

Jesus Boy



Jesus Boy

By Hettie Lue Brooks

Brookhill Books

Hot Springs, Arkansas

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Photo by E. C. Jones

Foreword

I said, "God I want an experience. I want a story that could help say something and could help us to understand salvation and what Jesus really did for us – putting it in terminology that we could see and understand.

God gave me this story.

He put it in the Civil War setting back

Jesus Boy

during the black slave days, back during the days when the War Between the States was fought over slavery.

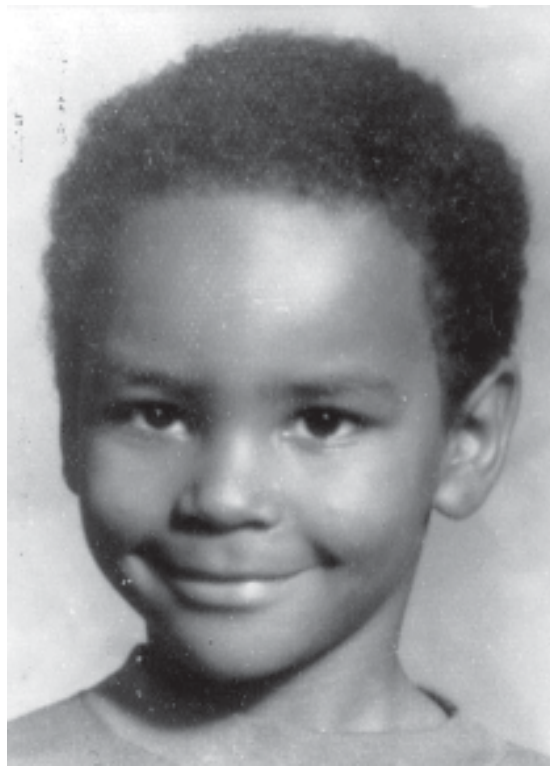
I treasure this gift from God because of the slavery that we have all walked into – addictions, the ways we have all been in bondage, and also the ways that we have not understood so often the true sacrifice that was made for us.



So God gave me this story.

The name of the story is called “Jesus boy.”

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This happened a long time ago.
Mammy, she's a
black woman,
and her husband
lived on a
plantation.



A very wealthy
white family lived
up in the big
house.

Up in the big plantation house, oh, it
was so beautiful up there.



Mammy, her husband, and many other slaves lived way down the holler from where the white man lived.

There in their little shacks, each evening they would come in from picking cotton

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and eat their meager meals.

When Mammy was a young woman, the white man came down and saw Mammy.

He said to her, "I want you to come up, and I want to train you."



"I want to teach you to keep my house,
to live and move in my house, and to take



care of
things for
the white
woman and
for me."

Why was
she
chosen?

Why?

"Yes Master, you know I'll do anything,
Master, you want me to do. You know I
will."

The white man said, "I need to teach you to read. You've got to learn to read so that you can take care of my business better."

So he began to teach her how to read, which ordinarily was not done. In fact, in some areas, it was





illegal to teach a slave to read.

She worked hard. She worked ever so hard, and she learned to read and write.

One day, she noticed a big black book on a stand in the living room which she kept so spotless and so clean.

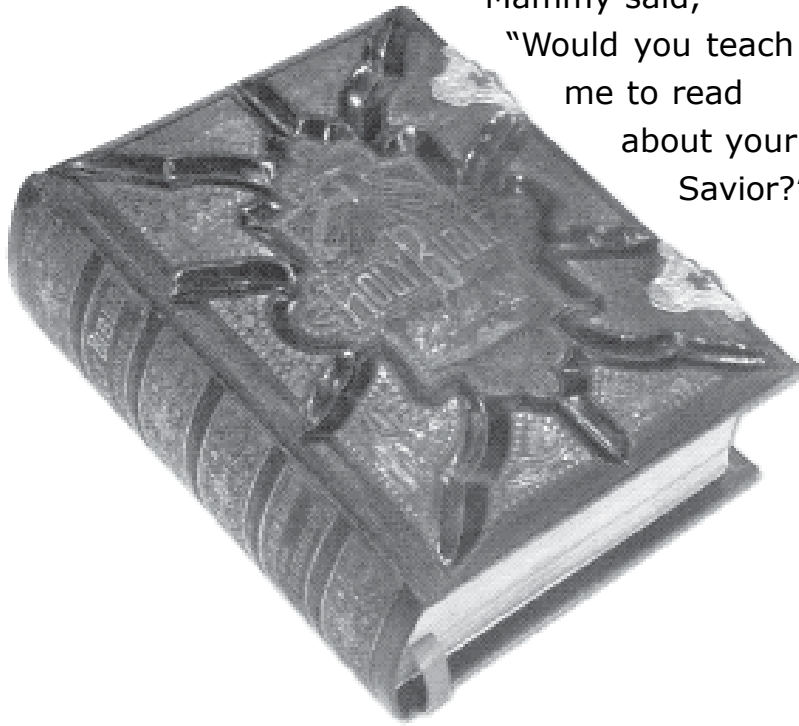
It was a beautiful, big living room with velvet drapes.

