

Mary Jane Kelley

Interview with Mary Jane Kelley (85)

Newberry, S.C.

—*G.L. Summer, Newberry, S.C.*

"I live in a rented house wid my daughter who takes care of me. I was born in de Santuc section. My pa and ma was Richard Dawkins and Marsha Shelton Dawkins. I think dey lived wid de Hendersons in de Maybinton section near Broad River, but dey lived wid Marse Bill Jeter near Santuc when I was born. My husband was Ike Kelley, he been dead good many years.

"Marse whipped me once or twice. We had to work in de cotton fields, and I have split rails and ditched like men, too.

"We had home-raised meat, lots of hogs and cattle. Marse had a big garden and we got lots of vegetables. Marse fed slaves in a trough in de yard. He had his own smokehouse whar he cured his meat. His flour was ground in de neighborhood. Sometimes he give a slave family a small patch to plant watermelons in.

"We wore heavy brogans wid brass toes. Sometimes Marse would make his own leather and have shoes made in de neighborhood and dese would have wooden bottoms. He never let us learn to read and write. He never allowed us to go from one place to another unless it was on his place. De patrollers would git us if we didn't have a pass; even if we went to church wid white folks we had to have a pass. Niggers didn't have no church till atter de war; den dey built brush arbors in de woods.

"I married at my house. We is Baptists, and I used to go and see dem baptize sinners.

"We used to go home at night when de work was over and go to bed and rest. We worked all day on Saturdays, but never worked on Sundays. On Christmas Days we had off, and Marse would give us good things to eat and some whiskey to drink.

"My mother worked around de house in slavery time, she helped cook, clean up and wash dishes, and sometimes she would card, spin and weave.

"Dey used to make a yellowish dye from mud, a grayish dye from maple tree bark and a brownish dye from walnut tree bark. We allus planted by de signs or de scales. Irish potatoes, turnips and sweet potatoes we planted in de dark of de moon; while beans was planted in de sign of de craw-fish.

"I remember when de Yankees come through atter de war. Dey stole everything and burned up everything dey couldn't steal. De Ku Klux was in our section. Dey killed lots of niggers around dar.

"I don't remember anything about Abraham Lincoln nor Jefferson Davis, only heard about dem. I don't know much about Booker Washington, either

