

## [Nathan Beauchamp](#)

### **Interview with Nathan Beauchamp**

—*Gertha Couric, Eufaula, Alabama*

#### *HALF BREED*

I walked up a little path bordered with small stones, an atmosphere of solitude surrounding me. In the sky, large, white cumulous clouds like great bolls of cotton, floated leisurely northward. Far down the road a ramshackle buckboard disappeared over a slight hill; directly in front the path ran at twenty yards into the dilapidated steps of a Negro cabin, while an old colored man in a vegetable garden to the left to the cabin broke the stillness with the intermittent metallic sounds of his spade digging into thirsty soil. I knew at a glance that this was Nathan Beauchamp.

"Hello, Uncle Nathan," I called.



*Nathan Beauchamp, Eufaula, Alabama*

"Mornin', white folks," he answered, as he discontinued his spading and raised his hand in a friendly gesture.

I walked over to where Uncle Nathan was standing and stopped in the little furrows of brown earth. Already a thick coat of dust had formed on my shoes.

"Uncle Nathan," I said, "I'd like to have a brief chat with you about slavery days, if you can spare a few minutes from your garden here?"

"Yassuh, boss," he said, punctuating his reply with a spat of tobacco that was soon nothing but a dark mark in the parched ground, "glad to be of any 'sistance."

We moved to the shade of a large oak where we sat down together on a sturdy, home-made bench.

"Well, white folks," he went on after taking a long turn at the dipper hanging on the tree which shades a well. "I'll tell you a story of my mammy an' pappy. Nathan Beauchamp, my pappy, belonged to Massa Green Beauchamp at White Oak Springs, near Eufaula.

Massa Green was a member of de legislature when de capital was at Tuscaloosy. He had many a acre of land an' hund'eds of slaves. Pappy use to drike de wagon in to Eufaula to git supplies an' on de way he would meet up wid an Injun gal a-carryin' big baskets dat she was a goin' to sell dere. He would ask her iffen she wanted to ride, an' she always say yes. So one day pappy came to de massa and tell him dat dere was an Injun gal on de St. Francis Indian Village dat he wanted fo' a wife, an' de boss say all right so pappy married de Indian gal. Her name was Mimi. So I is half nigger an half Injun. My mammy died 'bout five year after freedom, but I can remembers dat she had long black hair, and I remembers de way de sun sparkle on her teeth when she smile. Atter she married pappy, she still carried her pretty baskets to Eufaula to sell. Sometime she walk all de way dere and back, twentyfo' miles. I been libin' here in Eufaula fifty year or mo', white fo'ks, an' I owns my little cabin an' de lan' around it. T'ain't much, but its enough to keep me a-goin', dis wid de little sto' I owns.