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There, Mammy would sneak in and open the book.

As she began to read, the white man saw her interest, and he said, "Mammy, it's the Bible, and it's all about the white man's Savior."

Mammy said,
"Would you teach
me to read
about your
Savior?"





And he said, "Yes, Mammy, I will."

And she began to read about the man Jesus.

Mammy began to work hard and fast each day so that she could go in and read the Bible.

Mammy discovered that this man Jesus

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was not just for the white man, but this man Jesus was for every man, and it didn't make no difference the color of the skin.

One day, Mammy was reading about him dying on the cross. Mammy read about him giving his whole life so that she could be free from sin, and she began to understand what sin was, and selfishness, and self-pity, all that old bunch of greed, all that old bunch of junk.

One day as Mammy read, the tears



began to
roll down
her face,
and she
said,
"Laws
have
mercy, this
man Jesus
he done



died for me."

Mammy fell down and began to sob.

She said, "Man Jesus, you come, and you save this woman's heart, and you change Mammy, and you wash me with your blood, Lord Jesus, and you set me free."

Mammy she felt the power, a power like nothing Mammy had ever known her whole life went through her. When Mammy got up, she was born again.

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She was brand new.

She didn't even know what color her heart was.

Mammy rushed that night, and she went



down to her husband, and she said, "Honey, I done got born again."

He said, "What Mammy?"

She said, "I got born again. I'm a new woman. I'm a new creation in Christ Jesus my Lord and my Savior. I want to tell you about him.

"I'm gonna tell all these black folks down here. I'm gonna tell these slaves. I'm gonna tell them how they can be done being slaves and can be done set free by the Lord Jesus Christ.

"I'm gonna tell them."

He said, "Mammy, do you know what you're talking about?"

She said, "I know what I am talking about."

I tell you she started preaching.

She started going down there at night,



and
she
started
gathering
them
around
one
by

one.

She saw her husband one night, and she gathered him under a big old willow tree, and she saw him one night fall down on

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the ground
and gives
his life to
the Lord
Jesus Christ.
He comes up
born again.

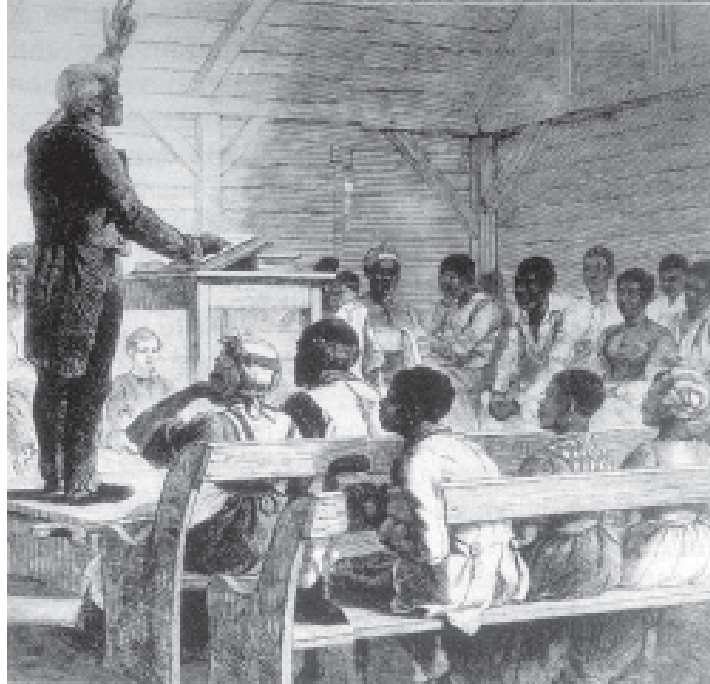
They
began to
praise Him
for setting
their hearts

free.

