

**JACOB BRANCH, about 86, was a slave of the Van Loos family, in Louisiana, who sold him when a baby to Elisha Stevenson, of Double Bayou, Texas. Jacob helps his son, Enrichs, farm, and is unusually agile for his age. They live in the Double Bayou settlement, near Beaumont, Texas.**

"I's bought and fotched here to Double Bayou when I's jes' three year old. I and my half-brother, Eleck, he de baby, was both born in Louisiana on de Van Loos place, but I go by de name of Branch, 'cause my daddy name Branch. My mama name Renee. Dey split up us family and Elisha Stevenson buy my mama and de two chillen. I ain't never see my daddy no more and don't 'member him at all.

"Old 'Lisha Stevenson he a great one for to raise pigs. He sell sometime 500 hawgs at one time. He take he dogs and drive dem hawgs 'cross de Neches River all by hisself, to sell dem. Dat how he git money to buy de niggers, sellin' hawgs and cowhides.

"Old massa he sho' a good old man, but de old missy, she a tornado! Her name Miss 'Liza. She could be terrible mean. But sometime she take her old morrel—dat a sack make for to carry things in—and go out and come back with plenty joints of sugar cane. She take a knife and sit on de gallary and peel dat cane and give a joint to every one de li'l chillen.

"Mama, she work up in de big house, doin' cookin' and washin'. Old massa go buy a cullud man name Uncle Charley Fenner. He a good old cullud man. Massa brung him to de quarters and say, 'Renee, here you husband,' and den he turn to Uncle and say, 'Charley, dis you woman.' [Pg 138] Den dey consider marry. Dat de way dey marry den, by de massa's word. Uncle Charley, he good step-pa to us.

"De white folks have de good house with a brick chimney. Us quarters de good, snug li'l house with flue and oven. Dey didn't bother to have much furn'chure, 'cause us in dere only to sleep. Us have homemake bench and 'Georgia Hoss' bed with hay mattress. All us cookin' and eatin' done in de kitchen de big house. Us have plenty to eat, too. De smokehouse allus full white 'taters and cracklin's hangin' on de wall. Us git dem mos' any time us want, jes' so long us didn't waste nothin'. Dey have big jar with buttermilk and 'low us drink all us want.

"Old lady 'Liza, she have three women to spin when she git ready make de clothes for everybody. Dey spin and weave and make all us clothes. Us all wear shirt tail till us 'bout twelve or fourteen, boys and gals, too. You couldn't tell us apart.

"Us chillen start to work soon's us could toddle. First us gather firewood. Iffen it freezin' or hot us have to go to toughen us up. When us git li'l bigger us tend de cattle and feed hosses and hawgs. By time us good sprouts us pickin' cotton and pullin' cane. Us ain't never idle. Sometime us git far out in de field and lay down in de corn row and nap. But, Lawdy, iffen dey cotch you, dey sho' wore you out! Sunday de onliest rest day and den de white folks 'low us play.

"Massa never whup Uncle Charley, 'cause he good nigger and work hard. It make missy mad and one time when massa gone she go down in de field. Uncle Charley hoein' corn jes' like massa done told him, jes' singin' and happy. Old missy she say, 'Nigger, I's shogwineter whup you.' He say, 'What for you [Pg 139] whup me. I doin' every bit what old massa done tell me.' But missy think he gittin' it too good, 'cause he ain't never been whupped. She clumb over de fence and start down de row with de cowhide. Uncle Charley, he ain't even raise he voice, but he cut de las' weed outen dat corn and commence to wave he hoe in de air, and he say, 'Missy, I ain't 'vise you come any step closer.' Dat sho' make her mad, but she 'fraid to do nothin'.

"One time she have 'nother nigger name Charlie. Massa go on de trip and she tell dis Charley iffen he ain't finish grindin' all de cornmeal by Monday she gwineter give him a t'ousand lashes. He try, but he ain't able make dat much meal, so come Monday he runned off in de bayou. Dat night come de big freeze and he down dere with water up to he knees and when massa come home and go git him, he so froze he couldn't walk. Dey brung him in de kitchen and old missy cuss him out. Soon's he thaw out, he done die right dere on de spot.

"My pore mama! Every washday old missy give her de beatin'. She couldn't keep de flies from speckin' de clothes overnight. Old missy git up soon in de mornin', 'fore mama have time git dem specks off. She snort and say, 'Renee, I's gwineter teach you how to wash.' Den she beat mama with de cowhide. Look like she cut my mama in two. Many's de time I edges up and tries take some dem licks off my mama.

"Slavery, one to 'nother, was purty rough. Every plantation have to answer for itself.

"I used to know lots of songs, but I don't know many now. Spiritual songs, dey comes through visions. Dat's why cullud folks can make dem better [Pg 140] dan white folks. I knowed one song what start out—

"'De Jews done kill pore Jesus,  
And bury him in de sepulchur;  
De grave wouldn't hold him,  
Dey place guards all 'round him,  
But de angels move de stone,  
De Jews done kill pore Jesus,  
But de grave it wouldn't hold him.'

"Dey 'nother song what say—

"'Run, sinner, run,  
Gawd is a-callin' you.  
Run, sinner, run,  
De fire'll overtake you.'

"When I 'bout ten dey sets me ginnin' cotton. Old massa he done make de cotton with de hand crank. It built on a bench like. I gin de cotton by turnin' dat crank. When I gits a lapful I puts it in de tow sack and dey take it to Miss Susan to make de twine with it. I warm and damp de cotton 'fore de fireplace 'fore I start ginnin' it.

"Dere school for de white chillen in Double Bayou and I used to go meet de chillen comin' home and dey stop longside de way and teach me my ABC. Dey done carry me as far as Baker in de book when old

missy find it out and make dem stop. De war comin' on den and us daren't even pick up a piece of paper. De white folks didn't want us to larn to read for fear us find out things.

"Us livin' down by de Welborn's den and I seed dem haul de logs out of Pine Island to make dat Welborn house. Old man Hamshire and old man Remington buided dat Welborn house. It 'cross de bayou, left hand side Smith's ferry. Dat house still standin' in parts.

"One mornin' Eleck and me git up at crack of dawn to milk. All at once come a shock what shake de earth. De big fish jump clean out de bay and turtles [Pg 141] and alligators run out dere ponds. Dey plumb ruint Galveston! Us runned in de house and all de dishes and things done jump out de shelf. Dat de first bombardment of Galveston. De sojers put powder under people's houses and blowin' up Galveston.

