

## Transcribed Excerpts from Narrative of Former Slave Felix Haywood, 1936

FELIX HAYWOOD is a temperamental and whimsical old Negro of San Antonio, Texas, who still sees the sunny side of his 92 years, in spite of his total blindness. He was born and bred a slave in St. Hedwig, Bexar Co., Texas, the son of slave parents bought in Mississippi by his master, William Gudlow. Before and during the Civil War he was a sheep herder and cowpuncher. His autobiography is a colorful contribution, showing the philosophical attitude of the slaves, as well as shedding some light upon the lives of slave owners whose support of the Confederacy was not accompanied by violent hatred of the Union ...

"It's a funny thing how folks always want to know about the War. The war weren't so great as folks suppose. Sometimes you didn't knowed it was goin' on. It was the endin' of it that made the difference. That's when we all wakes up that somethin' had happened ...

"How did you know the end of the war had come?" asked the interviewer.

"How did we know it! Hallelujah broke out —  
"Abe Lincoln freed the nigger  
With the gun and the trigger;  
And I ain't goin' to get whipped any more.  
I got my ticket,  
Leavin' the thicket,  
And I'm a-headin' for the Golden Shore!"

"Soldiers, all of a sudden, was everywhere — comin' in bunches, crossin' and walkin' and ridin'. Everyone was a-singin'. We was all walkin' on golden clouds. Hallelujah!

"Union forever,  
Hurrah, boys, hurrah!  
Although I may be poor,  
I'll never be a slave —  
Shoutin' the battle cry of freedom."

"Everybody went wild. We all felt like heroes and nobody had made us that way but ourselves. We was free. Just like that, we was free. It didn't seem to make the whites mad, either. They went right on giving us food just the same. Nobody took our homes away, but right off colored folks started on the move. They seemed to want to get closer to freedom, so they'd know what it was — like it was a place or a city. Me and my father stuck, stuck close as a lean tick to a sick kitten. The Gudlows started us out on a ranch. My father, he'd round up cattle, unbranded cattle, for the whites. They was cattle that they belonged to, all right; they had gone to find water 'long the San Antonio River and the Guadalupe. Then the whites gave me and my father some cattle for our own. My father had his own brand, 7 B), and we had a herd to start out with of seventy.

“We knowed freedom was on us, but we didn't know what was to come with it. We thought we was goin' to get rich like the white folks. We thought we was goin' to be richer than the white folks, 'cause we was stronger and knowed how to work, and the whites didn't and they didn't have us to work for them anymore. But it didn't turn out that way. We soon found out that freedom could make folks proud but it didn't make 'em rich ...