. He was a colored man and his parents were Negro slaves. Your skin is darker because of him."

Sam understood her comments about white people and those men responsible for her six children. He knew Sarah referred to the fathers of the children as the men responsible for the babies and their births. Sam felt she was not being fair.

Sam appreciated her feelings about the men. He knew she believed a father was also responsible for taking care of the child after the young mother delivers the baby to the family.

"Mother, I have a father. He did not raise me, but he is my father. I was not abandoned as a baby by my father. He was forced to leave you."

Sarah smiled realizing Sam might be right. She felt Sam should know his family. Sarah expected they might be able to find his father and Sam could get to know him. Sarah decided he should know the truth about the man.

"Sam, your father was a gentle man. I admired him from a distance. As time past, the distance got shorter and shorter, until we were together. Our love was very secretive and forbidden by others. After your birth, I asked him to leave the area for our safety."

Sam heard the gossip about his colored father. A few of the local colored families remembered him. They also knew he was forced to leave the area before the war.

"Mother, I heard about my father living in the area before the start of the war. He went to the north."

Sarah was not surprised by his comment. She realized as he grew older Sam would hear about his colored father. Sarah smiled at Sam and noticed his father's looks and mannerisms.

"Your father was liked by most white people, but they were afraid of him. White people did not really know your father or any other colored people. White people will not be cruel to you. They may even like you."

"White people will watch to see if you are a threat to them or their way of life. You must be careful."

Sam did not understand what she was saying. Sam felt he was not a threat to anyone. Sam knew he was not afraid.

"I am not a threat to people. Colored people are not against white people. We are the same people. Some of the colored people, like Ben and Rich, have skin color lighter than most white people."

Sarah realized Sam, like most people, thought of race as skin color. She knew being part of a culture and a community was more important than skin color to most colored people.

"There are some white people who will expect and want you to fail. These people are not willing to share the wealth. They will want you to take the easy way."

Sarah thought about meetings and talks with most colored people in the area. She knew what it meant to live and serve as a colored person in Brunswick County. Sarah wanted Sam to know how she felt about being colored.

"Most colored people are like the fish in the river."

"As children they flow with the waters. As they grow older, they fight the flowing water to survive and stay in the river. The struggle is long and hard. Some give up and float into oceans, but there is nothing good in salty ocean for the fish. They die in the oceans."

"Other fish grow strong and swim up into the river. The best fish create more fish at the top of the river."

Sam was confused by the comment on colored people living like fish in a river. He felt colored people were strong.

"Mother, why are you concerned about my future and the problems with white people. We can work together in the fields and live separately in our homes. Colored people should not fear white people."

Sarah smiled as she thought about how white people would work against Sam because of his skin color.

"White people will give or show you the easy way, to keep you from growing as a man."

"You must be strong and fight the easy way. A man must fight to make life better for his family. The struggle is not

a violent fight, it is a quiet and gentle fight with weak hearted friends and deceitful enemies. You must be careful with your trust."

"You should be careful with easy friends. They will be quick to join you as a friend and quick to leave you in time of trouble. Some of those people against you will go just as easy because their heart will not be in the struggle. They are followers and you will succeed in spite of their effort."

"Their leaders are neither friend nor enemy. They want more money from your labor for themselves and their people. The leaders want more wealth and power. They do not care about the little people like us."

Sam understood and appreciated the advice given by Sarah as a warning from his mother. Sam was surprised by her words against white people. Sam knew they were her people.

"Colored people are not like the fish. We are very different as people. Our Skin color may be black, brown, yellow or white. We are all different."

Sam grabbed the bucket of clean fish and walked with his mother to the cabin. Sarah cleared the table and prepared a large area for the fish. Sam needed time to think about what she said to him about his colored father.

Philan joined a group of colored settlers going west for a colony in Kansas. Philan said good-bye to the young men on the farm. Sarah and Sallie wished him well on his trip as he slowly departed. Sarah appreciated the hard work and support given by Philan over the past ten years. Sarah cried as they said good-bye to an old friend.

The progressive goals of the Reconstruction Programs for an integrated society were no longer supported by politicians in the American centennial year of 1876. The disputed public election of Rutherford Hayes for President resulted in secret negotiations for the benefit of southern white politics. The southern Democrats supported Hayes, the Republican candidate, in exchange for removal of the Union troops from the southern states. The civil rights of colored people were placed under the mercy of southern Democrats, who supported the rebellion.

Former slaves and other colored people lost the military protection of the government against hostile white people and former slaveowners. Thousands of colored people migrated for their safety

and better opportunities in the west. The black groups of colored people sought greater personal freedom with their families. However, most colored people were greeted by hostile public receptions, from those white people inhabiting the area before their arrival.

CHOICES IN LIFE

Sarah and her colored family remained secluded from most of the white community. Sam and Rich worked in the fields on the farm growing corn, cotton and tobacco for market. Sallie took care of the family garden. Ben and Mary also shared the duties of living on the family farm, including taking care of the farm animals. The family operated a successful farm with everyone working together.

Sarah spent most of her time taking care of the children including Alice, her small granddaughter. She also helped in the kitchen with the other women. The young women picked the vegetables from the garden and cooked the surplus for storage in glass jars. The women used the opportunity, together, for discussions about family matters and local gossip.

Sarah expected Sam and Rich would want to leave the farm and live independently in the county. She was concerned with their ability to succeed as young colored farmers. Sarah was very worried about Rich being accepted. She noticed a slight difference in his feelings toward the family. Sarah was sure of her love, but she not comfortable with her feelings toward the youngest child. Sarah decided to talk to Rich hoping the discussion would inspire him.

Rich was helping Sarah with the cutting and cleaning the fish from an afternoon visit to the river. They were talking in general terms about life being a struggle to survive and a need for faith in the Almighty.

Sarah decided to use the quiet occasion for a discussion on her concerns about Rich and his future. She described the story from the Bible about choices for people. She could not read or write, but Sarah could recall stories from the Bible.

"I am told there was an old story in the Good Book about our Lord meeting the Devil. The Devil tried to pursue him to leave the following of God. The Devil offered all the riches and material things of this world."

Rich listened with some interest. He never recalled his mother attending a church. Rich remembered Philan was always talking about stories in the Bible.

"Uncle Philan told the story about the Devil trying to trick Jesus. He said Jesus refused the Devil and told him, the only riches were in heaven with God."

Sarah was not surprised when Philan was quoting Bible stories to her children. She suspected her old friend could read and write, when the boys found his old Bible in the cabin. Sarah felt being able to read was a secret for Philan.

"You know the story of the Lord's refusal, but did you understand how the Devil was able to offer these riches to him? Why did the Devil offer all the riches?"

"The Devil did it because this is his world. The Devil rules this world with his power. Native people were killed for their land and Negro people were made into slaves. This is why so much is wrong in the world."

"Evil is a powerful force and the Devil uses it to start trouble among people. Love is the stronger force for good people. The Bible says God is Love."

Rich started to worry about these strange words from his mother. He felt she sounded more like an old spiritual slave woman than the strong-minded mother of his youth.

"Mother, what are you saying? I know the world is evil and people should be careful with other people."

Sarah waited for Rich to continue his comments. She saw the influence of Philan. Sarah wanted Rich to understand the opportunities as well as struggle and the problems of life.

"Rich, good people do not control this world. The world is ruled by bad men of all colors. Virginia is ruled by white people. There are more colored people, but we are ruled by a few white men. They have all the power."

Sarah looked into the face of her son. The tone of her voice became serious as she started to make her point to him.

"Our people are colored. I chose to have children with colored men and live among the colored people. We are people of color and this is my family. You must choose to live as mulatto or pass as a white man."

Rich was surprised by her statement about his race being the choice between mulatto or white. Rich wondered why Sarah was saying his

race was a choice for him. He felt his family and friends were people of color in their appearance and with their culture as descendents of African slaves.

"Mother, you can not join a race of people like it is a church. You were born into the white race and I was born mulatto with mixed parents. I am a person of color by law. You became a person with color by choice, but you continue to be a white person. I belong to the people of color, just as you belong with colored people."

Sarah was pleased with his feelings, but she felt it was time to be strong. She knew the future was uncertain for her mulatto son, but the problems in past were clear. Sarah felt his life would be more difficult as a local colored man.

"You are what life has made you. You were given to me as a baby. Your mother was a white woman and the man was a colored slave. You were taken from your mother to save you from your white grandfather."

"He would have killed you as the brown baby of his white daughter. They were fighting a war over the rights of colored people. Life can be what you make it. You can pass as a white person, because it is in your blood."

"White people will help and support you as a member of their group, as long as you follow their rules. They will accept you as a friend and as a member of their society. They will give you opportunities to succeed."

"It will be better for your children. Remember race mixing among families is against the rules for most white people. Colored people are not and will never be acceptable by most white people. The world is very divided between white people and people of color."

Rich thought about moving away from Brunswick County and starting his life as a white man. A white man with no family history and no old friends. Rich knew he could pass as white in the northern states life and live as a white person.

Rich wondered about his white mother and the Negro slave finding some type of love with so much hate between white and black people.

"Who were my parents? What was the family name?"