"Young massa Shake Stevenson he vol'teer and git kilt somewheres in Virginny. Young massa Tucker Stevenson, he ain't 'lieve in war and he say he never gwine fight. He hide in de woods so de conscrip' men can't find him. Old man LaCour come 'round and say he have orders for find Tucker and bring him in dead or 'live. But 'cause he old massa's friend, he say, 'Why don't you buy de boy's services off?' So old massa take de boat, 'Catrig,' us calls it, and loads it with corn and sich and us pole it down to Galveston. De people need dat food so much, dat load supplies done buy off Massa Tucker from fightin'.

"After war starts lots of slaves runned off to git to de Yankees. All dem in dis part heads for de Rio Grande river. De Mexicans rig up flat-boats out in de middle de river, tied to stakes with rope. When de cullud people gits to de rope dey can pull deyself 'cross de rest de way on dem boats. De white folks rid de 'Merican side dat river all de time, but plenty slaves git through, anyway.

"I wait on lots of sojers. I have to get smartweed and bile it in salt water to bath dem in. Dat help de rheumatism. Dem sojers have rheumatism so bad for standin' day and night in de water.

"Us sho' in good health dem days. Iffen a cullud man weak dey move de muscles in he arms, bleed him and give him plenty bacon and cornbread, and he git so strong he could lift a log. Dey didn't go in for cuttin', [Pg 142] like dey do now. Dey git herbs out de woods, blue mass and quinine and calomel. I think people jes' die under pills, now. Old lady Field she make medicine with snakeroot and larkspur and marshroot and redroot.

"After war am over Massa Tucker brung de freedom papers and read dem. He say us all am free as Hell. Old man Charley so happy he jes' roll on de floor like a hoss and kick he heels. De nex' mornin' mama start do somethin' and missy cuss her out. I runned to missy and say, 'Us free as de bird.' She sho' whup me for dat, but no more, 'cause she so mean us all leave.

"Dat funny. Old man LaFour, what de head de patterrollers and so mean, he de first to help us niggers after freedom. He loan us he ox team and pay Uncle Charley a dollar de day for work and a dollar every time my mama wash for he wife.

"Old massa and missy split up. She so bad she ain't give him no better show dan she done us. Old massa gittin' some peaches one day and she come after him with de buggy whip. He git on he hoss and say, 'Liz, you's gittin' broad as de beef. You too big for me.' She so mad she spit fire. Lightenin' done kill her, she upstairs and de big streak hits her. It knock her under de bed.

"De first freedom work I done am pullin' up potato hills at two bits a hunnerd. 'Bout two bits de most us could make in one day. I work two days to buy mama de turkey hen for Christmas. Anything mama want I think she got to have. I's growed 'fore I gits much as four bits a day. I's done earn as much as \$1.50 in my time, though.

"When I's 25 year old I marries Betty Baker but she dead now. De Rev. Patterson he marry us. Us has four chillen livin'. Turah and Renee, dat my gals, and Enrichs and Milton, dat my boys. Milton work in Houston and Enrich help me farm. I's a Mason 30 year. De lodge split up now, but it answer. [Pg 143]



420069



**William Branch**



**William Branch**

**WILLIAM BRANCH, born 1850, 322 Utah St., San Antonio, Texas. Eyesight is so poor someone must lead him to the store or to church. William kneels at his bedside each evening at five and says his prayers. In this ceremony he spends a half hour or more chanting one Negro spiritual after another.**

"Yahsur, I was a slave. I was bo'n May 13, 1850, on the place of Lawyer Woodson in Lunenburg County, Virginia. It was 'bout 75 miles southwest of Richmond. They was two big plantations, one on one side the road, yother the yother. My marster owned 75 slaves. He raised tobacco and cotton. I wukked tobacco sometime, sometime cotton. Dere wasn't no whippin' or switchin'. We had to wuk hard. Marster Woodson was a rich man. He live in a great big house, a lumber house painted white. And it had a great big garden.

"De slaves lives in a long string of log houses. Dey had dirt floors and shingle roofs. Marster Woodson's house was shingle roof too. We had home cured bacon and veg'tables, dried co'n, string beans and dey give us hoe cakes baked in hot ashes. Dere always was lots of fresh milk.

"How'd us slaves git de clothes? We carded de cotton, den de women spin it on a spinnin' wheel. After dat day sew de gahment togeddah on a sewin' machine. Yahsur, we's got sewin' machine, wid a big wheel and a handle. One woman tu'n de handle and de yuther woman do de sewin'. [Pg 144]

"Dat's how we git de clothes for de 75 slaves. Marster's clothes? We makes dem for de whole fam'ly. De missis send de pattren and de slaves makes de clothes. Over nigh Richmond a fren' of Marster Woodson has 300 slaves. Dey makes all de clothes for dem.

"I was with Marster twel de Yankees come down to Virginia in 1861. De sergeant of de Yankees takes me up on his hoss and I goes to Washington wid de Yankees. I got to stay dere 'cause I'd run away from my marster.

"I stay at de house of Marse Frank Cayler. He's an ole time hack driver. I was his houseboy. I stay dere twel de year 1870, den I goes to Baltimore and jines de United States Army. We's sent to Texas 'count of de Indians bein' so bad. Dey put us on a boat at Baltimore and we landed at Galveston.

"Den we marches from Galveston to Fort Duncan. It was up, up, de whole time. We ties our bedclothes and rolls dem in a bundle wid a strap. We walks wid our guns and bedclothes on our backs, and de wagons wid de rations follows us. Dey is pulled by mules. We goes 15 miles ev'ry day. We got no tents, night come, we unrolls de blankets and sleeps under de trees, sometime under de brush.

"For rations we got canned beans, milk and hardtack. De hard tacks is 3 or 4 in a box, we wets 'em in water and cooks 'em in a skillet. We gits meat purty often. When we camps for de night de captain say, 'You'all kin go huntin'.' Before we git to de mountains dere's deer and rabbits and dey ain't no fences. Often in de dark we sees a big animal and we shoots. When we bring 'im to camp, de captain say, 'Iffen de cow got iron burns de rancher gwineter shoot hisself a nigger scout.' But de cow ain't got no iron, it's—what de name of de cow what ain't feel de iron? Mavricks, yahsur. We eats lots [Pg 145] of dem Mavricks. We's goin' 'long de river bottom, and before we comes to Fort Duncan we sees de cactus and muskeet. Dere ain't much cattle, but one colored scout shoots hisself a bear. Den we eats high. Fort Duncan were made of slab lumber and de roof was gravel and grass.

