

ARMSTEAD BARRETT

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 was really owned by Master Stafford Barrett, but my mammy belonged to Master Ben Walker, and she was allowed to keep me with her. So after we got free, I lived with my daddy and mammy and go by the name of Barrett. Daddy's name was Henry Barrett and he was brung to Texas from Richmond, Virginia, and Mammy comes from Kentucky. We lived in Huntsville. I waited on Miss Ann, and Mammy was cook.

Old master had a doctor for us when we were sick. We were too valuable. Just like the fat beef, master was good to us. Master would go to other states and get men and women and child slaves and bring them back to sell, because he was a speculator. He'd make them wash up good and then sell them.

Most time we went naked. Just have on one shirt or no shirt at all.

I know when peace declared they were all shouting. One woman was hollering and a white man with a high-stepping horse rides close to her and I see him get out and open his knife and cut her wide across the stomach. Then he put his hat inside his shirt and road off like lightning. The woman put in a wagon and I never heard no more about her.

I didn't get nothing when we were freed, only some cast-off clothes. Long time after, I rented the place on halves and farmed most my life. Now I'm too old to work, and get a pension to live on.

I seem to think we have more freedom when we were slaves, 'cause we had no responsibility for sickness then. We have to take care all that now, and the white man, he beats the nigger out of what he makes. Back in the old days, the white men were honest. All the nigger knew was hard work. I think the colored folks ought to be allowed more privileges in voting now, 'cause they have the same responsibility as white men, and they are more and more educated and brighter.

I think our young folks are pretty sorry. They won't do right, but I believe if they could get fair wages they'd do better. They get beat out of what they do, anyway.

I remember a owner had some slaves and the overseer had it in for two of them. He'd whip them near every day, and they did all they could to please him. So one day he comes to the field and calls one of them slaves, and that slave drops his hoe and goes over and grabs that overseer. Then the other slave cut that overseer's head right slap off and threw it down one of the rows. The owner he fools around and sells them two slaves for \$800.00 each and that is all the punishment them two slaves ever got.