

# THE VETERANS' CORNER

## Amos Rucker, Colored, Confederate Veteran

By Passie Fenton Ottley

in Uncle Remus's Home Magazine

**L**IKE the bison and the buffalo, the "old-time negro" will soon be extinct. The new negro of the new South will be the negro of the future.

His interest and significance is large, for he is the "negro problem." It is, however, a different interest altogether from that of the "old-time negro". He is a totally different phenomenon, and authentic records of him should be preserved for historical, no less than sentimental, reasons, for he is rapidly passing away, and, when he goes, we "shall not look upon his like again."

Smaller each year grows the little company of colored folks who, through all the horrors of war, the chaos of reconstruction and the alienation of these piping times of equality, have unfalteringly persisted in their attitude of affectionate loyalty towards "their white folks".

Among this ever lessening band of faithful servants, these "white-folks' niggers", as their own race call them now, there could have been numbered no more interesting character than that of an old negro man who passed away some months ago in Atlanta. Throughout the whole South it would have been difficult to find a more striking or dramatic figure than that of Amos Rucker, whose bright, black face, with its friendly smile, was known and loved of all men in the city where he lived and died. Amos "belonged" to the Rucker family of Elbert County, and when his "young marster", Sandy Rucker, went to the war, Amos went with him. In the wonderful record of the fidelity of the negroes of the South to the homes and families of their masters during war times, a most striking example was furnished by the "likely young colored boys" who followed their young masters to the army as "body-servants". A story is told of a report made by a subordinate officer to General Grant of reinforcements to General Lee's army of "90 privates from the University of Virginia with 90 body-servants".

In the thrilling records of those dramatic days these negro body-servants deserve a chapter to them-

selves. Many weeping mothers laid the care of dashing young officers and privates upon black Jim or Sam or Andrew: and hunger or cold, privation and the temptation to desert to the better provided side developed few Judases among them. Uniformly true to the trust "old Miss" imposed, they acted as cook, valet and general utility men, a very important part of their service being that of foraging in starvation times.

Where the fortunes of war were favorable, master and man came home together; while every Southern

the Confederacy was sincere and personal. It was his master's cause and therefore his, but, once enlisted in it, the fire and fervor of the fray became his own, and when he died there ceased to beat a heart as loyal to the Lost Cause as any that took flight under Lee at Gettysburg, or Jackson at Bull Run.

This enthusiasm it was which made for Rucker his picturesque and unique position as the acquaintance and personal friend of nearly every white person in Atlanta. After the war, when, in too many instances, the hands of white and black were turned against each other, Rucker knew nothing of the storm. To him the solving of the negro problem was exquisitely simple. The white folks were his folks: they would take care of him, and they did. When many years ago, his health grew feeble and he was unable to work, Amos knew no care. In his uniform of Confederate gray, which he wore to the day of his death, he went cheerfully about the streets of Atlanta, beaming upon old and young alike, and as secure of all that was needful as are the lilies of the field.

Rucker was one of the few negroes who held membership in a camp of Confederate Veterans.

He regularly belonged to Camp W. H. T. Walker, U. C. V., and never failed to attend a reunion, no matter how far it might be from Atlanta. On these occasions, the little old darkey with the white head and the gray clothes, attracted any amount of attention, and was often the center of an interested group while he performed a remarkable feat of memory in calling verbatim the roll of his master's old regiment. From A to Z, from color-sergeant to the last private, in the voice of the orderly sergeant, Rucker would run through the roll, answering each name, sometimes "here", often, very often, "dead or 'wounded'". He loved to be called upon to give his roll-call, and it was a great occasion with him, when, at a meeting of the camps, a request would be made for it, as was often done. Some verses written several years ago by a veteran comrade affords an idea of how Rucker and his roll-call were regarded by the camps:

