



Fannie Brown

FANNIE BROWN, aged Negro of Waco, Texas, does not know her age. She was born near Richmond, Virginia, a slave of the Koonce family. They sold her to Mrs. Margaret Taylor, of Belton, Texas, when Fannie was only five years old, and she never saw her mother again.

"I was borned near Richmond, over in Virginy, but Massa Koonce sold me. When I was five year old he brung me to Belton and sold me to Missy Margaret Taylor, and she kep' me till she died. I was growed den and sold to Massa Jim Fletcher and dere I stayed till I was freed.

"Dere no spring near Massa Fletcher's place and us have to git water out de well, what dey call de sweep well. Dey cut down a young saplin' and weight it on one end with rocks and tie de bucket on a rope on de other end and brace de pole over de well.

"While de big house bein' built dey slep' in a big wagon and cook over a fireplace make out of rock what us niggers pick up in de woods. Us cook lots of good eatin' out on dat fireplace, dem wild turkeys and wild meat sho' tasted good.

"Massa trades ten yards of red calico and two hatchets to de Indians for some skins and take de skins to Austin and traded dem fer de spinnin' wheel and loom, and hauls dem to Belton in de ox carts.

"My missy larnt me to spin and weave and did dis child git many a whuppin' 'fore I could do it good. Den she larnt me to cook and start me cookin' two or three days 'fore company come. Dat when us have de good old pound cake. De li'l chillen stand round when I bake, so as to git to lick de spoons and pans, and how dey pop dere lips when dey lickin' dat good dough! [Pg 155]

"Massa have garden seed he brung to Texas, but he didn't think it would grow, so he kep' it several months, but den he plants it and up it come, jus' like in de old states. Us used dem tomatoes for flowers,

'cause us thunk dem pretty red things would kill us or put de spell on us. But de white folks et dem and us larn to.

"I was growed and have chillen 'fore de freedom war. I never did have no special husban' 'fore de war. I marries after de war.

"My, how dem niggers could play de fiddle back in de good old days. On de moonlight nights, us dance by de light of de moon under a big oak tree, till most time to go to work next mornin'.

"De fus' barb wire us ever seen, us scairt of it. Us thunk lightnin' be sho' to strike it. It sho' keep de stock in, though.

"I seed men ridin' hosses with dead men tied 'cross dey hoss, endurin' de freedom war. But I can't tell much 'bout dat war, 'cause I couldn't read and I never git any place 'cept home at my work. I love dem days better dan I do dese times now, but I'm too old to 'member much. [Pg 156]