



Steve Conally



Steve Conally's House

STEVE CONNALLY, 90, was born a slave of Tom Connally, grandfather of United States Senator Tom Connally, from Texas. The family then lived in Georgia, and Steve's master was a member of the Georgia Legislature.

"I was born in Murray County, Georgia, and was a slave of Massa Tom Connally, but they called him Massa "Cushi" Connally. He was a member of de Georgia Legislature. I stayed with Missy Mary Connally till I was sixty-seven and Massa Cushi died when I was sixty-nine.

"My mother, Mandy, weighed two hundred pounds and she was de Connally cook. When I was born, she took de fever and couldn't raise me, so Missy Mary took and kep' me in a li'l cot by her bed. After

dat, I'm with her nearly all de time and follows her. When she go to de garden I catches her dresstail and when she go to de doctor, 'bout eighty miles away, I goes with her.

"I mus' tell you why everybody call Massa Connally Cushi. Dere am allus so many Tom Connallys in de fam'ly, dey have to have de nickname to tell one from de other.

"Back dere in Georgia, us have lots and lots of fruit. Come time, de women folks preserves and cans till it ain't no use. My mammy take de prize any day with her jelly and sech, and her cakes jes' nachelly walk off and leave de whole county. Missy Mary sho' de master hand hersef at de fine bakin' and I'd slip round and be handy to lick out de pans.

"Dey didn't have no 'frigerators den, but dey built log houses without a floor over de good, cold spring, and put flat rocks dere to keep de milk and cream and butter cold. Or dey dig out de place so de crock be down in[Pg 250] de wet dirt. Dey sho' have to make de latch up high, so de bad chillen couldn't open dat door!

"De plantation in Georgia was de whopper. I don't know 'zactly how many acres, but it a big one. Us make everything and tan hides and make shoes, jes' like all de big places did. De big house and de weavin' house and de tannin' yard and de sugar mill and slave quarters made a li'l town. Dere used to be some mighty big doin's dere. De Connally men and women am allus good lookers and mighty pop'lar, and folkses come from far and near to visit dem. All de 'portant men come and all de sassiety belles jes' drift to our place. Dere sho' lots of big balls and dinners and de house fix mighty fine dem times. De women wore de hoop skirts and de ribbons and laces. My missy was de bes' lookin' from far and near, and all de gem'mans want to dance with her. She sho' look like de queen you see in de picture books and she have mighty high ways with folks, but she's mighty good to dis here li'l black boy.

"I goes in de buggy with Massa Cushi, up to Tennessee, to git his sons what been kilt or wounded. Massa Ned, he dead, and Massa Charles, he shot in de hip, and die after he git brung home. Massa Dick hurt, too, but he didn't die.

"Right after de Civil War, when I'm 'bout nineteen, I comes to Texas with de Connallys, all what didn't git kilt in de war. I stays with Missy Mary till she die in Georgia. Her son, Jones Connally, come to Brazos County, near Bryan, and after dat removes to Eddy. I works for him two years and has lived round Eddy ever since. De Connallys give me a house and lot in Eddy. Some de fool niggers 'spected a lot, but I wasn't worryin' none. All I wanted[Pg 251] was to stay near de Connallys. Mos' gen'ly all de slaves what I knowed was found places for and help git a start at jobs and places to live. All de Connally slaves loved dem. Some de timber land give to Mrs. Rose Staten and when she go up dere a old nigger woman name Lucy sees her. She so happy to see one dem Connally chillen she laugh and cry.

"Massa Jones Connally have de twin gals, name Ola and Ella. Olla born with de lef' arm off at de elbow and she allus follow me round. When I go to milk I puts her in de trough. I saved her life lots of times. One time she's on de cone of de two-story house, when she's 'bout two years old. I eases up and knocks de window out and coaxes her to come to me. 'Nother time, I's diggin' de well and some clods falls down and I looks up and dere am dat Missy Ola leanin' over, mos' tumblin' in de well on her head. I gives de loud yell and her brother-in-law come runnin' and grabs her legs.

"Senator Tom Connally, what am a son of Jones Connally, often says he'd like to visit his grandpa's old home in Georgia. I'd like mighty well to go with him and take him all over de old home place and out to de old cemetary." [Pg 252]