"Den we's ordered to Fort Davis and we's in de mountains now. Climb, climb all day, and de Indians give us a fit ev'ry day. We kills some Indians, dey kills a few soldiers. We was at Fort Clarka while. At Fort Davis I jines de colored Indian Scouts, I was in Capt. George L. Andrew's Co. K.

"We's told de northern Cheyennes is on a rampus and we's goin' to Fort Sill in Indian Territory. Before we gits to Fort Concho (San Angelo) de Comanches and de Apaches give us a fit. We fitten' 'em all de time and when we gits away from de Comanches and Apaches we fitten de Cheyennes. Dey's seven feet tall. Dey couldn't come through that door.

"When we gits to Fort Sill, Gen. Davidson say de Cheyennes is off de reservation, and he say, 'You boys is got to git dem back. Iffen you kill 'em, dey can't git back to de reservation.' Den we goes scoutin' for de Cheyennes and dey is scoutin' for us. Dey gits us first, on de Wichita River was 500 of 'em, and we got 75 colored Indian Scouts. Den Red Foot, de Chief of de Cheyennes, he come to see Capt. Lawson and say he want rations for his Indians. De captain say he cain't give no rations to Indians off de reservation. Red Foot say he don't care 'bout no reservation and he say he take what we got. Capt. Lawson 'low we gotter git reinforcements. We got a guide in de scout troop, he call hisself Jack Kilmartin. De captain say, 'Jack, I'se in trouble, how kin I git a dispatch to Gen. Davidson?' Jack say, 'I kin git it through.' And Jack, he crawl on his belly and through de brush and he lead a pony, and when he gits [Pg 146] clear he rides de pony bareback twel he git to Fort Sill. Den Gen. Davidson, he soun' de gin'ral alarm and he send two companies of cavalry to reinforce us. But de Cheyennes give 'em a fit all de way, dey's gotter cut dere way through de Cheyennes.

"And Col. Shafter comes up, and goes out in de hills in his shirt sleeves jus' like you's sittin' dere. Dey's snow on de groun' and de wind's cole, but de colonel don't care, and he say, 'Whut's dis order Gen. Davidson give? Don' kill de Cheyennes? You kill 'em all from de cradle to de Cross.'

"And den we starts de attack. De Cheyennes got Winchesters and rifles and repeaters from de government. Yahsur, de government give 'em de guns dey used to shoot us. We got de ole fashion

muzzle loaders. You puts one ball in de muzzle and shove de powder down wid de ramrod. Den we went in and fit 'em, and 'twas like fightin' a wasp's nest. Dey kills a lot of our boys and we nearly wipes 'em out. Den we disarms de Cheyennes we captures, and turns dere guns in to de regiment.

"I come to San Antonio after I'se mustered out and goes to work for de Bell Jewelry Company and stays dere twel I cain't work no more. Did I like de army? Yahsur, I'd ruthuh be in de army dan a plantation slave." [Pg 147]

420230



Clara Brim

**CLARA BRIM, slave of William Lyons of Branch, Louisiana, now lives in Beaumont, Texas. The town of Branch was known in slave days as Plaquemine Bouley. Clara estimates her age to be 100 or 102, and from various facts known to her and her family, this would seem to be correct.**

"Old massa's name was William Lyons. I didn't have no old missus, 'cause he was a bachelor. He had a big plantation. I don't know how big but dey somethin' like twenty fam'lies of slaves and some dem fam'lies had plenty in dem. My ma was Becky Brim and pa, he name Louis Brim. She come from Old Virginy. Dey work in de field. I had two sister name Cass and Donnie and a brudder name Washington. He went off to de war. When it break out dey come and take him off to work in de army. He lost in dat war. He didn't come back. Nobody ever know what happen to him.

"Some de houses log house and some plank, but dey all good. Dey well built and had brick chimneys. Dey houses what de wind didn't blow in. Us had beds, too, not dem built in de wall. Us sho' treat good in slavery times, yes, suh. Old massa give us plenty clothes to keep us good and warm. He sho' did.

"Old massa, he wasn't marry and eat de same things de slaves eat. He didn't work dem in de heat of de day. 'Bout eleven o'clock, when dat sun git hot, he call dem out de field. He give dem till it git kind of cool befo' he make dem go back in de field. He didn't have no overseer. He seed 'bout de plantation

hissself. He raise cotton and corn and sweet 'taters and peas and cane, didn't fool with rice. He didn't go in for oats, neither. [Pg 148]

"When Sunday come Old Massa ask who want to go to church. Dem what wants could ride hos s-back or walk. Us go to de white folks church. Dey sot in front and us sot in back. Us had prayer meetin', too, reg'lar every week. One old cullud man a sort of preacher. He de leader in 'ligion.

"When de slaves go to work he give dem de task. Dat so much work, so many rows cotton to chop or corn to hoe. When dey git through dey can do what dey want. He task dem on Monday. Some dem git through Thursday night. Den dey can hire out to somebody and git pay for it.

"Old Massa even git de preacher for marryin' de slaves. And when a slave die, he git de preacher and have Bible readin' and prayin'. Mostest de massas didn't do dat-a-way.

"I as big in war time as I is now. I used to do anything in de field what de men done. I plow and pull fodder and pick cotton. But de hardes' work I ever done am since I free. Old Massa, he didn't work us hard, noway.

"He allus give us de pass, so dem patterrollers not cotch us. Dey 'bout six men on hoss-back, ridin' de roads to cotch niggers what out without de pass. Iffen dey cotch him it am de whippin'. But de niggers on us place was good and civ'lized folks. Dey didn't have no fuss. Old Massa allus let dem have de garden and dey can raise things to eat and sell. Sometime dey have some pig and chickens.

"I been marry his' one time and he been dead 'bout forty-one years now. I stay with Old Massa long time after freedom. In 1913 I come live with my youngest girl here in Beaumont. You see, I can't 'member so much. I has lived so long my 'memberance ain't so good now. [Pg 149]

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420248



**Sylvester Brooks**



**SYLVESTER BROOKS, 87, was born in Green County, Alabama, a slave of Josiah Collier. The old Negro's memory is poor, but he managed to recall a few incidents of slave days. He lives in Mart, Texas.**

"I's born 'bout de year 1850, near de Tom Bigbee river in Alabama, on a plantation own by Marse Josiah Collier. My folks was Henderson and Martha Brooks and I's de only child den.

