

Uncle John Hickman Slave

By Carl Langford

In researching the M. M. Hickman Family last week, I came across the same name "John Hickman" (Negro) age 110 years old in 1930 Census, with the same birth year as the one I was researching. So, I had to find out who this Negro man was and was his age correct? It didn't take long to find out about him, as several articles had been written about him in the Ft Worth & Dallas Newspapers, being born 10 Mar 1820, died 16 Aug 1931 buried White Settlement Cemetery, the United Daughters of the Confederacy of Ft Worth, paid for the funeral cost of the old Negro with a Confederate Flag draped over the casket and later being reburied in Oakwood Cemetery (1952-53) because of expansion of Carswell AFB runway.

He was born "John" to a slave family, in Old Virginia in 1820, known only as "Uncle John" in his older years. John came to Texas in about 1831 as a 11 year old slave of Major George Bowie, brother of Col. James (Jim) Bowie, "acquired" him as part of his wife's dowry, who married Miss Sophia Adams of Orange County Virginia. Later, John carried surveyor chains, as Master George Bowie marked a military road from Alabama to San Augustine where he laid out that township.

He was with Major George Bowie at Gonzalez, when David Crockett marched out to join Travis at San Antonio. Upon the news of the fall of the Alamo, his master and General Sam Houston sent him with Erastus "Deaf Smith" (remembered as one of Texas's greatest scouts and spies) and others to bring Susanna Dickenson to safety. He states, "I toted her on my back across more than one mud hole." Then went to get Jim Bowie's body, but being half burnt and in bad shape, unable to bring it back. He removed a scarf, a little gold star and half moon pin off his shirt and took it to Marse (Master) George Bowie, who was very hurt by death of his brother Jim getting killed.

Worse of all days of the Civil war was when he was at the front line with Capt. Joe Hickman, into whose charge he was given. Capt. Hickman was killed just before Lee's surrender and John came back to Texas and at request of his wife, took the name "John Hickman". "I tried to tag myself," he said, "to Robert E. Lee after Marse Capt Joe Hickman got shot, but Gen. Lee was too busy to bother with me." Uncle John was in the trenches near where Lee surrendered to Grant.

Uncle John did almost anything, from fighting in the Indian Wars in Texas, to punching cattle with John Chisholm and knew Billy the Kid, as a trail boss, before he became an outlaw. Served as cook and fighter with half dozen Texas Ranger companies and later working on a boat bringing horses from England for breeding. On his fifteenth birthday (1835), General Sam Houston gave him a ten cent piece, which he still carries.

Back in the early days, when he was with the same prairie schooner with Pat Brady. In an Indian attack Old Johnnie's horse was shot from under him and pinning him under the horse with three arrows sticking in his body. Pat, seeing his trouble, dragged the horse from him and took him to safety. Old Johnnie heard of Pat's problem with the Law, came to his aid, paying his fine, getting him off the road gang. He considered the debt repaid.

In Texas, he has made his home on a small farm, living in a tumbled down shack 10 miles from Ft Worth on White Settlement Road for some 37 years. In 1930, age 110, was invited to the State Fair of Texas to speak to fair goers about the Alamo and his life of many years. He was clear minded and could relate many tales on his life. Not 10 miles from there he witnessed his last brush with the Indians.

In all the articles nothing is said about his family, only that he was buried by his wife in White Settlement Cemetery and they had twelve children. Due to the

slavery system they were separated for twenty-nine years. One 70 year old grandson attended the funeral, Will Smith. She isn't listed (that I could find) when the cemetery was relocated. I started to search to see if anything showed up on any census data. There's too many variables to make decision on his family.

Go to internet and read all about him in detail. He led quite a life in the thick of all things happening in Texas. Enter, White Settlement Tarrant Co., Tx., or John Hickman, Tarrant Co., Tx. **Findagrave #29768053.**