

PRIVATE SILAS SKIPPER AND HARRIET OWENS, A SOUTHERN UNIONIST COUPLE

United States Cavalry, Civil War Photograph



INTRODUCTION TO MY SKIPPER NARRATIVES

When I began to study this family's history, I finally had to take a long look at the Civil War. My Skipper ancestors were shooting at each other, and I wanted to know why. 1861-1865, there our ancestors trudged, guns in hand, marching off to war and shooting at one another until one of them was dead—my great-great-grandpa, Private Silas Skipper, Company G, 2nd U.S. Cavalry.

What I found in traditional American history was the story of the Civil War being told by the losers, and later, by those who were sympathetic to the losers. My mother told me a different tale. What I found concerning her family story was former Civil War researchers avoiding, and at times, corrupting the facts. Until in recent times, when a new kind of historian began publishing letters, investigating newspaper articles, and locating informative documents of the times, these so-called historians had written about southern rebels as if they had known what they were doing. For the new guys, however, there was no more pussy-footing around the slave mongers who caused the war or General Lee who fought it for them—and lost. It didn't hurt that one of the rookies was a woman—Dr. Stephanie McCurry, author of, Confederate Reckoning. Her book, a Pulitzer finalist, included the letters of southern mothers and wives, who knew better than anyone who caused the war and certainly its effect on their families. Revelations these new historians disclosed had to be the truth, unless letters and newspapers and documents written practically on the scene were untrue.

As I began reading literature in the handwriting of the Civil War era, I was spellbound by the evil power which the planters held over the South. Like a pall their hatred and fear of black people bore many a Southern lad to his grave, including my great-great-grandfather. Though their phobia shrouded the South, smothering patriotism, post-war writers ignored it, but to me, it was undeniable that the fears of the planters killed Great-great-grandpa Silas Skipper. In discovering his daring and the bold choices he made in the scariest of all real worlds, I marveled at the bravery of my kinsman and his wife. I was especially proud of my great-great-grandparents because they lived in the Confederate state of Louisiana, yet, in spite of the danger, they became loyal, hard-fighting, patriots.

This Skipper narrative is written in memory of my mother, and to give her great-grandparents a voice. They have been silenced for far too long.

Helen Vaughan Michael

MY SKIPPERS

Rebecca Skipper 1862, Louisiana

Silas Skipper 1826, Tennessee

Barnabas Skipper, 1776, North Carolina

Barnaby Skipper 1727, Colonial North Carolina/Virginia

George Skipper, 3rd, and Mary Bailey, circa 1700, Colonial Virginia, a chief, 1749-1762

George Skipper, 2nd, circa 1668 pre-invasion Virginia, North Carolina landowner, planter.

George Skipper, 1st, circa 1644, the Anglicized name of an Unknown Cheroenhaka

The Unknown Cheroenhaka of pre-Colonial, pre-historic, America of the Iroquois/Sioux language, Great Lakes origin.



Benjamin Franklin

Before the beginning . . .

Silas Skipper was a descendant of Native America. The Native American part of the legacy of the United States Constitution came to be through a gift from his Haudenosaunee ancestors. The Haudenosaunee were the beginning of American democracy.

As early as 1754 American founding fathers came under the political influence of Native Americans. At the same time that they kept busy trying to exterminate their tribes, and get them off the land, white colonial leaders understood the wisdom they heard in the governing principles of the native tribesmen. The *Iroquois* Confederacy that the Haudenosaunee were a part of allowed them to live under democratic principles for hundreds of years before whites colonized Jamestown. When printer Benjamin Franklin heard one of the leaders of the Five Nations of the *Iroquois* Confederacy list the articles of their constitution which had served Haudenosaunee people well for so long, he put it in print.



Great Seal of the United States

The Indian speaker recommended that the thirteen colonies unite, as had the Five Nations. He advised the thirteen colonies to form a union which would make them stronger. The metaphor he used, that many arrows cannot be broken as easily as one, inspired the catch of thirteen arrows in the grasp of an eagle talon pictured on the Great Seal of the United States that is still used today. After that proposal worked in the war against England, the articles of the *Iroquois* Confederacy actually appealed to the new

nation's white founding fathers and helped construct the great laws of the United States Constitution.

For example, the United States Constitution restricts governing members from holding more than one office, outlines processes to remove bad leaders, designates two branches of legislature with procedures for passing laws, defines who has the power to declare war, and sets up a balance of power between the governing branches. These are the Haudenosaunee ideas and practices that actually appealed to the men who began writing the Constitution in 1787.



The Iroquois, officially the Haudenosaunee, meaning "people of the Longhouse", are an Iroquoian-speaking confederacy of First Nations peoples in northeast North America. They were known during the colonial years to the French as the Iroquois League, and later as the Iroquois Confederacy. The English called them the Five Nations, comprising the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca (listed geographically from east to west). After 1722, the Iroquoian-speaking Tuscarora people from the southeast were accepted into the confederacy, which became known as the Six Nations. Wikipedia

Written in 1787, ratified in 1788, and in operation since 1789, the United States Constitution is the world's longest surviving written charter of government, and the men who wrote it were inspired by the Haudenosaunee.

Too bad for Silas and his kind that the white man and his kind would not be able to live up to the expectations of the document—expectations that within the United States Constitution a government could be found that was put together by a group of geniuses so well, someone joked, that even a bunch of idiots could run it.

By 1860 the bunch of idiots in Silas's case turned out to be southern planters who made it their life's work to place their plantations under a constitution of a different sort. On these plantations the idea of unity ran afoul of the selfish individual desires of the proprietors to the point, they started a war.

Silas's father, and his father before him, were Native American patriots. As if they were born to fight for freedom, when war came, each in his own time signed up for the fight. Then, during the Civil War, it was Silas's turn. As the great-grandchild of a Native American chieftain, he mounted his horse and took up arms against the enemy.



*Internet Archive image,
Unnamed Iroquois chief,
early 18th century*

SILAS SKIPPER 1825–1864, BORN TENNESSEE

The parents of Silas, Barnabas and Temperance Skipper, brought their family out of South Carolina into Tennessee sometime after the 1820 census. Silas was born in Sumner County in 1825.



Driven by the desire of Southern planters for more land for cotton plantations, by 1820 easterners had begun to make their move west, invading Indian tribal grounds and claiming immeasurable territory of the Cherokee. He owned no slaves, but Barnabas Skipper was one of the first from Marlboro, South Carolina to take his brood to Tennessee.

The white nation spread from 1794 to 1818 into the lands west of South Carolina, all the way to the Mississippi River. In turn, these areas were annexed into the United States. By 1814, the Mississippi River was becoming a valuable shipping lane for the next generation of nomads, and neither could be held back. Barnabas Skipper, Haudenosaunee Cheroenhaka, would go west with the rest of America, seeking a place to settle where he and Temperance could raise their crops and kids.

The waterways snaking around the new states flowed over a rough Appalachian terrain, leaving behind excellent land for farming along the streams that fed them. Small family farms fit perfectly onto the gracefully sloping hillsides and nestled into the narrow valleys that the rushing water and quiet streams formed in Tennessee. Fortunately for the Skipper way of life—that did not include slavery—the hilly landscape all but ruled out plantation agriculture. By 1822 Barnabas led his family in trying out a new life there, where the last of his Skipper babies were born—Elizabeth in 1822 and Silas in 1825.



