



John Crawford

JOHN CRAWFORD, 81, was born a slave on Judge Thompson Rector's plantation at Manor, Texas. After emancipation, John was a share-cropper. He has always lived in Travis County and is now cared for by a daughter at Austin.

"John Crawford am me. It am eighty-one years since I's borned and dat's on de old Rector plantation where Manor am now. It wasn't dere den. I knowed the man it was named after.

"Ma's name was Viney Rector and the old judge brung her from Alabama. She milked all the cows two times a day and I had to turn out all de calves. Sometimes dey'd git purty rough and go right to dere mammies.

"Pap's name was Tom Townes, 'cause he 'longed on de Townes place. He was my step-pap and when I's growed I tooken my own pap's name, what was Crawford. I never seed him, though, and didn't know nothin' much 'bout him. He's sold away 'fore I's borned.

"Pap Townes could make most everythin'. He made turnin' plows and hossshoe nails and a good lot of furniture. He was purty good to me, 'siderin' he wasn't my own pap. I didn't have no hard time, noway. I had plenty bacon and side-meat and 'lasses. Every Sunday mornin' the jedge give us our rations for de week. He wasn't short with dem, neither.

"Many was de time Injuns come to Jedge Rector's place. Dem Injuns beg for somethin' and the jedge allus give dem somethin'. They wasn't mean Injuns, jes' allus beggin'. [Pg 258]

"I can't read and write to this day. Nobody ever larnt me my A B C's and I didn't git no chance at school.

"On Christmas mornin' Massa Rector come out and give each man and woman a big, red pocket handkerchief and a bottle of liquor. He buyed dat liquor by de barrel and liked it hisself. Dat why he allus had it on de place.

"One mornin' the jedge done send word down by de cook for nobody to go to de fields dat day. We all want up to de big house and de jedge git up to make de speech, but am too choke up to talk. He hated to lose he slaves, I reckon. So his son-in-law has to say, 'You folks am now free and can go where you wants to go. You can stay here and pick cotton and git fifty cents de hunerd.' But only two families stayed. De rest pulled out.

"After freedom we rented land on de halves. Some niggers soon got ahead and rented on de third or fourth. When you rent that-a-way you git three bales and de boss git one. But you has to buy you own teams and seed and all on dat plan.

"Its a fac' we was told we'd git forty acres and a mule. Dat de talk den, but we never did git it.

"De Ku Klux made a lot of devilment round-about dat county. Dey allus chasin' some nigger and beatin' him up. But some dem niggers sho' 'serve it. When dey gits free, dey gits wild. Dey won't work or do nothin' and thinks dey don't have to. We didn't have no trouble, 'cause we stays on de farm and works and don't have no truck with dem wild niggers. [Pg 259]

"In 1877 I marries Fannie Black at de town of Sprinkle. It wasn't sech a town, jes' a li'l place. Me and her stayed married fifty-two years and four months. She died and left me eight year ago. We had seven chillen and they is all livin'. Four is here in Austin and two in California and one in Ohio.

"I gits a li'l pension, \$9.00 de month, and my gal, Susie, takes care of me. I ain't got long to go now 'fore de Lawd gwine call me. [Pg 260]