

**GUS BRADSHAW was born about 1845, at Keecheye, Alabama, a slave of David Cavin. He recalls being brought to Texas in the 1850's, when the Cavin family settled near old Port Caddo. Gus remained with his master for ten years after emancipation. He now lives alone on a fifty acre farm seven miles northeast of Marshall, which he bought in 1877. Gus receives an \$11.00 per month pension.**

"I was born at Keecheye, Alabama, and belonged to old man David Cavin. The only statement I can make 'bout my age is I knows I was 'bout twenty years old when us slaves was freed. I never knowed my daddy, but my mammy was Amelia Cavin. I's heard her say she's born in Alabama more times than I got fingers and toes. Our old master brung us to Texas when I's a good sized kid. I 'members like it am yesterday, how we camped more'n a week in New Orleans. I seed 'em sell niggers off the block there jus' like they was cattle. Then we came to old Port Caddo on Caddo Lake and master settles a big farm close to where the boats run. Port Caddo was a big shipping place then, and Dud and John Perry run the first store there. The folks hauled cotton there from miles away.

"Mammy's folks was named Maria and Joe Gloster and they come to Texas with the Cavins. My grandma say to me, 'Gus, don't run you mouth too much and allus have manners to whites and blacks.' Chillen was raise right then, but now they come up any way. I seed young niggers turn the dipper up and drink 'fore old folks. I wouldn't dare do that when I's comin' up.

"Maria say to me one day, 'Son, I's here when the stars fell.' She tell me they fell like a sheet and spread over the ground. Ike Hood, the [Pg 131] old blacksmith on our place, he told me, too. I says, 'Ike, how old was you when the stars fell?' He say, 'I's thirty-two.'

"Massa David had big quarters for us niggers, with chimneys and fireplaces. They use to go round and pick up old hawg or cow bones to bile with greens and cabbage. They was plenty of wild game, and deer and wolves howlin' right through this country, but you can't even find the track of one now.

"The first work I done was pickin' cotton. Every fellow was out at daylight pickin' cotton or hoein' or plowin'. They was one overseer and two nigger drivers. But at night you could hear us laughin' and talkin' and singin' and prayin', and hear them fiddles and things playin'. It look like darkies git 'long more better then than now. Some folks says niggers oughtn't to be slaves, but I says they ought, 'cause they jus' won't do right unless they is made to do it.

"Massa David allus give us egnog and plenty good whiskey at Christmas. We had all day to eat and drink and sing and dance. We didn't git no presents, but we had a good time.

"I don't know much 'bout the war, only Massa Bob Perry come over one day and say to Grandma Maria, 'They is surrender, Maria, you is free.' She say to him, 'I don't care, I gwine stay with my white folks.'

"The Klu Klux done lots of cuttin' up round there. Two of 'em come to Dr. Taylor's house. He had two niggers what run off from the Klux and they want to whip 'em, but Dr. Taylor wouldn't 'low 'em. I knowed old Col. Alford, one of the Klux leaders, and he was a sight. He told me once, 'Gus, they done

send me to the pen for Kluxing.' I say, 'Massa Alford, didn't they make a gentleman of you?' He say, 'Hell, no!'[Pg 132]

"I knowed old Col. Haggerdy, too. He marries a widow of a rich old Indian chief, name McIntosh. He broke a treaty with his people and had to hide out in a cave a long time, and his wife brung food to him. One time when she went to the cave he was gone. She knowed then the Indians done git him and kilt him for vi'latin' the treaty. So she marries old Col. Haggerdy.

"The only time I votes was against whiskey. I voted for it. Some white folks done say they'd whip me if I voted for it, but Mr. Joe Strickland done told me they jus' tryin' scare me, so I voted for it. I don't think niggers ought to vote. If some niggers had things in hand 'stead of white folks, I couldn't stay here. These eddicated niggers am causin' the devilment. The young niggers ain't got no 'spect for old age.

"I bought and paid for fifty acres land here in Harrison County and I has lived on it sixty years. I lived with my wife fifty years 'fore she died and done raise two chillen. These young niggers don't stay married fifty days, sometimes. I don't mess with 'em, but if I needs help I goes to the white folks. If you 'have youself, they allus help you if you needs it. [Pg 133]

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