

**Prepared by
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Jane Louis

Foreword: Jane Louis, ex-slave lives at Bridge Port, Mississippi. She was born in 1851 and was owned during slavery time by Turner Wilson. This old ex-slave is a rich dusky brown with white hair, eyes of a peculiar color, a blacky blue. She is extremely low, barely five feet and weighs about one hundred and forty pounds. His health is very good. She and her husband farm on halves and do fairly well.

"I don't know where my Marse come from but he bought my ma and pa from Virginia to wuk on his plantation of a few hundred acres wid 'bout fifty slaves. I guess I had a purty good time when I was a slave. I was a house maid an' alwa's stayed at Marse's big house. I helped wait on ole Missus and tended to de chillun. I didn't never played in de slave cabins as I alwa's stayed at Marse's. I slept in de room wid de chillun mos' ob de time. I et in de kitchen. I wuked long hours an' hard but was treated kind an' fed an' clos'ed well. My close' was plain an' course, made from home spun cloth. I was alwa's made to go clean an' fresh. "De onliest time I was ever whipped was fer slippin' off to dances. I did enjie gettin' off to 'em. Sometimes dey would give me a pass an' again dey wouldn't. Den I would slip off an' sometimes get cotched up with. I'd tell 'em I was gwine down to Ma's cabin. I had to git back in Marse's house, dat made it easy fer 'em to catch up wid me. Ole Missus done de whuppin'.

"On Sunday us went to church at de white folks meetin' house. At other times us would git together an' have worship amongst our selves. Den us could sing our songs and shout an' sho' 'nuf' enjie a good meetin'. "When dey begin to talk o' war to free us we didn't know jis what to think as we was tole fust one thing den another. All through de war days was hard times fer everybody. We heard de guns firin' an' seed de soldiers a marchin' an' things took way from de plantation, sich as de meat an' ho'ses an' time us was freed deir won't nuthin' left fer nobody but a hard time. When us was turnt loose after de war us didn't have since 'nuf to take care or look after our selves. Ole Marse had alwa's done dat. Pa an' Ma didn't know which way to turn an' Ole Marse he homestead 'em a place an' us moved on it.

"De bad days wont over wid. White folks an' colored was all up-sot, everything had jes' been churned 'round. De Klu Klux Klan begin ter take a han' an' scare us up.

"I married when I was a young gal an' raised six chillun, three girls an' three boys. Dey is all married an' a farmin'. "I likes to see my race a gittin' an' edification an' wid advantages. Dey is havin' chances an' I hopes to see 'em rise higher an' higher, an' live better.