

EX-SLAVE STORIES
(Texas)

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HARRIET BARRETT, 86, was born in Walker Co., Texas, in 1851, a slave of Steve Glass. She now lives in Palestine, Texas.

"Massa Steve Glass, he own my pappy and mammy and me, until the war freed us. Pappy's borned in Africy and mammy in Virginy, and brung to Texas 'fore de war, and I's borned in Texas in 1851. I's heered my grandpa was wild and dey didn't know 'bout marryin' in Africy. My brother name Steve Glass and I dunno iffen I had sisters or not.

"Dey put me to cookin' when I's a li'l kid and people says now dat Aunt Harriet am de bes' cook in Madisonville. Massa have great big garden and plenty to eat. I's cook big skillet plumb full corn at de time and us all have plenty meat. Massa, he step out and kill big deer and put in de great big pot and cook it. Then us have cornbread and syrup.

"Us have log quarters with stick posts for bed and deerskin stretch over it. Den us pull moss and throw over dat. I have de good massa, bless he soul. Missy, she plumb good. She sick all de time and dey never have white chillen. Dey live in big, log house, four rooms in it and de great hall both ways through it.

"Massa, he have big bunch slaves and work dem long as dey could see and den lock 'em up in de quarters at night to keep 'em from runnin' off. De patterrollers come and go through de quarters to see if all de niggers dere. Dey walk right over us when us sleeps.

"Some slave run off, gwine to de north, and massa he cotch him and give him thirty-nine licks with rawhide and lock dem up at night, too, and keep chain on him in daytime.

"I have de good massa, bless he soul, and missy she plumb good. I'll never forgit dem. Massa 'low us have holiday Saturday night and go to nigger dance if it on 'nother plantation. Boy, oh boy, de tin pan beatin' and de banjo pickin' and de dance all night long.

"When de war start, white missy die, and massa have de preacher. She was white angel. Den massa marry Missy Alice Long and she de bad woman with us niggers. She hard on us, not like old missy.

"I larned lots of remedies for sick people. Charcoal and onions and honey for de li'l baby am good, and camphor for de chills and fever and teeth cuttin'. I's boil red oak bark and make tea for fever and make cactus weed root tea for fever and chills and colic. De best remedy for chills and fever am to git rabbit foot tie on string 'round de neck.

"Massa, he carry me to war with him, 'cause I's de good cook. In dat New Orleans battle he wounded and guns roarin' everywhere. Dey brung massa in and I's jus' as white as he am den. Dem Yankees done shoot de roof off de house. I nuss de sick and wounded clean through de war and seed dem dyin' on every side of me.

"I's most scared to death when de war end. Us still in New Orleans and all de shoutin' dat took place 'cause us free! Dey crowds on de streets and was in a stir jus' as thick as flies on de dog. Massa say I's free as him, but iffen I wants to cook for him and missy I gits \$2.50 de month, so I cooks for him till I marries Armstead Barrett, and then us farm for de livin'. Us have big church weddin' and I has white loyal dress and black brogan shoes. Us been married 51 years now.