"Marse Collier owned seventy fam'lies of slaves and dey all lived in dey quarters 'bout a mile from de big house. When freedom come Marse Collier sent for all de slaves and lines us up in a row, two deep, and helt up he hands and say, 'Boys, you is free as I is. All of you what wants to can go, and all of you what wants to can work for me on wages dis year. Next year I'll give you a crop or work for wages.' Dey all stays but two, and one of dem two my daddy, and he lef' mammy and six chillen and never come back.

"Us stays on till Marse Collier and Missus both dies, and den stays with he oldes' gal, and didn't go 'way till we's growed and has fam'lies of our own.

"I 'members best de Fourth of July. De white folks have lots to eat for dem and us and we plays games and goes swimmin'.

"Next thing I 'members is de patterrollers, 'cause dey whip me every time dey cotches me without my pass. Dat de way dey make us stay home at night, and it made good niggers out of us, 'cause we couldn't chase round and git in no meanness.

"Old Marse often told me 'bout de stars fallin'. It was 'long 'bout sundown and growed dark all a sudden and de chickens goes to roost. Den some stars with [Pg 150] long tails 'gins to shoot, den it look like all de stars had come out of Heaven, and did dey fall! De stars not all what fell. De white folks and de niggers fell on dere knees, prayin' to Gawd to save dem iffen de world comin' to a end, and de women folks all run down in de cellar and stayed till mornin'. Old Marse say it was in 1833, and he say dem stars fall awhile and quit awhile, like de showers when it rains.

"'Bout a year after freedom Old Marse give us a piece of land for a church and dis was de school, too. De preacher's name was Christmas Crawford, and dat de reason I 'members it, it so funny to us. De nigger teacher named Nimron. De niggers has de blueback spellers and larns 'rithmetic, too.

"On Thanksgivin' Day de niggers goes round to de white folks houses and gives a ser'nade, like dis:

"De old bee make de honeycomb,  
De young bee make de honey—  
De nigger make de cotton and corn,  
And de white folks git de money.

"De raccoon he a curious man,  
He never works till dark;  
Nothin' ever 'sturbs he mind,  
Till he hear old Towser bark.'

"Den de white folks asks us in and help ourselves to de cake or wine or whatever dey has, and we does dis on Christmas, too.

"We had a song we'd sing when we's thinkin' of comin' to Texas:

"We'll put for de South, for seven-up and loo,  
Chime in, niggers, won't you come 'long, too?  
No use talkin' when de nigger wants to go,  
Where de corn top blossoms and canebrakes grow.  
Come 'long, Cuba, and dance de polka juba,  
Way down South, where de corn tops grow.'

"I'd like to be in old Alabama to die, but Old Marse and Missus gone, and it ain't no use goin' dere no more. [Pg 151]

420014



**Donaville Broussard**

**DONAVILLE BROUSSARD, a polished gentleman of his race, was the son of a mulatto slave of Emilier Caramouche. He was born in 1850, but appears vigorous. Light skinned, with blue eyes and a genial expression, he gave the story of his life in the French patois spoken by Louisiana French Negroes, which has been translated into English.**

"My mama was daughter of one of the Carmouche boys. One of M'sieur Francois' sons. She call herself Armance Carmouche. She was house servant for the family and I worked around the house. I remember my Madame brought me the little basket and it had a strap on it. I put the strap over the shoulder and went round with the sharp stick and picked up the leaves on the ground with the stick.

"It was a great house with trees and flowers. Madame liked all clean and pretty. I never worked hard. The ladies and my mama, too, petted me as if I was the white child.

"M'sieur had a widow sister. She made us learn the prayers. We were glad to go where she was for she always had something good in her bag for us. I never saw the baptizing. In those days all the slaves had the religion of the master and the Catholics didn't have no baptizing. They didn't have to half-drown

when they got their religion. The church was 15 or 20 miles off. The priest came and held Mass for the white folks sometimes.

"I remember one wedding. My aunt got married. M'sieur Caramouche killed a big pig. The white folks ate in the house. The [Pg 152] slaves sat under the trees and ate in the yard. At four o'clock the justice of the peace came. He was the friend of M'sieur Caramouche. He made my aunt and the man hold hands and jump over the broom handle. When the priest came he made M'sieur sign some papers.

"A slave always had to ask M'sieur to marry. He always let the women slaves marry who they wanted. He didn't loose by that. He was so good the men would come to his plantation.

"We all wore the long chemise. Made out of heavy cloth. They made the cloth on the place and the women sewed it up. We didn't wear the shoes. We didn't like them when we had them.

"Each slave could have the little garden. They raised vegetables and had a couple of beehives for the honey.

"When the Yankees came they told us we could be free, but I don't know of any slaves that left. Old M'sieur died of the fever in the second year of the war. His wife died before he did. No children. They sold us, the house and everything. M'sieur Cyprien Arceneaux of Lafayette bought me and Madame Arvillien Bernard of St. Pierre bought the mama. They used to call it St. Pierre. They call it Carenero now. When war was finished I left M'sieur Arceneaux and lived with mama.

"A year and a half after that the mama married a black man and us three farmed the little farm. My steppapa didn't like me. I was light. He and me couldn't get along. So when I had 20 years I left there and hired myself out. I saved till I bought a little piece of land for myself. Then I married and raised the family. Me and my wife and the children farmed that place up to ten years ago and then she died. My son farms the place now and I came to Beaumont. I live with my girl. [Pg 153]

"I remember me in time of war we danced. Round dances. We sang and danced La Boulangere in time of war. De song go:

"La Boulangere ait ta victoire  
Et nous, qui sont en guerre,  
Voici le jour que je dois partir.

"Mon cher ami, tu pars,  
Tu me laisses un enfant dans les bras  
et prend tes armes.  
Et moi, je vais dans le moment  
verser des larmes.

"Quand je serai en le guerre, [*Handwritten Note*: à la guerre?]  
Tu serais de garnison,  
Et tu m'oublierais moi,  
Qui serai en les haillons.

