Ex-slave Report

My name is Albert Todd, of East Crockett St., San Antonio, Texas. My father's and mother's names were Elias and Polly Todd.

I was born in Russellville, Kentucky, in about 1850.

My master's name was Mr. William Hudson.

There was so much talk about the freedom of the slaves in that part of the United States that my master and mistress took all of us slaves and moved to Texas when I was about ten years old.

We settled at Tavernia, Texas, on a large plantation of several hundred acres, a great big house where my Boss and his family lived and hundreds of cabins for the slaves. These cabins were built of logs, one door, one wooden window, a dirt floor. In summer we slept on the dirt floor; in winter we rolled up in a piece of cloth and slept on
straw that was placed on the

My life was with the boys on
our plantation. I was not old
enough to be married.

They made us pick up chips,
clean the yard, wash the dishes, sweep
the floor, work in the garden, get the
cows, pull off the calves, and carry
water to the field hands. As soon
as we were big enough we had
to go to the field and work hard
right along with the grown men.

My master had a very large
orchard of which my father had
charge with several other men to
help him.

My mother cooked up at the
big house for Master, Mistress and the
family.

They sold my mother and
father because they would not
be whipped. The night before my
mother left, she took a goose
and some chickens from the my
Master and cooked them. We had a great
feast.
They considered my sister of great value because she had twenty-three children.

The women folks of our plantation spun cotton and woolen thread and wove cloth, knitted socks and stockings. This done they had to work hard in the fields. Women who did not bare children, were worked as hard as the men. They had to cut cord wood, split rails, and build rail fences. They would begin work before day in the morning and come out the field after dark at night. Then they would have to card cotton bollings and spin thread until late at night.

Our food was the coarsest corn bread, thick fat bacon some times, and sour milks. Once in a great while they would give us a biscuit, a little sorghum molasses, and coffee, and make up a little dark cake for us.
We wore home-spun clothes consisting of a home-spun shirt until we were way up in the teens, and went barefooted. Did not know what shoes were, so far as having a pair, after coming to Texas. We did not know what soap was to wash our clothes. Had to sprinkle them with ashes, wet them and put them on a block and beat them with a stick until they were clean.

They did not allow a man to go with a girl until he was twenty one years old, because they wanted male hearty slave babies that would bring big money.

We did not know when Sunday or Christmas came. We just worked on from day to day, all getting up by the plantation bell and on until way in the night.

Our only pleasure was sometimes our masters would have a big corn shucking or log rolling at night.
then they would give all some cake and potatoes, and sometimes would give the men a little whiskey. We would slip off sometimes and have a little frolic at the farthest cabins. We would have to dodge the patter-rollers. We were so slick that they seldom if ever caught us.

Punishment

Our punishment was not so awful when you were children; but was simply awful when you became grown. Then it was common to strip men or women completely naked and buckle them hands and feet to four stakes and give them five hundred or more lashes until their whole body would be a mass of blood and bruises. Then they would rub the wounds with salt and pepper.

If a woman that was to be whipped was with child, they would dig a hole and pad it with moss, strip her and tie her hands and feet.
so that her stomach would fit in the padded hole so that the unborn child would not be injured and whip her just the same.

Then they had worked slaves until they were not much account. Then they would sell them off and buy new ones. Then they would whip the new slaves repeatedly in the most cruel manner without committing no offense, calling themselves breaking them in.

Religion

Once in a great while our Master and Mistress would take us to their church where seats were placed in the back for us. There we would listen to the text, "Servants obey your master.

We knew there was a God and we believed that in some way He would hear our prayers; so, sometimes we would slip off at night and have prayer meeting in the cabins that was some distance from the "Big house". The would turn buckets, tubs and pots down at the door.
Keep the sound from being heard outside. Our great song was "Steal Away to Jesus". If we were caught having these meetings, or even caught praying, they would beat us most cruelly.

Did you like slavery?

No, indeed, I did not like slavery. I was treated so cruel. I prayed hard to be free, and thanks the Lord he sent it.
Report on Ex-slaves
by
Mrs. A. B. Young

Miss Guilford
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