

George Scruggs

CALLOWAY CO.

Interviewed by L. Cherry

I was a slave before the war. My boss, the man that I belonged to, was Ole Man Vol Scruggs. He was a racehorse man. He had a colored boy for every horse those days and a white man for every horse, too. I was born right here in Murray. My boss carried me away from here. I thought a heap of him and he though a heap of me. I'd rub the legs of the horses and ride them around to give them exercise. I was just a small boy when my boss carried me away from Murray. My boss carried me to Lexington. I stayed with Ole Man Scruggs a long time. I just don't know how long. My boss carried me to his brother, Ole Man Finch Scruggs. He ran a store and I had to sweep the floor of the store, wash dishes and clean knives and forks every day. Ole Man Finch Scruggs carried my uncle up there when Ole Vol carried me. Ole Man Finch Scruggs lived in a little town called Clintonville on the other side of Lexington. When Ole man Vol Scruggs married, he took me away from Old Man Finch Scruggs and carried me to live with him. I was then with my old boss again. He then hired me to work for a doctor in Lexington. My job was to clean up his office and when he went out in the country, he took me along to open the gates. I had to scour knives and forks and ole brass candlesticks. That's been a long time ago, I'm telling you, white man. While I was sweeping the doctor's office one day I saw droves of colored folks going by with two white men riding in front, two riding in the middle, and two riding behind. The colored folks were walking, going down town to be sold. When I first saw them coming I got scared and started to run but the white man said, "Stop, boy, we are not going to hurt you." I stayed with that boss doctor for something like a year, and then went back to my Ole Boss. I'd been up there with him yet but he kept telling me I was free. But I didn't know what he meant by such talk. When my Ole Boss sold out up there, he brought me with him to Paducah.

He had a nephew in the wholesale grocery business in Paducah. My Old Boss carried me to his nephew and left me there. That was the last time I ever saw my good Ole Boss because he went on to Missouri. My Old Boss was sure good to me, white man. I sure do love him yet. Why, he never would allow me to go barefooted, because he was afraid I'd stick thorns in my feet, and if he even caught me barefooted, he sure would make my back tell it. When he left me in Paducah, his nephew took me over to my aunt, Rose Scruggs to stay all night with her. Next day I walked with my cousin to Mayfield, carrying two toe sacks of clothes that my Good Ole Boss gave me when he left me in Paducah. The clothes were for me and my mother. When we got to Mayfield, we went straight to Judge Williams cause he married my Ole Boss' sister and I was sure we could stay with them. My Ole Boss and my mother were play-children together. My mother's name was Patsy Malone. Mr. Maoine's wife was my Ole Boss' sister and my mother fell to her as a slave. Next day I came to Murray where my mother lived with Miss Emily Malone. I was gone a long time cause my Ole Boss took me away from Murray when I was a small boy. I stayed with my mother till she died. I now live in one mile of the house where I was born. Mr. Hugh Wear says I am 100 years old.