

9.1937
ARMSTEAD BARRETT, born in 1847, was a slave of Stafford Barrett, who lived in Huntsville, Texas. He is the husband of Harriett Barrett. Armstead has a very poor memory and can tell little about early days. He and Harriet receive old age pensions.

"I's really owned by Massa Stafford Barrett, but my mammy 'longed to Massa Ben Walker and was 'lowed to keep me with her. So after we'uns sot free, I lives with my daddy and mammy and goes by de name of Barrett. Daddy's name was Henry Barrett and he's brung to Texas from Richmond, in Virginny, and mammy come from Kentucky. Us all lived in Huntsville. I waited on Miss Ann and mammy was cook.

"Old massa have doctor for us when us sick. We's too val'ble. Jus' like to de fat beef, massa am good to us. Massa go' to other states and git men and women and chile slaves and bring dem back to sell, 'cause he spec'lator. He make dem wash up good and den sell dem.

"Mos' time we'uns went naked. Jus' have on one shirt or no shirt a-tall.

"I know when peace 'clared dey all shoutin'. One woman hollerin' and a white man with de high-steppin' hoss ride clost to her and I see him git out and open he knife and cut her wide 'cross de stomach. Den he put he hat inside he shirt and rid off like lightnin'. De woman put in wagon and I never heered no more 'bout her.

"I didn't git nothin' when us freed. Only some cast-off clothes. Long time after I rents de place on halves and farms most my life. Now I's too old to work and gits a pension to live on.

"I seems to think us have more freedom when us slaves, 'cause we have no 'sponsibility for sickness den. We have to take care all dat now and de white man, he beats de nigger out what he makes. Back in de old days, de white men am hones'. All the nigger knowed was hard work. I think de cullud folks ought to be 'lowed more privileges in votin' now, 'cause dey have de same 'sponsibility as white men and dey more and more educated and brighter and brighter.

"I think our young folks pretty sorry. They wont do right, but I 'lieve iffen dey could git fair wages dey'd do better. Dey git beat out of what dey does, anyway.

"I 'member a owner had some slaves and de overseer had it in for two of dem. He'd whip dem near every day and dey does all could be did to please him. So one day he come to de field and calls one dem slaves and dat slave draps he hoe and goes over and grabs dat overseer. Den de other slave cut dat overseer's head right slap off and throwed it down one of de rows. De owner he fools 'round and sells dem two slaves for \$800.00 each and dat all de punishment dem two slaves ever got.
