

LIFE OF JOSEPH F. WALKER

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I was born December 17, 1854.

My owners were the Goodwins. My original Master was Col. William Goodwin who had two sets of children. His son, Bert Goodwin, was my second owner. In the division of the estate, my mother and children fell to Maria Harrison, Bert Goodwin's sister.

The war between the States had not begun then. My first recollection was the mustering at Spotsylvania Court House. My next recollection was when my Master, Bert Goodwin, left to go to Aquia

Creek to join the 19th Cavalry. He left the yard with horse and blanket, and I and all the family were in tears. I never saw him again until after the war. We all staid at home which joined the McCool farm at Bloody Angle.

The next thing I remember was when a squad of Yankees came looking for the mail carrier, who had passed along the road and dropped the mail in our field by the gate. They came up to the house where we boys and a man working on the farm, Henry Johnston, were and attempted to force us to tell who put the mail there. We knew nothing about

it.

The big thing I remember was when the fight began in the Wilderness with Grant's second raid. General Lee's headquarters was at the Court House, and his men encamped in our woods, on the left side going to the Court House. General Lee's army would go out every morning to the Wilderness about seven miles. He continued about two weeks, and on the third week General Lee's men came in on Friday. Grant's army followed and continued the skirmishing and fighting all Saturday night. On Sunday morning it increased. The

battle was very fierce around Mr. Spindle's house which was burned down. It is now called Sperry's Store. Later in the afternoon my mistress, Miss Harrison, and my mother began gathering up her silver to leave.

Just then General Longstreet formed the line of battle in our front yard, two lines of Infantry and one line of Cavalry. The Cavalry constituted the Battery. My mistress asked if there were any danger, and we all clustered around the officers in the house for safety; but in a few minutes we were ordered to get out as the

firing was going to begin; which it did like a thunder storm.

All I could hear was, "Go to the rear!" We managed to get through the three lines of soldiers safe and unhurt, and went to a house now known as the Dabney House. We staid until 12 p. m. Sunday night. Then we left and made our way down to a farm at Dr. Minor's and put up there until next morning, when Col. Bert Goodwin came and took us down to a farm where I was born, Rose Hill, his farm.

There we came in contact with General Lee's army on Monday morning preparing for another battle.

We staid there all the week until Saturday. When they did not hear anything from the Yankees, the orders were given to fire seven times into what was supposed to be the Yankee's Camp.

On the Thursday before my Mistress sent myself and Henry Johnston back to the house, where we were when the battle commenced, and the only thing we could see on the farm was a pig. My mother's house was pulled down to make breast works, and the yard and garden were used as a burying ground.

On Saturday General Lee, not getting any response from what was

supposed to be the Yankee Camp, a courier was sent out to see if the Yankees could be located. In a little while the courier returned, his horse very much exhausted, and when he reported to head quarters, the bugle sounded and the Cavalry was soon in boots and spurs, and moved away with all the army.

After this we were so much torn up that my mother and all the children except two were sent down in Caroline at Mr. Catlett's. Two were kept at home and in a few months I was put out at work to live with a man named John Mitchel because they did not have food for

us. I staid there until the close of the war the following April.

Then my mother sent for me and I went to Caroline County and staid with Mr. Chew Catlett until September. I worked for my board and clothing and stayed there until Christmas, when we went to live with Mr. Sam Schooler who kept a large boarding school. We stayed there until the following Christmas, I still working for my board. Mr. Schooler married Mr. Fleming's sister, Miss Mary Liza.

Then we came up to Mr. Ben Christenberry's. We worked there that year for our board, my mother

and myself. The next year, 1868, I went to live with Mr. Haislip for board and \$23.00 a year.

In 1869 I went to live with Mr. Crismond until 1870 for board and \$25.00 a year. In 1870 I lived with Col. Goodwin and worked for \$25.00 and board.

The first quarter I ever had Col. Goodwin gave me to get dinner in Fredericksburg, but I did not do it. I bought flour and had some pies made out of it and sold them at a protracted meeting at Bethany.