They were just a bunch of slaves, but
their hearts were done set free.

She would get them together, and they
would begin to make up songs to the Lord
Jesus Christ. Oh, how they could sing.

They would start out, "Swing low, sweet
chariot, coming for to carry me home. "



They could feel them chariots coming to get them. How the love of the Lord Jesus Christ did set these slaves free.

I tell you revival broke out in the households of slaves.

Then Mammy began to find out that this man Jesus works miracles. Mammy has

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been married now a long time.

She never had any baby. One night she got down on her knees.

She'd just come from the white man's house, and the white lady didn't have any baby neither.

That afternoon, before she got ready, the white man came rushing in, "Mammy, guess what, Mammy, guess what, I'm gonna have baby, Mammy.



"I'm gonna have a baby."

"Oh sure, Master, how can you say 'I'm gonna have a baby'?"

He said, "I wanted you to know, Mammy, I'm gonna have a baby. I mean



my wife is.
We're gonna
have a baby."

"Oh Master,
ain't that
something.
Ain't that just
something.
I'm plumb

happy. Oh Master, I'm plumb happy."

She went home just rejoicing.

But she was also praying.

"I want to have me a baby," she told the
Lord. "I want to have me a baby boy.

"I want him to grow up to be just like
the man Jesus. I want to have me a baby
boy, and I am gonna name him after
Jesus.

"That's want I want."

She went out under the willow tree that night after they had sung and praised the Lord. Mammy fell down on her knees, and she said, "Father, I wants me a baby boy."

"I gonna give you this baby boy, and I gonna believe, Lord Jesus, that he's gonna grow up to be just like you. Please, Lord Jesus, give me that baby boy so he can grow up and be just like you."

Tears ran down her face. Mammy got up, "Thank you, Lord, you always hear Mammy."

"Thank you Lord, thank you Lord."

Mammy started going around praising the Lord. "I gonna have me a baby boy."

"Oh, Mammy," said people – doubting since she was no longer young, "how can you say you gonna have a baby boy?"

"I'm gonna have me a baby boy."

"He gonna grow up to be just like the man Jesus."

"Oh, Mammy"

"Yes suh, I'm gonna have me a baby boy."

And Mammy prayed.

The white woman was now maybe three months carrying her child. Mammy kept praying.

Not very long after that, Mammy came running down the path. She said, "The

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Lord done showed me I got a baby boy. I
got a baby boy growing inside me. I gonna
have a baby."

"Mammy, is you sho?"

"I'm sho I'm gonna have me a baby
boy."

Oh, how Mammy took care of the white
woman. Oh, how every day she would go
and minister to the white woman and
lovingly care for her. The white woman
was getting heavy with child.

Just almost close to the time of the white woman, Mammy began to show that she was indeed going to have a baby.

One day, she ran up to the white man's house and the white man said, "Mammy, I think it's time for our baby. Oh, come Mammy, help me, help me."

Mammy goes in, and she says, "Now don't you worry none. I done brought a



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lot of these little black children into this world.

"Don't you worry none, Mammy can take care of it. I'm gonna take care of it, and I'm gonna bring your baby safe and sound into this world."

Mammy goes in, and in a little while the cry of a baby is heard, and the white woman delivered a baby boy.

Oh, Mammy came out, her big round face and her big black eyes shining with the glory of God.

"Laws, what a God you is. Laws, what a God you is. Master, you done got your baby boy."

Oh, the Master started crying. He'd wanted a child for so long. He rushed in to his wife, and Mammy had cared for the baby and had him lying there in the mother's arms.



A few months went by. Mammy was getting heavy.

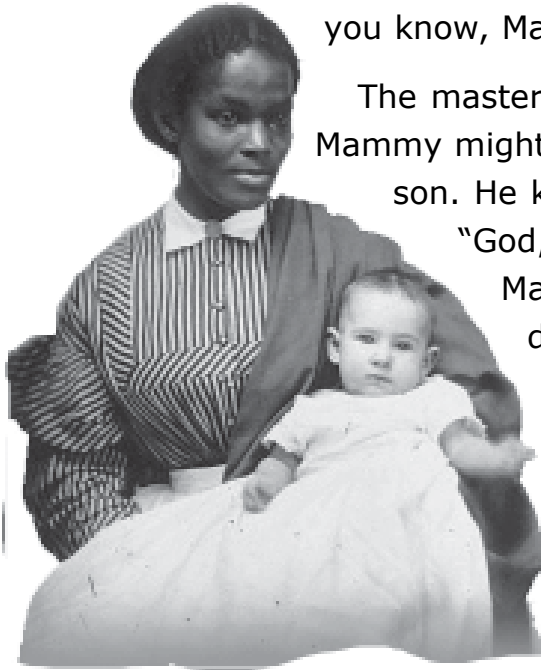
She worked just as hard. Every day Mammy worked and got on her knees and scrubbed the kitchen, and cooked the food, and took care of the tiny baby,