1. *18th century barn still standing in the Tennessee Hills (Mabel Harp 1997 photo)*

2. *Sumner County, Tennessee
Wikipedia Map*



1830's ALABAMA



In the midst of a national community of land grabbers, whose belief in Manifest Destiny would eventually become America's exclusive Eleventh Commandment, the Skippers ended up invading Indian territory and picking up some of it for themselves. This was a time when all men were hungry for cheap land on which to raise a family, and too often they claimed what was not theirs. In fact, in a personal history of musical chairs, these descendants of the displaced Cheroenhaka, *aka Nottoway*, were moving onto the lands of a displaced Cherokee family who would become ancestors of shared descendants. Their Cherokee infant, rescued off the Trail of Tears, would one day become the great-grandmother of three great-grandchildren of Silas Skipper. (Pictured, above, left—Isabella Cummins Loudermilk, Cherokee future great-grandmother [ancestor] of three Cheroenhaka Skipper descendants--her great-grandchildren.)

According to the Civil War records of Silas Skipper, the youngest son of Barnabas and Temperance, their family first settled in Sumner County; his military record says that Silas was born there in 1825. Of the Carolina Skippers who moved to Tennessee, a few stayed, but some kept moving west, and Barnabas and Temperance Skipper moved down to Alabama after less than a decade in Tennessee. The whole family, all nine of them, were still alive and together in south-central Alabama in 1830.

1830 Census of Dallas County, Alabama for Barnabas Skipper

Home in 1830 (City, County, State) Dallas, Alabama

Free White Persons - Males - 5 thru 9: 1, Silas

Free White Persons - Males - 20 thru 29: 1, Sion

Free White Persons - Males - 40 thru 49: 1, Barnabas, head of household

Free White Persons - Females - 5 thru 9: 1, Elizabeth

Free White Persons - Females - 10 thru 14: 1, Temperance, daughter

Free White Persons - Females - 15 thru 19: 2, Nancy and Rebecca or Martha

Free White Persons - Females - 20 thru 29: 1, Rebecca or Martha

Free White Persons - Females - 40 thru 49: 1, Temperance, wife

Free White Persons - Under 20: 5

Free White Persons - 20 thru 49: 4

Total Free White Persons: 9

Total - All Persons (Free White, Slaves, Free Colored): 9.

(Of the children, only the names of Silas and Elizabeth are verified. There may have been a third son, born before Sion, named John Wesley.)

1830 Census of Dallas County, Alabama

SCHEDULE of the whole number of Persons within the Division allotted to

FREE WHITE PERSONS, (INCLUDING HEADS OF FAMILIES.)

Name of County, City, Ward, Town, Township, Parish, precinct, Hundred, or District.	NAMES or HEADS OF FAMILIES.	MALES.																	FEMALES.						
		Under five years of age.	Of five and under ten.	Of ten and under fifteen.	Of fifteen and under twenty.	Of twenty and under twenty-five.	Of twenty-five and under thirty.	Of thirty and under forty.	Of forty and under fifty.	Of fifty and under sixty.	Of sixty and under seventy.	Of seventy and under eighty.	Of eighty and under ninety.	Of ninety and under one hundred.	Of one hundred and upwards.	Under five years of age.	Of five and under ten.	Of ten and under fifteen.	Of fifteen and under twenty.	Of twenty and under thirty.	Of thirty and under forty.	Of forty and under fifty.	Of fifty and under sixty.	Of sixty and under seventy.	Of seventy and under eighty.
		781	511	426	277	662	466	214	115	57	16	4				714	472	485	538	470	295	174	82	45	12
		2					/									/	/	/		/	/				
Dallas	A. M. Miller																								
	John Cunningham		/	/			/		/							2	2	/							
	Samuel Lee		/	/	/			/							/										
	Nichols Bryan		/												/		2								
	Elizabeth Bryan		/				/																		
	Leane Simmons, jr		2												/										
	Tom Smiley	/					/								/										
	John Tompkins						/								/										
	Morgan Milly						/								/										
	James Phelps		2	2		/												2	/					/	
	E. J. Cooper	/	/				/															/			
	Walter B. Davis	2	/				/								2	/									
	Abraham Billberg						/								2	2									
	Henry Billberg	/					/								/										
	John Sumner						/											2							
	McNeal Billberg	/					/								/									/	
	E. Wyatt	/			/	/									/										
	Barny Skipper		/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	3		/	/	/	/		/			
	Ransom Davis	/		/											/		/	2	/			/			
	Stanoy Riab	2					/								/	2	/				/				
	Tom Falt		/	/		2			/						2			2						/	
	James Kent	2				/									2		/	2				2			
	John Davis						/												/						
	F. Jones						/																		
	Morgan Griffin	2	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	2						/			/	
	Murdoch McFarland	2	2	/			/																		
	Henry McCallough			/	/																			/	
	Matthew Davis	2				/																			

The 1830 census taker found five-year-old Silas in the Dallas County, Alabama home of Barnabas Skipper. (11th from the bottom)