Sarah started to wonder about Rich's feelings toward his parents

and his white relatives. She did not know the family name, but his mother had some Harrison blood.

"I do not know the name of the family. Your mother was born with some Harrison blood. We could be one people, if we could respect and trust each other."

"The future of colored people is limited by a few white men with power. If you were a white man, your children would have more opportunities for a better life and change things for people of color."

"My father and grandfather were white men, all of their fathers were white men. You can be another white man for our family. You can live as a white man with a white family. You may be able to help colored people by being accepted by white people."

Rich smiled and stood, looking at the trees in the front yard. He turned toward the cabin, looking down toward Sarah, who was sitting on the bench near the fish.

"What difference will it make. I am one poor man with nothing. I do not belong to any race."

Sarah decided to finish her talk about Rich passing as a white man. Sarah stood and turned to her tall fair skinned son. She had given Rich something to consider for his future as a young man in America.

"Rich, some people are born into one religion and change their religion as they go through life. You were born out of one race into another race."

"The Law may see you as a mulatto, but it should be what you want in life. It is not their choice. It is not my choice. It is your choice."

Rich felt trapped by her words and his feelings. He was free to go and live the life of his choice.

"This is Virginia and I will live as I want. I do not need to chose my race as a man. I can be a man without a color or a race."

Sarah knew Rich would be considered mulatto by the local authorities because his association with colored people. She knew, in order to be accepted as a white person, he could not stay in the area. He would need to leave the southern states and start a new life in the

northern states. Rich decided to stay in the local area and continued to be with Sarah and the family on the farm near Ante.

The Harrison family farm, with over three hundred acres, was valued at seven hundred dollars for tax purposes. County tax value included one hundred dollars for the cabin and some small sheds. During the year, Sarah paid roughly two dollars at the Courthouse to the county tax commissioner.

Over time, the mulatto boys of Ante grew into strong and independent men living in harmony with people of color in the area. It was a difficult time for colored people. The local white authorities continued their oppression of civil rights and their denial of social justice toward former Negro slaves and other colored people in the area.

The colored men of the Harrison farm worked their crops, and quietly supported their families ignoring the growing and violent animosity of most white people toward people of color in Virginia and other southern states.

Local newspapers in Lawrenceville developed, printed and distributed information with conservative leaning in favor of local white politicians. These private newspapers reinforced racist attitudes and values among local white people. People of color were described as inferior and subordinate with many deficiencies in their character. Newspaper articles included information on local events in the white communities and some national news from the major cities.

There were advertisements from merchants with groceries, home supplies and other items. The town newspaper advertised personal services including all haircuts for twenty cents and shaves for ten cents. There was information on local society events and scheduled events for the white community. None of the newspapers served the interest of the black community.



WHITE BRIDE IN DISGUISE

(1880-1890)

Christian religious services for white people, living in the southern states during the early eighteenth century, were very emotional, with women shouting and girls fainting. Many of these women believed, it was possible to establish contact with the spiritual world in a proper religious setting. Some white women measured their integrity by their usefulness as a loyal Christian. However, emotional shouting and fainting by women and young girls became unusual with most white churches in the area. Most white men considered the observed practice to be an unacceptable behavior by their white women. The men expected all white women to show perseverance and strength of character with control and discipline over their actions.

A few white people began attending these black religious services, in nineteenth century, to participate in the highly emotional activities with colored people. The members of the congregation, who were descendants of very ceremonious tribes in their native Africa, easily accepted shouting and fainting of the women. Most white people believed the vivid emotional behavior was part of the black religious experience. Many of these white people considered the activities to be associated with African spiritualism among the Negro slaves.

Many of the colored citizens attended a few of the white churches, sitting separately in the church. Eventually, most of these colored people were encouraged to leave the churches and attend the black services with the Negro slaves.

Most Negro slaves and their colored neighbours often met in a secluded spot, during the early days of slavery, to pray for freedom. These people of color would discover a pleasant location in the woods to meet with family and friends. These shady spots served, as local weather conditions permitted, as a place of worship. When local conditions were not suitable, the slaves met in their cabins, in family groups, to pray for salvation. These meetings were usually secretive.

The beautiful sites for religious services in the forest provided excellent locations for the eventual construction of black churches. In Brunswick County, black churches included locations at Cedar Grove, Hickory Run and Poplar Mount. Like most places of open worship in the southern states, all three of these churches were Baptist. Black churches grew rapidly after the end of the Civil War.

Local farmers started the Poplar Mount Baptist Church on some land, near a swamp, owned by Jeffrey Powell. The former slaveowner donated the land for the church. The poor colored congregation constructed a log cabin for the worship services and other activities in the farm community. The congregation named the black church for a poplar tree at the center of the worship place. The large tree stood over a hundred feet with bright green leaves and greenish yellow petals.

Guy Powell was one of the leaders in the church. Powell attended the Virginia Union University in Richmond, which was established for colored people. The progressive congregation sent Powell to the school. He returned to the farm community of Ante in 1871. Powell preached social and religious values to colored people in his ministry. Powell encouraged colored people to buy land, build homes and support schools for Negro and other colored children in the area.

Reverend Powell was at the age of twenty one years, when he returned from school in Richmond. His enthusiasm for the virtues of land and home ownership resulted in the growth of a strong black community and his commitment to children and their education resulted in the first school facility for colored children at the Poplar Mount Church. Most members of the church continued to buy land and start small farms in the area with their children.

Many white people became disenchanted with the political and social themes of reconstruction taught in the local black churches. Consequently, local white people stopped attending and participating at the worship services with colored people in the black churches. The spiritual concept of black became the absence of white as the two

groups grew into two distinct and separate communities with the same geography.

Reverend Powell and his wife, Mary Ann, lived on a small farm in 1880, near the home of his father. Milton Powell was a born free colored man with five sons. He lived with two of his sons, Bob and Ben. Juanita, the slave mother of his five sons, died several years earlier. The family worked in their fields growing cotton and tobacco to sell at the local market for cash. Bob, one of the sons, continued to visit the young men on the Harrison farm and their sister, Sallie.

Sarah was the grandmother of a baby girl on the Harrison farm. She was caring for Alice, her granddaughter from Susan and John. *Jim and Ben, her two older sons, were married with small children on their farm.* Jim and Rosa were living north of the Harrison farm. Ben was living on the family land with his wife, Mary. John, the father of Alice, died in the cabin and was buried on the family farm, near the cabin.

Negro and other colored people saw the mulatto children, during slavery, as living evidence of the wrongful social and sexual exploitation of slave women by white men. Most women, vulnerable to the whims of men, could sympathize with the sad plight of young slave girls. Many of the married white women believed that all race-mixing was wrong. The women recognized the relations as sexual competition between women. Colored males were forbidden to have sexual relations with white females.

Sallie decided, beyond her eighteenth birthday, to marry young Robert Powell, a former Negro slave. The County Office refused to issue a marriage license for this inter-racial and illegal marriage. Sallie did not understand the reason given for the refusal to issue a marriage license. Sallie wondered why the people, in the Clerk office, believed she was a white woman. Sallie knew most of the local white people considered her family to be people of color in the black community.

Sarah realized, Sallie felt confused and hurt, for being turned away from marriage at the County Office. Sarah wanted her daughter to understand the problem of race selection with a marriage to Robert. Sarah trusted their bond as mother and daughter would help Sallie understand the situation. The sad feelings, hidden by the mysterious secrets of sexuality, were painful. The women shared their sexual suffering and endured the struggles of daughters, sisters and mothers.

Sarah held Sallie's hand as they walked down the road on a winter day. Sarah knew Sallie would live with Bob but she wanted to talk to Sallie about Charles, her former lover.

"I am deeply sorry about what happen to you and Robert in town at the Courthouse. The County Clerk is an old man and people have changed more than he is able to change. I will help you get a marriage license."

Sallie felt better about her racial identity and decided to marry Bob with or without a marriage license. Sallie knew her mother wanted a marriage license for a proper family.

"Mother, what will you say to him?"

Sarah thought about her Sallie being a white girl to the people in the County Office. Sarah knew the birth records in the Courthouse stated Sallie was a white female and the slave records would note Bob was a Negro male.

"I will say your skin color should not matter and his race should not matter. What should matter are your feelings about Robert and his feelings about you. This is all that should matter to people."

Sallie observed her mother's pale skin and wondered what was the truth about being white.

"They will say the only thing that matters is the Law and it says people of different races can not marry."

"Mother, what is the truth? Am I white or colored?"

Sarah stopped and turned toward Sallie. Sarah wanted to give an honest answer to her only daughter.

"The truth is I do not know. Your birth record says you are white. Grandmother decided you were white because she believed the man was white. She never asked me, but by his appearance, I guess he would be called white."

Sallie turned as Sarah continued walking, holding hands, down the old dirt toward the general store.

"If my father was a white man and my mother is a white woman, then I must also be a white woman. The Law says we can not marry as black and white people!"

Sarah noticed how quickly her daughter was calling a man that she had never met, her father.

"This man, who was responsible for your birth, may have been a white man. I am not sure my mother was a white

woman. I may have colored blood and my mother may have had colored blood. You may also have colored blood. We were all born without fathers."