I went to live in 1871 with Mr. Haislip again and got \$40.00

a year and board. In the end of 1871 I came to Fredericksburg to live and went to work at the paper mill, run by Mr. Howland, until 1872. I got \$1.14 per day.

The first \$100.00 I earned my uncle, Jefferson Smith, kept for me. He spent it and never gave me anything. The next \$100.00 I received was in 1873, the year of the panic. With it I bought and paid for 10 acres of land in Spotsylvania, and built a cabin on it for my mother, to be owned by her until her death. I now own it, my mother dying about twenty years ago.

I went to live with Judge Barton in the Fall of 1873. I got there \$10.00 per month and I joined the Church in 1877. I remember now Mrs. Barton's gentle words. She came to me in the pantry and said: "Joseph, you are going to be baptized today?" I said: "Yes'm." She said: "Joseph, don't stop there; your work has just begun." That is all she said, but those words live with me now.

I became Sexton of St. George's Church in 1878. I still continued to live with Judge Barton. My combined stipend as sexton of the Church and as Judge

Barton's Butler was \$17.00 per month.

I was married in 1878. My only child was born in 1879 and lived until 1898. He was 19 years old when he died. My wife died November 26, 1926.

My first religious impression was obtained from Mr. Cushionberry, from his having daily morning prayer. All the servants came to this service. I have kept it up ever since, and consider it one of the most valuable things I have derived from my Episcopalian friends.

When I went to St. George's

Church as Sexton, I regard it as coming to me providentially. I did not seek it and I did not want to be Sexton of St. George's Church.

Mr. Edgar Young's Grandfather was sent out to get a sexton. He was Senior Warden of the Vestry and he met me on the street and asked me where he could get one. Then he asked me how I would like to be Sexton. I told him that I could not do the Sexton's work because I was at Judge Bartons. When I returned home I spoke to Judge Barton. He said: "Joseph, I would be very selfish not to encourage you to take the job because I have

never been able to pay you what you are worth to me." This decided me to become Sexton of St. George's Church.

I have served every Rector of St. George's since the Civil War, either directly or indirectly. It is needless to say that this service has been very pleasant. I served Dr. Murdah, Rev. John Mason, Dr. Clark, Rev. Mr. McBride twice, Dr. Lanier and Rev. Mr. Boogher. I was especially fortunate in the close religious relations I enjoyed with Dr. Lanier and Rev. Mr. Boogher.

I have been Senior Deacon,

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Shiloh New Site, about 48 years, and I have tried to do my whole duty as I saw it; and while not perfect, I have tried to satisfy my conscience in doing my full duty to my fellowmen.

I went in the mail service (hauling the mail) in 1909. I handled the mail 12 years. Then I was underbid. I have been underbid twice but am still in the service at the present time.

I say this to show that a mere education does not always make a man a success. I do not wish to undervalue an education. I have never been to school. My education

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has been obtained by night study.
My associations have been very
happy and I have been much benefit-
ted from them in the building of
my character.

(I have written the above
as dictated to me by my friend,
Joseph Walker. It is a very mod-
erate and modest statement of the
bare facts of his useful life. It
gives no idea of the estimation
in which he is held by his many
friends on account of his unfail-
ing politeness and generosity.

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He is one of the most courteous and polite men I have ever known. I am glad to call him my friend.

He is also one of the most dependable men I have ever known. For nine years I was Rector of St. George's Church, and during all that time whenever I told Joseph to do a thing I dismissed it from my mind, for I knew he would do it.

These are the qualities of his character that have made his usefulness and success. Nor can I fail to mention one or two of his many acts of kindness and

generosity which have endeared him to his friends. When my son, Dr. Richard Lanier, started the practice of Dentistry in Fredericksburg, Joseph came to him and said: "I know what a hard time Doctors have in getting started. If at any time you get into a tight place and need some money, let Joseph know and he will help you."

I mention these things because you would never get them from Joseph. But to know the man you must know these things, for they are an essential part

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of his character. Joseph is
a gentleman and may he live long
and prosper!)

-----John J. Lanier.