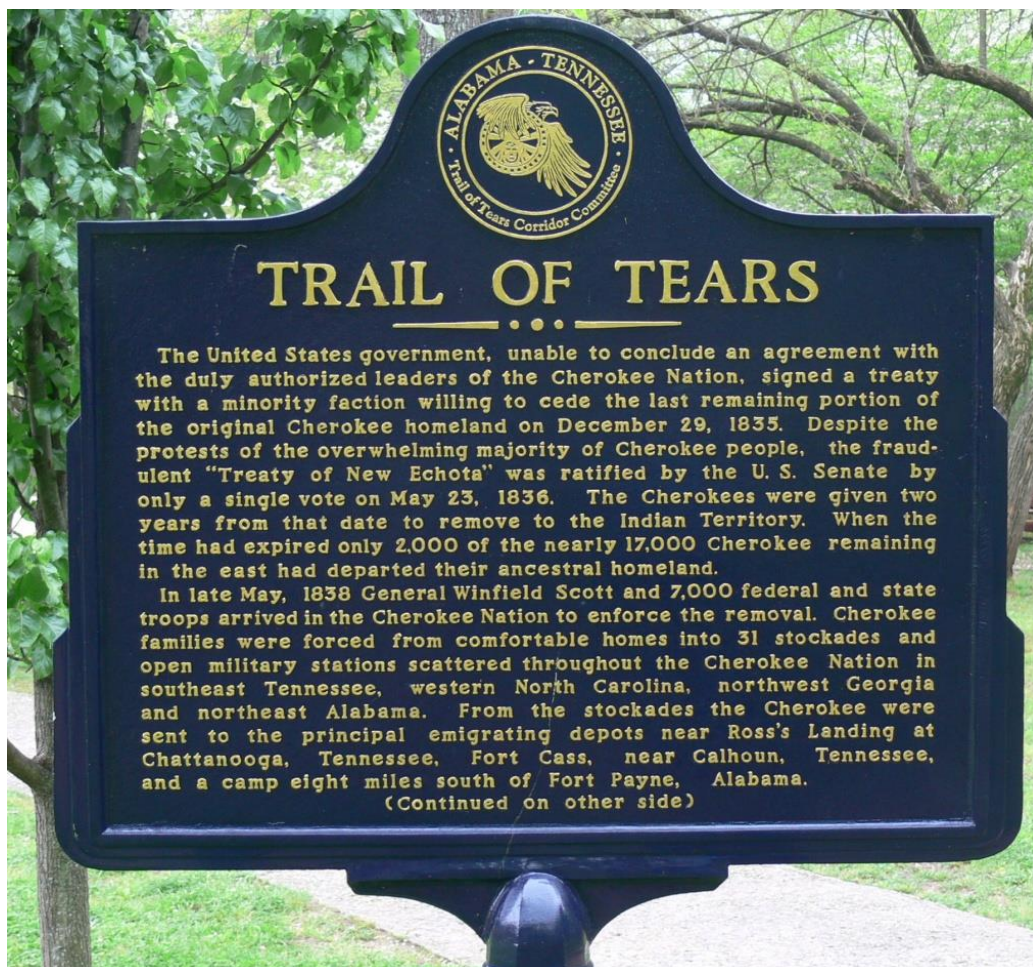


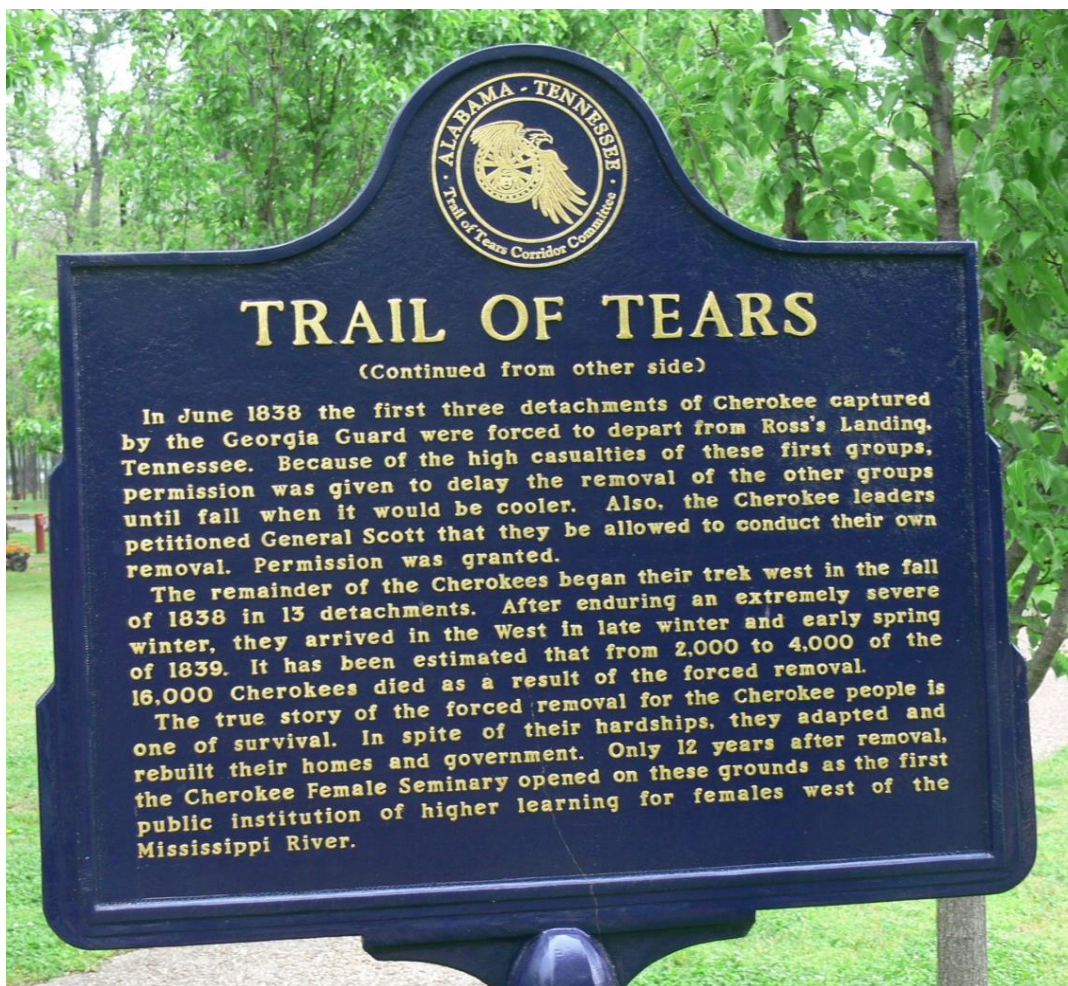
Map, Dallas County, Alabama



Andrew Jackson, of Tennessee, was President, and the biggest issue of the time was the morality of slavery. The economy, the Nullification Crises, and events in Texas—all tied to the questions inherent in the practice of selling human souls into bondage—were on everyone's mind. Young and old, black and white and Indian, wondered and worried alike over slavery.

At the very heart of Jackson's Indian removal policy was the demand of slave owners for more land, and the rich black soil of Alabama provided a perfect base on which slaves could build huge cotton plantations. Subsequently, thousands of native people were ripped out of their homes, their communities destroyed, and their feet heard trampling down thousands of miles of a trail of tears for everyone in the South to see and hear. Alabama and the whole world were not big enough to grow a sufficient amount of cotton to soften the sound. Even soldiers conducting the march were seen wiping tears from their eyes.





THE INDIAN WARS

Native Americans did not simply sit around and watch the settlers steal their homelands. The Census Bureau in 1894 counted over 40 wars with rallying Indian tribes fighting to keep them out during the 57 years between 1789 and 1846, but, simply put--the Indians lost.

Called the Indian Wars, the battles between whites and the native peoples of North America began almost from the time of the first landing and eventual settlement at Jamestown. War was the result of whites trespassing against tribal property. While the Indians fought for their lives and their way of life, the European colonists had come to mainland America seeking capitalistic opportunities in land, lumber, and furs. A few were motivated by religious zeal. In the end, both zeal and greed herded the intruders all the way across the continent.

The Indian Wars



From the very beginning, whatever their cause, the colonists won, and white Americans kept on winning. Sometimes, it was other Indians who won. In 1830 the grandson of a Haudenosaunee Cheroenhaka Chief, *aka Nottoway* Chief, Silas's father, Barnabas, moved onto the land of a nineteenth century tribe that was driven out of their homes by the same imperial force that had begun expelling his own people from theirs over two hundred years earlier—the white man's belief in Manifest Destiny.

Alabama became a state of the United States of America on December 14, 1819. Twenty years later, in spite of Indian protests, President Jackson's policy of Indian removal had forced most Native Americans out of the state so that new settlers could move in. Wealthy planters took over and their slaves began building god-forsaken cotton plantations. Planters then opened up lucrative slave markets where human souls were bought and sold like property. Elsewhere, all over Alabama, slave-less whites practiced the principles of good stewardship on their family farms, and thrived.

There are no other family names on the Dallas County, Alabama census for Skipper, but ten years later the married children of Barnabas, along with one nephew, are living nearby in Butler. The opportunities offered by a land grant in 1837 may have inspired him to move there. In Butler County, Alabama, just south of Dallas, on August 18, 1837, Barnabas accepted a grant of over two hundred and twenty acres. His certificate was signed by President Martin van Buren. The Skippers were living in Butler in 1840, with young Silas the only child still living at home.

Butler County, Alabama Grant, 1837

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

CERTIFICATE }
No. 32123. }

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

WHEREAS *Barnabas Skipper, of Butler County, Alabama,*

has deposited in the **GENERAL LAND OFFICE** of the United States, a Certificate of the REGISTER OF THE LAND OFFICE at *Cahaba* whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said *Barnabas Skipper*

according to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An Act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," for the North West quarter of Section Twenty-two in Township Ten of Range Sixteen, in the District of lands subject to sale at Cahaba, Alabama, containing One hundred and Fifty nine acres and Eighty seven and a half hundredths of an acre

according to the official plat of the survey of the said Lands, returned to the General Land Office by the **SURVEYOR GENERAL**, which said tract has been purchased by the said *Barnabas Skipper*

NOW KNOW YE, That the **United States of America**, in consideration of the Premises, and in conformity with the several acts of Congress, in such case made and provided, **HAVE GIVEN AND GRANTED**, and by these presents **DO GIVE AND GRANT**, unto the said *Barnabas Skipper*

and to *his* heirs, the said tract above described: **TO HAVE AND TO HOLD** the same, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances of whatsoever nature, thereunto belonging, unto the said *Barnabas Skipper*

and to *his* heirs and assigns forever.

In Testimony Whereof, *Martin Van Buren*
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these Letters to be made **PATENT**, and the **SEAL** of the **GENERAL LAND OFFICE** to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the *eighteenth* day of *August*
in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and *thirty seven* and of the
INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES the *sixty second*

BY THE PRESIDENT: *Martin Van Buren*
By *A. Van Buren* Sec'y.
Jos. S. Wilson Acting **RECORDER** of the General Land Office.
ad interim

L.S.

