

MRS. JOHN BARCLAY (nee Sarah Sanders) Brownwood, Texas was born in Komo, Mississippi, September 1, 1853. She was born a slave at the North Slades' place. Mr. and Mrs. North Slade were the only owners she ever had. She served as nurse-maid for her marster's children and did general housework. She, with her mother and father and family stayed with the Slades until the end of the year after the Civil War. They then moved to themselves, hiring out to "White Folks."

"My marster and mistress was good to all de slaves dat worked for dem. But our over-seer, Jimmy Shearer, was sho' mean. One day he done git mad at me for some little somethin' and when I take de ashes to de garden he catches me and churns me up and down on de groun'. One day he got mad[Pg 40] at my brother and kicked him end over end, jes' like a stick of wood. He would whip us 'til we was raw and then put pepper and salt in de sores. If he thought we was too slow in doin' anything he would kick us off de groun' and churn us up and down. Our punishment depended on de mood of de over-seer. I never did see no slaves sold. When we was sick dey give us medicine out of drug stores. De over-seer would git some coarse cotton cloth to make our work clothes out of and den he would make dem so narrow we couldn' hardly' walk.

"There was 1800 acres in Marster Slade's plantation, we got up at 5:00 o'clock in de mornin' and de field workers would quit after sun-down. We didn' have no jails for slaves. We went to church with de white folks and there was a place in de back of de church for us to sit.

"I was jes' a child den and us chilluns would gather in de back yard and sing songs and play games and dance jigs. Song I 'member most is 'The Day is Past and Gone.'

"One time marster found out the over-seer was so mean to me, so he discharged him and released me from duty for awhile.

"We never did wear shoes through de week but on Sunday we would dress up in our white cotton dresses and put on shoes.

"We wasn't taught to read or write. Our owner didn't think anything about it. We had to work if there was work to be done. When we got caught up den we could have time off. If any of us got sick our mistress would 'tend to us herself. If she thought we was sick enough she would call de white doctor.

"When de marster done told us we was free we jumped up and[Pg 41] down and slapped our hands and shouted 'Glory to God!' Lord, child dat was one happy bunch of niggers. Awhile after dat some of de slaves told marster dey wanted to stay on with him like dey had been but he told 'em no dey couldn't, 'cause dey was free. He said he could use some of 'em but dey would have to buy what dey got and he would have to pay 'em like men.

"When I was 'bout 18 years old I married John Barclay. I's had ten chillun and four gran'-chillun and now I lives by myself." [Pg 42]