

Mississippi Narratives
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"I was one er Mr. Jerry Brown's niggers an' I was mar'ied right in Miss Addie's backyard. Couldn't nobody 'cide which had the mos' niggers er the mos' lan', Mr. Jerry Brown er Mr. Wade Hampton in Souf Ca'lina. But Mr. Jerry Brown he had fifteen thousan' acres; it retch frum to six miles er Livingston to in three miles er Gainesville an' hit was fo' miles across Sumter County, Alabama. It 'cluded the Jack Tom place that Mr. Jerry Brown bought from Jack Tom; he was er rich Injun chief. But where Mr. Jerry Brown lived hisself was named the Lowden Plantation - I don't rightly know why. An' that's where I was bornd. We dug Brown's Cut through Lime Hill but when the railroad come 'bout eighty - well, 'bout eighty sumpen - they couldn't do nothin' 'bout it; they had ter go roun' the hill; they couldn't go th'ough hit like we done with the teams.

After the Surrender, my daddy went ter another farm ter work but we come back home in two year an' I stayed there till I was eighteen an' then I runned off frum my daddy an' come ter Mer-ree-dian an' worked on the section, made out purdy well. My wife she come with me' we mar'ied in 1881. She had seben chullen an' two uv um's still livin'. My fus wife died an' I mar'ied again an' she had one child.

Mr. Jerry Brown he had er thousan' slaves but I don' know'm how I come ter be name Price 'cep' Mr. Jerry Brown he had so many slaves he give um las' names sorter in sections like he'd buy er man an' wife an' let um keep the name er the man he bought um frum an' all they chullen an' gran' chullen ud keep the same las' name.

I been er carpenter fer forty-three years. I been all over the State er Mississippi buildin' steeples - an' pickin' cotton. I he'ped build the school house in Hattiesburg an' the Baptist parsonage right here in Mer-ree-dian - the wooden one what burned down long time ago - an' I he'ped build the

Masonic Temple buildin'; they used ter be a barroom on the corner, Mr. Schuler-an'-Pool's barroom. I built the doom on the Russell house an' I went plum ter Okolona to put a steeple on the church. Mighty few likes ter build steeples. I rised frum the A.B.C's in the carpenter trade an' went ter the top wages. You see this here scar on my chin an' my arm hit's kinder twisted? I fell th'ough a roof fo' years ago an' pud-nigh broke my neck an' that keeps me frum steady work now. Sometimes I covers a house though now.

You see them corn stalks an' them pole-beans? That's my garden; that's the onliest way me an' my wife has to live now. The flowers in the front yard they jes kinder takes care er theyse'fs but I haves ter cut the hedges ever week er two. Looks puddy, though! The Buildin' an' Loan they 'bout ter take my house; my daughter was payin' it out fer me - she lived in St. Louis - but she's dead an' her husban' he mar'ied again. . . I'm kinder sick this mornin' an' I can't have that picture took . . . Well'um, you jes gimme two bits an' hit'll be all right. Thank yer ma'am!"