Sallie grew very concerned about the family. She knew her mother and her grandmother gave birth to females, without any man identified as the father. Sallie felt that the talks about, these women having heated sexual affairs with men of another race, was surprising. She knew these women were white by birth.

"Mother, I am confused. You are saying we may be colored because your mother may have been colored."

Sarah felt Sallie needed to understand the family legacy of the Harrison women. Sarah knew their heritage and culture as a family was important for the future.

"We were three generations of women without husbands or other men. We were mothers of children without fathers or other male influence. There were many possibilities for unmarried women with different circumstances."

"My family became my people and my race."

Sallie thought about being a white person in the colored community or being a colored person in the white community.

"Mother, are you saying pick a side, black or white, and then live your life for better or worse."

Sarah smiled because she wanted Sallie to marry and have a young family. Sarah felt her daughter did not need to take a former slave.

"We may be white or colored with some Negro or Indian blood. How would I know, if we can not see it in a mirror? When I look at my children, I do not see their differences, but I know they are different."

"By not having a father, we were given choices about our heritage, most people do not have a choice in life. It was not a choice between black or white, it is about being free to accept and develop your culture."

Sallie understood her mother, but she wanted to know who and what was her father. Sallie did not like the idea of not knowing her father. She wanted to know more about her father or man at her birth, whoever or whatever he was.

"You may be partly a colored woman, but the record will say white. How did you meet my father, or as you call him, your former white lover."

Sarah wondered, if Charles were alive. She hoped he was not killed in the civil war. Sarah felt she would never know the truth about her former white lover.

"Your father was a travelling merchant, who sold goods to local farmers. His name was Charles Smith. He started visiting our farm before the war. Charles was from the state of Pennsylvania and his parents were Quakers."

Sallie never heard of Quakers, but her brothers had told her about the Mister Charles, who visited their mother.

"Mother, what are Quakers? I never heard of them."

Sarah did not know much about Quakers. Sarah remembered some of the things told to her by Charles.

"Quakers are white people, who are strong Christians."

"They believe in quiet worship and peaceful living with all people. Charles was not a strong believer, but he was a devoted member. They were against slavery."

Sallie suspected her mother was white, with only English ancestors. Sallie felt Sarah shared neither Negro nor Indian blood. Sallie thought of herself as a white girl waiting and wanting to marry a colored man.

"Mother, whether I am white or not and whether it is legal or not, I am going to marry Bob."

Sarah slowly dropped Sallie's hand from her hand as they stopped walking. Sarah looked at her young stubborn daughter of eighteen years. Sarah continued to walk and talk about an earlier time with Charles, the man responsible for Sallie.

"Charles and I became good friends. He would play with your brothers, when they were small boys. He wanted us to move to Pennsylvania before the War."

"Charles and I got to be lovers. We became the best of friends and I got pregnant. He went back to his home in the northern states, before we knew I was pregnant."

"The War started with fighting between the states. He never came back. I do not know what happened to him, but we became a family without a father."

Sarah walked away and sat on a small hill at the side of the road, near a tall oak tree.

"I wanted you to know about Charles. I raised five sons just like Robert. I see no difference between them and other men. My sons are neither black nor white to me."

"They are men with no differences between them."

"Women are entitled to support from their husbands, but they become dependent on the men. These men can keep or discard the women without any trouble. The men control the happiness of a woman. Do not expect any man to be faithful. Robert is a man and he will act just like my sons or any other men in the world."

"What will you tell Robert about your color and your race being considered white by the County Clerk."

Sallie thought about her mother calling Bob by his first name. She was being proper to emphasize Robert as a man.

"Mother, I will tell the truth. It will not matter to him. We will be married and our children will be the same color, brothers and sisters."

Sarah visited the County Clerk Office at the Courthouse, in January of 1880, to hear about the family farm. The Clerk remembered those questions about her race, when Sarah claimed the family farm. He served as Clerk for forty years. He was familiar with the claim of Sarah being colored, while his tax records showed her to be a white female. The old records also showed her daughter as a white girl at birth.

Sarah walked into the County Courthouse and asked to see the County Clerk. The county office contained several opened books on large tables. Sarah remembered her earlier visit to the Courthouse and her claim to the Harrison farm.

The old Clerk slowly walked into the room with a cane at the side of his leg. The Clerk smiled at Sarah as he offered a seat next to a table.

"Hello, Miss Sarah. It is nice to see you. How have you been? I understand there is a problem with your daughter and a colored boy."

Sarah knew the old clerk understood the problem with the classifications for race in a marriage license between Sallie and Bob, a colored man. She felt the law was wrong.

"My daughter wants to marry Robert Powell. He is the son of Milton and Juanita Powell. They were not able to get a marriage license for some reason. I am here to help with any misunderstanding by your office."

The Clerk looked over at the other people working in the office. He turned toward Sarah with a smile.

"There is no problem in my office. The boy, she wants to marry, is a Negro. We have a Law against white people marrying colored people. A marriage between this boy and your daughter would be illegal and immoral."

Sarah understood his feelings on their relations. Sarah felt the old man wanted her to admit she was a colored women.

"My daughter and all of my children are colored."

The old clerk smiled and shook his head to indicate some of his disagreement, with the comments from Sarah. He knew most of the children were not born to Sarah.

"I know some of your children came from other white families. Some were born white. Most of the fathers were white men. Your daughter is white. She can not legally marry the colored boy. It is the Law."

Sarah knew the birth of Sam was not recorded as white by the County office. The man, responsible for Sam, was a Negro and the birth was recorded as a colored male. It was part of the records at the County Courthouse.

"My children are the same. Your records may differ between my children, but I know the truth about their blood. Your records are wrong about the children."

The clerk turned toward the other people in the room and thought of the many records stored in the books. He knew his family recorded most of the legal events in the county.

"The Law is recorded in these books. We will not change the truth because your daughter wants to marry a Negro boy. Your children are white just as your parents and your grandparents were white."

Sarah decided not to challenge the Clerk with the rumors about her parents and her grandparents. Sarah chose to prove he was wrong about all of her children being white.

"The birth of my son, Sam, was recorded in these books before the War. The truth about his race and his color were noted in the books. He was born in July of 1859 as a colored male."

"I know this to be the truth, because I reported his birth to your office and they recorded the truth."

"The birth of John, my son, and the birth of Sallie, my daughter, were reported by my grandmother. She did not know the men responsible for these children."

The old clerk called one of his male helpers in the room and instructed him to get their 1859 birth records. The book was opened to July and the clerk read the birth records.

"I see the birth record of Samuel Harrison, and your name as the mother. It was recorded as the birth a colored male. I agree this is your son and he is not white. You were the mother of this colored boy."

"What is the birth date for your first son and your daughter? I want to see the record with my eyes."

Sarah carefully watched as the old man called his helper to get the other books. Sarah acted as if she could read the words in the books, but she did not understand the writings.

"John was born in 1854 and Sallie was born in 1861."

The old clerk looked into each book as his helper placed the books on the table. The old man agreed Sarah was correct about her grandmother reporting the births of white children.

"The records support your statements. I will accept your claim of the children being colored. I knew some of your children could be colored, but I also suspected your family was also colored."

"I believe you to be a colored woman. The farm was not your birth right for your colored children."

"Your daughter and the Negro boy can marry. Tell her to see me in my office. I will give them a license to marry. You claim her to be colored. I will accept your word, but the record will show she was born white."

Sarah quietly thanked the old man and quickly walked out of the office into the lobby for the Courthouse. She decided to visit her friend,

Jane, before returning to the farm. She was happy for Sallie, who was getting to marry the man of her choice. Sarah hoped Robert Powell was the right choice. She told Jane about meeting with the old Clerk at the Courthouse.

Robert Henry Powell and Sallie Elizabeth Harrison joined together, as married man and wife, in February. The ceremony was conducted by Reverend Chavis. Sarah and Jane served most of the meal during an evening reception, at the family cabin, after the wedding ceremony. Sallie moved to the farm home of her husband, Bob, with his father, Milton. Sallie, the white bride, was mulatto on the marriage license in the record.

GRANDDAUGHTERS

While some women were gaining more rights and power, the basic role of married women did not change from child bearing for most women. Most men continued with polygamous marriages by keeping two wives and creating rivalries among women. The men and the wives made little or no attempt to limit the size of their families through abstinence. Most of the wives were not able to withdraw from the intimacy of their marriages.

Relations between women were ambiguous, as married women felt threatened by unmarried women. White women were concerned about the young mulatto girls, with their fair skin and white appearance, attracting their white men. White women believed the young colored women were more sensuous and passionate due to their tropical nature. Some of these white women imagined the young mulatto girls possessed a promiscuous nature.

Sallie gave birth to Willie Charles, in January of 1881, on the Powell farm. Sarah and some other women helped Sallie with the delivery in the cabin. Sallie gave birth to her son at a comparative ease. Bob, the happy father, decided to get some public land for a small farm.

Sallie cooked and cleaned in the cabin as the men worked in the fields on the farm. Bob continued to stay on the farm with his father. Guy and Mary lived in a cabin near the farm with George, another son of Milton Powell. Both of the wives shared chores and took care of the small children.

