

**Mississippi Narratives**

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**Lorena Thomas**

I was born in Columbus Miss on Court St. My mama was Alice Humphrey, and belonged Dr. William Humphrey. Now listen, her mother came from N.C. a servant of Mr. Jack Amos, a fruit grower. His daughter married Mr. Sam Butterworth who came to Columbus. This daughter heired my grandmother, who later was bought by Dr. Humprey. Right there in Columbus, or near, her children & grandchildren were born.

My Mother never lived much on the plantation, but was carried to the Town House, where she was raised with the white children as a nurse. Her Mistress called my Mother Tashi. You needn't think you could say a word about her Miss Rebecca, if you didn't want a fuss. No she didn't think Marster William was kind & good but she knowed he was. Said if de over-seer threatened to whip her, she would run to old Marster, who never allowed her to be touched by any one.

Food was plentiful, yes mam. There was jes one big garden of vegetables for slaves & big house, too.: The hands had certain days to work this garden. They raised chickens, eggs, butter & milk. My grand mother was the milker, & she never wanted for milk. She was a good weaver, too. I members after I was a big girl seeing her weave. I'd take a stick & stop her shuttle, and she scold, cause that wasn't right She could weave anything from yellow domestic to the finest cloth. I think she said the task of spinning was at night. Three lbs of cotton a night had to be spun. Same wid de wool. My grandmother always died her thread, then wove it into cloth. It was first dipped into corn meal jes like starch, Then it was put on a brooch, a spool like concern, then into the shuttle which was a part of the loom. I think 3 yds of cloth a day was a task.

Did it make good clothes? Yes, mam. There was plenty of good shoes, but I've forgot whether she said dey was bought or made on plantation.

They had Saturdays off, unless there was something necessary to do in the field. The women washed, if they hadn't been smart enough to do it at night.

On this place de didn't have no frolics, cause they were Church people. Dey liked to pray & sing. I've heard it said that some overseers wouldn't allow this. Dey would put their heads in barrels or wash pots when praying, to keep the sound from being heard. On Sundays all who wanted to went to Church, or go visiting from plantation to plantation. Dey had to always have a pass, or dey might be caught by de patrollers.

My grand mother went to a Hardshell Baptist Church several miles from the plantation, sometimes in a wagon, & then again on horse back. Now, my mother who was the nurse in the Town House went wid de white folks, at that old Baptist Church. There was a galery for the servants.

My grand mothers favorite songs were

Old Time Religion

Watch the sun, how steady she run  
Dont let'er ketch you wid de work undone

Dey would sing any where, when de spirit struck them. Old Marster would say, Wait till de get de power off. Dont bother me.