

JOE BARNES, 89, was born in Tyler Co., Texas, on Jim Sapp's plantation. He is very feeble, but keeps his great grandchildren in line while their mother works. They live in Beaumont. Joe is tall, slight, and has gray hair and a stubby gray mustache. In his kind, gentle voice he relates his experiences in slavery days.

"Dey calls me Paul Barnes, but my name ain't Paul, it am Joe. My massa was Jim Sapp, up here in Tyler County, and missus' name was Ann. De Sapp place was big and dey raise' a sight of cotton and corn. Old massa Jim he have 'bout 25 or 30 slaves.

"My mammy's name was Artimisi, but dey call her Emily, and pa's name Jerry Wooten, 'cause he live on de Wooten place. My steppa named Barnes and I taken dat name. My parents, dey have de broomstick weddin'.

"When I's a chile us play marbles and run rabbits and ride de stick hoss and de like. When I gits more bigger, us play ball, sort of like baseball. One time my brudder go git de hosses and dey lots of rain and de creek swoll up high. De water so fast it wash him off he hoss and I ain't seed him since. Dey never find de body. He's 'bout ten year old den.

"Massa live in de big box house and de quarters am in a row in de back. Some of dem box and some of dem log. Dey have two rooms. Every day de big, old cowhorn blow for dinner and us have de little tin cup what us git potlicker in and meat and cornbread and salt bacon. Us gits greens, too. De chimneys 'bout four feet wide and dey cooks everything in de fireplace. Dey have pots and ovens and put fire below and 'bove 'em.[Pg 47]

"I used to wear what I calls a one-button cutaway. It was jis' a shirt make out of homespun with pleats down front. Dey make dey own cloth dem time.

"Massa marry de folks in de broomstick style. Us don' have de party but sometime us sing and play games, like de round dance.

"Dey give de little ones bacon to suck and tie de string to de bacon and de other round dey wrists, so dey won't swallow or lose de bacon. For de little bits of ones dey rings de bell for dey mommers to come from de field and nuss 'em.

"After freedom come us stay a year and den move to Beaumont and us work in de sawmill for Mr. Jim Long. De fust money I git I give to my mammy. Me and mammy and stepdaddy stays in Beaumont two years den moves to Tyler and plants de crop. But de next year us move back to Beaumont on de Langham place and mammy work for de Longs till she die.

"When I git marry I marry Dicey Allen and she die and I never marry no more. I worked in sawmillin' and on de log pond and allus gits by pretty good. I ain't done no work much de last ten year, I's too old.

"I sort a looks after my grandchillen and I sho' loves dem. I sits 'round and hurts all de time. It am rheumatism in de feets, I reckon. I got six grandchillen and three great-grandchillen and dat one you hears cryin', dat de baby I's raisin' in dere.

"I's feared I didn't tell you so much 'bout things way back, but da truth am, I can't 'member like I used to.[Pg 48]

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