Mary, a big woman with dark skin, was fifteen years older to Sallie. Mary considered Sallie to be a good wife, but she saw her as a poor little white girl. The family kept an active role in the church and most

of the members accepted the young mulatto girl. Mary was generally supportive of her young neighbor and she functioned as a sister to Sallie.

James and Rosa saw the birth of John, their third son in the Sturgeon area. Sam married Hester Steward, while working as a new sharecropper in the area. Sarah was the grandmother of seven grandsons and a granddaughter. Sallie was expecting another child from Bob. Sarah was hoping for a baby girl.

Sallie gave birth to a mulatto girl in May of 1883, with her mother and others helping in the birth. Gertrude was the second child of Sallie and Bob. Sarah got a granddaughter in her extended family of nine grandchildren.

Bob constructed a cabin on open farm land designated for former slaves by the 1870 Reconstruction Act. Bob and Sallie moved in 1884 to the site and settled into the log cabin with their children as small family farmers.

The Homestead Act of 1862 granted forty acres of land to adult citizens with proof of five year occupancy plus payment of a registration fee. The grant of public land required the land be used for a family home. Former Negro slaves received the same homestead rights to land with the Reconstruction Act of 1870. Farmers established ownership of the land with five year occupancy. The farmers could pay roughly one dollar per acre to the government for a clear title to the land.

In their first year on the farm, the young family earned over one hundred dollars. Bob received fifty dollars for the corn crop plus thirty dollars for the cotton crop. They sold three hogs for twenty-five dollars and received eight dollars for cotton seeds, separated from the cotton ball. The family enjoyed the early success on the small farm. Sallie was soon expecting another baby with Bob.

Virtually all southern white community leaders continued to deny employment and voting opportunities to colored people through violence and other forms of coercion. The bitterness of many southern white people toward colored people, resulted from the hardships created by the emancipation of slaves plus the radically enforced reconstruction programs. The racial and social tensions, among most individuals, restricted political and economic development of black communities in the southern states and the cities in the northern states.

Racial attitudes, for most white people, discouraged the selling of land to Negro families and other colored people in the southern states.

Land was a source of economic power, as wealthy individuals dominated the selling and buying of land, in the area. Farm land, originally claimed and owned by poor colored families, was subject to court enforced foreclosures, by greedy white merchants or clever white politicians.

Sarah worried about her children and their heritage from her grandparents. She wanted her grandchildren to own land and build strong families in the area. Sarah decided to make arrangements to sell land to other family members. John, her neighbor, asked for twenty-five acres to start farming. John and Emma Harrison were cousins to Sarah.

Ben decided to talk to Sarah about selling land to other farmers in the area. Ben walked over to the cabin during the evening. He walked up the path to her cabin for a visit with the sun setting in the west.

Sarah was sitting on a bench, under a large oak tree, at the front of the cabin. She knew something was troubling her son, as he came over and sat on a bench near Sarah.

"Hello Ben, how are you doing? Why are you looking so poorly this evening? Have you been eating?"

Ben smiled, but he was still concerned about the selling of the land to other families for money.

"I saw Bill Mitchel, today. He wanted to talk to me about buying some land from you."

Sarah knew the Mitchel family was an old problem for her children. The Mitchel family never forgot the property taken from their family and awarded, by the County Court, to Phoebe in 1837. Bill Mitchel wanted more land to enlarge his cotton and tobacco farm, which was connected by a small creek.

"How is Mister Mitchel? I thought he was happy with his store selling food and seeds to farmers."

Ben smiled knowing that Sarah understood the feelings of most white people toward colored people owning land. He felt his mother knew Mitchel and she understood his feelings about colored people. Ben knew Bill did not like colored people in the area, but Bill liked Sarah and her family. Ben felt Bill was kind to his mother because he felt she was white.

"Bill is doing fine at his store. He wants to increase the

size of his farm for his family. He wants land on the south-side. He wants to move the front road near us."

"Bill wants a larger farm. He does not want to grow more corn or cotton. If he wants to own more land, he should ask his friends to sell land."

Sarah wondered, why Mitchel wanted more land on the road to grow tobacco. Sarah felt Mitchel did not need her land to increase his farm, but she was curious about his offer.

"How much land does Bill want to buy for his farm?"

Ben looked at Sarah, who was smiling at him. He did not understand his mother's reaction to the offer from Mitchel.

"Bill says he wants the land between the creek and the road. He says its about a hundred acres. He wants the land for his children. He will pay two dollars an acre for the land."

Rich quietly walked out of the cabin and sat on the door stoop, with his knees up. Alice was asleep on the bed in the cabin. Rich probably did not care about farm land being sold or kept by the family.

Sarah suspected Rich was curious about their discussions on selling farm land to other people. She wondered about Ben not willing to sell several acres of the farm to other people outside of the family.

"Ben, what is wrong? The land is not a problem for us to sell, if we need the money."

Ben looked away into the open field and started thinking about Bill Mitchel as their neighbour.

"Mother, if Bill Mitchel wants some land, he should buy from white people. He should not be trying to buy our land or the land of other colored people."

"We need to keep our land in our family. We should not sell any of the land to him. We may need it."

Sarah understood Ben's problem with selling land outside of the family. Sarah agreed Bill wanted to buy the land from colored people, so white people would own it.

"Bill and I are different individuals living separate, but related lives. I do not approve of his feelings toward colored people and some of his choices in life."

Ben looked at Sarah and turned toward the cabin. He saw a large maple tree standing beyond the oak tree in clear view with the early moonlight.

"Mother, do you want to sell land to white people?"

Sarah smiled and looked over at Ben, as he turned toward the front yard. Sarah knew, it was evening and Ben needed to go home to his family.

"Life is not so simple for people. We are poor and simple caretakers living on a small farm. We are trying to make something out of our lives."

Ben stood, looking at his mother, as he thought about her comments. Ben did not understand her willingness to sell any land to white people. It was important to keep the land.

"Mother, we should never sell the land. The farm has been in our family for more than a hundred years. We must keep it for the grandchildren."

Sarah understood his strong feelings towards the land and she knew Ben was confused by her feelings.

"The land is not ours to keep. There are many roads to travel for all people. Some roads are dead ends, some roads never end and some roads are one way. We need to share with others. We should help other people."

Ben felt people need to work and live according to their means. Ben knew his mother wanted to help others get started with their farms and homes as families.

"Mother, I will talk to Bill Mitchel. I will tell him the land is not for sale, because you want it for your grandchildren. Bill asked because he wants your land, but he does not want to be next to colored people."

Sarah smiled and moved her head to indicate an agreement with Ben. Sarah knew she would not sell any of their land to someone outside of the family. Ben stood and started walking toward the road. He waived good-bye to Sarah and Rich.

Sarah sold twenty-five acres in December of 1880 to John and Emma Harrison. The land, covered with trees, bordered an old creek in the north corner of the farm. The land sold for twenty dollars by Ben. The old farm listed for taxes, as two hundred seventy-seven acres,

and valued at two dollars for an acre. Sarah decided her farm should be surveyed and recorded at the County Clerk office in the courthouse. Sarah made the arrangements for a survey of the farm land and Ben recorded a deed in Sarah's name at the courthouse.

Sallie attended the Poplar Mount Baptist Church with the children to hear Bob's brother, Guy Powell. The Ministers in the black churches preached and encouraged people to buy land and send their children to school for a good education. Most of the black churches exercised powerful influence over local black communities with Negro and other colored families.

Sallie discussed religion with her mother, but Sarah did not attend any of the black churches. Sallie lived about ten miles from the Harrison family farm, but she continued to see her mother, Sarah. She would ride her mule driven wagon down the winding road with her children. The women would normally talk about the children during her visits. Occasionally, the women would talk about black and white race relations.

Sallie started talking to Sarah about being white in the black community. Sallie felt accepted by most colored people in the area, but she was not comfortable with local people in the black church. Sallie knew some colored people considered her to be a young white woman living with a black man.

"Mother, you say color is not important. What do you think is the color of God?"

Sarah was holding Gertrude, while Alice was playing with the baby boy. She thought about the question of color for the people in the area. Sarah felt the Bible did not answer many of the questions regarding the differences in people.

"Sallie, I do not believe God has a color. God does not need a color to be felt or seen. God is love and it is everywhere there are good hearts and souls."

"God is the love between two people when they care about each other. It is sharing and caring. It is the power holding us together and doing the right things for your family and friends. God does not have or need a color."

Sallie thought about God as feelings and emotions with no physical structure. She imagined God was a spirit.

"Mother, if God is a spirit with no body or physical presence, God may not have a color. Is God a woman?"

Sarah thought of God as being female in nature. She felt women should not think of God as a man. She believed God was neither male nor female. Sarah saw God as a power.

"I believe God is neither a man nor a woman."

"Most of us want God to be in our image. God must be very different from us. God is felt but never seen. We can hear God, and we hope God will listen to us. God is not invisible to most people, they see the work of God in everything and everywhere."

"If God needed to paint itself for the eyes of men, it would not be white like the dead winter nor black like the empty night. God would be green like life."

"God is the love we share in life. The color green is for the land which gives food and shelter to us."

Sallie did not like some of the comments, her mother was making about God being love. Her faith and beliefs were more traditional within religions of the area. Sallie had strong feelings about marriage and proper family life.