"J'entends le tombour qui m'appelle

A les points de jour.  
Mon cher Armande, si tu m'aimes  
Tu penserais à moi, quand tu serais,  
Dans tes plaisir.  
Moi—que serai au bout du fusil!

"I got one real scare. I was with M'sieur Arceneaux in Lafayette. There was the battle. Lots of fighting. Lots of killing. The Yankees came right inside the house. I stayed hid.

"I don't know whether it's been better since the war. At all times one has his miseries. We managed to get along on the farm. But now I have nothing. Oh, I don't mean slavery was better than to be free. I mean times were better.

"The reason I'm so light is, my mama was half-white. My papa was Neville Broussard and he was all white. [Pg 154]

420233



**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]



**Fred Brown**

**FRED BROWN, 84, 1414 Jones St., Fort Worth, Texas, was born a slave to Mr. John Brown, who owned a plantation along the Mississippi River, in Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. Fred was eight years old when the Civil War started. During the War, he and a number of other slaves were taken to Kaufman Co., Texas, as refugees, by Henry Bidder, an overseer. He worked five years as a laborer after he was freed, then worked as a cook until 1933.**

"Sho', I has time to talk to you 'bout my life, 'cause I can't work any more and I has nothin' but time. It am de rhumatis' in de leg, it ketch me dat way, from de hip to de knee, —zip— dat pain goes!

"I's bo'n in ole Louisiana, in Baton Rouge Parish, on de 16th of November, in 1853. I knows, 'cause massa give dis nigger a statement. You see, dey don' larn de niggers to read in dem days, nor figger, but I can read figgers. See dem on dat car? Dat am 713. Dat am bad figgers, I never has any truck with sich numbers as de 7 or de 13.

"Massa have quite pert a plantation in Louisiana, dis side de Mississippi River. De slaves him own am from 40 to 50 sometimes. In our family am pappy, mammy and three brudders and one sister, Julia, and six cousins. Dat am 13 and dat's why massa had so much trouble with niggers runnin' 'way!

"Everyone have dere certain wo'k and duties for to do. Mammy am de family cook and she he'p at de loom, makin' de cloth. My daddy [Pg 157] am de blacksmith and shoemaker and de tanner. I 'spains how he do tannin.' He puts de hides in de water with black-oak bark and purty soon de hair come off and den he rolls and poun's de hides for to make dem soft.

"When I's 'bout 8 years old, or sich, dey starts me to he'pin' in de yard and as I grows older I he'ps in de fields. Massa, him raises cane and co'n mostly, no cotton.

"De buildings on de place am de resident of de massa and de quarters for de niggers. Dey am built from logs and de quarters has no floors and no windows, jus' square holes whar de windows ought to be. Dey have bunks for sleepin' and a table and benches, and cooks in de fireplace.

"We allus have plenty for to eat, plenty co'nmeal, 'lasses and heavy, brown sugar. We gits flour bread once de week, but lots of butter and milk. For de coffee, we roasts meal bran and for de tea, de sassafras. Den we has veg'tables and fruit dat am raised on de place. De meat mostly am de wil' game, deer and de turkey, but sometimes hawg meat.

"Massa have overseer and overlooker. De overseer am in charge of wo'k and de overlooker am in charge of de cullud women. De overseer give all de whippin's. Sometimes when de nigger gits late, 'stead of comin' home and takin' de whippin' him goes to de caves of de river and stays and jus' comes in night time for food. When dey do dat, de dawgs is put after dem and den it am de fight 'tween de nigger and de dawg. Jus' once a nigger kills de dawg with de knife, dat was close to freedom and it come 'fore dey ketches him. When dey whips for runnin' off, de nigger am tied down over a barrel and whipped ha'd, till dey draws blood, sometimes.

"Dem fool niggers what sneak off without de pass, have two things for to watch, one is not to be ketched by de overseer and de other am [Pg 158] de patter-rollers. De nigger sho' am skeert of de patters. One time my pappy and my mammy goes out without de pass and de patters takes after dem. I'se home, 'cause I's too young to be pesterin' roun'. I sees dem comin,' and you couldn' catched dem with a jackrabbit. One time anoudder nigger am runnin' from de patters and hides under de house. Dey fin' him and make him come out. You's seen de dawg quaver when him's col'? Well, dat nigger have de quaverment jus' like dat. De patters hits him five or six licks and lets him go. Dat nigger have lots of power—him gits to de quarters ahead of his shadow.

"Now, I tell 'bout some good times. We is 'lowed to have parties and de dance and we has for music, sich as de banjo and de jew's harp and a 'cordian. Dey dance de promenade and de jeg. Sometimes day have de jiggin' contest and two niggers puts a glass of water on dere heads and den see who can dance de longes' without spillin' any water. Den we has log-rollin'. Dere was two teams, 'bout three to de team, and dey see which can roll de log de fastes'. Den sometimes a couple am 'lowed to git married and dere am extry fixed for supper. De couple steps over de broom laid en de floor, dey's married den.

"Sometimes de overlooker don' let dem git married. I 'splains it dis way. He am used for to father de chillun. Him picks de portly, and de healthy women dat am to rear de portly chillen. De overlooker, he am portly man. Dem dat him picks he overlooks, and not 'low dem to marry or to go round with other nigger men. If dey do, its whippin' sho.' De massa raises some fine, portly chillen, and dey sel' some, after dey's half-grown, for \$500 and sometimes more. [Pg 159]

"De war didn' make no diff'runce, dat I notices, 'cept massa and one overseer jines de army. Massa come back, but de overseer am captured by de Yankees, so massa says, and we never hears 'bout him after dat. De soldiers passes by lots of times, both de 'federates and de 'blue bellies', but we's never bothered with dem. De fightin' was not close enough to make trouble. Jus' 'fore freedom come, de new overseer am 'structed to take us to Texas and takes us to Kaufman County and we is refugees dere. De Yankee mans tells us we am free and can do sich as we pleases. Dat lef' us in charge of no one and we'uns, jus' like cattle, wen' wanderin'.

"Pappy, him goes back to Lousiana to massa's place. Dat am de las' we hears from him. Mammy and I goes to Henderson and I works at dis and dat and cares for my mammy ten years, till she dies. Den I gits jobs as cook in Dallas and Houston and lots of other places.