THE 1840'S

Living on their Butler Land Grant with Barnabas and Temperance in 1840 is Silas Skipper, the Tennessee born teenager. His older brother, a sister, and other kinfolk are in the neighborhood, now with families of their own. Whatever caused his middle-aged father to pack up his family--from the northern border of Tennessee to the middle of Alabama--didn't matter for long, because he soon had a family compound around him. Then sometime after the 1840 census was taken, Barnabas Skipper died. It is said he is buried in Crenshaw County, a county merged with Butler, but no marker exists, and no will has been found.

His death left Temperance and Silas, her youngest son, on their own to tend their two-hundred-and-twenty-acre farm. Silas had long farmed with his father, and he was up to the task. He got married in 1846, and he and his bride Harriet Owens started filling up his departed father's house with a new branch of Skippers. Martha and Mary were born before the end of the decade, and their grandmother Temperance was there to help care for them.

Several years before the marriage of Silas Skipper and Harriet Owens a T.C. Owens showed up in the Butler, Alabama neighborhood. T.C. was the only other Owens in the neighborhood, and he was a planter—the biggest planter in the whole county. He owned thirty thousand acres of real estate and he personally was worth over forty thousand dollars. In this wealthy man's family tree, three of his five children were listed as “deaf and dumb.”

T.C. and Harriet Owens probably came out of the same family—brother and sister, perhaps—from an Owens' twenty-thousand-acre plantation of Barbour County, east of Butler. If Harriet's father was Whitman H. Owens and his son, T.C., was her brother, then Harriet came from very fortunate financial circumstances. Since there was no other Owens family in the area, Harriet surely came from these people, but no documented link is apparent. Nevertheless, since there was little opportunity for youngsters in pioneer settlements to meet outsiders, whether apparent or not, it seems likely that Silas found his Owens bride amongst the wealthy Owens family who lived near the Skippers.

THE 1850'S

4

SCHEDULE I.—Free Inhabitants in Township Green in the County of Butler State
of Alabama enumerated by me, on the 16 day of Dec. 1850. Wm. B. King Ass't Marshal.

1	2	3	4			7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			Age	Sex	Color, or race							
		William	2	m				Alabama				
		Therese	1	m				do				
91	91	Cliche Kelly	56	m		Farmer	300	Carolina				
		Rose	45	f				do				
		Cliche	17	m		do		Alabama				
		Samuel	10	m				do				
		Margaret	8	f				do				
		Hampton	3	m				do				
92	92	John Houston	35	m				Carolina				
		Nancy	22	f				Alabama				
		Rod	2	f				do				
93	93	Simon Jones	23	m		do		do				
		Martha	19	f				do				
94	94	John Keen	60	m		do	100	Carolina				
		Milly	59	f				do				
		Edley	27	f				do		1		
		Miles	9	m				Alabama		1		
95	95	John Keen	18	m		do		do				
		Milly	22	f				Carolina		1		
		Leck	2	f				Alabama				
96	96	Joseph Keen	21	m		do		do		1		
		Elizabeth	17	f				do				
		Miscari	1	f				do		1		
97	97	Miles Keen	24	m		do		do				
		Eliza	20	f				Carolina				
		Henry	1	f				Alabama				
		James Kaiden	26	m		do		Georgia				
98	98	Silas Skippin	25	m		do	500	Tennessee				
		Harriet	25	f				Carolina		1		
		Martha	3	f				Alabama				
		Mary	1	f				do				
99	99	Temperance Skippin	26	f				Carolina		1		
		Verrell Keen	30	m		do		do				
		Malinda	31	f				do		1		
		Elizabeth	12	f				Alabama				
		James	9	m				do				
		James	7	f				do				
		Eliza	5	f				do				
		Amanda	3	f				do				
100	100	Richard Bridgud	38	m		do	800	Georgia				
		Elizabeth	45	f				do				
		Julia Coney	75	f				Carolina				

18
24

1850 U.S. Census, Butler, Alabama

By 1850 Harriet Owens Skipper was living with Silas, their two children, and Silas’s widowed mother, Temperance:

1850 Butler, Alabama Census:

Elias Skipper 25, b. Tennessee

Harriet Skipper 25, b. South Carolina

Martha Skipper 3

Mary Skipper 1

Temperance Skipper 70

The Skipper farm had increased in size to five hundred acres. Since Silas ended up owning slaves, they, and the added acreage, could be the result of a rich dowry from a bride’s rich father. One way or another, somewhere along the way, Silas did acquire some slaves and more land.

His only son, John Wesley, was born in 1854 and three years later Elizabeth Sarah was born while the family still lived in Alabama. In 1859 Harriet Malinda was born in Louisiana, but before Silas left Alabama, his mother remarried.

Temperance’s new husband was Charles B. Jordan. They were listed as the same age, but Temperance was actually much, much older. Jordan was a landowner. In 1860 his real estate was valued at \$1,600 and his personal estate at \$2,560.

Detail, 1860 Butler Alabama Census for Temperance Skipper Jordan.

15			<i>J. T. Taylor</i>	7	<i>M</i>													15
16	<i>65</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>C. B. Jordan</i>	73	<i>M</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>✓</i>	<i>1600</i>	<i>2560</i>		<i>Georgie</i>							16
17			<i>J. Jordan</i>	73	<i>F</i>						<i>Malinda</i>			<i>1</i>				17
18	<i>66</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>S. R. Brightwell</i>	33	<i>M</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>160</i>					<i>1</i>				18

Marriage Record

Name: Temperance Skipper ; Spouse: Charles B. Jordan

Marriage Date: 11 Jan 1855

Marriage Place: Butler

Performed By: J. P.

Surety/Perf. Name: H. C. Smith

Some say Temperance died in 1862 and that she is buried in Crenshaw, Alabama with Barnabas, but there is no record written on paper or stone that tells of her death. The cemetery is in the edge of a wood, and the last survey of it was taken February, 1987; even then a lot of graves were sunken in, and there was a large number of unidentified graves.

The 1860 census is the last written word on Temperance.

Incidents of the '50's

The Silas Skipper family came into its own history during the turbulent 1850's. The turbulence was swirling around the issue of slavery. The fiendish lords of the enslaved plantations were set on driving their nation into civil war—a war that Silas Skipper would come to feel he had to fight.

Nat Turner, Slave

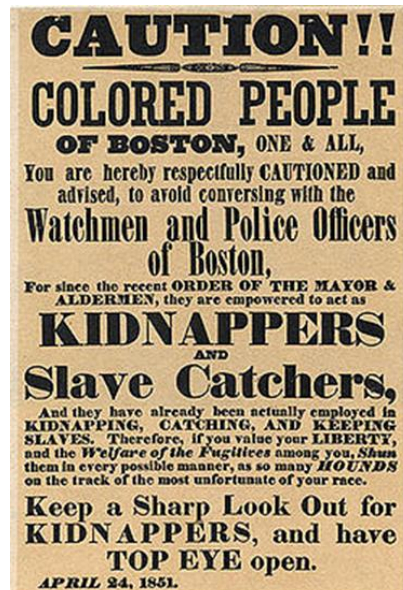
Nat Turner had rebelled in the birthplace of Silas's *Nottoway* forefathers--Southampton County, Virginia—back in 1831. No slave rebellion had a chance of succeeding in the South, but in the face of all logic, after Nat Turner's Rebellion, planters became more and more delusional over even an image of their slaves getting loose. By 1850 the worst of them were wild-eyed with fear, and their fiery episodes of ranting and raving over the imagined ordeal, which freed negroes surely had in store for them and their families, burned across the south, earning them the title of "fire-eaters."

