

HORACE OVERSTREET was born in Harrison Co., Texas, in 1856, a slave of M. J. Hall. He was brought to Beaumont when a youth and still lives there.

"I born near Marshall what was de county seat and my master was call Hall. My mother name Jennie and my father's name Josh. He come back from de 'federate War and never got over it. He in de army with he young massa.

"Dat old plantation must have been 'bout 200 acres or even mo', and 'bout 500 head of slaves to work it. Massa Hall, he big lawyer and bought more niggers every year. He kep' a overseer what was white and a nigger driver. Sometime dey whip de slaves for what dey call disbedjouce. Dey tie 'em down and whip 'em. But I was raise' 'round de house, 'cause I a fav'rite nigger.

"De niggers didn't have no furniture much in dere houses, maybe de bedstead nail up to de side de house, and some old seats and benches. De rations was meat and meal and syrup 'lasses. Dey give 'em de shirt to wear, made out of lowers. Dat what dey make de cotton sack out of. De growed people has shoes, but de chillen has no need.

"Christmas time and Fourth July dey have de dance, jus' a reg'lar old breakdown dance. Some was dancin' Swing de Corner, and some in de middle de floor cuttin' de chicken wing. Dey has banjo pickers. Seem like my folks was happy when dey starts dancin'. Iffen dey start without de permit, de patterroles run up on dem and it 150 lashes. Law, dem niggers sho' scatter when de patterroles comes. Jus' let a nigger git de start and de patterrole sho' got to git a move on hisse'f to git

dat nigger, 'cause dat nigger sho' move 'way from dat place!

"When de war comes, I seed plenty soldiers and if dey have de uniform I could tell it jus' in spots, for dey so dirty. Dey was Yankee soldiers and some stops in Marshall and takes charge of de court martial.

"Fore long time come to go up and hear de freedom. We has to go up and hear dat we's free. Massa Hall, he say we kin stay and he pay us for de work. We didn' have nothin' so most of us stays, getherin' de crop. Some of dem gits de patch of land from massa and raises a bale of cotton. Massa buy dat cotton and den he sell it.

"After 'while they slips away, some of 'em works for de white folks and some of 'em goes to farmin' on what they calls de shares. I works nearly everywhere for de white folks and makes 'nough to eat and git de clothes. It was harder'n bein' de slave at first, but I likes it better, 'cause I kin go whar I wants and git what I wants.

"Dey was conjure men and women in slavery days and dey makeout dey kin do things. One of 'em give a old lady de bag of sand and told her it keep her massa from shippin' her. Dat same day she git too uppity and sass de massa, 'cause she feel safe. Dat massa, he whip dat nigger so hard he cut dat bag of sand plumb in two. Dat ruint de conjure man business."
