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Interview, Kate Golden, Ex-Slave, 84 Years Old Now Living at Orlando, Florida, May 18, 1937

Kate Golden

Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of Florida

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KATE GOLDEN

Ex-slave, 84 years old,
Now living at Orlando, Florida)

"Dis comin' fifteenth day of January I'll be 84 years old. I was borned in Lumpkin County, Georgia. An' den while I was little we was moved to Makinson. My Master was Mr. Campbell an' he was a preacher. He had one daughter an' five sons. My mother was de young Misses' house-woman. When she got married to a lawyer by de name of Bennett way down in Thomasville, my Master gave me to her to take with her for her house-woman. Dat was de way it was den. If a man was wealthy 'nuf when his chillen got married he would give dem some slaves.

"My new Master was like mos' young peoples today - always lookin' for somethin' big with lots of money i it an' don't never want to do nothin'. His mother was a rich old woman an' when he got married she gave him lots an' lots of slaves. He sure was lucky to marry Preacher Campbell's daughter.

"My mother's name was Easter an' she had ten chillen. I was de next to de oldes'.

"My step-father, I always called him pappy 'cause I didn't know no better, he was trained to be a carpenter an' after freedom he bought a little place near de Bennet's an' stayed dere, but I stayed right on in de big house. My mother used to come over to de big house an' nurse anyone when dey got sick.

"My mother was de house-maid for Mistress an' she used to leave de chillen with my mother when she went away. My mother would nurse de baby sometimes and den she would taken her own baby and nurse it. Many white women had Nègro women to nurse dere babies instead of a nursin' dem deyselves. De nigger women sure loved de white babies too.

"We had church in de afternoons on Sundays. De church was about two miles from de plantation an' de white peoples would use de buggies an' let us use de wagons an' mules. We set in de back of de church an' de preacher preached somethin' like dis here:

" 'We has come here today to worship an' praise de Lord. Do you all want to know how to please your God? Be good slaves an' obey your masters an' dat is all you needs to do to be saved.'

"No sir, we ain't never studied runnin' way much. Our darkies didn't run way 'cause de Master didn't 'low no miss-handlin' on his place. De darkies was jes' like dey is today, some of dem is good an' some of dem is awful mean. Dere was

some good masters an' some bad ones. Our Master did not 'low no punishment an' when he rented his slaves out, nobody else better not whip 'em either. He sure was a good man.

"Some of de Masters was awful mean to de darkies. Dere was a man by de name of Young who had 'bout 200 darkies an' was awful mean to 'em. Den dere was a Stanley man who was always thinkin' up somethin' mean to do to the darkies. He would tie 'em up with her arms to der feet an' whip 'em on one side an' den jerk 'em over an' whip de other side.

"When dey got tired of whippin' de darkies dey made a place dey called hell. Dey tied up a nig er in a croka sack an' put him up on a rope over an' open fire an' smoked an' burned him somethin' awful.

"De darkies always had to have a pass whenever dey went anywhere. I 'members one time a darkey come to take some of de women at de big house out for a ride. An' dey was good lookin' women too. Dis darkey belonged to a rich man an' he thought he didn't need no pass. He got 'bout two miles from de quarters when dey caught him. Dey stripped him plumb naked an' whipped him right dere 'fore all de women. My mother saw him right dere stark naked a gettin' a whippin'.

"When de Masters heard dat de darkies was a goin' to be free dey surel was mad an' meaner'n ever to 'em.

"After we was free I stayed right on at de big house. De Government tried to make somekind of a law or somethin' 'bout us what dey called illegitimates or somethin' so as we could stay right on at de big house with de Master. I stayed dere 'bout ten years, I reckon.

" I come down to Orlando 'cause dey had good wages here at dat time an' I could save up somethin'. I worked at de ives for years an' years. Dey always did say I was a good darkie, too.

"I had three chillen, two sons an' a daughter. My girl died long time ago and my oldest son jus' died las' month.

"I've see a good many good days an' a good many bad ones. Sometimes I don't see how I could live through it, but I guess de Lord will take care of me. He always has."