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Francis Black

**FRANCIS BLACK was born at Grand Bluff, Mississippi, about 1850, on the Jim Carlton plantation. When five years old, she was stolen and taken to the slave market in New Orleans. Failing to sell her there, the slave traders took her to Jefferson, Texas, and sold her to Bill Tumlin. Francis stayed with him five years after she was freed, then married and moved to Cass County, Texas. She became blind a year ago, and now lives at the Bagland Old Folks Home, 313 Elm St., Texarkana, Texas.**

"My name am Francis Black, and I don't know jes' how old I is, but 'members lots 'bout them slave days. I was a big gal, washin' and ironin', when they sot the darkies free. From that, I cal'late I'm in my eighties.

"I was born in Grand Bluff, in Mississippi, on Old Man Carlton's plantation, and I was stole from my folks when I was a li'l gal and never seed them no more. Us kids played in the big road there in Mississippi, and one day me and 'nother gal is playin' up and down the road and three white men come 'long in a wagon. They grabs us up and puts us in the wagon and covers us with quilts. I hollers and yells and one the men say, 'Shet up, you nigger, or I'll kill you.' I told him, 'Kill me if you wants to—you stole me from my folks.'

"Them men took us to New Orleans to the big slave market. I had long hair and they cut it off like a boy and tried to sell me, but I told them men what looks at me, the men cut my hair off and stole me. The man what cut my hair off cursed me and said if I didn't hush he'd kill me, but he couldn't sell us at New Orleans and took us to Jefferson. [Pg 89]

"I never knowed what they done with the other gal, but they sold me to Marse Bill Tumlin, what run a big livery stable in Jefferson, and I 'longed to him till surrender. I lived in the house with them, 'cause they had a boy and gal and I did for them. They bought me clothes and took good care of me but I never seed no money till surrender. I et what they et, after they got through. Missy say she didn't 'lieve in feedin' the darkies scraps, like some folks.

"I played with them two chillen all day, then sot the table. I was so small I'd git in a chair to reach the dishes out of the safe. I had to pull a long flybrush over the table whilst the white folks et.

"Marse Tumlin had a farm 'bout four mile from town, and a overseer, and I seed him buckle the niggers crosst a log and whip them. Marse lived in Jefferson, heself, and when he'd go to the farm he allus took his boy with him. We'd be playin' in the barn and Marse call from the house, 'Come on, Jimmie, we're gwine to the farm.' Jimmie allus say to me, 'Come on, nigger, let's ride round the farm.' I'd say, 'I ain't no nigger.' He'd say, 'Yes, you is, my pa paid \$200 for you. He bought you for to play with me.'

"Jefferson was a good town till it burned up. I 'members the big fire what looked like the whole town gwineter burn up. Marse Bill lost his livery stable in the fire.

"The Yankee soldiers, all dressed in blue, come to run the town after the war. Marse Tumlin done told me I'm free, but I stays on till I'm most growed. Then I works round town and marries Dave Black, and we moved to Cass County. I raises six chillun but my old man done git so triflin' and mean I quit him and worked for myself. I come to Texarkana to work, and allus could earn my own livin' till 'bout a year ago I lost my seein', and Albert Ragland done took me in his home for the old folks. They gives me a \$10 a month pension now. They is good to me here and feeds us good. [Pg 90]

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