took care of the white woman, took care of the master's needs.

Mammy never complained. Mammy was so full of her freedom in Jesus. Mammy was so full of the glory and the joy of Jesus.

She said, "I gonna have me a son too, you know, Master."



The master worried that Mammy might not have a son. He kept praying, "God, don't let Mammy be disappointed."

And Mammy said, "I ain't gonna be no disappointed."

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CHARLESTOWN, April 27, 1769.



TO BE SOLD,
On WEDNESDAY the Tenth Day of
MAY next,

A CHOICE CARGO OF

Two Hundred & Fifty

NEGROES:

ARRIVED in the Ship
COUNTRESS of SUSSEX, THOMAS DAVIES,
Master, directly from GAMBIA, by

JOHN CHAPMAN, & Co.

* * *THIS is the Vessel that had the Small-Pox
on Board at the Time of her Arrival the 31st of
March last: Every necessary Precaution hath since
been taken to cleanse both Ship and Cargo thoroughly,
so that those who may be inclined to purchase need not
be under the least Apprehension of Danger from In-
fection.*

*The NEGROES are allowed to be the likeliest Parcel
that have been imported this Season.*

1769



I gonna have me a
son.

I'm gonna tell
you, Master, my son
he gonna grow up
and he gonna be just like the man Jesus."

Some weeks later, in the wee hours of the morning, the slaves began to rise from their straw mats in their little huts.

There among the shacks, they heard the cry of an infant.

"Laws, Mammy's done had that baby."



And they began to rise up, and they



began to gather out into the little path,
and they rushed up to the path where
Mammy and her husband lived.

They rushed up, and in a few moments
Mammy's husband walked out.

"Well? Well?" they said.

He shook his head. He said, "Laws,
Laws, Mammy just had her a baby boy."

Shouts came from all the slaves,
"Mammy's had the baby boy." They began

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to rush in and their lay Mammy on her straw bed with her son.

"Mammy, now what you gonna call that boy?"

"You know good and well what I gonna call this boy.





"This
boy he
done
had his
name
before
he ever,
ever,

ever became a living soul in me. I gonna
call him Jesus boy.

"This is my Jesus boy. I'm telling you
something too," Mammy, paused.

She was tired. You could tell how worn
she was, how she had labored hard. But
out of the sweat came the glory of God.

She said, "I'm telling you, my son, he
gonna grow up and be just like the man
Jesus."

When it came time to be at the white
man's house, Mammy was there. A few

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hours of rest and Mammy was back.

The white man said, "Mammy, you need to stay home today."

She brought her baby, and she said, "No master, I'm okay. Mammy's just okay, and God done blessed Mammy.

Master, you know Mammy always wants to bless you. Mammy always wants to take care of your son too, Master. I'm gonna take care of your son too."



The two little boys began to grow,
Mammy taking care of all the
needs, and the white man
and the white woman loving
their child, giving him
everything, showering love
and affection on him, Mammy
and her husband teaching
Jesus boy discipline,
integrity, teaching him to be
obedient.

Jesus boy would come to
work to the white man's



house, but he never ever was noisy. He was always quiet. Mammy kept him in the kitchen, quiet.

And now, when he's just so little, it's Christmas. A big tree is in the living room,



and toys are underneath the tree.

Jesus boy, being a little boy, watched while Mammy went outside to feed the chickens.

While she was gone, he sneaked in under the Christmas tree, and he saw there under the tree a little wooden wagon, and it was big enough to crawl in.

He sat up in the

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wooden
wagon, and
it was the
most
wonderful
thing he
had ever
seen. But
he could
hardly get
in it when
the white
man's son
came
rushing

down the spiral step, toddling, and saw it,
and went over and knocked him and kicked
him and started screaming and crying.