"Mother, you make God sound like a thing rather than a person. We are called the children of God in the Bible and Jesus was the son of God. He must be a person."

Sarah, like the native people, believed God was the love in nature, allied closely with animals. Sarah identified God as the living spirit in everything. She looked at the babies and smiled as a mother of small children.

"Sallie, you can make God into a man or a woman."

"God can be black or white. I think your faith should determine what God means to you."

"I like to think of God being in the heart"

Sallie did not want to talk any more about God. She was not comfortable with her mother's statements on religion.

"Mother, do you think a woman is free to leave her man, if he is unfaithful to their relationship?"

Sarah decided not to answer the question. She looked at the children. Gertrude was asleep in Sarah's arms, while the other children, Alice and Willie, were playing in the dirt on the floor. Sarah quietly stood up and carried the small baby over to her bed in the corner.

Sallie decided to join the small children. She realized her mother was not going to answer her question about leaving an unfaithful husband. Sallie concluded her visit with Sarah and drove her wagon back to the Powell farm.

Sarah believed in marriage, but encouraged most women in her family to be independent of their men. She felt some men were not reliable for the support in a family. Sarah thought women should have individual ownership of property and little girls should get the same education as the little boys.

LADIES AND BABIES

Wealthy men were able to indulge their erotic and sexual impulses with impunity, during the first two hundred years of slavery, in the white and black communities. Many white male slaveowners did not sanction or respect marriages among Negro slaves. The sexual misconduct by white men toward the female servants and slaves was common. There were scandalous nudity and illicit intercourse, as men dominated and controlled women with licentious sexual relationships.

Most slaves, deprived of a stable family, lived in large farm communities. Women slaves could not achieve or maintain sexual security without the staunch protection of slaveowners in the area. A few female slaves lured some slaveowners into very illicit attachments for favorable treatment. A few male slaves seduced some wives and daughters of owners for special advantages on the plantation.

This romantic age of individualism and sexual corruption continued after the emancipation of southern slaves. Despite fears of promiscuity with excessive sexuality, the lascivious habits and sensualities of men were uninhibited. Many of the husbands failed to honor and respect their marriages. Sexual rivalry developed among many of the women for the support and affection of the men, which continued into the next century.

Jane was living and working as a housekeeper for several white families in the town of Lawrenceville. Jane was dating and giving her age as thirty-nine years. She was actually at forty-four years, when she became pregnant with another child in the autumn of 1883.

Jane decided to visit her best friend, Sarah. Jane felt the Harrison women would want to know more about the baby and the man. Jane drove her wagon into the yard, while Sarah was outside getting some wood for the stove and fireplace.

Sarah smiled as Jane walked over from her mule and wagon at the edge of the yard. Sarah noticed the smile on her face as Jane walked toward the pile of dry wooden chips.

"Good morning, Jane. You are looking very pleasant and bright. How have you been doing?"

Jane smiled at Sarah and looked at little Alice, who was five years old. Jane was tall and slender with dark skin and dark eyes. Jane was very attractive without any gray showing in her long black hair.

"Good morning, Sarah and Alice. You are looking very nice today. Let me help you with the fire wood. The nights are getting very cold."

Sarah noticed Jane did not respond to her question. She decided they would go inside and get some coffee.

"Please come inside and get a cup of coffee."

Sarah picked up the wood in her arms and walked into the warm cabin. The hot fire in the cabin was smothering. Sarah placed a log onto the aches of the fire.

"Jane, its cold at night because you live alone."

"You need someone to keep you warm like Alice. She is the best bed warmer in the world."

Jane smiled at Alice, who was quietly grinning about her grandmother's comments.

"You must be right I need Alice to live with me. Alice, you want to come and live with me?"

Sarah smiled and decided to wait for an answer from Jane on how she was doing. Sarah wondered what was on her mind.

"As you might expect, the men are doing fine with their farms and the women are having babies. I have seven grandchildren with more babies coming from these young fertile women. Who can keep a count on babies?"

"Sallie is holding little Gertrude in her arms and her husband is ready for another baby."

Jane smiled with Sarah's comments. Jane knew her friend did not like men having control over the women.

"You should be proud. They have husbands, who want to

stay home and be fathers. That is very rare in these parts for the men. You should be proud of your sons."

Sarah laughed at Jane's naive view of her sons and their roles in the Harrison families. Sarah believed her sons were men with the same strength and weakness as other men.

"We should be proud. You helped with the children."

Jane smiled and thought over the comments on getting her help with the children. Jane felt they helped Sarah with the children, but Sarah was always the mother.

"The children may not have fathers, but we could not have the babies without them. We simply raise our children without any men to help us."

Sarah knew Jane always liked men and she saw quite a few men over the years. Sarah suspected a few of her men friends could be married or living with other women.

"I know the men were part of it, but it was a very small part. What is the real value of their part?"

Jane smiled and thought about the lack of men in Sarah's life as lovers. Jane knew there were probably only a few men lovers in Sarah's life and none in the last twenty years.

"They do it for their pleasure. I was saying a woman needs a man to have a baby and the more your man is at home, the more babies you will carry as a mother."

Sarah agreed with her friend and thought about Sallie in a difficult marriage. There were two babies in three years.

"Sallie will stay in trouble with Robert at home."

Jane laughed and thought it was like Sarah to see sex as trouble. Jane felt a baby as a great blessing.

"Sallie is lucky. She is married to a hard working man, who is smart and handsome. I never heard anyone say anything bad about him. He is a good man."

Sarah wondered, how Jane would know about Robert. Sarah thought of Jane as an independent woman, living without a man or husband in the black community of Lawrenceville.

Sarah preferred not to know the details of Jane's sexual affairs with

local men. Sarah wanted to focus her attentions on Sallie and her marriage to Bob Powell.

"The marriage is still fresh with two babies and a farm needing a lot of work. Sallie can handle it for now, but time will tell the story."

Jane was curious. Jane knew Sallie was talking to Sarah about Bob and their marriage. Jane felt Sarah knew more than she was telling. Jane felt it was improper to ask Sarah.

"What do you mean time will tell? What is wrong?"

Sarah felt Sallie and Bob were happy as a married couple living together, in love. She recalled Sallie talking about her husband being kind and tender as a lover. Sarah knew the young couple needed some time to adjust to each other.

"Robert is a man, like all of the other men."

Sarah recalled Sallie describing Bob as a gentle man and a good father. Sarah felt Sallie was happy with her husband.

"Men live by their needs and their wants. When a man has a full stomach at home, he will stay at home. When his stomach is empty, he will eat anywhere."

Jane understood the comments by Sarah, but she would not agree with her analogy of food compared to sex.

"That is not a man; that is a dog. A man is more than a simple animal. A man has a mind and a heart to do what is right. He can be good or bad to his woman. A hungry dog will eat anywhere and anything."

Sarah thought about her comments. Sarah felt Jane could be right about some men. Sarah wondered if her feelings were unfair to men. Sarah knew only a few men in her life outside of her sons and the relationships with their wives.

"Jane, you may be right. My view of men is from seeing them at a distance for a long time. I may have never thought of a man as another person."

Sarah felt some men were strong and righteous with their families. Sarah believed most men were poor companions based on her past experience with men.

"I never had a husband or a brother. I did not have a father or grandfather to teach me about men."

Jane thought about the married men seeing other women on the weekends, while their wives are home with their children.

"I know some men, who are not much different from the dogs. There are good men and there are bad women in every town. There are also good women and bad men."

"There is not much difference between men and women."

Sarah wondered, how Jane was doing in town. She decided to again ask the question.

"Philan said I could not see the men in my sons. I may need to take another look at men. You are right about the men and the dogs."

"Tell me about you and how you are doing in town. Are you still working in town?"

Jane smiled and thought about being pregnant. Jane felt it was wonderful for a woman at the age of forty years. Jane did not know what to say to her old friend.

"I am still working keeping house for some families in town, but things are going to change. I may have to quit my job in town."

"I will need to quit because I am going to be a mother with a new baby. I am pregnant at the tender age of forty years"

Sarah was happy for Jane. Sarah knew her friend was not too old for a baby. She wanted to ask questions, but decided to ask only one question.

"This a wonderful surprize. How are you feeling?"

Jane saw her friend was pleased with the good news. She smiled and thought about her feelings about the baby.

"I feel fine, but I am concerned about working a job and taking care of a baby at my age."

Sarah felt there was no need to worry about working with a baby. Sarah was more concerned about the mother's health.

"Jane, you need to be very careful with this baby."

"I know of older women having babies, but they were very careful. You should be careful and not work too hard at your job. We will help you with the baby."

Jane was not ready to quit her job in town and move onto a farm in the woods, she wanted the help from Sarah.

"I am going to stay in town, but I would like you to stay with me when the time is near."

Sarah agreed she would help Jane when the time was right and move into her house. The two women continued to talk for several hours, but Jane did not tell the name of the man, who was responsible for her condition. Sarah decided she did not want to know the circumstances or the name of the man.

Jane gave birth to a colored female in March of 1884, at her home in Lawrenceville. Jane was a housekeeper working at several homes. Anna was the fourth child for Jane. The clerk recorded the birth at the local courthouse. There was no man listed as the father in the record. There was some gossip in the black community about the father being a married man with other children. Jane did not discuss the local gossip.

