

Caroline Wright
59 Grant St., Waco, Texas

Caroline Wright, about 90 years old, was born near Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dr. Warren Wortham owned her parents and their 14 children. Caroline was 12 when they were freed. Her father, Robert Vaughn, moved to Texas, where he prospered and bought more than 300 acres of Tehuacana bottomland in McLennan County. Caroline and her husband now live at 59 Grant St., Waco, in a little house they bought after their family was grown.

I was born in Louisiana on Jones Creek, by Baton Rouge, about 90 years ago. I disremember the year. My pappy was Bob Vaughn and my mammy was Rose Ann. They were born by Baton Rouge. I had six sisters, Betsy Ann, Lydia, Nancy, Paga and Louisan; and three brothers, Horace, Robert and Tom. We were all owned by Dr. Warren Wortham and his wife, Annie. Mr. Bob, the doctor's brother, had us in charge, and he hired us out to Hays White, who owned a sugar plantation on the Mississippi River by Baton Rouge. We all stayed at his place for two years. There was sugar cane, corn, peas and tomatoes raised on the farm. We lived in a log cabin made of pine logs and our beds was made out of pine timber with corn shucks tacked on the bed, and our kivers was feather beds.

In Clinton, in Louisiana, we were all put on the block and valued. I was six years old and I was valued at \$1,500. But our family wasn't sold to anyone. I was given to Miss Muriel, Dr. Wortham's daughter. Me and my sisters was made house slaves and my mammy and pappy and brothers was made field slaves.

Our master, Dr. Wortham, sure was a fine doctor. He never whipped us. The young missus learned us our A B C's 'cause there was no school for the slaves. There wasn't no church on the plantation, but we all went occasionally to a big log cabin and camp shed. Sometime a white would preach and sometimes a colored preacher.

I only remember one slave who ran away. He was so worthless, he came back when he got ready. He wasn't punished, 'cause he wasn't mean, just lazy. I never saw no jail for slaves and never saw any whipped. We always had from Friday noon to Monday morning off.

On Christmas, the white folks always give us presents and plenty to eat, and we always had a big dance five or six times a year. Dr. Wortham lived in a great big log house made from cedar logs.

One day, I saw a lot of men and I asked the missus what they were doing. She told me they come to fit in the war. The War got so bad that Mr. Bob told us we were all going to Texas. We all started out on Christmas Day of the first year of Lincoln's war. We went in ox wagons and we had mules to ride.

On the trip to Texas, one evening a big storm come up and Mr. Bob, he asked a man to let us use a big, empty house. They put me by the door to sleep 'cause I was the lightest sleeper. Some time in the night, I woke up and there stood the biggest haint I ever saw. He was ten feet high and had on a big beaver coat. I hollers to my pappy, 'Pappy, wake up, there's a haint.' Next morning we got up and there was nothing outta place. No, ma'am, we didn't catch the haint, a haint just can't be catched.

Next morning we started again on our journey, and some time in March we reach Texas. They took us all 'cross the Brazos on a ferry boat, just about where the suspension bridge is now.

The doctor took us all on the farm on the other side of where Bosque is now. On the farm we raised all kinds vegetables and grain and sugar cane to make sorghum, but no cotton. We all lived in one and two room log cabins, made out of cedar posts. We didn't make any money for ourselves, but we had plenty of hog meat, beef, butter, milk, cornbread and vegetables to eat, lots more than we have these days. We did all the cooking in the fireplaces. We sure did have plenty of possum, and rabbit, and we caught lots of fish out of the Bosque River.

The women slaves, eleven of us, had our own gardens and we spun all our own clothes. In the summer we all wore cotton stripe and in the winter, linsey dresses. On Sunday we had lawn dresses and we sure did come out looking choicesome.

Dr. Wortham had Si for an overseer. It was a big farm and had forty or fifty slaves to work it. we got up about four in the morning and ate breakfast about nine o'clock. All the slaves had to work from sun to sun, and when we were sick, the master treated us.

When I was about 16, I married William Wright. He was born a slave near Rapid Pass, Kentucky. When he was eight year old, his family's owner died, and he went to the daughter, Mrs. Richard Mason, on Black River, in Louisiana, as 'heir property'. He was raised there, but when he was freed, he came to Texas and worked for Ganey Mason, seven miles east of Waco. He's 105 year old now and you can't hardly understand' what he's talking about. We were married on the 23d day of December, in 1869. Will and me sure did have a fine wedding. The women cooked for three days and we danced and ate. My wedding dress was elegant. It was white lawn with blue ribbons. Will and me had 12 children and raised 9, and we have 14 grandchildren.

Will and I have been married about 75 years and still married. It's disrespectful how the young folks treat marriage nowadays.

Ten year after our children growed, we swaps what land we has for this little house, but we had to pay some money, too. Will was more than 90 years old and I was eighty some years old, but we got this house and we're happy. We can sit under that big china-berry tree in the front yard and look at the big trees over there on Waco Creek, and one of our sons lives with us.