Missouri 1850

A piece of the explored lands from the Louisiana Purchase had become the State of Missouri back in 1821 as a slave state as agreed in the Missouri Compromise of 1820. By 1850, Missouri's southern hordes had been replaced by many German and Irish immigrants who were filled with love and loyalty for their new country, the United States of America. On the other side, slave-holders rushed to Missouri to keep it in line with their nightmarish dreams and inflamed Missouri's western border with their rhetoric and with guns. Some of those who moved in were the kin of Silas Skipper.

Fugitive Slave Act, 1850

After the Fugitive Slave Act passed, southerners could make a living going north and capturing even free blacks and taking them back down south with them. By 1851 local government agents also sent free men down south as slaves. Blacks from the north were sent south whether they were slaves or not, but the fears of the planters were not assuaged by the help the Act gave them in keeping black people enslaved.



Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1852

Of course, their hysteria got roiled over and over in the upheaval caused by abolitionists purposefully taking aim at the locks on the chains of their plantation prisons. The writing of Uncle Tom's Cabin, a book with such widespread appeal that it was read by Queen Victoria—and one million of her British subjects, churned up the troubled waters in which the planters were thrashing in 1852. Harriet Beecher Stowe's literary depiction of slave suffering galvanized the abolitionist movement into action at the same time it whipped the slaves' persecutors into madness. However, the Skippers who had relocated in the Deep South did not regularly attend school and were not reading and writing anything, so not many of them would have been affected by literature of the day. Nevertheless, both Silas and Harriet Skipper were literate, and once settled, and schools were built, they sent their children to school where they rapidly caught up. Every slave Silas had somehow come to own troubled him deeply whether he had read the Beecher Stowe book or not.

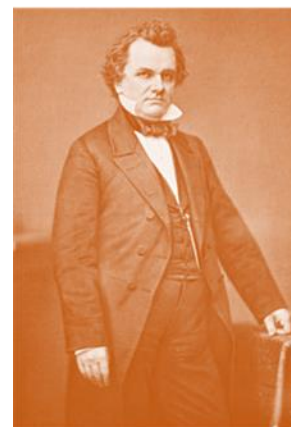


Left: Harriet Beecher Stowe and Book, Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1852.

Stephen A. Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854

The times, people, and borders of the United States were changing according to the pro and con dictates of slavery. When Stephen A. Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854 opened up Kansas as a territory, he set the stage for a six-year preview of the incivilities of civil war. The Missouri-Kansas border area was already primed for neighbor going against neighbor when the shooting began for real at Fort Sumter in April of 1861. Bloodshed introducing the coming Civil War began oozing out of Kansas and Missouri long before 1861, when for Silas Skipper, the Civil War became a personal nightmare. Eventually he enlisted in a troop of Union Cavalry.

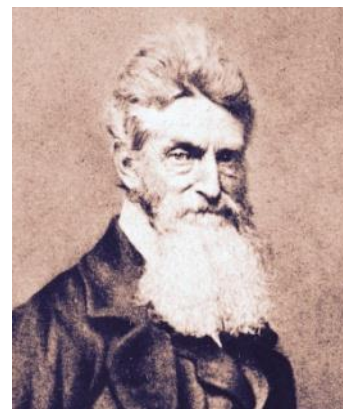
RIGHT: Stephen A. Douglas



Abolitionist, John Brown, 1859

The planters became hysterical after abolitionist John Brown raided Harper's Ferry, Virginia in 1859.

This attempt by a white man to start an armed slave revolt had the slave owners quivering in their boots even though Brown was easily defeated. Brown had originally asked Frederick Douglass to join him in his raid, but Douglass wisely declined, as he, at least, knew Brown's plan—and any, like unto it—had no chance of succeeding. *RIGHT, John Brown.*



Abraham Lincoln, 1860

Keepers of slaves were unable to be so logical as Frederick Douglas. By the time Abraham Lincoln was elected in November of 1860, every one of them was frantic with the thought that their slaves were about to be free of their chains. Autocrats who had no regard for the rights of their neighbors—white or black--began oppressive acts that were representative of their future Confederacy by blocking voter support for Lincoln. Except for Virginia, ballots in the South were not permitted to even list Lincoln's name. Later, freedom of speech was quelled by intimidation, terror, and death, as was freedom of the press.

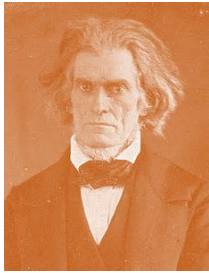


Fire-eaters, 1861

Not one of the previously mentioned events—not all of them combined--worked to start the war as much as the black man phobia that infested the planter psychopaths; in fear of losing their slaves and in fear of their slaves if they were ever set free, these panic-stricken men worked furiously to get Southern boys to start shooting at boys from the North—and shooting at each other when necessary. Their wild-eyed claims that their rights were being violated earned them the name, fire-eaters.

Saturated by their diatribe, some of the South believed them and trembled with them. But it took a while. In every state except South Carolina the planters couldn't win a secessionist vote by playing fair. They had to call a number of conventions before secession was declared. Almost half of Virginia seceded from Virginia to form the U.S. state of West Virginia. In Tennessee martial law was declared and that state was forced into the Confederacy by gun. In Texas dozens of Unionists were dragged out of their beds by night riders and hanged. Dozens.

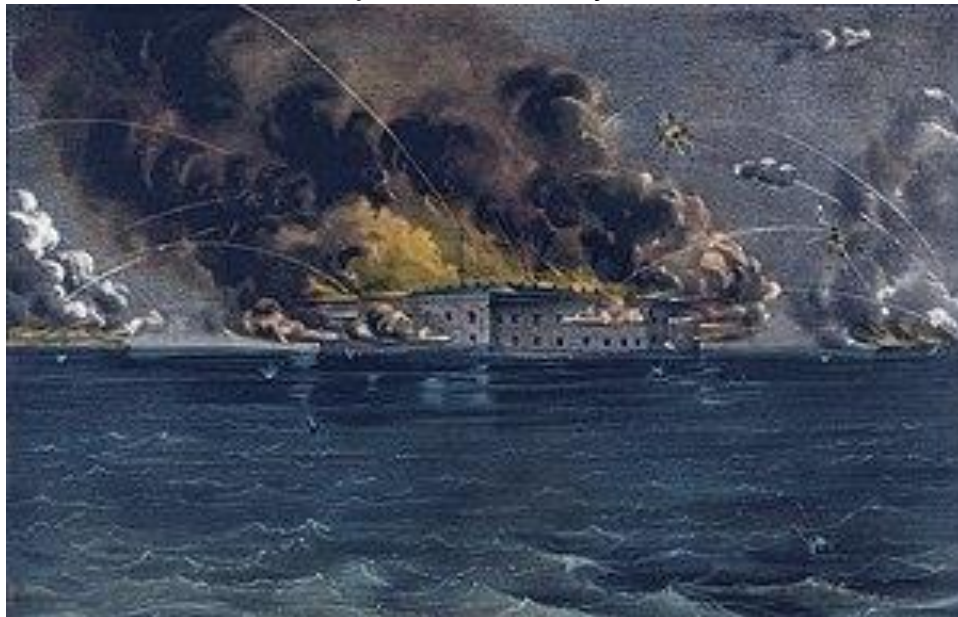




In effect, slaveholders stirred up a war to try to save their way of life with their slaves which included the buying and selling of children—children who repeatedly witnessed the rape of their mothers, the beating and mutilation of their fathers, the torture and starvation of their siblings and grandparents, and the forced labor of all. When bombardment of the fort on South Carolina’s shore started the American Civil War, young boys who had fallen under the spell of the fire-eaters’ propaganda could be heard shouting, “We got our war!” Some of them, like Silas, could have descended from George Skipper of the Carolinas, Chief man of the *Nottoway*. None of them, except the Indians, had had any of their rights violated by the United States government, but within weeks, they, and their families, would lose all the rights they had enjoyed and were guaranteed under the Federal Constitution. An old Unionist anti-nullification attorney James L Petigru was heard to say, “South Carolina is too small for a republic and too large for a lunatic asylum!” But it was just right for priming a foolish boy for war.

