(Ark. S, 40)

(2. G) 85 / 65-8

W.M.C. (24) (P. 3) (C. 37)

I, David Walker was born in Lexington, Kentucky. I don't remember the year but it must have been in December for I know it was near Christmas. I was first owned by a Mr. Walker. When his youngest daughter married he gave me and my mother to her. She was named Elizabeth and She married a Mr. Crowe. They moved to Buchanan County Missouri carrying my mother and me with them and leaving my father, one sister and one brother back in Kentucky. I never saw them again.

Just before the war we moved to Texas in Collin County, my master moved to keep us from falling in the hands of the yankees. I was sold at the age of twelve along with a sister to a Mr. Ledbetter. My mother was sold and carried to Arkansas. We never saw each other again until after the war.

I was a field hand. I plowed, chopped corn, cut wood, fed the cattle

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and horses.

The home life was a fairly contented one. The children were ruled under very strict discipline. The parents treated their children or controlled them just like the master controlled them. On the whole the young folks were good and of very good moral character. They courted and married at an early age. The ceremony was performed by the couple jumping over a broom. If two on the same plantation married they got the consent of the master. If one of the couple lived on an adjoining plantation each would get the consent of their Masters. Their Masters would talk it over between them. If they agreed they gave their consent but each would keep his slaves. The man would be allowed to visit his wife on Wednesday and Saturday nights. The children from this relationship would belong to the master who owned the 'gal'. Sometimes there would be immoral relationships between the master and a slave 'gal'. In that case he would make a house girl out of her

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and she was not allowed to mix with the other slaves. The children from these relationships were subject to the same treatment as the other slaves. When the Negroes seem to be slow about mating they were forced to mate or marry. If the woman proved barren she was sold. Every man and woman who married were supposed to be loyal to each other and if found immoral were sold. Sometimes the master would sell husband away from wife and mother away from children or vice versa.

Food

They would issue you an allowance of ration a week. It would consist of meal, bacon, syrup, beans and potatoes. On Sunday you were given enough flour for biscuits. If your allowance gave out you did without until your next allowance. Most of us would steal food especially sweet potatoes which we would roast in the ashes in the fireplace.

Punishment

We were punished very severely and were punished for anything that displeased the master no matter how-

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small the offence. He would strip us, tie us up and whip us with switches roasted in the fire.

Clothing

Our clothes were homespun. Mine were made by the white woman because I had no mother to sew for me. Two garments were given you a year. Pants, shirt and coat made up our wardrobe. Our master did not furnish us underwear.

Working Habits

We had to get up at four in the morning and feed. We worked until eleven thirty. We ate dinner and went back to work at one o'clock. We had white overseers altho a colored overseer was used sometimes. This didn't help much because he had to treat us just like the white man paid for him to do. On cold, bad days we worked on the inside shucking corn, repairing harness and other inside jobs.

Amusement

We could have dances on the quarters. They would allow us to dance until twelve o'clock. Negroes from neighboring plantations could attend if they got a pass from their master.

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Punishment

They were whipped if they did not have a pass when they went out without one. In the fall when work slowed up and the harvest was over we were allowed to hunt and fish, also to gather nuts. At Christmas time my master would play Santa Claus to us. He would fill our socks with candy and apples.

Religion

We attended church with our master sometimes. They allowed some to join the church. You were not allowed to pray down on the quarters. If you did you turned your pot down so the sound would not go up to the big house. For if the master caught some old pious Negro man or woman praying she would surely whip them.

Superstitions

I never heard of all these superstitious ideas until long after freedom.

Living Conditions

We had built-in beds with trundle beds under them for the children. They would give us ticks to fill with straw. We had home made stools and sometimes the mammy fell heir to a

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rocking chair. Each cabin had its pot and skillet for cooking.

I didn't like slavery because you were so badly treated. you never had enough to eat because of the hard work you had to do. They would make you grease your face with a meat skin and pretend that you had enough. you had to ask when you wanted to go off and had to be back at a certain time. The master would have immoral relationship with the slave girl. you were not allowed to express yourself regardless of how right you were. I married after slavery.

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Mrs. Ethel Jones Everett
571 N. East St.
Sherman, Texas
Prof. T. R. Veal, Instructor

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