

**Transcribed by Rose Diamond**  
**Mississippi Narratives**  
**Prepared by**  
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**Pet Franks age 92**

Uncle Pet, 92 year old ex-slave, is the favorite of Ackers' Fishing Lodge which is situated 14 miles north of Aberdeen, Monroe County. He is low and stockily built. His ancestry is pure African. Scarcely topping five feet one inch, he weighs about 150 pounds. Though he walks with the slightest limp, he is still very active and thinks nothing of cooking for the large groups who frequent the lodge. He has his own little garden and chickens which he tends with great care.

"I know all 'bout slav'ry an' de war. I was right dere on de spot when it all happened. I wish to goodness I was back dere now, not in de war, but in de slav'rytimes. Niggers where I lived didn' have nothin' to worry 'bout in dem days. Dey aint got no sense now-a-days. All dey b'lieves in now is drinkin' an' carousin'. Dey aint got no use for nothin' but a little corn likker an' a fight. I don't b'lieve in no such gwine-on, no sir-ree. Dat's de reason I stays out here by myse'f all de time. I don't want to have nothin' to do wid 'em. I goes to town 'bout once a mont' to git s'plies, but I don' never fool 'roun' wid dem Niggers den. I gits 'long wid my white folks, too. All de mens an' wimmens what comes out to de club is pow'ful good to me.

"I was born up near Bartley's Ferry right on de river. De way I cal'clates my age makes me 'bout 92 years old. My firs' Marster was name Mr. Harry Allen. He died when I was a boy an' I don't 'member much

'bout him. De Mistis, dat was his wife, married ag'in an' dat husband's name was Marse Jimmy Tatum. Dey was sho' good white folks. My mammy an' pappy was named Martha an' Martin Franks. Marse Harry brung 'em down from Virginny, I thinks. Or else he bought 'em from Marse Tom Franks in West Point. Anyways dey come from Virginny an' I don't know which one of 'em brought 'em down here. Dey did b'long to Marse Tom. I know dat.

"Bartley's used to be some place. My folks had a big hotel down on de river bank. Dey was a heap o' stores right on de bank, too. De river done wash 'em all 'way now. Dey aint nothin' lef'. But Lawdy! When I was a kid de boats used to come a-sailin' up de river 'bout once a week an' I used to know de names o' all de big ones. Dey would stop an' pick up a load o' cotton to carry to Mobile. When dey come back dey would be loaded wid all kin' o' gran' things.

"Us chillun had a big time playin' 'round' de dock. Us played 'Hide de Switch' an' 'Goose and Gander' in de day time. Den at nighttime when de moon was shinin' big an' yaller, us'd play 'Ole Molly Bright.' Dat was what us call de moon. Us'd make up stories 'bout her. Dat was de bes' time o' all. Sometimes de old folks would join in an' tell tales too. Been so long I forgits de tales, but I know dey was good'ns.

"When I got big 'nough to work I he'ped 'roun' de lot mostly. Fac' is I be worked right 'roun' white folks mos' all my days. I did work in de fiel' some, but us had a good overseer. His name was Marse Frank Beeks an' he was good as any white man dat ever lived. I don't never 'member him whippin' one o' de slaves, leastways not real whippin's. I do 'member hearin' 'bout slaves on other places gittin' whipped sometimes. I guess Niggers lak dat wished dey was free, but I didn' want to leave my white folks, ever.

"Us had preachin' an' singin'. Dey was some mighty good meetin's on de place. Old Daddy Young was 'bout de bes' preacher us ever had. Dey was plenty o' Niggers dere, 'cause it was a powerful big place. Old Daddy could sho' make 'em shout an' roll. Us have to hol' some of 'em dey'd git so happy. I knowed I had 'ligion when I got baptized. Dey took me out in de river an' it took two of 'em to put me under. When I come up I tol' em, 'turn me loose, I b'lieve I can walk right on top o' de water.' Dey don' have no 'ligion lak dat now-a-days.

"All de Niggers on de Tatum place had dey own patches where dey could plant what ever dey wanted to. Dey'd work 'em on Satu'd'ys. When dey sol' anything from dey patch Mistis 'ud let 'em keep de money. When de boats went down to Mobile us could sen' down for anything us want to buy. One time I had \$10.00 saved up an' I bought lots o' pretties wid it. Us always had plenty t'eat, too. All de greens, eggs, wheat, corn, meat, an' chitlins dat anybody'd want. When hog killin' time come us always have some meat lef' over from de year, befo'. Us made soap out o' dat.

"When de war broke out I went right wid de Marster up to Corinth. I stayed up dere in de camp for de longes' time a-waitin' on de sojers an' nussing de sick ones. I never seen much o' de real fightin'. But I heard de cannons roar an' I waited on de sojers what got wounded.

"After dey moved camp de Marster sent me back home to he'p look after de Mistis an' chillun. De 'Federates had some cattle hid 'way in us pasture an' I looked after 'em. One night when I was comin' home I met 'bout a hund'ed Yankees comin' over a hill. Dey saw de cattle an' took 'bout ha'f of 'em. I skidoed. Dey aint ketched me yet.

"After de war de Yankees called deyse'ves 'Publicans. Dey come down here an' wanted all de Niggers to vote de "Publican ticket. Den, lemme tell you, I went to work for my white folks. Dey was a-holdin' big meetin's an' speakin's, but I was workin' too. On 'lection day I brung in 1500 Niggers to vote de Democrat' ticket. De folks what saw us comin' over de hill say us look like a big black cloud. I reckon us sounded lak one wid all dat hollerin' and' shoutin'.

"All my folks was dead soon, an' I went 'bout lak I was in a trance for awhile. I went firs' one place an' den 'nother.

"When I was on de Cox place I met Dora an' us married. Dat was a big weddin' an' a big feas'. Den us moved over to de Troup place an' stayed dere for a long spell. While us was dere I 'member de Klu Kluxers an' all de carryin' on. Dey would dress up in white sheets an' come 'roun' an' scare all de Niggers. Dey'd whip de bad ones. Some of 'em would git cow horns an' put on dey heads. One time dey chased a Nigger plumb under de house jus' a-playin' wid 'im. Dey was a-bellowin' jus' lak bulls.

"I can't read an' write. I aint got much use for a Nigger wid a little education. I went to school twict. De firs' teacher I had, dey come an' carried to de pen for signin' his old Marster's name. De nex' teacher, day put in jail for stealin'. So I jus' cided twas jus' better for me not to know how to read'n write, less'n I might git in some kinda trouble, too.

"Dora an' me is got three out o' eight chillun livin'. Dora an' me don' live together no more. She likes to stay in town an' I aint got no patience wid city slickers an' dey ways. She stays wid us gal, Nanny. I stays out here. I goes in to see her 'bout once a mont'.

"I don't git lonesome. Lawdee, no'm! I's got two dogs. Den de white folks is always a-comin' out here. Dey is good to me. Dey is one right pert Nigger woman what lives down de road a-piece. Her name is Katie, an' I goes down dere when I gits tired o' eatin' my own cookin'. She sets a plumb good table, too."