Mary also gave birth to a colored female, on Independence Day in 1884. Claudia was the third child for Mary and Ben. She was Sarah's third granddaughter. Sarah helped with the birth and cared for Mary. At the age of forty-five years Sarah was the grandmother of ten children.

Sarah gave land to a local church and recorded the land, where John was buried, as a family cemetery. Sarah purchased a survey of the land to determine the farm size and establish its actual area boundaries. The acreage of the farm resulted from eighteenth century purchases by Daniel Harrison.

The Harrison farm was surveyed, in 1884, with some parts of the land assigned to the Rising Star Church and the family cemetery. The size of the family farm was reduced to roughly two hundred acres. Sarah rented the crop fields to Ben for a fixed amount, payable from the sale of the crops. The fields included cotton and tobacco crops worked by Ben and Rich.

FARMING IN POVERTY

The Supreme Court, of the United States, declared it was unconstitutional to prohibit racial discrimination by private individuals. The High Court decided the Fourteenth Amendment only prohibited race discrimination by the government and its agencies. The 1883 Court decided the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution does not protect the civil rights of colored persons. The Supreme Court ruled

the Amendment only provided for the citizenship rights of Negro and other colored people.

Southern plantation owners did not have sufficient money to hire field workers, with the defeat of the confederacy and emancipation of their slaves. A few of the large land owners sold sections of their farm for cash, but most owners started leasing acreage to former slaves and other workers. The farm workers did not have enough cash to pay rent as tenants.

The tenant farmers paid a share, often fifty percent, of the proceeds from their crops. The unfair system of farming, called sharecropping, was very prevalent in the area. Tenant farmers frequently borrowed money with the crops for supplies and other living essentials. Farmers often pledged shares of their crops to merchants for seeds, tools and supplies.

Crop liens were expensive sources of credit for southern tenant farmers. Most of the local farmers, compelled by most merchants, produced the crops with consistent demand, such as cotton and tobacco. Local white merchants dominated southern communities and created continuing tension with local colored farmers. The tenant farmers, heavily in crop debt, grew more hostile toward the wealthy white merchants and the large land owners, who controlled their farms.

The Harrison brothers worked separately and together, as farmers, on different farms growing cotton and tobacco. They continued to help their mother with her crops, while she took care of Alice as her child. Sarah also cared for young Anna, in order for Jane to work as a house keeper. Sarah could not keep sufficient cash for family items and household supplies, despite being prudent with her money.

Sarah took a lien on her land for sixty dollars in April of 1887. The loan was an advance on supplies and clothing at a store owned by the Furness Brothers, local merchants in the town of Lawrenceville. The open credit account was due to be paid by November. Sarah paid the account in October with the crop money from her farm. This was the fourth time, in twenty years, Sarah borrowed money with her land.

Sallie continued to deliver babies, with Robert Lamar in 1885 and James Dolson in 1887. Sarah's family had grown from the mother with six children to the grandmother with thirteen grandchildren. James and Rosa were parents of three children with Ben and Mary also having three children. Sam and Hester were parents of two children. Sallie and Bob were parents of four children. Alice was the oldest grandchild.

Sarah thought about Rich and his future. Sarah recalled her Uncle Richard, who never married and died at a relatively young age. Sarah wanted to talk to Rich about the problem at his birth with his white family during the war.

Sarah walked to the back field as pine trees blocked the sun in the western sky. She could see Rich plowing the field for seeding. The mule was pulling the plow through the rocky and sandy soil, while Rich followed in the fresh path holding the two ropes guiding the mule. Sarah slowly walked toward a clear area, where Rich kept a jar of water. Sarah sat on the old log, from a fallen tree, and waited for Rich.

Sarah decided to talk to Rich and describe the events of the past. Sarah hoped he would understand and appreciate the situation during a time of hate and violence.

"Hello, how are you doing? It is good to see you."

Rich noticed his mother sitting in the shade and waiting for him. He knew her visit to the back fields was unusual.

"Hello Mother, what brings you back into these parts?"

Sarah smiled as Rich walked over to get his jar of water and talk to his mother. She felt Rich was different from his brothers. She knew part was the age difference, part was the big sister influence, and part could not be explained. Sarah wanted Rich to marry and start a family.

"I wanted to talk to you about your past and your blood relatives. I wanted to talk about your family."

Rich guided the mule from the field into a tree clearing near Sarah. He watched as the mule grazed. Rich walked over to area and sat next to Sarah.

"What do you want to say about my past?"

Sarah looked toward Rich and slowly turned her head away from him. She thought about Philan saying the boys needed to know the truth about their origins and their blood relatives.

"I want to tell you about the past because it is time for you to learn the truth about your blood."

Rich understood her statement. Rich suspected Sarah was not his natural mother. He heard the other comments from his older brothers over the years.

"Mother, I always wondered what happen to my father?"

Sarah did not like discussing the men from the past, who were responsible for the children. She did not refer to them as fathers, because the men were not parents. They were poor males spreading their seeds.

Sarah thought about his birth and the events surrounding his white mother and his brown skin. She was not certain the father was a colored man. Sarah knew most of the white woman suspected the natural father of the baby was a colored man.

"This is difficult, but I never met the man responsible for you. I know he was not a father to you or a husband to your mother. He was a man spreading seeds."

"A good farmer is more than a person who puts seeds in the ground. A father is more than a man who helps a woman become pregnant."

Rich felt Sarah's statement about not knowing the father was a surprise. He knew his mother had strong feelings about the role of men as fathers. Rich always suspected, Sarah was not his natural mother or the mother of his brothers.

"Mother, I am not surprised to learn I was an orphan like my brothers. Who was my mother?"

Sarah knew Rich suspected she was not his natural mother and he was an orphan. She accepted his personal belief, that her other sons were also orphans.

"I was there when you were born and I raised you from birth. I may be the only mother you will ever know?"

Rich knew Sarah was the woman, who raised him from birth and provided a home. He knew Sarah was his only mother.

"If you were there when I was born. You must have met my mother. Did you adopt me when I was a baby?"

Sarah recalled going to help a young pregnant white girl during the war. Sarah heard the girl was pregnant by her boy friend, before he went to serve in the confederate cause.

"I was helping the girl with the birth of her baby. My grandmother taught me to serve as a midwife to the local women. I was giving instructions, when you came out."

"The girl's mother started crying because your skin was

brown. She and the other women felt the boy responsible for you must have been colored."

"The girl started crying because she was afraid of her father. She knew he would kill you."

"One of the women said the girl's father would kill you and the girl, your mother and his daughter, as well."

Sarah paused to gather her thoughts to see his reactions as she described the events around his births.

"An old white woman described how some brown babies were killed in the past by angry fathers or brothers. They would slap the baby's head against the wall and break its neck or smother it to death. They reported the baby as being born dead. If they killed the mother, she was reported as dying in child birth."

"I listened to the woman and I was horrified by the killing of innocent babies and young girls. I wanted to do something. I grabbed you from the bed and told the women, I was taking the baby."

"We decided in to tell the men, of the family, that the baby was born deformed and she died at birth."

"I filled your mouth with a cotton cloth and wrapped you in an old blanket and ran past the men out of the cabin into the woods. The women told the story to the men and explained my offer to bury the baby. They never asked to see the grave. They did not care about the baby."

Rich felt the story of his birth was depressing. He was saddened by the thought of not wanted by his family. Rich knew he was abandoned by his mother because of racial hate.

"Who was the colored man? What happened to him? What happened to the white girl and her father? Do they still live in this area?"

Sarah knew she could not answer his questions. It was a long time ago and the girl was very young.

"I do not know anything about the colored boy or the man responsible for getting the young girl pregnant. I also do not know anything about the girl or her family."

Rich looked at Sarah, who was still sitting on the large log with her feet down. He was grateful to her for saving his life.

"Mother, it was very brave and bold for you to save me from that family. How could people be so cruel?"

Sarah looked at Rich, standing with the water jar in his hand, and smiled. She never thought of her desperate actions as being brave or bold. It was a necessary to save a life.

"It was a long time ago. Things were very different and people were dying. There was a lot of hate."

Rich looked at the mule and walked toward the open field at the end of the clearing. Rich turned to Sarah.

"I need to get back to my work. I have a lot to think about. Mother, I will see you at dinner."

Sarah stood and slowly walked toward a path to the cabin on her farm. There were no more words between them. She was saddened by the story of young love and old hate. Sarah wanted her son to know the truth. She hoped it was best for Rich to tell the truth. She wondered, how the truth would affect him as a person. Sarah knew Rich was a good person.

Rich continued to live on the farm with Sarah and Alice, while working the cash crops. Sarah realized it was the same situation, as her youth, with Phoebe and her Uncle Rich. She was not comfortable with the similarities in her life and the young life of her granddaughter.

