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In the old days we lived down near Hickman, Kentucky. We belonged to Master Joe Mott and Missus Mary Mott. Then there was young Master James Andrew and young Master Joe, and there was Missie Ophelia and Missie Mary Rebecca.

They had a nice big house, white with big porches and big locust trees around in the yard. They only had us, one family of slaves, but there were a good many of us.

My daddy was Henry Litener and my mammy was Rosanna Litener. My daddy belonged to Woodson Morris. He was a cousin of Master Joe Mott and lived a few miles away. He was always allowed to visit us over Saturday night and Sunday. Mammy did the cooking at the big house and Master Joe always said there wasn't nobody who could cook like Rose—that's what he called her.

We lived in a three-room log house and we always had plenty good eatin'. Hams, pretty near all year round chickens, and sweet taters and possums too.

Can't tell 'bout good times in those days because there weren't any. We didn't have church but Ole Missus Mary used to carry Mammy along to her church—riding behind on her horse. I guess they were mostly right good to us all. The children would never let nobody whup me because we all played together. But Ole Master used to whup Mammy when he'd get mad.

When the war came Ole Master didn't go, but he was a regular old secesh! Young James Andrew went off to war and ole Missus used to grieve for him. We never saw fighting around our place but we could hear the big guns over at Columbus. When the soldiers were around the neighborhood, they'd always have me playing around the front gate so I could tell them when they were coming up the road. Then they'd go and hide before the soldiers got there. They were all scared of the soldiers. I was scared too, but they said soldiers wouldn't bother a little black gal. The soldiers just came in and ransacked the house—they'd find something to eat and they'd look for money. They want money! But they don't find any. Then they wanted to know where my folks were, but I told them I didn't know, "They just left and didn't say where they were going'.

When the war was over, Ole Master Joe came in and he said, 'Rose, you all ain't slaves any more. You are all as free as I am.' Then you should've heard my mammy shout! You never heard such shouting in all your born days. And Ole Missus, she joined in the shouting too. She was glad because now James Andrew would be coming home.

Ole Missus Delia Reed, that was Ole Master's sister, she was good about looking after us when we were ailing, but if we were sick they'd get the doctor. They were just as dutiful to us as to their white folks.

They used to talk—about hoodoos and casting spells and such like, but I guess there wasn't much to it or they would've cast spells on some of the mean masters when they beat them up. Still, if they had, maybe they would've beaten them worse, or maybe killed them.