

some people who could help me.”

“Let me know if you need anything else.”

He made me feel good with his brief words of encouragement. With that, I was ready to find Dixon. I ate my sandwich quickly and paid the smiling waiter. I wasn't used to the frequent smiling because I didn't normally see it in New York. I smiled back and walked back onto the unfamiliar streets of Alabama. I knew Dixon was not too far from Montgomery because on some documents which were passed down from generation to generation in my family, it was noted that my relative often had to walk to Montgomery. I also knew of several landmarks that were noted on these papers, which I kept in my bag. I would have to go on this knowledge, since Dixon was too small to show up on a map and since no one seemed familiar with it.

I started walking. I didn't know if these faded papers would lead me to where I wanted to go, but I certainly hoped they would. So I kept walking. Every once in a while I asked a person about a landmark, and it actually seemed like I was getting somewhere. A feeling of proud hope arose inside of me. I felt in my heart that I was getting closer to Dixon, closer to my past, and closer to having a strong sense of identity and pride. This meant so much to me. I glanced at my feet as they walked on the path that my ancestor once travelled; they seemed to smile.

It was noted on the papers that there was a small hill which divided Dixon and Montgomery. As I approached the hill, it seemed larger than I had pictured, for I could not see much over it. When I started to walk over it, I noticed that there were no longer people passing me, and I was alone. I assumed that the people of Dixon kept themselves apart from those of Montgomery. That hill would have been enough to keep me out of Montgomery. When I reached the top of the small mountain, a sinking feeling took over me. I looked down on what must have been Dixon, but it was not Dixon anymore. It was deserted.

With disbelief overcoming me, I walked down the other side of the hill, thinking that someone would come and direct me to the real Dixon. But that was not the case. At the bottom of the hill I found myself in an area which at one point must have been busy with businessmen, elders, children, and yes, even slaves. My family was once in this place. I walked past fallen street signs and broken street lights. I ended up in the middle of a wide road which was covered in dirt. I stopped at a rather large sign on the ground and wiped off the dirt in order to read it. It read, “Welcome to Dixon, where our past is rich and our future is bright.” I sat next to the sign and cried for what seemed to be hours. This was the end of my journey. There was nothing that this forgotten town could offer me about my family's history. I felt helpless.

I reached in my bag to get some tissues to wipe away my tears when my book fell out. Inside sat the carnation that I found earlier; I was glad to see it. This beautiful flower was probably the brightest thing Dixon had seen in a long time. As I held it in my hand, I thought about my ancestors. I laid the carnation in the middle of the road with respect to them -- to honor their memory. While I gathered my stuff and dusted myself off, I noticed the sign again. I couldn't help but smile, because it finally dawned on me that even if I don't know the names of every one of my ancestors, I know that my past is rich; and because of that, my future is bright. I went home that day without what I had come for, but instead with a feeling of peace.

~Dana Saxon '96

### **Malevolent Masses**

By living in this world of burning sin,  
Our souls afire seek out our childlike kin.  
Doomed to char by avarice will gluttony.  
Consumed by pride, the minds of man shall blaze;  
Desire, sloth, and wrath do our hearts' foray.  
Our essence of love has long been gone;  
Taken by lies and to his trap are drawn.  
To Satan's chambers we all must descend'  
The Lord doth not our searing souls amend.

~ Ryan Morinelli