Farmers in the southern states gave the crop yields from their labor to the land owner. The land owner deducted money for housing, seeds, fertilizer, food and clothing of the farm family from the cash proceeds from the crops. Approximately, three out of four colored farmers were small sharecroppers in the southern states. Many of the small tenant farms received nothing for the labor of the family, but more debt. A few of tenant farmers were able to earn up to fifty dollars, for the year, compared to a hundred dollars earned by farmers, owning land and selling their crops directly to merchants. While some members of the family were sharecroppers, Ben worked the front acreage growing primarily tobacco and cotton crops, while Rich worked the back acreage. Green and Burton, a local merchant, opened accounts for both men with credit up to fifty percent of their annual crop money. Rich received a fifty-five dollar account, while Ben got a sixty dollar loan. James and Sam lived on tenant farms and worked as honest sharecroppers. They received the seeds and supplies from the land

owners. These land owners would sell the crops for cash to pay for the farm materials and the rent. Despite the long hours in the fields, the young farmers struggled to get money for their poor families.

The difficult and bitter circumstances of farming in the share crop and crop lien systems forced many colored families to migrate to the towns and cities, seeking new opportunities to work. This migration, by the victims of exploitation, led to increased competition for manufacturing jobs against white immigrants from Europe.

While the attitudes of white Americans vacillated towards new immigrants, they had a strong understanding of the proper place for people of color. Most white people considered dark skin to be a curse. Many of white people manipulated colored people as tools for personal services. The presence of Negro and other colored people was disturbing, but very beneficial, to all white people. Dark skin, in social hierarchies of the late nineteenth century, was a visible distinction for social inferiority in power and prestige.

Colored people were visible targets of white immigrants, who were seeking jobs and property. The smooth subordination of colored people, who were seeking cultural independence and economic freedom extended and increased the severity of their racial segregation. The animosity, among most southern white people, grew as the family literacy and household cash income increased among the colored people.

Farming in the poor southern states continued to be very archaic and labor intensive for most families. Cotton had to be picked by hand and put in bails. Tobacco leaves had to be pulled by hand and dry cured. The corn and other farm grains gathered by hand. Every member of the family helped with the farm work during the harvest period. The local labor demands for farming encouraged large and extensive families. Farmers wanted children in order to use their labor in the fields.

CHILDREN OF PAIN

The political compromise in the presidential election of 1877 ended military protection for former southern slaves and other colored people. The southern states returned to racial segregation and discrimination against people of color. Dual societies developed in every community as most colored people suffered from white oppression. Local wealthy white property owners forcefully deprived most colored people of their legal and civil rights in the southern states.

Colored people lost the rights to privacy and protection in most southern communities. Local white authorities denied voting privileges and job opportunities to colored people. A cradle to grave system of segregation and discrimination held colored in social bondage. White people excluded all colored people from participation in the white society, except on the unfavorable bargain of servitude. Colored people in the southern states endured continuous poverty in black communities. The separate and unequal legal segregation facilitated the exploitation of colored people. Sarah supported the institution of marriage and she held strong family values. She encouraged her children to marry at an early age. She rejected the sexual double standard for women, but Sarah believed that sex should be confined to marriage.

Sarah helped Sallie with the delivery of another baby in 1889. Alfred was the fifth child. Sarah was the grandmother to a family of twenty children on five farms. They continued to need cash to support the farms. Sarah received a loan for fifty dollars, from Mitchel, with her land as the collateral.

Sarah heard the rumors about the problems between Sallie and Robert. There were problems about their marriage and the proper raising of their five children. Sarah did not want to get involved in the problems, but she was willing to listen.

Sallie often visited Sarah on the old farm to talk about the children and her suspicions about Robert. Sallie visited her mother with her new baby. Sallie stood near an old table under a tree and watched the small children, who were playing with each other, in the yard.

"Mother, Bob wants to spoil the children. He said we should never beat our children. He says hitting the children will make them into mean people."

Sarah was against her little grandchildren being beate by their parents, but she felt it was necessary at times.

"Sallie, I do not know about fathers and their children, except it is good to have them. You have a husband and your children have a father. You need to work it out, between you and Robert."

Sallie did not like the comments from Sarah. She wanted her mother to agree with her and support her feelings.

"Bob is a good man. He works hard and provides for the children as well as he can in these difficult times. In the

morning, he goes to the field and works until his breakfast is ready. Then he returns to the fields until supper is ready for him. He is not with the children, day and night, like me."

Sarah knew Robert was a good and hard working man. As a young boy, he worked with his father and his two brothers.

"Sallie, you know Robert works all day. He may be too tired to be with the children. Men like their sons to be a little older so they can put them to work on the farm. Things will get better."

Sallie thought about her small children being spoiled by their father and becoming lazy adults with no purpose in life to guide them. Sallie remembered her mother beating her as a little girl. She also knew her brothers got beatings, as bad boys. Sallie decided she was not going to spoil her children in their growing up, with a husband or without husband.

"Mother, I want my children to do better. They should earn money and live in better homes than me. I want to have control and keep my children out of trouble."

Sarah looked at the children. She was certain the young children were not listening to their mother. Sarah felt they could not hear Sallie talking about Robert.

"I think you should not let the children come between you and Robert. The two of you need to be together for the good of the children."

Sallie knew her mother encouraged everyone to marry, but her mother never got married herself. Sallie recalled Jane was never married. Sallie felt neither woman understood men.

"If it takes a beating for them to understand me, then they get a beating. If Bob does not like it, he can get himself another wife. I am their mother."

Sarah handed the baby to Sallie and stood to stretch her legs on the ground. Sarah placed a clay cup at the window of the cabin. Sarah watched as Sallie sat with her little baby, who was asleep. Sarah walked toward the yard and picked up a small can of dried, powdered, tobacco leaves.

"I never had a husband. You got a husband and you need to keep him. I never had a father or a grandfather as a child."

Your children have both and you need to keep both of them. Just as you said, Robert is a good man."

Sallie wanted to say more about Bob, as she followed her mother into the cabin. Sallie asked a simple question.

"Mother, before we were married, you called him by his short name, Bob. After we were married, you started calling him by Robert. Why did you change his name?"

Sarah reached for her tobacco can and put some powder in her mouth with her fingers. She looked at Sallie standing at the door, holding her small baby.

"Bob was a boy and a friend of my sons. Robert is a black man and the husband of my only daughter."

Sallie smiled and thought about her husband, as a friend of her brothers and the father of her children.

"Mother, the man is the boy and the boy is the man."

Sarah thought about the boy riddle. She felt the nature of a man was different from the feelings of a boy. Sarah saw the boy in Robert, but she wanted to be clear about him.

"The man may be the same boy to some people, but he is not the same person to me. He is your man."

Sallie smiled again, but she did not feel good about Bob and their problems with the children.

"Mother, I understand. Bob was sweet and kind as a boy, but not as a man. We have problems with the children, our money and his other women."

"I know about his other women. Every week he and his brothers go to town to get cleaned up. They come back late in the evening or in the morning."

"They spend all day in town taking care of the farm and spend the evening with other women."

Sarah understood the problems listed by her daughter for the marriage. Sarah knew Sallie and Robert were young adults with family responsibilities.

"The problems with money and the children can be fixed with a little understanding. The problems with other women can be tolerated, if not accepted, by you."

"All of these problems will go away with time."

Sallie did not like her mother's comments. She knew her children would grow up and leave in time. Sallie needed more help and support from Bob. Sallie felt her mother was right, but she did not care about the consequences.

"I can not wait to solve my problems. I will not let him have other women, while I stay at home with his babies. He needs to decide between the women or me."

Sarah did not approve of Sallie stubborn statement. She thought of Jane as an unmarried mother, who lived in town for many years. Sarah wondered who were the other women?

"Sallie, you can not push a man into a corner and think he will not fight. Robert will not be pushed."

Sallie slowly stepped from the doorway and preceded into the yard, followed by her mother. Sallie looked at Sarah and turned toward the children, playing in the distance.

"I know Bob can not be pushed, but now he has to decide between his family and his desires. He has me as a wife and he does not need other women."

Sarah walked from the cabin with Sallie. She could hear the small children playing in the yard as Alice returned from working in the fields. Sallie decided to go back to her farm with the children. Sallie said good-bye as she departed with her children. Sarah worried about Sallie's marriage.

Ben sold the twenty five acres to John Harrison, who was a half-brother of Jane. John and his wife, Emma, moved their family to the Green community. John sold the land to members of their family in the area. Ben was not happy with the sale to other members of their family.

Sarah and the families of her children continued as part of the black community. The race relations between white and colored people were a major topic of discussion in the family of Sarah Jane Harrison. She and Alice discussed the problems with race relations among the farmers. Alice often talked to her grandmother asking family questions involving skin color.

"Mother, some people say you were born as a white woman with white parents. How can you be white, when my aunt and uncles are colored people?"

Sarah smiled at Alice, her oldest granddaughter, and she thought about the children and her mother.

"Alice, we are mixed. Some of the children have fair skin, like me. Some are yellow skin and some have brown skin. They are all my children."

Alice did not understand the natural concepts of race or skin color as discussed by family members. She felt race was based on skin color and the overall appearance.

"Mother, Aunt Sallie looks like a white women."

Sarah remembered the racial rumors about her grandmother and her mother. Sarah knew they could have mixed blood.

"We could be a mixture of several colors with white, red and black blood. We will never know the truth about our race and our origin as a family."

Alice thought about her skin color. Alice could see the colors in her skin, but there was no color for her race.

"My skin is brown like other colored people, but I can see your skin is pale like most white people."

