

On that plantation where I was born in  
Sugar cane plantation in Louisiana where  
I was born, my people had lived for  
five generations. I knew a man, Mr.  
Walter Zeno, who died on that plantation  
in 1978, who had known my grandparents  
Grandparents. As a child I had often  
heard my Great Aunt Spake of Mom  
and Pop, but I had always thought  
she was talking about her parents and  
my grandfather's parents. Mr. Zeno, who  
was by a variety of names - Pete,  
Riley, Salute - told me that Mom and  
Pop were my grandparents' grandparents.

my oncenty her Nothing to do with us  
I'm going to read, other than to Paris  
out that we had been on that some  
plantation for five generations. Six generations  
if you want to count my two brother's  
children who were born there. But only  
five, if you wish to stop with my  
generation.

My older people were slaves who  
worked the land. After emancipation, my  
people would still work on that  
some plantation as free men. By the  
time I come along, 1933, the land  
was just being turned over to share-  
cropping.

Here, something else happened. Whereas, under the plantation system only black had worked the land. Once it was turned over to share-cropping, the land was divided among blacks and whites, the whites being the Copins of that area.

By being white, the Copin got would get the better land, the front land, the upper land. The black got the bottom land, the land nearest the swamp, the land with less drainage. As a result the poor land, the upper land, grew better crop. When you grow better crop, you're able to buy better tools, which results in growing even better crop. Soon there was a greater division between white and

Black shore cropper. Because the  
whites grew better crop, they were able  
to buy tractors, while the blacks still  
used mules and plows. One tractor  
did the more work than six mules  
and plow.

The second world war took a  
lot of the young black men away  
from the land. Since they barely made  
a living on shore croppers before they  
left, few ever returned. Those who  
didn't re-enlist into military service,  
either went to the cities, or to the north.  
The younger women also left the  
land, following their husbands. (Every  
Scatter writes her white boys  
Thi - Fuchs, Caldwell, Horner Wolf, James  
Willis, and others)

The young men and young women  
went to the North, leaving only the  
old and the very young.

Soon it was obvious that the  
old could no longer make anything  
share cropping the land, and those with  
tractors and other modern machinery  
would soon have it all.

But at the same time, the old  
people were not pushed off the land.  
They could stay in their houses, they  
could raise a garden, chicken, make  
one or two hogs... So they remained  
on the land, paying no, or little rent,  
remembering the days when they did grow  
the sugar cane, the cotton, the  
corn.

During the past three decades  
you no longer had store keeping on  
many of these old plantations. Instead  
you had a Company, or a white family,  
a white family, leaving the entire land.  
That white family could have been  
the competitor of the black store-  
keeper twenty or thirty years earlier.

The place of my story is not  
my birth place. The place is  
epochal. I doubt that this story  
could have happened where it came  
from. But it is certain, from hitting  
to people's talk, <sup>both black and white</sup> that it reflects the  
thing of <sup>both</sup> men and women; ~~both~~  
~~black and white~~.