

**Interviewer: Unknown**  
**Transcribed by Ann Allen Geoghegan**

**Mississippi Narratives**  
**Prepared by**  
**The Federal Writer's Project of**  
**The Works Progress Administration**  
**For the State of Mississippi**  
**Frances Patterson**

Foreword: Age 84 years, height about 5 feet, weight 115 lbs., general coloring black, physical condition fair except for attacks of rheumatism. Makes her home about with her children.

"I was born in Chickasaw county, near old Atlanta, on June 12, 1853. My Mama was Elizabeth Jennings an' she belonged to Jack Jennings in Chickasaw. My Papa was Omas Morgan from Chickasaw too."

"My job durin' slavery days was mostly carryin' dinners to de field hands. I stayed in de house wid old Miss (Polly) an' spun a heep too. Miss was mighty good to me; didn't make me work in de field an' de other niggers had to."

"Old Marsa had a heep big farm an' owned lots o' slaves. They was Uncle Bose, Aunt Lindy, Aunt Hettie an' --Land Sakes! I can't 'member how many more."

"We lived in little log houses dat was a heep to small, dark an' open fo' folks to live in now days. But back den we was real glad to have dat good. Old Marsa an' Missus, dey had big good houses."

"Early in de mornin' my job was to go to de white folks house befo' daylight an' get meat fo' my Aunt to cook. Yo' know she was our cook. It would be so dark an' I'd be scared but I'd have to go."

"Our Mistress an' Marsa wasn't so bad. Old Marsa, he was sorter chicken hearted--when he saw blood he wouldn't hit another lick an' wouldn't 'low nobody else to hit then. Marsa, he didn't never whip me but Missus, she sorter brushed me once in a while. Lord, talk 'bout toatin' water--we had to bring it from a spring dat was a long ways from de house an' dis nigger sho' brought her share."

"One o' Marsas slaves by de name o' John run 'way an' stayed in de woods. He wasn't treated bad but jus' didn't wanta-work. Course some de other niggers knowed where he was hidin' an' carried him somethin' to eat along."

"We lived close to one slave owner dat wouldn't feed an' clothe his slaves. When he'd go to whip 'em he had a big tree in de yard he'd tie 'em to it up tight an' whip 'em--whoo-ee! After slaves was all sot free he went to de bad."

"On Saturday afternoons we worked jus' like other days but on Sunday we went to de white folks church.

Christmas an' New Years day was like any other day wid us-- we worked jus' de same unless dey come on Sunday."

"When slaves was freed my daddy left his Marsa an' lived wid de man I was a talkin' bout who was so mean to his hands."

"My! My! I wish I could rake up money now like I did dat old Confederate money when we was sot free. I'd rake it up by de hands full 'cause it twasn't no more good den."

"When de Yankees come through I member old Missus was so large she went an' stood in de closet doo where dey kept de flour an' hid it from 'em. Dey kicked over our bee gums an den dey went in de smoke house an' took old Marsa's meat out o' de boxes an' jus' throwed it away. When dey would come to de hams dey saved dem an' took 'em with 'em. One my brothers had been in de camp where de stock was all hid out. He didn't know de Yankees had come an' rode up on one o' de best mules. Dese Yankees took dis mule an left their old plug. My Marsa had started too, but Missus saw him befo' de Yankees did an' motioned fo' him to go back. Young Missus hid all her best dresses down at My Aunt Hetties house."

"Marsa was his own overseer, he wouldn't 'low nobody to whip his niggers an' wouldn't whip 'em much his self. Uncle Bose, one his slaves, didn't have real good sense an' wouldn't take no whippins."

"My fust husband was John Enochs. My weddin dress was white pique made with one o' dese long full skirts an' tight waists. My, I thought I was some dressed up wid it on. Me an' John had four chillun but Archie Gaston an' Stella Young is de only two livin' now. Archie farms an' Stella is a widow an' washes fo' a livin'."

"My next husband was Charles Patterson an' we had four chillun: Tommie Pullman, Durant, Miss.; Minnie Brown, Tennessee; Dora Hammond, Arkansas; an' Bunk Patterson, Derma, Miss."

"Durin' each one o' my husband's lifetimes we generally allus farmed fo' a livin'. Allus livin' 'round in Chickasaw an' Calhoun counties. Since Charles Patterson, de last one died, I's had to live 'bout wid my chillun an' depend on them fo' a livin'."

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