"I gits married in 1901 to Ellen Tilles and I cooks till 'bout four years ago, till I gits de rhumatis'. Dat's all I can tell you 'bout de ole days.[Pg 160]

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**James Brown**

**JAMES BROWN, 84, blind for the last 12 years and now living alone in a shack at 408 W. Belknap, Fort Worth, Texas, was born a slave of Mr. Berney in Bell Co., Texas, in 1853. While still an infant, he and his mother were sold to Mr. John Blair, who farmed four miles south of Waco, Texas. JAMES has no known living relatives and a pension of \$14.00 a month is his sole support.**

"My fust Marster was named Marster Berney. I'se don' 'member hims fust name nor nothin' 'bout him. I'se don' know nothin' 'bout my pappy, but Marster Blair told me hims name was John Brown.

"Marster Blair have hims farm four miles south of Waco. We'uns lived in de cabins and have de fiddle and de banjoes. We'uns sing and have music on Sundays. Marster never whups we'uns and him was allus good to us. Him gives us plenty to eat, and meat, too. Hims keeps 'bout 20 hawgs dere all de time. De women makes de clothes and we'uns have all we need.

"De fust work I does is drivin' de Marster to town. Marster have fine hosses. Marster have hims office in Waco and we drive dere every day. I'se stays all day ready to drive him home. Mos' every day hims give me five cents or maybe de dime. Hims was a big law man and went to de legislature down in Austin. His picture am in Austin, 'cause I'se down dere years ago and seen his picture in a case wid Gov'ner Ross' picture.

"Anudder thing dat Marster does powe'ful good am trade[Pg 161] de niggers. He buys and sells 'em all de time. You see, dere was traders dat traveled from place to place dem days and dey takes sometimes as much as 100 niggers for to trade. Dere was sheds outside of town, whar dey keeps de niggers when dey comes to town.



"De Marster and de trader talks dis away: 'How you trade?' 'I'se gives you even trade.' 'No, I'se wants \$25.00 for de diff'runce.' 'I'se gives you \$5.00.' Dat's de way dey talks on and on. Maybe dey makes de trade and maybe dey don'.

"Dey have auction sometime and Marster allus tend 'em. At de auction I'se seen dem sell a family. Maybe one man buy de mammy, anudder buy de pappy and anudder buy all de chillens or maybe jus' one, like dat. I'se see dem cry like dey at de funeral when dey am parted. Dey has to drag 'em away.

"When de auction begin, he says: 'Dis nigger is so and so ole, he never 'bused, he soun' as a dollar. Jus' look at de muscle and de big shoulders. He's worth a thousan' of any man's money. How much am I offered?' Den de biddin' starts. It goes like dis: '\$200 I'se hear, does I'se hear \$250, does I hear \$300.' Den de nigger takes him clothes—dey have one extry suit—and goes wid de man dat buys him.

"De day befo' Marster gives we'uns freedom, he says to we'uns, 'I'se wants all you niggers to come to de front of de house Sunday mornin!' We'uns was dere and he was standin' on de gallery, holdin' a paper in hims han' and readin'. Dere was tears in hims eyes and some drap on de paper. I'se have tears in my eyes, too; mos' of 'em have. When hims done readin', hims says: 'You darkies is as free as I'se is. [Pg 162] You cango or you can stay. Those dat stay till de crops laid by, I'se will give \$5.00 a month.'

"Den he takes de little niggers and says, 'De little fellows who I'se have sold dere mammies will stay wid me till dey am 21 years ole. You little fellows, I'se know you's age and I'se give yous de statement.'

"Mos' of de niggers stays wid him, but dey lef' fust one and den tudder. I'se stays on wid him for many years and works as coachman. When I lef' de Marster, 'twas to work for a farmer for one year, den I'se comes to Fort Worth. I'se works in lumberya'd for long time.

"For de las' 12 years I'se been blin'. I'se had hard time after dat till de las' year but I'se gits de pension each month, dat am a heap of help. Dis nigger am thankful for what de Lawd have blessed me wid. [Pg 163]



**Josie Brown**

**JOSIE BROWN was born about 1859, in Victoria, Texas. She belonged to George Heard. Her mother was born free, a member of the Choctaw Nation, but she was stolen and sold as a slave. Josie now lives in Woodville, Texas.**

"I's bo'n on Christmas day, in Victoria. Got here jus' in time for de eggnog! Dat 'bout 1859, 'cause I's six year ole de Christmas 'fore freedom. My mudder was a free bo'n Injun woman. Jus' like any ole, demmed Choctaw down in de woods. She was stole and sol' by a spec'lator's gang. Us move to Tyler when I one mont' ole.

"We lib on a big farm and my mudder suckle her thirteen chillun and ole mistus seven. Bob, my brudder, he go to Mansfiel' and we never hear of him no more. He wen' with young marster, Wesley Heard. I 'member de mornin' dey lef', dey had to wait for him, 'cause he'd been out seein' his gal.

"De marstar hab a big log house close to de road. De quarters was 'cordin' to de family what live dere. De stage line through Woodville pass close by. I 'member sittin' on de rail fence to see de stage go by. Dat was a fine sight! De stage was big, rough carriage and dey was four or five hosses on de line. De bugle blow when dey go by, with de dus' behin' dem. Dey was comin' from Jasper, in Louisian', and everywhere.

"When us little dey hab to keep us in de house 'cause de bald eagle pick up chillen jus' like de hawk pick up chicken. Dey was lots of catamoun' and bears and deer in de woods. Us never [Pg 164] 'llowed play 'lone in de woods.

"I didn' do nothin' 'cep' eat and sleep and foller ole mistus 'round. She giv me good clothes 'cause my mudder was de weaver. De clothes jus' cut out straight down and dyed with all kinds of bark. I hab to keep de head comb and grease with lard. De lil' white chillun play with me but not de udder nigger chilluns much. Us pull de long, leaf grass and plait it and us make rag doll and playhouse and grapevine swing. Dere's plenty grapes, scudlong, sour blue grape and sweet, white grape. Dey make jelly and wine outta dem. Dey squeeze de grapes and put de juice in a jimmijohn(demijohn) to fo'men'.

"My mudder name was Keyia. Dat Injun. Daddy's name was Reuben. I 'member when I's lil' us goes visit my uncle, Major Scott. He lib in Polk County and he wore earring in he ears and beads and everyt'ing. He's a Injun. He dead now, many year.

"My daddy work in de fiel'. He sow de rice and raise t'baccy. Dey have fiel's of it. Dey put it in de crack of de fence to press, den dey dry it on de barn roof. Dat was smokin' t'baccy! For de chewin' t'baccy, dey soak it in sugar and honey. Us never see snuff den.