Sarah remembered the stories about her family living and working with native people in the area. She recalled colored men living and working on their farm with unmarried women.

"When our family came to Virginia, there were not many white women from England to marry and make a family with children. We may have some native blood. The native blood could make some white people think of us as being colored people. Our skin has some color."

"Our family has lived on this farm for a hundred years and the farm was started with a Negro slave, who was pure African. When my mother was born, a young colored man was working and living on the farm. My grandfather died while my grandmother was carrying my mother. Some people say the colored man was my mother's father."

"I grew up with my grandmother and she said her husband was the father of her children. I believed she was telling the truth. All of her children were white, just as white as other white people."

Alice thought about what she heard about her poor family and her grandmother. She knew some people believed Sarah was a colored woman with a mulatto father. Alice knew most white men believed all of her lovers were black men.

"Mother, some people see you as a colored woman. They believed all of the men, who fathered your children, were colored. All of your family are colored people."

Sarah laughed because she knew some local white men were saying she was a mulatto woman. Sarah believed the white men could only accept her as a poor colored woman, who slept with different colored men. She knew they were angry.

"I never knew my mother. She died when I was a baby."

"When I was born, there was a young colored man living and working on the farm. Some people said this colored man was my father and my mother's lover."

"I knew this colored man as a young girl. He was not a slave. He was free and married to a slave woman. I do not believe he was my father, but it was possible."

Alice thought about the women in the family and how they raised babies without husbands or any other men.

"It is a little strange that your grandmother had your mother when she was widow. Your mother had you when she was not married. You had babies without a husband. You never know when there is no man."

"Aunt Sallie is married and having colored babies with a husband. All of her babies are the same with a father."

Sarah thought of Alice growing into a young woman in the same manner as herself. She realized they were, both, raised from a baby, by a grandmother, on the farm. Sarah remembered she became pregnant at the same age as Alice.

"Women have a big burden in life. We bring babies into the world and raise them into adults. It is difficult because we need men to plant the seeds for babies."

"When a women has a baby, there is always a question of what man planted the seed. The woman is the only one who knows and sometime she may not know."

Sarah remembered the mother of Alice was also young when she became pregnant without a husband. Sarah saw a pattern.

"A man can get down on any woman. He has done his act and he can live without any consequence. A woman is different from a man. She may become pregnant and then, a mother without a man. This will let others guess about the man responsible for the baby. You can name the man, but he may deny it. Other people will suspect other men, and soon, it could be any man."

"A woman needs to be married before she has a baby or the father will be questioned by others. When a woman is married and has a baby, there are no questions about the man. There can be no questions because the pride and honor of the man will not be challenged. If a woman is married, the father must and should be the husband."

Alice heard people say her grandmother was mother to six colored babies by six different colored men. Alice knew some white men were saying, Sarah was either a promiscuous mulatto woman or a white whore, from a poor family.

"Why did you not keep to one of the men for marriage?."

"There must have been some opportunity for marriage with those men calling on you. Where was the need for love?"

Sarah smiled and thought about good women marrying young men with devious nature. Sarah felt the question deserved an answer and she wanted to be fair to the men.

"At first I was too young for a husband. Then I was too busy for a husband, and now, I am too old for a man. It was not meant for me. I decided to be a mother and let the right man find me."

Alice knew the answer to her next question. Alice heard her grandmother say it, but she wanted to hear the words from the old white woman. Alice believed Sarah was a white woman.

"Grandmother, you are a white woman. You were born as a white woman. As a child, your family were white people and they said you were white. You may have some colored or native blood, but nobody knows it."

Sarah felt the words, from her granddaughter, were right and

nobody knew her race. Sarah wanted the color of her skin to be inconsequential to her family.

"I feel knowing the person is much more important than knowing the race or color of a person. We should be judged as individuals and not judged as groups of people from the same race or with the same skin color."

Alice nodded in agreement and stood. She walked over to the corner and prepared the bed for the night.

"Race and color is not important in a family. I see you as Mother, the woman, who took care of me, as a child."

"Your skin color may be white, but your soul and heart is colored. It is getting late for both of us."

Sarah listened to Alice and she appreciated the feelings of her granddaughter. Sarah understood the real significance between being white versus being black. Sarah decided to end their discussion and wait for another day to share feelings.

"White is not a color to me and black is not a color"

"We need to get ready for bed. We can talk some more, tomorrow, when the day will be bright and clear."

There were many chores for the morning. Sarah stood and walked over to the door. She gazed into the night and looked at the stars. She thought of the future for her children and their families. Sarah wondered, if the young people would be able to live better life than her experiences as a woman. Alice wanted to say more, but she knew it was time to go to bed and rest for another day. Sarah watched as Alice went about the cabin, preparing for bed. Sarah knew some problems would never go away for many of the people. She remembered a slave poem taught to her sons by Philan. Sarah recalled some of the words in *A Mulatto Confession* from memory:

**I see the white man as my honorable father.
He conceived me by raping my black mother.
I am proof of his sin and his weakness.**

**We share the same blood as family and foe.
I respect his strength and fear his power.
There is no love or peace between us.**

We are mortal enemies for life and eternity.

Sarah thought it was a sad poem for a angry black man to write on a tree. Sarah wondered about Philan searching for a purpose and living alone. She remembered the poem because it reminded her of her old friend. The poem reflected the harsh feelings of many mulatto slave children before their freedom.

The Democratic and the Republican political parties were active during normal elections in the area. Local candidates spoke at the center of the town. White Democratic candidates attracted large crowds of white people and easily gain strong support from the newspapers. The white Republican candidates attracted colored people, who were generally not permitted to vote, and a few white people supporting the Republican party.

The presidential election campaign of 1888 tried to keep the focus on the needs of merchants and other business groups in the white communities. Issues and concerns of farmers and laborers were ignored by the candidates. Glover Cleveland, a rich Democrat from New York, received over a hundred thousand popular votes more than Benjamin Harrison. The 1888 election resulted in Harrison, a Republican from the state of Indiana, winning the presidency in the Electoral College.

The Electoral College elected Benjamin Harrison, as the twenty-third President of the United States. Harrison won by two hundred votes in the political exercise of representation by state. Benjamin was the grandson of William Harrison, the ninth President, and a great grandson of Benjamin Harrison, a signer to the Declaration of Independence.



COLORED MEN IN SCARCITY

(1890-1900)

The 1888 election resulted in Republicans gaining public control of the central government. Southern Democrats became concerned with the federal government desire to insure voting rights for all citizens. Most colored people in the southern states were aroused by the Republican victory and they became more active with participation in the selection of candidates and the election of public officials.

Southern Democrats resisted attempts, by some Republican politicians, to restore local voting rights to colored people in most area of the southern states. Local white authorities used a combination of literacy test and property ownership to disqualify colored people from voting. Local white officials challenged the citizen qualifications of colored people under the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Some extremists used intimidation and violence, in situations, to enforce the domination and control of local elections in southern states.

A majority of colored people, lived in Brunswick County, without the rights of citizenship. The local authorities, as members of the white minority, denied majority rule to people of color. Community leaders, aligned with wealthy landowners and local merchants, supported the practice of white minority rule in most southern states. It was common practice to deny basic civil rights to colored citizens. Local race relations were very poor as the white community and the black community developed into separate and unequal social systems. The social and economic rise of most colored people from slavery and other forms of

white oppression started to recede in the South. People of color gained considerably in English literacy and property ownership despite the strong resentment of white farmers and white merchants. Most Negroes and other colored people were the obvious targets of immigrants seeking to improve their personal wealth and social status. The animosity among most white people toward Negroes and other colored people resulted in legal restraints against the civil and political rights of colored people. These negative attitudes, among local white people, were cynically protected by the arrogant ambition of white politicians. The drive for continuous power and control, by wealthy white families, kept most colored families living in rural poverty and resulted in the denial of their vote rights in the southern states.

Colored people in southern communities shared relatively no role in local or national politics. Their denial of basic rights as citizens, contributed directly to the withdraw from social and cultural association with white people. The black communities developed into separate societies with businesses and professions serving only Negroes and other colored people in the communities. Independent black professionals included doctors, lawyers and teachers. Southern America evolved into two separate and distinct societies. Local authorities physically separated white communities from black communities. Most of these black communities were located outside of the towns, with colored people working and living on family farms. The share-crop and crop-lien systems perpetuated continuous poverty for most colored people. The poor colored families in the black community of Ante became acquainted through the schools and the churches. Many colored people lived and worked with little contact with most white people. Colored people were invisible, as individuals, in the white societies. While most race relations were often described as amicable, there was a strong lack of respect and trust between white and colored people. The separation and isolation of colored people, from the dominant white society, created many parochial and benevolent black communities. Colored families supported other families in times of difficulties as friendly neighbors and members of the local Christian faith. Many families formed common bonds through marriages and shared farm labor.

William Gillus arrived in Brunswick County in 1830, from the Tidewater area. William moved to the southside area with his wife, Rainy. They lived on a poor family farm with their son, Henry. William, known as Billy, was the son of a strong and independent woman of color and a Negro slave. Elizabeth, born in 1832 and William, born in 1833, also lived and worked on the small family farm near the river.