### When Rucker Calls the Roll.

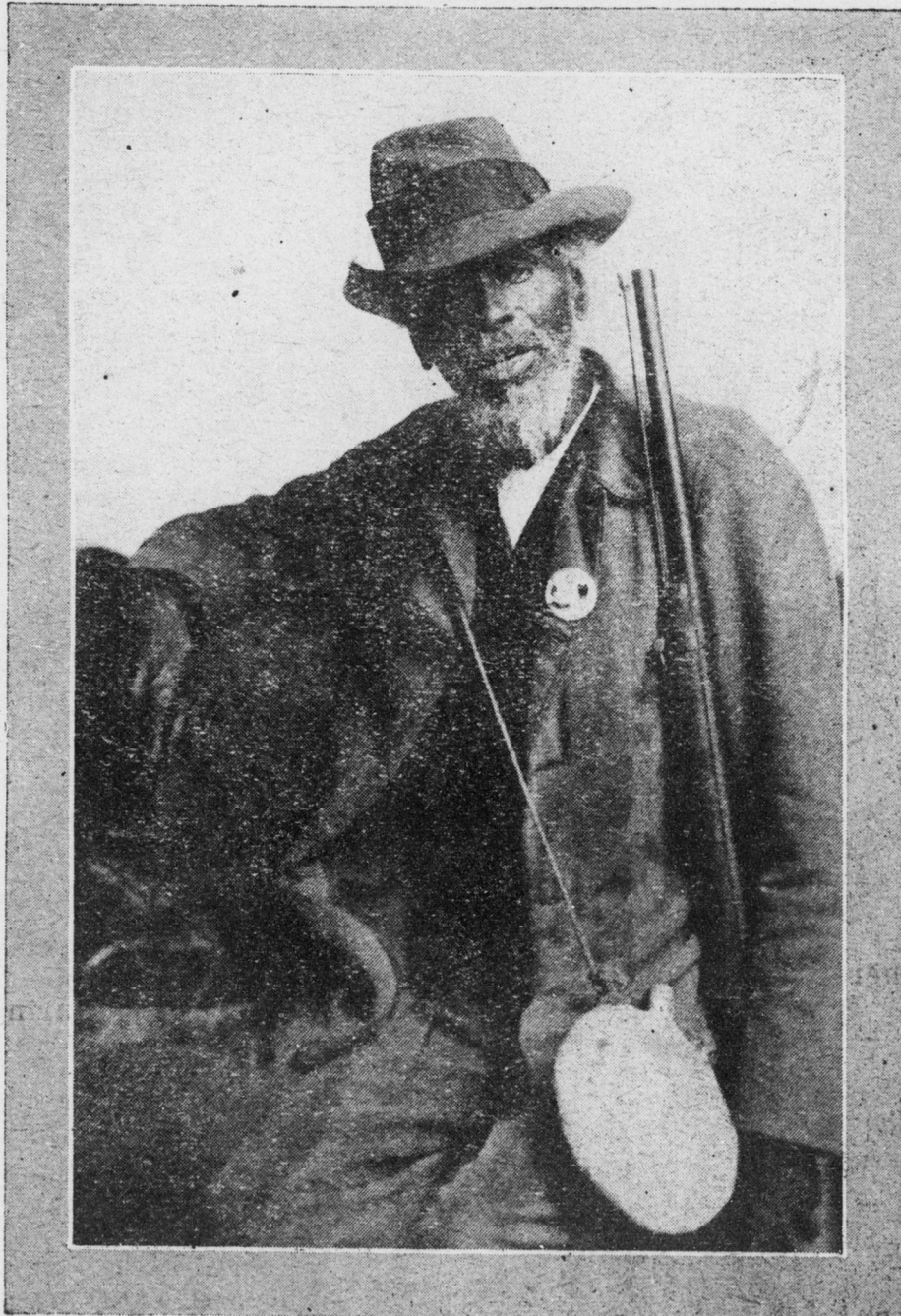
By F. O. Chase.

How thick the mem'ries come to mind,  
Of many a tented plain,  
Of fading lines, of faded gray,  
And ghastly heaps of slain,  
Of bugles blaring through the night  
In tones that stir the soul,  
The days of '62 come back,  
When Rucker calls the roll.