"On Sunday us didn' work. We has chu'ch meetin'. But dey has to have it in de ya'd, so de white folks could see de kin' of religion 'spounded.

"I seed some bad sight in slavery, but ain' never been 'bused myself. I seed chillun too lil' to walk from dey mammies sol' right off de block in Woodville. Dey was sol' jus' like calfs. I seed niggers in han' locks.

"After freedom dey wuk a whole year and den Major Sangers, he finally come and make de white folks tu'n us loose. I stay on for years, 'till ole mistus die. She larn me to knit and spin and sich like. [Pg 165]

"In de early day, us hab to be keerful. Dey say witches ride dey hosses on de da'k night s. Us allus put hosshoes over de door to keep de witch out. Iffen us go out at night, us go roun' de house three time so de witch not come in while us gone.

"I's fifteen year ole when I marry. Giles Paul was from de Wes'. He was de fus' husban'. Us hab a real weddin' with a bride veil. My weddin' dress hang 'way back on de flo', and shine like silver. Dey hab big dance and eat supper.

"My second husban' name' Robert Brown and I's mudder of ten chillun. 'Sides dat, I raises six or seven day I pick up on de street 'cause dey orfums and hab nobody to care for dem. Some dem chillun drif 'bout now and I wouldn' know 'em if I seed 'em! [Pg 166]



**Zek Brown**

**ZEK BROWN, 80, was born a slave of Green Brown, owner of six slave families, in Warren County, Tennessee. Zek came to Texas in 1868, with Sam Bragg. Zek now lives at 407 W. Bluff St., in Fort Worth, Texas.**

"My name am Zek Brown and Massa Green Brown owned me. He have a plantation in Tennessee and own all my folks, what was my pappy and mammy and two sisters. I never seed any of dem since I ran 'way from there, when I's ten years old.

"I sometimes wishes I's back on de plantation. I's took good care of dere and massa am awful good. Each fam'ly have dere own cabin and it warn't so much for niceness but we lives comfor'ble and has plenty to eat and wear. My mammy work de loom, makin' cloth, and us chillen wears linsey cloth shirts till dey gives us pants. Massa buy he fam'ly nice clothes but dey wears linsey clothes everyday. Same with shoes, dey am made on de plantation and de first store shoes I has am after surrender. My mammy buys me a pair with brass tips on de toe, and am I dress up den!

"De food am bester dan what I's had since dem days. Dey raises it all but de salt and sich. You wouldn't 'lieve how us et den. It am ham and bacon, 'cause dey raises all de hawgs. It am cornmeal and some white flour and fruit and honey and 'lasses and brown sugar. De 'lasses am black as I is and dat am some black. I wishes I was dere and mammy call me, and I can smell dat ham fryin' right now.

"Not once does I know of de massa whippin' and him don't talk rough even. Jus' so de work am done we does as we pleases, long as us reas'ble. Us have parties and dancin' and singin'. De music am de banjo and de fiddle.[Pg 167]

"I don't 'member when de war start but I 'member when it stop and massa call all us together and tell us we's no more slaves. Him talk lots 'bout what it mean and how it am diff'rent and we'uns have to make our own way and can't 'pend on him like. He say if us stay dere'll be wages or we can share crop and everybody stay. My folks stays one year and den moves to 'nother he farms. Pappy keep de farm and

mammy teach school. Her missie done larnt her to read and sich from time she a young'un, so she have eddication so good dey puts her to teachin'.

"De way I leaves home am dis. One day mammy teachin' school and me and my sister am home, and I 'cides she need de haircut. She want it, too. So I gits de shears and goes to work and after I works a while de job don't look so good, so I cuts some more and den it look worse and I tries to fix it and first thing I knows dere ain't no hair left to cut. When mammy come home she pays me for de work with de rawhide whip and dat hurts my feelin's so bad I 'cides to git even by runnin' 'way a few days. It am 'bout sundown and I starts to go and comes to Massa Sam Bragg's place. I's tired den and not so strong 'bout de idea and 'cides to rest. I walks into he yard and dere am a covered wagon standin' and loaded with lots of stuff and de front end open. I finds de soft place in de back and goes to sleep, and when I wakes up it am jus' gittin' daylight and dat wagon am a-movin'.'

"I don't say nothin'. I's skeert and waits for dat wagon to stop, so's I can crawl out. I jus' sits and sits and when it stop I crawls out and Massa Bragg say, 'Good gosh, look what am crawlin' out de wagon! He look at me a while and den he say, 'You's too far from home for me to take you back [Pg 168] and you'll git lost if you tries to walk home. I guesses I'll have to take you with me.' I thinks him am goin' some place and comin' back, but it am to Texas him come and stop at Birdville. Dat am how dis nigger come to Texas.

"I's often wish my mammy done whip me so hard I couldn't walk off de place, 'cause from den on I has mighty hard times. I stays with Massa Bragg four years and then I hunts for a job where I can git some wages. I gits it with Massa Joe Henderson, workin' on he farm and I's been round these parts ever since and farmed most my life.

"I gits into a picklement once years ago. I's 'rested on de street. I's not done a thing, jus' walkin' 'long de street with 'nother fellow and dey claim he stole somethin'. I didn't know nothin' 'bout since. Did dey turn me a-loose? Dey turn me loose after six months on de chain gang. I works on de road three months with a ball and chain on de legs. After dat trouble, I sho' picks my comp'ny.

"I marries onct, 'bout forty years ago, and after four years she drops dead with de heart mis'ry. Us have no chillen so I's alone in de world. It am all right long as I could work, but five years ago dis right arm gits to shakin' so bad I can' work no more. For a year now dey pays me \$9.00 pension. It am hard to live on dat for a whole month, but I's glad to git it. [Pg 169]

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**MADISON BRUIN, 92, spent his early days as a slave on the Curtis farm in the blue grass region of Kentucky, where he had some experience with some of the fine horses for which the state is famous. Here, too, he had certain contacts with soldiers of John Morgan, of Confederate fame. His eyes are keen and his voice mellow and low. His years have not taken a heavy toll of his vitality.**

"I's a old Kentucky man. I's born in Fayette County, 'bout five miles from Lexington, right where dere lots of fine hosses. My old massa was name Jack Curtis and de old missus was Miss Addie. My mother name Mary and she die in 1863 and never did see freedom. I don't 'member my daddy a-tall.

