

AGATHA BABINO, born a slave of Ogis Guidry, near Carenco, Louisiana, now lives in a cottage on the property of the Blessed Sacrament Church, in Beaumont, Texas. She says she is at least eighty-seven and probably much older.

"Old Marse was Ogis Guidry. Old Miss was Laurentine. Dey had four chillen, Placid, Alphonse and Mary and Alexandrine, and live in a big, one-story house with a gallery and brick pillars. Dey had a big place. I 'spect a mile 'cross it, and fifty slaves.

"My mama name was Clarice Richard. She come from South Carolina. Papa was Dick Richard. He come from North Carolina. He was slave of old Placid Guilbeau. He live near Old Marse. My brothers was Joe and Nicholas and Oui and Albert and Maurice, and sisters was Maud and Celestine and Pauline.

"Us slaves lived in shabby houses. Dey builded of logs and have dirt floor. We have a four foot bench. We pull it to a table and set on it. De bed a platform with planks and moss.

"We had Sunday off. Christmas was off, too. Dey give us chicken and flour den. But most holidays de white folks has company. Dat mean more work for us.

"Old Marse bad. He beat us till we bleed. He rub salt and pepper in. One time I sweep de yard. Young miss come home from college. She slap my face. She want to beat me. Mama say to beat her, so dey did. She took de beatin' for me.

"My aunt run off 'cause dey beat her so much. Dey brung her back and beat her some more. [Pg 38]

"We have dance outdoors sometime. Somebody play fiddle and banjo. We dance de reel and quadrille and buck dance. De men dance dat. If we go to dance on 'nother plantation we have to have pass. De patterrollers come and make us show de slip. If dey ain't no slip, we git beat.

"I see plenty sojers. Dey fight at Pines and we hear ball go 'zing —zing.' Young marse have blue coat. He put it on and climb a tree to see. De sojers come and think he a Yankee. Dey take his gun. Dey turn him loose when dey find out he ain't no Yankee.

"When de real Yankees come dey take corn and gooses and hosses. Dey don't ask for nothin'. Dey take what dey wants.

"Some masters have chillen by slaves. Some sold dere own chillen. Some sot dem free.

"When freedom come we have to sign up to work for money for a year. We couldn't go work for nobody else. After de year some stays, but not long.

"De Ku Klux kill niggers. Dey come to take my uncle. He open de door. Dey don't take him but tell him to vote Democrat next day or dey will. Dey kilt some niggers what wouldn't vote Democrat.

"Dey kill my old uncle Davis. He won't vote Democrat. Dey shoot him. Den dey stand him up and let him fall down. Dey tie him by de feet. Dey drag him through de bresh. Dey dare his wife to cry.

"When I thirty I marry Tesisfor Babino. Pere Abadie marry us at Grand Coteau. We have dinner with wine. Den come big dance. We have twelve chillen. We works in de field in Opelousas. We come here twenty-five year ago. He die in 1917. Dey let's me live here. It nice to be near de church. I can go to prayers when I wants to. [Pg 39]