Full many a roll call comes to mind,  
Full many a sad parade  
Of muskets glinting down the line  
And gleam of saber blade,  
Though few they be who do not sleep  
Beneath some grassy knoll,  
In vivid visions all come back  
When Rucker calls the roll.

Then here's to Rucker—loyal heart,  
Faithful and tried and true—  
And when death's bugle sounds for taps  
Our prayer shall go with you.

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AMOS RUCKER

town holds among the pathetic annals of these fearful days, stories of painful and difficult journeys through hostile lines when the bodies of young heroes were brought back to weeping mothers by these same colored boys, who thus proved themselves "faithful unto death".

Notable among this class of body-servants was Amos Rucker, whose young master early enlisted in the Thirty-third Georgia Regiment, a part of the Division of General Patrick R. Cleburne. This Division caught some of the heaviest fighting of the war, and Amos not only accompanied his master into every engagement, but, standing side by side with him, he fought like an enlisted soldier. When in the trenches or in a charge, a gun or a saber would fall from the hands near to him, Amos was ever quick to snatch it up and push forward to close up the ranks.

His enthusiasm for the cause of

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## Amos Rucker, Colored Confederate Veteran

(Concluded from Page 3)

May many years pass o'er your head  
Ere the last sad bell shall toll  
To tell that faithful Rucker  
No more shall call the roll.

By a singular incident, Rucker was reported dead several weeks before the time of his actual demise, and while he was still in moderately good health. One of his own color, presuming upon his many well-known friendships among the white people, made a round of stores and business offices, stating that Rucker was dead and asking for money with which to bury him. He had, evidently, however, reckoned not fully enough upon the extent of the old man's popularity, for the news spread, and, not content with sending contributions, a number of prominent citizens hurried to the home of the supposed corpse with hearse and every equipment for a proper funeral. What was their surprise to be met at the corner of the street by the cheerful, though surprised, Rucker himself. The bearer of the false tidings was haled into police court upon the charge of obtaining money under false pretenses, there to be faced by the alleged dead man, who indignantly denied that he was dead, or, if he had that he should have entrusted his funeralizing to "any such a low-down, trifling nigger". Not more than four weeks later the funeral cortege again turned into the narrow street where Amos and his old

wife had lived so long. The old man lay really dead this time.

The body of the President of the Confederacy once lay in state in Atlanta, noted Confederate generals have slept there before the eyes of a loving populace, and yet none of these obsequies have furnished a more unique or dramatic picture than did the burial of this simple old negro.

Shrouded in his uniform of Confederate gray, he lay, beneath the drapery of a great Confederate flag, in the undertaking parlors, which were visited by hundreds of respectful friends, both black and white. The funeral services were most impressively said by General Clement A. Evans, that gallant "fighting priest", who is commander of the veterans. The pall-bearers who volunteered their services, were ex-Governor Allen D. Candler, General A. J. West, Judge Lowndes Calhoun, Dr. Amos Fox, ex-postmaster; F. A. Hilburn, Commander of Camp Walker, U. C. V.; J. Sid Holland and R. S. Osborne. Very lovingly these distinguished citizens and veterans bore their old companion to the grave, which was covered by beautiful flowers, among the handsomest of which was the offering of the Daughters of the Confederacy. Camp Walker, U. C. V., not only defrayed all expenses, but undertook to provide a lot in which Amos Rucker's wife shall lie beside him.

In all the years in which Rucker was a member of Camp Walker, he

had never missed a meeting until the Monday night before his death, when to Commander Hilburn came the message: "I am awful sorry I can't be with you tonight, but I am too sick. Give my love to the boys!"

This, the last message of the faithful old soul, was a fitting close to a life, the story of which is one of simple love and loyalty worth the telling in this day of dissention, doubt and discord.