"De place was jis' a farm, 'cause dey didn't know nothin' 'bout plantations up dere in Kentucky. Dey raise corn and wheat and garlic and fast hosses. Dey used to have big hoss races and dey had big tracks and I's stood in de middle of dat big track in Lexington and watch dem ex'cise de hosses. Sometimes I got to help dem groom some dem grand hosses and dat was de big day for me. I don't 'member dem hosses names, no, suh, but I knowed one big bay hoss what won de race nearly every time.

"I had two sisters name Jeanette and Fanny and a brother, Henry, and after my daddy die, my mother marries a man name Paris and I had one half-brother call Alfred Paris.

"Old massa was good to us and give us plenty food. He never beat us hard. He had a son what jis' one month older'n me and we run 'round and play lots. Old massa, he whip me and he own son jis' de same when we[Pg 170] bad. He didn't whip us no more'n he ought to, though. Dey was good massas and some mean ones, and some worthless cullud folks, too.

"Durin' de war de cholera broke out 'mongst de people and everybody scairt dey gwine cotch it. Dey say it start with de hurtin' in de stomach and every time us hurt in de stomach, missus make us come quick to de big house. Dat suit us jis' right and when dey sends Will and me to hoe or do somethin' us didn't want to do, pretty soon I say, 'Willie, I think my stomach 'ginnin to hurt. I think dis mis'ry a sign I gittin' de cholera.' Den him say, 'Us better goto de big house like ma say,' and with dat, us quit workin'. Us git out lots of work dat way, but us ain't ever took de cholera yit.

"Durin' de war John Morgan's men come and took all de hosses. Dey left two and Willie and me took dem to hide in de plum thicket, but us jis' git out de gate when de sojers come 'gain and dey head us off and take de last two hosses.

"My mother she wore de Yankee flag under her dress like a petticoat when de 'federates come raidin'. Other times she wore it top de dress. When dey hears de 'federates comin' de white folks makes us bury all de gold and de silver spoons out in de garden. Old massa, he in de Yankee army, 'cause dey 'script him, but he sons, John and Joe, dey volunteers.

"Old massa he never sold none of he slaves. I used to hear him and missus fussin' 'bout de niggers, 'cause some 'long to her and some to him and dey have de time keepin' dem straighten' out.

Us boys have good time playin'. Us draw de line and some git on one side and some de other. Den one sing out[Pg 171]

"'Chickama, Chickama, craney crow,  
Went to de well to wash my toe;  
When I git back my chicken was gone,  
What time, old witch?'

"Den somebody holler out, 'One o'clock' or 'Two o'clock' or any time, and dem on one side try to cotch dem on de other side.

"When I's young I didn't mind plowin', but I didn't like to ride at fust, but dey make me larn anyhow. Course, dat white boy and me, us like most anything what not too much work. Us go down to de watermelon patch and plug dem melons, den us run hide in de woods and eat watermelon. Course, dey lots of time dey 'low us to play jis' by ourselves. Us play one game where us choose sides and den sing:

"Can, can, candio,  
Old man Dandio,  
How many men you got?  
More'n you're able to cotch.'

"Endurin' de war us git whip many a time for playin' with shells what us find in de woods. Us heered de cannons shootin' in Lexington and lots of dem shells drap in de woods.

"What did I think when I seed all dem sojers? I wants to be one, too. I didn't care what side, I jis' wants a gun and a hoss and be a sojer. John Morgan, he used to own de hemp factory in Lexington. When young massa jine Woolford's 11th Kentucky Cavalry, dey come to de place and halt befo' de big house in de turnpike. Dey have shotguns and blind bridles on dere hosses, not open bridle like on de race hosses. Dey jis' in reg'lar clothes but next time dey come through dey in blue uniforms. All my white folks come back from de war and didn't git kilt. Nobody ever telt me I's free. I's happy dere and never left dem till 1872. All de others gone befo' dat, but I [Pg 172] gits all I wants and I didn't need no money. I didn't know what paper money was and one time massa's son give me a paper dime to git some squab and I didn't know what money was and I burned it up.

"Dey's jis' one thing I like to do most and dat's eat. Dey allus had plenty of everything and dey had a big, wooden tray, or trough and dey put potlicker and cornbread in dat trough and set it under de big locust tree and all us li'l niggers jis' set 'round and eat and eat. Jis' eat all us wants. Den when us git full us fall over and go to sleep. Us jis' git fat and lazy. When us see dat bowl comin', dat bowl call us jis' like hawgs runnin' to de trough.

"Dey was great on gingerbread and us go for dat. Dey couldn't leave it in de kitchen or de pantry so old missus git a big tin box and hide de gingerbread under her bed and kept de switch on us to keep us 'way from it. But sometime us sneak up in de bedroom and git some, even den.

"When I 'bout 17 I left Kentucky and goes to Indiana and white folks sends me to school to larn readin' and writin', but I got tired of dat and run off and jine de army. Dat in 1876 and dey sends me to Arizona. After dat I's at Fort Sill in what used to be Indian Territory and den at Fort Clark and Fort Davis, dat in Garfield's 'ministration, den in Fort Quitman on de Rio Grande. I's in skirmishes with de Indians on Devil's River and in de Brazos Canyon, and in de Rattlesnake Range and in de Guadalupe Mountains. De troops was de Eighth Cavalry and de Tenth Infantry. De white and de cullud folks was altogether and I have three hosses in de cavalry. De fust one plays out, de next one shot down on campaign and one was condemn. On dat campaign us have de White Mountain 'paches with us for scouts. [Pg 173]

"When I git discharge' from de Army I come to Texas and work on de S.P. Railroad and I been in Texas ever since, and when I's in Dallas I got 'flicted and got de pension 'cause I been in de army. I ain't done much work in ten year.

"I gits married in San Antonio on December 14, 1882 and I marries Dolly Gross and dat her right dere. Us have de nice weddin', plenty to eat and drink. Us have only one chile, a gal, and she dead, but us 'dopt sev'ral chillen.

"Us come to Beaumont in 1903 and I works 'round Spindletop and I works for de gas people and de waterworks people. I's been a carpenter and done lots of common work wherever I could find it.

"It's been long time since slavery and I's old, but me and my old lady's in good health and us manage to git 'long fairly well. Dat's 'bout all I can 'member 'bout de old times. [Pg 174]