

**Mississippi Narratives**  
**Prepared by**  
**The Federal Writer's Project of**  
**The Works Progress Administration**  
**For the State of Mississippi**  
**Joe Bouy (Buie), Age 89**

I found Joe Bouy out in the woods back of his house lying prone on the ground in the full glare of the strong, sweet sunshine drinking in its warmth like it was a life giving medicine.

Feeble and emaciated, hair and beard snow white, back bent over as he wobbles along with the aid of a crooked cane, Joe Bouy gives every appearance of being blown away with the next strong wind.

He is eight-nine years old and was born on the Bouy plantation located three miles from Caseville. His speech is more or less of a mumble and hardly discernable due to the loss of all his teeth. As he told his story his mind rambled and his imagination betrayed him. The following pages reproduce his eloquence as accurately as it is possible to quote the inimitable old negro.

"Hmmmmm-- --- Ah 'members when de wah was stahted. Ah 'members Marse John cum ridin' up on his black hoss a 'shoutin', 'Ma' Ma' --Wahs' been de'clahed.' Out in the quarters we was might up sat. We was scart' de Yankees gwine get us an' cut our necks off.

Ah was borned on de Bouy plantation an' de house still stans' thar an' Marse John, he libs dar now.

I don know whar ma' mammy cum frum, but ma pappy cum frum South Carolina. Ah had five sisters an three brothers. Ah 'members one day two, three yeahs 'fore de wah, Abraham Lincoln was trabling 'long out our way an' he stop at our place an' stay de night an res. Tall, sparse man. He pat me on de haid when he fixin' to leave. Ah 'members dat.

Old Man Dan Bouy had six chillun. Only one of de sons went to wah. Ah 'members how thin he be when he cum home on furlow.

Dar was three colored women woukin' in de big house. De res o' de men an' women wuk out in de fiels.  
Us chillun din do no kin' wuk till we was sixteen.

De Yankees stop at our house all de' time. We got right use to 'em, an dey din bothah us much.

We had weddins' an' musicals an dances an lots o' good times regulah'. De folks in de big house use  
com' down to de' quarters on Sattidy nights an mek' us sing. We sho did some cuttin' up. Ah use to be  
able to do some right smaht jiggin' when Ah was a youngster.

De Marster whip de slaves when he katch em runnin' away or takin things. Ah got a whippin jes one  
time. Dat night we was all a'sittin' roun de fiah' an Ah seen de Marster a'comin' frum de big house wif de  
whip in his hands an' Ah knowed right away he was a huntin' me. Ma pahtner an' me had killed one o'  
de hogs fer ourselves sos' we could hev some fresh meat. De Marster whip me good an' plenty.  
Ah seen a man hung onct. He ran off wid de Yankees an com sneakin back tryin' to get som O' de res o'  
de niggahs to go off wid him. De white folks takin' him off an Ah put de rope roun his neck. Ole Mars  
Bouy took de rope an' flung it roun ma' haid after dey had hung the niggah. Ah was plumb scairet' den,  
sho nuf. But he was only playin'.

After de wah, ma mammy had died, an me an' pappy trable roun de country wukin'. De women usual  
got ten or fifteen dollah' a month an' de men got twenty-fi'.

Ah finally got married an' had six chillun. Ahs' libin wif one o' ma sons now.

Ahs' glad dey ain't no mo slaves. Ahs' glad to be free.