

**Mississippi Narratives**  
**Prepared by**  
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**Mollie Hatfield - Age 77**

"I was born in Mobile, on a boat on Mobile Bay. My Mama cooked on this boat. "Her old Marster was Charles Hatfield of Alabama. My Ma's name was Patsy and my par' was Walter. Bof of em belonged to the Hatfields of Alabama." "I think my daddy died befo we come to West Point. I was a little girl and I members trying to draw up de water and couldn't take em off de rope."

"You know we lived in one of dose old houses up on the Main Street. You know T. C. and W. C. White had a drugstore right where Cox's is now - Den when de M. & O. R. R. was built Ben Robertson moved from the Cross Roads and built a brick store on corner where Pryors stands."

"Yesim I had three brothers, Dick, Van and Henry and one sister Eugene. Dick was born in slavery time." "I think they all come from Virginia to Mobile, but it was in Mobile where dey hired my Ma out to work on the boat." "She used to say she would like to go back to ole Virginia."

I members all dem houses over yonder where de hospital was. Ma carried food to sick and wounded soldiers." "I remembers de yankees was here riding horses." "You know sometimes you forget and I have. I used to work around your folks all de time - Miss Marcella."

"What kind of clothes did I have as a child?" "I knows one thing chillerns used to wear flannel clothes. Yesim I remembers I wore home spun dresses. Ma said dey was made on a loom. Chilern go naked now."

"I was too little to member much about Mobile - My Aunt took care of me while Ma cooked on de boat."

"M. & O. was already built and we come on it to West Point - All dis country was full of Indians." "I never had seen a graveyard until I come here. Right over dere on Clarke hill was a grave yard. De highway is cut through dat hill."

"Yesim I members my Ma telling about de patarollers. Dey give em passes to go from one place to anoder. You know if a little something was give like a party on next plantation De Marster would give em a pass."

"I heard old man Albert L. Gerdine tell about slipping out his Marster's boots and wearing em to a party and when he got home, it took all de niggers on de place to get em off of him. You know Uncle Albert belonged to Gen. Gerdine."

I've heard old Albert say dat de horn would blow early in de morning, which meant dey had to get to de field." "He told me, too, dat his white folks was so good to them. Dey never beat nor knocked em up. Dey stayed around dere white folks long as dey lived."

"I've heard him say de negroes was put up on blocks and bid em off. Sometimes de chillern was separated from de mothers but not often. He said dey had cooks, washers, field hands, and Ed Gerdine was de carriage driver. Now let me see - Aunt Liza Gerdine was de seamster all de time." "I don't know where de Gerdines come from, You know de ole Shinn place? Dats where de Gerdines lived."

"Miss Marcella, where is all de Joiner boys?" "I used to wash for dem boys - had twenty or thirty shirts a week."

"Yes, My Ma went to church in Mobile. She say dey went to the same church wid de white folks. She was a great Methodist, my Ma was."

"She say the house burnt up and every thing burned up - and de uneducated folks couldn't keep up and member things that happened."

"I remember de first negro church in West Point was a Methodist Church, and a white elder McDaniel from Holly Springs was sent here to build it. We needs a new roof on it so bad, now."

"No, my ma didn't even know her A.B.C. but den she had more sense dan we got right now."

"I've heard Ole Man Albert Gerdine say dey was givin one day a week for prayer meeting and singing."

"Now, I went to school right here in dat same Methodist Church after the war. You know we had white teachers from de north. My teacher was named Smith. His hair was long and hung around his neck. He was run out of town by the Ku Klux Klan. He taught too, right up dere in that brick house of de Fosters."

"Den I went to a white man named Lake, an ole yankee what whipped me - jes tore my back all to pieces. Ma carried me to de Mayor. Col. Jordan, and he made dat white man pay for beatin me up too."

"You know dey don't have no jail jes a Calaboose. Now, Ise talking about de days of reconstruction."  
"Dat man was rough you know dey wasn't no citizens much here, and de Ku Klux had to make folks behave."

"I jes don't know nothin about Abraham Lincoln. De say he freed de cullerd folks."

"No, I don't know about Jeff Davis neider." "Booker T. Washington is de nigger dat run dat big school, aint he? I got his picture. Dey say he was pretty good. He has give many a negro an education."

"At Christmas time my Ma would have vacation time off the boat - and her white folks were good to them. She would come to de white folks and see de chillern."

"Not ever living on plantation my ma didn't know anything about Corn shuckins and Cotton pickins, but dey give cullerd folks dances on de boat, and dey would dance by a banjo. She'd say, "We wouldn't let ma talk about haunts, we was to skeered."

"De song I sings all de time when I here by myself is."

"De Gospel train is a comin I hear it jes at hand, The four wheel charriot is a movin, She's carryin us all through dis land."

"Yessim I belongs to de Church - My ma raised me at de alter, right dar at de alter at dat ole Methodist Church. You know Miss Marcella, I aint had a fuss with nobody in my life. I am like de white folks."

"Religion makes us better-makes us better citizens."

Honey, I don't know nothing about slavery - Dey tells me the cullerd people was better off in dose days. I know dey had plenty to eat and wear.

Interviewer's notes:

I am sure Mollie is older than she admits. She has always been highly respected in this community, as are her children. She has managed to educate them well, all are married and have nice families, living from California to New York. She would have me go in and see her many pictures of these children and grandchildren and the nice clothes which they send her. There was a picture of a young negro boy, her grandson, in cap and gown, whom she said had just graduated in medicine in Chicago. She lovingly called my attention to several dolls lying on her bed which had belonged to a granddaughter whom she had raised, now married and gone away. Mollie lives more in the present than in the past being very progressive. Her home surroundings are very comfortable and she seems very happy and content with having contributed such good negroes to the world. One son, John, a local barber lives with her. As she says, keeps up the taxes and insurance on her house. She has lived in this same house, about 50 years. Mollie's age is 77 years according to her count. She weighs 150 pounds, and is 5 feet 4 inches tall. Ginger cake in color, jolly in disposition and very humble and loyal to the white folks. Says she has the best neighbors (white) in the world.