PICTURED: Fire-eaters-- John C. Calhoun, top left; Edmund Ruffin, lower left.

Bombardment of Fort Sumter by Currier & Ives



Fort Sumter, South Carolina, 1861

1860: SILAS SKIPPER, PRIVATE, U. S. CAVALRY

Sometime after the 1857 birth of Elizabeth Sarah Skipper--their fourth child, Silas and Harriet had packed up their brood in Butler, Alabama and headed for Jackson Parish, Louisiana. The Skippers set up housekeeping just in time for the birth of Malinda Harriet, born in 1859. The same year, Silas picked up 277 acres in neighboring Ouachita Parish and started a Louisiana plantation. In 1860 he owned \$2,000 in real estate and \$600 in personal wealth. Some of what he owned was now invested in the enslavement of other human beings.

Jackson Parish, Louisiana

1860 Census, Jackson, Louisiana

Name: Silas Skipper /Age: 34

Birth Year: abt 1826 /Birth Place: Tennessee

Home, 1860: Jackson, Jackson, Louisiana/Post Office: Vernon

Silas Skipper 34

Harriet Skipper 34

Martha J Skipper 12

Mary A Skipper 10

John Wesley Skipper 6

Elizabeth Sarah Skipper 3

Malinda Harriet Skipper 1

John Jones 33, a farmer, possibly an overseer.

None of the children of school age were in school, because there were not any schools in the Deep South in which they could enroll. However, Martha could read and write, as could her parents. Future records have them in school—and all became literate.

Ouachita Parish, Louisiana

1859

Name: Silas Skipper

Land Office: Monroe

Document Number: 19298; Total Acres: 276.94

Signature: Yes

Act or Treaty: April 24, 1820

Entry Classification: Sale-Cash Entries

**Land Description: 1 NE LOUISIANA No 15 N 1 W 22; 3 NENW LOUISIANA No 15 N 1 W 22;
2 N½SE LOUISIANA No 15 N 1 W 22**

The ownership of slaves went against the life his forefathers had lived since the time of the Haudenosaunee, on through the *Nottoway* years, during wartime, and throughout migration from state to state to state. Silas Skipper had no desire to own slaves. He told his wife he was going to free them. When the chance came for him to free his and to fight for their freedom, he took it. Soon after enlisting, he was killed.

THE FINAL BATTLEFIELDS OF PVT. SILAS SKIPPER

The duty roster of 2nd Regiment included defense maneuvers at New Orleans, Brashear City, Baton Rouge and Port Hudson until September 1864. The 2nd Cavalry was involved in skirmishes at Spanish Hill, April 2, Bayou Boeuf, May 7, and Wilson's Landing May 14.

A couple of months after these engagements, Silas Skipper died on



July 16, 1864. He was buried in the Baton Rouge National Cemetery where he is enlisted in the Roll of Honor. He was thirty-nine years old.

Name: Silas Skipper; Service Info.: PVT US ARMY CIVIL WAR; Death Date: 16 Jul 1864; Cemetery: Baton Rouge National Cemetery; Cemetery Address: 220 North 19th Street Baton Rouge, LA 70806; Buried At: Section 12 Site 690

<i>Roll of Honor Index</i>		955
Skinning, B. P. 19:34	Slade, Jesse 7:110	Slater, Daniel 7:81;
Skinnington, J. 9:113	Slade, John 18:414	25:304
Skirovianski, M. T. 14:218	Slade, M. C. 9:150	Slater, E. B. 9:59
Skipler, O. A. 18:253;	Slade, N. C. 27:108	Slater, Ed 3:177
26:64	Slade, Samuel 22:491	Slater, Edward 7:110
Skipper, James L. 18:94	Slader, F. 3:177	Slater, Garrett 20:36
Skipper, Samuel 25:233	Slader, G. C. 18:253;	Slater, George 14:109;
Skipper, Silas 19:284	26:62	22:345
Skipper, Jackson 18:401	Slaffer, Hector 21:284	Slater, George D. 21:388



Baton Rouge National Cemetery



U.S. Cavalry Charge

War Record

*Name; Silas Skipper
Birth Date; 1825; Age; 39;
Enlistment Date; 1864;
Military Unit; 2nd Cavalry.*



General Ulysses S. Grant, 1864

Ouachita Parish, LOUISIANA

Monroe is the parish seat of Ouachita Parish. The Skippers built a home there, where, in 1862 their daughter Rebecca M. Skipper was born. She was born during the second year of the American Civil War. The Skippers had made their home where a civil war within the Civil War was raging, but they fortunately landed in an area filled with Union patriots. This placed a large number of unhappy potential Confederate conscripts smackdab in baby Rebecca's neighborhood. Her father, Silas, who loved his country and was devoted to its star-spangled banner, was one of the men who declined the Confederate draft, and he went into hiding. Afterward, exactly as Rebecca recalled to her granddaughter, two Confederate training camps moved into the Monroe area in 1862 to search for him and his loyalist friends.

Added to local Confederate rebels' woes, secessionist refugees raced into the Skipper's parish from the east, fleeing ahead the forces of Union General Ulysses S. Grant who spent the winter of 1862–1863 in northeastern Louisiana. There, he prepared for the capture of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Union sympathy in Monroe made life even more miserable for the frightened Mississippi refugees, with Ouachita residents refusing to offer them food or shelter. On the other hand, Union boats that came up the Ouachita River to Monroe were welcomed. Yankee coffee, liquor, dry goods, and good money were traded for Louisiana cotton.

The Civil War in Louisiana had not gone well for the Confederacy. Not only did General Grant set up his '62-'63 winter camp there, when many Louisiana conscripts failed to report for duty Confederate General Richard Taylor had to set up his training camps to try and search them out. He sent five companies into Jackson to arrest "the shirkers"—to hunt them down and shoot them if they couldn't be forced into the Monroe camps. When Silas Skipper became one of the Confederate draft-dodgers Taylor had his men looking for, the Louisiana canebrakes, swamps, and hills where he could hide out made Taylor's order impossible to carry out. The woods on his plantation, added to the terrain, insured his safety. All the

while, during their searches, the Confederates had to watch out for the sympathizers who were helping Union troops. Moreover, they had to stay on guard against Yankee soldiers and General Grant, himself.

With the help of his wife Harriet and their slaves, who cared for him wherever he hid out, and with friendly guns in the area, Silas safely made it to the U.S. 2nd Cavalry and joined up. Before he left home he had freed his devoted slaves, and he also left Harriet with child. Harriet had a daughter, born after his departure, and she named her, Silas Ann.

After the war, the adjutant general of the U.S. Army reported the number of white enlistments from Tennessee at 24,940, Arkansas at 5,942, and Louisiana at 5,488—totaling over 35,000 loyalist soldiers against secession. Not only was that 35,000 men who didn't fill Confederate ranks, they were 35,000 soldiers that the undermanned Confederacy had to fight.

The lives of these Union men and their partisan families were daily threatened by the tyranny of an increasingly vicious Confederacy. The malice and spite generated by the war the planters had craved for so long forced thousands and thousands of loyal United States citizens to join resistance movements, to become dissidents, saboteurs, assassins, and spies, to work underground, and to seek refuge in swamps, forests, and caves all over the South. In Vicksburg, Mississippi, Confederate devotees dug out five hundred caves and hid out in them for a few weeks during General Grant's siege of the town—and their ordeal takes up pages, upon endless pages, of admiring text put out by admiring historians; on the other side, the loyal Unionist southerner had to stay out of sight for years, and many were hanged, murdered, thrown into dungeons and jails, and had their property confiscated, but their sacrifice is hardly a footnote to traditional American history. Silas Skipper left his hiding place on his plantation and enlisted in the 2nd Regiment, Louisiana Cavalry, Company G, early in 1864 and became one of the thousands and thousands of unsung and forgotten American freedom fighters who lived, and died, in the Civil War South.