### A Monument to Rucker.

A movement to erect a monument to the memory of Amos Rucker has been started. Subscriptions for the purpose may be sent to E. H. Alley, Historian of Camp W. H. T. Walker, Atlanta, Ga., or to Uncle Remus's Home Magazine. All money sent in care of the Magazine will be turned over to Mr. Alley. The following request for donations has been made:

"To the Business Men and Citizens of Atlanta: E. H. Alley, Esq., Historian of Camp W. H. T. Walker, kindly solicits donations for the erection of a monument, not to exceed one hundred dollars, to be placed over the remains of Amos Rucker, who was well known in the city of Atlanta. He was a faithful servant, devoted to his master, and respected by all Confederate soldiers who knew him in the Army of Virginia. After the 'War between the States' he remained, until his death, true to the type of the old negroes who never lost for a moment their respect for a true Confederate soldier. He attended all the reunions of the Confederate soldiers, when he had the strength to reach them. In the discharge of his duty he was not only faithful in the service of his master, but was severely wounded while fearlessly exposing his person on the battle fields where the company to which his master was attacked made a noble record. All contributions you may see proper to make for the erection of a suitable monument over the grave of this faithful old negro man will be highly appreciated."

### The Reason Why

(Concluded from Page 10)

though under present conditions there seems to be but little encouragement to engage largely in the industry or to invest much money in pure bred animals. The meat trust is a barrier of no mean importance, and farmers too must rid their pastures of the fever tick. With the tick eliminated, the government quarantine will be removed, thus permitting shipments to any market if by such shipments a paying market can be found. The elimination of the tick will also permit the introduction of improved breeds and thus the standard of individual excellence will be raised to a higher level. Under the salubrious climatic conditions prevailing in the Southland, well bred cattle can be grown to a remarkable age for less money than where the rigors of a northern winter must be faced, hence, even at prices prevailing, galling as they are because of the absence of parity between price paid to the producer and price charged the consumer, there is some profit. Some profit direct and much profit indirectly, for land occupied by cattle will become very rich, and, fertile lands bring

abundant harvests. We herewith charge the meat trust and the local dealers in meat, with whatever damage may have been caused the South by reason of any failure encountered by southern men in raising beef for the southern markets.

The cattle tick has to do with the growth and full development of cattle and should be eradicated. The government has given the matter attention for years and made liberal appropriation for fighting this pest and it should have the co-operation of each Southern State and every farmer in the South, but the tick has naught to do with present prices of fat cattle on southern markets. The tick has much to do with the growing of cattle, the trust has all to do in depressing the prices of southern steers.

### THE FARMERS' UNION.

The Farmers' Union is capable of doing great good, and if operated on wise lines it will prove itself stronger than the money power. The farmers must pull together and see that the wealth and power of the few shall be turned to the uses and benefit of the many. The farmers should strive to get control of governmental affairs into the hands of the people, and change our farming educational methods to reach the masses.

Some advise that we should keep out of politics; I say stay in. Stop sending so many lawyers to the Legislature. If farmers are not qualified, educate them. If your Congressman does not serve your interests, unite against him. Make the legislative bodies force publicity on the corporation, and punish the violators of the law among the wealthy and powerful as severely and as surely as they do among the poor and weak. —T. E. Sorrells, in Home and Farm.

Ducks have no true crop. Hence their food passes directly to the gizzard and must be soft. Grain is hard and large quantities are not good for them.

Never allow any mouldy or decaying vegetable matter to lie around for fowls to scratch in. Such matter contains germs which may cause canker, chicken-pox, diarrhoea and various other diseases in fowls.

One experimenter in corn cultivation says that corn cultivated four inches deep made thirty-one bushels per acre; three inches, forty-one bushels; two inches, forty-three bushels; one inch, forty-four bushels.

### THE BARBED-WIRE FENCE.

By R. Andrews.

All honor to the man who first  
The barbed-wire fence did make;  
By some he may be roundly cursed,  
My praises he can take.

Demand so pressing he has met  
On plains so long and wide;  
But for his art, we'd have to let  
Broad acres lie outside.

And then the man who loves his ease,  
No longer finds a seat,  
His lounging laziness to please,  
On barbs that pierce his meat!

For his invention, so renowned,  
I thank the inventor twice,  
Because in it I now have found  
A moral of great price.

'Tis this: In action and in mind,  
The neutral is pretence;  
It is impossible to find  
A true man on the fence!

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