

**Mississippi Narratives**  
**Prepared by**  
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**Mary Jane Jones - Jefferson**

"I was born in Jefferson County on Little Deer Creek Plantation, the last litter of my mother's children. She was the mother of sixteen head of children and raised eleven of them. You see, my mother was a wedding gift to my marster at the time of his marriage; was given to him as a kind of nest egg to breed slaves for him, and jest as soon as he carried her home, he bought a slave husband fur her and children came to both families thick and fast. My mother would have a baby every time my mistress would have one, so that my mother was always the wet nurse for my mistress.

"I had a good marster and he was kind to us slaves. He fed us well, clothed us, and saw to it that we had time off from our work to bathe, comb our hair, and wash our clothes, and he didn't allow no one else to whip us but hisself. But when he called the roll hisself once a week, which was his habit to do, he'd better find us clean and our hair combed as he'd whip any one that was dirty. I've kept myself clean up until dis day.

"My mother and daddy and all other slaves on my marster's place were married by the white preacher, and my marster didn't low no ugly living on his place. And another thing, my marster didn't low no white man to go into his quarters, and when peddlers would come on the place we would be called to the big house to look at what they had to sell and if we had money we could buy. My marster didn't mean to have anybody cheat us.

"My marster had done got rich offen us and he had a heap of plantations, one at Little Deer Creek, one at Rodney, and one in Louisiana.

"I tell you we et well on our place. Every day when we were working in the field a separate bucket of dinner would be brought to each one of us and the food would be cooked nice. Along on the same cart would be brought a barrel of milk and clean tin cups fur everybody to drink out of. I had plenty milk, and I have all of my own teeth today. I et sweets, too. My mother used to draw eleven pints of sugar and eleven pints of syrup fur her eleven head of children every Sunday morning.

"One of marster's pastors used to preach to us in de evening, and he used to say he'd heap much ruther preach to the Negroes as dey'd answer back and 'spond and show like dey had so much more spirit dan de white folks. Chile, it wasn't nigh de meanness in neither white or black as whut it is now.

"I am glad now when it rains and I say, "Rain on, Master Jesus," cause rain keeps down sin. People can't git about and sin so much.

"De white folks used to give balls fur us and we had them in the hospital on the place where the mothers left the babies when they went to the field in the daytime. The music we had were fiddles and drums and sometimes just singing and calling figgers. Oh we had good times and den sometimes de men on our place would get passes to go to other plantations to balls. My master didn't low no Paderoll to whip any of his slaves and he'd give them passes to go once a week.

"I was sixteen years old when the war was ended but the war did not free me. Just before the war started my marster came to de big place and give us all papers to sot us free. He told us to go ahead working and he left us a smokehouse full of grub and plenty chickens, corn, and hogs. So us worked right on, but 'twas much sorrow amongst us when marster told us he was doing this in order to go up north and join the Union. Us cried, "Oh! Marster what is us to do?"

"I got along pretty good all my life. I've never minded work and I've worked hard. Why, I've midwived fifty years. I've helped over eight hundred children in the world, some of them that would puzzle young doctors nowadays. I have done a lot of my work with the best white and colored. Once a man got scared of his wife's condition and called a doctor in, and when the doctor got there he said, "Madame can handle it," but he took charge of the case and then left it in my hands and didn't charge nothing. He told the man to pay me.

"The last case I had was the baby of a man that I had helped him and his mammy before him in the world. But now I can't work any more. I am now ninety-four years old, and I feel that I've lived a useful

life. I've lived on this same corner in this same house fur thirty-nine years. There isn't anyone in the neighborhood that was here when I came and I've seen many come and go.

"No indeed, Hoodoo ain't no count; hit is just a poisoned mind, dat's all. Won't nothing help but prayer and money, and I got plenty prayer."