

**Easter Sudie Campbell**

**Webber St., Hopkinsville, Ky**

**Interviewed by Mamie Hanbery**

**CHRISTIAN CO. HW: Ky 3**

Born in Princeton, Caldwell Co., Kentucky, her parents were slaves, the property of Will and Martha Grooms of Princeton.

Aunt Easter as she is called has followed the profession of a midwife for forty years. She is still active and works at present among the negroes of Hopkinsville.

Yes, sure, I make my own medicines, humph, that ain't no trouble. I can cure scrofula with burdock root and one half spoon of citrate of potash. Just make a tea of burdock root and add the citrate of potash to it. Sassafras is good for the stomach and cleans you out good. I use yellow per coon root for the sore eyes.

When I stayed with Mrs. Porter her chaps would break out mighty bad with sores in the fall of the year and I told Mrs. Porter I could cure that so I got me some elderberries and made pies out of it and made her chaps eat it and they were soon cured.

If it weren't for the white folks I sure would have a hard time. My man he just went away and I ain't never seen him again. I had five children and the white folks have helped me all these years. These trifling niggers they won't help their own kind of folks.

If you have a toothache, I make a poultice of scrape irish potatoes and put it on the jaw on the side of the tooth that's aching and that sure takes the fever out of the tooth. I blow tobacco smoke in the ear and that stops the earache.

When I go on a baby case, I just let nature have its way. I always test the baby, the first thing I do is blow my breath in the baby's mouth. I spank it just a little so it will cry and I give it warm catnip tea so if it is going to have the hives they will break out on it. I always have my own catnip and sheep balls, for some cases need one kind of tea and some another. I give sink field tea for the colic. It is just good for a young baby's stomach. I have been granning for nigh under forty years and I only lost two babies that were born alive. One of these was the white man's fault, this baby was born with the jaundice and I told this white man to go to the store and get me some calomel and he says, whoever heard of giving a baby such truck, and so that baby died.

Of course you can tell whether the baby is going to be a boy or girl before he is born. If the mother carries that child more on the left and high up, that baby will be a boy; and if she carries it more to the middle, that will be a girl. Mothers ought to be more careful while carrying their children not to get scared of anything, for they will sure mark their babies with terrible ugly

things. I know once a young woman was expecting and she went blackberry hunting and a bull cow with long horns got after her and she was so scared that she threw her hands over her head. And when that baby boy was born he had two nubs on his head just like horns beginning to grow. So I had her call her doctor and they cut them off. One white woman I waited on liked hot chocolate and she always wanted more, she never had enough of that stuff, and one day she spills some on her leg and it just splotched and burned her and when that gal was born, she had a big brown spot on her leg just like her mammy's scar from the burn. Now you see, I know you can mark the babies.

There was a colored woman once I waited on that had to help the white folks kill hogs and she never did like hog liver but the white folks told her to take one home and fix it for her supper. Well, she picked that thing up and started off with it and it made her feel creepy all over. And that night her baby was born, a gal child, and the print of a big hog-liver was standing out all over one side of her face. That side of her face is all blue and purplish and just the shape of a liver. And it's still there.

I grannied over three hundred children and I know what I'm talking about.

Hee! Hee! Hee! One day there was a circus in Hopkinsville and a black woman I was going to wait on was on the street to watch for the parade with the bands a-playing and the wild varmints and things; This woman gave birth to that girl child on the corner of Webber and Seventh St. That gal sure got a funny name 'Es-pe-cu-liar'. [I did not get the drift of the story so I asked her what was so funny about the name. Of course it is a name I have never heard before so the following is what the girls Mother said about it to Aunt Easter. M.D. Hanbery]

Well, the gal's mammy thought it was just peculiar that that happened when she was looking at the parade. [So this woman Especuliar is still in Hopkinsville and her story is known in quite a few of the older circles.]

Yah! Yah! I sure remember how the ole folks used to dress. The women wore hoop skirts and the men wore tight breeches. The night gowns were made on a yoke awful full and big long sleeves with a cuff at the hand, and a deep hem at the bottom of the gown. These gowns were made of domestic and when they were washed and starched and ironed they would be so stiff they could stand alone. The men and women both wore night caps. If the gown was a dress-up gown, why, they were homemade knit and crochet lace in the front, and lots and lots of tucks, some of them had deep ruffles on them at the bottom.

When my Pappy came home from the war, he was on the Government's side. He brought a pistol back with him that shot a ball that had caps on it and used these in the war. The Ku Klux jumped after him one night and he got three of them with his pistol, nobody ever knew who got those Kluxes.

### **Ghosts——**

Sure there are ghosts. One night as I was going home from work, the tallest man I ever saw followed me with the prettiest white shirt on, and then he passed me and waited at the corner. I

was feeling creepy and wanted to run but just couldn't get my legs to move. When I got to the corner where he was, I said 'Good Evening' and I saw him plain as day and he did not speak and just disappeared right before my eyes.

Then again, I went to the fish pond one day fishing and caught two or three big fish. When I went home, I thought I'd go back that night and I began to dig some fishing worms. My boss saw me and asked what I was doing. I told him I was going to the pond to fish that night. He said 'don't you go to that pond tonight, Easter, for if you do something will run you away.' I just laughed at him and that night I and my boy went to the pond. As we were standing there, quiet like, we heard something squeeching like a new saddle and horses trotting. We listened and waited when something went into that pond right twixt us like a ball of fire. We sure did leave there and the next morning my boss asked me if we caught anything. We told him what we saw and he said he knew we would be run away, for he was run away himself.

Course there are haunted houses, these haints in these places just won't leave you alone. When I was living in Princeton, Uncle Lige, my Mammy's brother and I moved into a cabin one Christmas day and we were going to stay there that night. We were setting before the fire and the fire light was as bright as day, when I looked up at the wall, for I heard scratching noise, and there was a big white cat on the wall with all his hair standing. That cat just jumps from wall to the other and Uncle Lige and I just open that cabin door and started to the other cabins on the place. That thing that was bigger than any cat I ever saw - just came through that door in the air at the front gate, this gate had an iron weight on it so it would stay shut, and this thing at the top then went away. No I never saw where it went. This gate just banged and banged all night. We could hear it from the other cabin. Uncle Liga and I moved away next day and other people moved in this cabin and they saw the same thing and nobody would stay there. Then some time after this the cabin was torn down.

Once I had a dream, I knew I near about saw it. I always did cook every night a pot of beans on the fire for the children to eat next day while I was at work, and Lizzie, my daughter, used to get up in the night and get her some beans and eat them. And this dream was so real that I couldn't tell if it was Lizzie or not, but this woman just glided by my bed and went afore the fire and stood there, then she just went twixt my bed and went by the wall. I just knew when I woke up that my child was sick that lived away from home and wanted my son to take me to see her. He said he would go himself and see, so he went, and when he came back he had a headache, and afore morning that nigger was dead. So you see, that was the sign of the dream. I was just warned in the dream and didn't have sense enough to know it.