To do what he did, he, his wife, his family, and his former slaves had to face the wrath of the Confederacy. And, he was but one of 5,488 in Louisiana. Ignoring their fears, white men, women, and children all over the south rose up in defiance of the Confederacy--an absent detail in American history books which only traditional historians can explain.

Before the war was over, soldiers, still alive, in what was left of the starving, half-naked, poorly armed Confederate army headed for home.

Another incentive for Silas Skipper to stay out of the Confederacy. Perhaps he even heeded the words of William Tecumseh Sherman. On South Carolina's secession from the United States, Sherman, the first President (Superintendent) of Louisiana State University, said:

You people of the South don't know what you are doing. This country will be drenched in blood, and God only knows how it will end. It is all folly, madness, a crime against civilization! You people speak so lightly of war; you don't know what you're talking about. War is a terrible thing! You mistake, too, the people of the North. They are a peaceable people but an earnest people, and they will fight, too. They are not going to let this country be destroyed without a mighty effort to save it... Besides, where are your men and appliances of war to contend against them? The North can make a steam engine, locomotive, or railway car; hardly a yard of cloth or pair of shoes can you make. You are rushing into war with one of the most powerful, ingeniously mechanical, and determined people on Earth—right at your doors. You are bound to fail. Only in your spirit and determination are you prepared for war. In all else you are totally unprepared, with a bad cause to start with. At first you will make headway, but as your limited resources begin to fail, shut out from the markets of Europe as you will be, your cause will begin to wane. If your people will but stop and think, they must see in the end that you will surely fail.

. . .A prophet, soon to be General Sherman, on warfare, Sherman was also famous for warning, "War is hell." Silas Skipper was nearby, perhaps he heard about Sherman's warning--and, his loyalty.

In January 1861, as more Southern states were seceding from the Union, Sherman was required to accept receipt of arms surrendered to the State Militia by the U.S. Arsenal at Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Instead of complying, he resigned his position as superintendent and returned to the North, declaring to the governor of Louisiana, "On no earthly account will I do any act or think any thought hostile ... to the ... United States." [32]

Wikipedia

In many other arsenals in the South the Confederacy already had control, thanks to departing gifts from a traitorous President James Buchannon.

Harriet Owens Skipper and Daughter, Rebecca

1870 Census for Ouachita Parish, Louisiana

Page No. 16 ; Inquiries numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be asked in respect to infants. Inquiries numbered 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20 are to be answered (if at all) merely by an affirmative mark, as follows:

SCHEDULE I.—Inhabitants in Ward 6, in the Parish of Ouachita, State of Louisiana, enumerated by me on the 2nd day of August, 1870.

Post Office: Yorkville C. H. Brewster, Ass't Marshal.

1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11		13	14	15		18	19	20
			Age at last birthday, or date of birth, if under 1 year, in French, Latin, or other language, if known.	Sex—Males (M.), Females (F.).	Color—White (W.), Black (B.), Mulatto (Mu.), Chinese (C.), Indian (I.).		Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male or female.	Value of Real Estate.		Value of Personal Estate.	Place of Birth, naming State or Territory of U. S.; or the Country, if of foreign birth.			Father of foreign birth.	Mother of foreign birth.			
1	117	Dickersons Mami	19	7	W	At Home			La									
2		" Emily	17	7	W	"			"					/				
3		" Rebecca	14	7	W	" School			"				/	/	/			
4		" Jehann	12	M	W	"			"				/	/	/			
5		" Sally	10	M	W	"			"				/	/	/			
6		" George	5	M	W	"			"									
7		" Spriey	5	M	W	"			"									
8		" Robert	22	M	W	Farmer			"									/
9	118	Johnson Mrs. B.	25	M	W	"	300	300	Gu									/
10		" Mary S.	24	F	W	Keeping House			"									
11		" Nicola	3	F	W	"			La									
12		" Joseph	3	M	W	"			"									
13	119	Jaeger Mich	30	M	W	Farmer			Ala				/	/				/
14		" Jane	26	F	W	Keeping House			Gu				/	/				
15		" Johnson	11	M	W	At Home			La				/	/				
16		" Alice	7	F	W	"			"									
17		" Randall	6	M	W	"			"									
18		" Shadrack	5	M	W	"			"									
19		" Ann	4	F	W	"			"									
20		" Elizabeth	3	F	W	"			"									
21		" Rudolph	75	M	W	At Home			S. C.									/
22	120	Skipper Harriet	44	F	W	Keeping House	300		Ala									
23		" Martha	22	F	W	"			Ala									
24		" Mary	20	F	W	At School			"				/					
25		" John W.	16	M	W	Farmer			"				/					
26		" Sarah	13	F	W	At School			"				/					
27		" Harriet	11	F	W	"			La				/	/				
28		" Rebecca	8	F	W	"			"				/					
29		" Ann	5	F	W	"			"									
30	121	Rutter Cardine	40	F	W	Farmer	600	500	Ala									
31		" George	28	M	W	Farmer			"									/
32		" Thomas	22	M	W	"			"									/
33		" Ellen	18	F	W	At Home			"									
34		" Adair	16	F	W	"			La									
35	122	Rutter Fortune	50	M	W	Farmer			S. C.				/	/				/
36		" Deba	50	F	W	Keeping House			"				/	/				
37		" Homer	20	M	W	Farmer			Ala				/	/				
38		" Joseph	15	M	W	"			La				/	/				
39		" Andrew	12	M	W	"			"				/	/				
40		" Isaac	10	M	W	"			"				/	/				

Harriet Owens Skipper and Daughter, Rebecca

Luke 21:23--But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days for there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. King James Version (KJV) Holy Bible

Rebecca Skipper

1862-1935



Unlike other southern states where loyal U.S. citizens suffered and died in their struggle to save the united government for which their forefathers fought and died, Louisiana was a state with an ally on the scene



who protected its freedom fighters. General Benjamin Butler was a fierce nationalist whose victorious troops took control of the state early in 1862. His occupation forces provided law and order and protected Louisiana's patriots from the type of Confederate zealots who could be found roaming in local vigilante gangs, lynch mobs, and packs of home guard all over the rest of the South.

On his imposition of a social revolution in New Orleans, Butler wrote:

I saw the war was a war of the Aristocrats against the Middling men, of the rich against the poor, a war of the Landowner against the Laborer; that it was a struggle for the retention of powers in the hands of the few against the many,. . . I therefore felt no hesitation in taking the substance of the wealthy, who had caused the war, to feed the innocent poor, who had suffered by the war.

—Benjamin Franklin Butler

In all areas where they were given support, the Unionists of Louisiana fought back against the aristocratic wannabees of the secessionist regime and were able to keep up the fight. After 1862 there was no widespread support for Confederate forces in Louisiana, and the Confederates—always expecting backing that wasn't there--were disappointed, time and time again, when their actions did not lead to popular uprisings. After 1862 Louisiana was essentially a Federalist state until the end of the war.

Broad-based support for the Union became apparent in the enlistment of individual Louisianans like Silas Skipper. After Silas freed his slaves, General Butler's policies, dealing with slavery, even forged ahead of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Since some of the property of the wealthy which General Butler took over were slaves, he had been helping African Americans escape their plantation prisons since 1862. His confiscation of the southern tyrant's most valuable property earned him the everlasting hatred of the Confederate south, and, the loyal devotion of black people everywhere. Against a wall of malicious propaganda his enemies built around him, black people revered him till the day he died.

Black newspapers eulogized him as an advocate, a friend, and “one of the few American statesmen who have stood as a wall of defense in favor of equal rights for all American citizens.” ... The New England Torchlight put it simply: ‘The white South hated him. The black South loved him.’ **Wikipedia**

Silas didn’t need any encouragement from General Butler in setting free the slaves on his plantation. His family had never enslaved people before, and the ones in Ouachita Parish were probably brought to his marriage by Harriet as part of a wedding dowry. He told his wife he was going to free them, and he did. Harriet had no objection.

According to family lore, Silas was simply trying to be a good and decent American. “All men are created equal,” the Sons of Liberty declared in 1776, and as such none of them deserved to be enslaved. When his wife and his newly freed black allies risked their lives to keep him hidden in the woods of his plantation—bringing food for him and his horse and keeping him in clean clothes as needed—he was able to escape General Taylor, enabling him to finally join up with the Union troops that arrived in the area.

Secretive visits were as joyful as two unburdened souls could make them. Following one of their last clandestine encounters their rendezvous led to the conception of their last child. After telling his beloved Harriet goodbye, he mounted his horse and rode away. The two lovers would never see each other again.

It didn’t hurt the Skippers that General Butler’s policies were at work. When Silas died after a few months of service he left his devoted wife and family in the midst of a war that was especially dangerous for the kin of Union loyalists. His brave widow, Harriet Owens Skipper was left in peril with seven children to care for. One was an infant, born shortly after his death. For his toddler, two-year-old Rebecca, he would be mostly known through the fond remembrances of his wife and older children. Their words were inspiring enough that one day Rebecca would name her only son, Silas. An older sister also named a son for their soldier father.

Sadly, not even General Butler could keep soldiers from dying.

War was especially hard on children, taking their fathers as it did. In fact, the war stole childhood from the little ones. At least, with General Butler’s policies in place, for a while this war-torn family in Louisiana did not have to suffer the way widows and orphans suffered in other parts of the warring Confederacy, but Butler was a general, and his duty would

eventually call him east to help defeat Robert E. Lee. In such a case, Harriet and all her little Skippers had to trudge onward through perilous times without Silas, never forgetting him.

When the South left the Union, each state left with all the Constitutional rights and liberties of their citizens in hand; within a year they were being drafted, over-taxed, and their basic freedoms suppressed. Murderous night riders invaded homes of protesters—looting, kidnapping, and killing--unabated. After four cruel years of oppression and listening to the guns of war, the home-life of much of the white populace who were anti-secession was ruined, but--the planters no longer held their slaves in unyielding chains. The war, which slave owners contrived out of their greed and fear, cost over a million men their arms, legs, faces, and lives. Millions of children were left with fathers who were mutilated beyond recognition, crippled beyond rehabilitation, unable to hear small voices, powerless to hold a little hand, and blinded to a child's growth into adulthood; and, some were left with no father at all.

With seven fatherless children to care for, in 1868 Harriet applied for the pension that was due her family--Martha J. Skipper, 1848; Mary A Skipper, 1849; John Wesley Skipper, 1854; Elizabeth Sarah Skipper, 1857; Harriett Malinda Skipper, 1859; Rebecca Skipper, 1862; Silas Ann Skipper, 1864. In the hard years to come, the family would need every cent.

Harriet/Silas Skipper Pension Application, 1868

NAME OF SOLDIER:		Skipper, Silas			(8-11-3)
NAME OF DEPENDENT:		Widow,	Skipper, Harriet		
		Minor,			
SERVICE:		G. 2 La Can			
DATE OF FILING:	CLASS.	APPLICATION NO.	CERTIFICATE NO.	STATE FROM WHICH FILED.	
1868 May 19	Invalid, Widow, Minor,	161034			
ATTORNEY:					
REMARKS:		X 0896-590			

Conditions worsened in the post war era. As Southern soldiers returned to their smoldering farms and their suffering families, the unrepentant planters aggressively continued their war within the wasted Confederacy. The entire South was a devastated war zone that unfortunately held open a gate for the planters--without their black slaves--to slip through and begin enslaving everyone. It was the very state of affairs General Butler had predicted and had worked so hard to prevent. Cotton was still king, and everyone who had a hand old enough to pick it, began doing so. Soon blacks and whites were sharecropping the fields of former slaveholders, working for wages they already owed to the company store that was owned by the planters. Harriet's brood would serve time in their fluffy white fields that lined the Mississippi River, and years later, Rebecca's children were born and raised in migratory housing in Texas where their little hands picked cotton and pulled bolls until they were grown.



Barefoot Children Cotton-pickers, the American South

Ouachita Parish was still the family home in 1870, though fatherless, with sixteen-year-old John Wesley farming an estate that was now worth a total of only \$300. Most of the family could read and write, and everyone between the ages of eight and twenty—no matter what--went to school. Showing signs of a learning difficulty that may have become a lifelong problem, eleven-year-old Harriet Malinda could not write. Never married, she spent her adult life in the home of her baby sister, Silas Ann.

In 1870 Rebecca M. Skipper was eight, and six of her years were spent with no father. Ten years after the death of Silas, her mother moved

the Skippers out of Ouachita Parish. Sometime after 1774, they moved to Rankin, Mississippi to sharecrop in the delta. John Wesley became “head of household.” Since Martha J. eventually returned to Louisiana it is known that the family managed to stay linked to Ouachita Parish.

By 1870, their United States was a whole, other country.

Post War Louisiana

General Grant was elected President in 1868, and he was known and loved all over the world—except in the ruins of southern plantations. Just as General Butler had warned, the unpunished and unrepentant planter class was consolidating its power and hatching out in secret, terroristic sects. Madder than ever, white citizen groups of a later age had their genesis in the aftermath of the Civil War. Throwbacks to the 1776 Tories, like a disease, these criminals were still wriggling and writhing in the southern heat, and they continued to suck the life out of the idea that all men were created with equal rights. Followers of Robert E. Lee, who didn’t want to admit he had been whipped, began putting a virtuous spin on the Confederacy, its leaders, and their part in the Civil War. With their racist propaganda they contrived a history they called “the lost cause” that lasted another hundred years and beat back every effort of the black man to prove his equality--until 1964. . . .1964.

General Butler worked tirelessly for civil rights legislation to help control the racist regimes of the former slave holders, but short of another war, there was little he or even President Grant could do to control the disease of so much hate. These were dangerous times for black people and their friends. In this harsh atmosphere Harriet and her children were driven off her land in 1874.



Image of mobs rioting entitled "The Louisiana Outrage." White Leaguers at Liberty Place attacked the integrated police and state militia, in New Orleans, September 1874. Published, 1874. Wikipedia

The children of Silas Skipper grew up in an America that was far removed from the kind of nation for which their father and his brothers in arms had fought and died. Saddest of all, this mockery of the war

allowed patriotic Unionists of the South to be pushed aside while its national heroes were treated to celebrations of what seemed to be an empty victory when evil slave owners were allowed to take back their lands and their odious way of life.

In Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, Rebecca Skipper would spend her younger years in seasonal migrations, with her children eventually working similar fields of the nation's enemy—the fields of former slave owners and their wealthy heirs. Some of their fields were once battlegrounds that were soaked in the blood of soldiers like her father.

The Death of Harriet Skipper

Harriet Owens Skipper died December 16, 1890 in Hunt County, Texas. With the disappearance of John Wesley, this branch of the family, bearing Chief George Skipper's name and blood, comes to an end.

The legacy left by Silas and Harriet Owens Skipper is that their heirs received the gift of a love of learning. In spite of their seasonal moves, their children learned to read and write, and among their descendants are teachers, coaches, educators, and mentors who continue to appreciate the lessons their ancestors learned and left America to live by. Daughter Rebecca's memories of the sacrifice her father and mother made in the Civil War are the source of this narrative.



*Harriet Skipper Headstone
Hunt County, Texas*

The End