Jesus boy jumped and ran.

Mammy opened the back door.

"What's going on here?" She takes Jesus

boy into the kitchen. "What are you doing?"

The little white man's son comes in.

"Mammy," he says, "you keep Jesus boy out of here. He was sitting in my toys. I don't want him in here. You keep him out.

"That's my wagon. "





Mammy said, "What are you doing in there. You know I never let you go in there. "

"Mammy, I wanted to sit in the wagon."

She said," No, you can't do that. That's a white man's son's wagon. That ain't your wagon. You can't sit in it."

"I want a wagon, Mammy."

"Well, you can't have no wagon. That's for the white man's son."



"I hate the white man's son."

"No, you don't hate the white man's son. No, you don't hate nobody!"

"I does too,

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Mammy."

"No, you
don't! No, you
don't hate
nobody! You
gonna grow up
to be just like
the man
Jesus."

"I hate the
white man's..."

"Did you
hear what I..."

"Yes, Mammy..."

"Say you love the white man's son. You
say it now."

"I love the white man's son."

It was awful.





The white man's son was so spoiled. He was so selfish. Jesus boy just tolerated him. They couldn't play together.

Getting along with the white boy meant that Jesus boy had to give everything to the white man's son. As they grew, it grew worse.

Jesus boy was having a time.

Mammy was trying to teach him to be unselfish, trying to teach him to love the white master and his wife, the missus, trying to teach him to be like Jesus.

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One Christmas when Jesus boy was a little bigger the white man brought fruit and nuts and some bags.

It was almost the only time of the year they ever got it.

The fruit and nuts were sitting out on the edge of Mammy's porch. She planned to deliver the bags to all the slaves.

But she came home and looked at the bags.

There were several gone.

Who could've been in these



bags?

"Somebody
done been in
here," she
said "Where's
them bags?

Nobody
seemed to
know.

"Jesus boy!
Jesus boy,
where are you? Where are you, Jesus boy?
Nothing.



She walks around the back of the shack.
It was up on sticks or stilts.

She looks under there.

Sitting under there is Jesus boy with
two or three bags just cramming the nuts
and treats into his mouth and eating it as

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fast as he could.

"Jesus boy, what you doing under there?
You get out from here right now!"

"Mammy, I don't ever get no fruits, nuts,
and candy! And I'm gonna eat all I want!"

"No, you ain't no such! You get outta
here right now! You hear Mammy?" She
crawled under there, gave him a good
thrashing, and jerked him out of there.

She said, "You ain't gonna grow up to be
no selfish boy! You gonna grow up to be
just like the man Jesus. You hear me boy?"

"You gonna grow up to be just like the
man Jesus. Now you know what you did?
Now some little slave boy down here ain't
gonna get no candy.

"He ain't gonna get no apples, cause
you just ate them up. I'm gonna give him
mine this time, cause I don't want some

little slave down here not having no fruit
and nuts cause me son done ate them all
up.

"You know what, you gonna grow up to
be just like the man Jesus."



"Yes, Mammy. I'm sorry,
Mammy."

"That's much better
son. Now let's go to work.
Let's make it a good
Christmas for all the
slaves. We're gonna have
a shouting, praising time
down by the willow tree
tonight."

Jesus boy would stand
around and watch them
praise the Lord, watch
them shouting, and he
stood and watched.

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The boys grew.

The white man's son grew. Jesus boy grew. Jesus began to work in the cotton fields with his dad and with the other slaves. He became strong, and he developed strong muscles, and he became a big fine strong young man.

The white man's son began to notice that the master had much affection for Jesus boy.

Many times in the



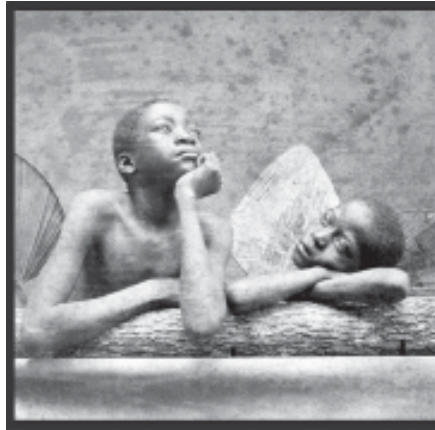
Jesus Boy



afternoon when they would come in with big loads of cotton, Jesus boy would not only be carrying his load but often would carry the load of maybe some old slave who was

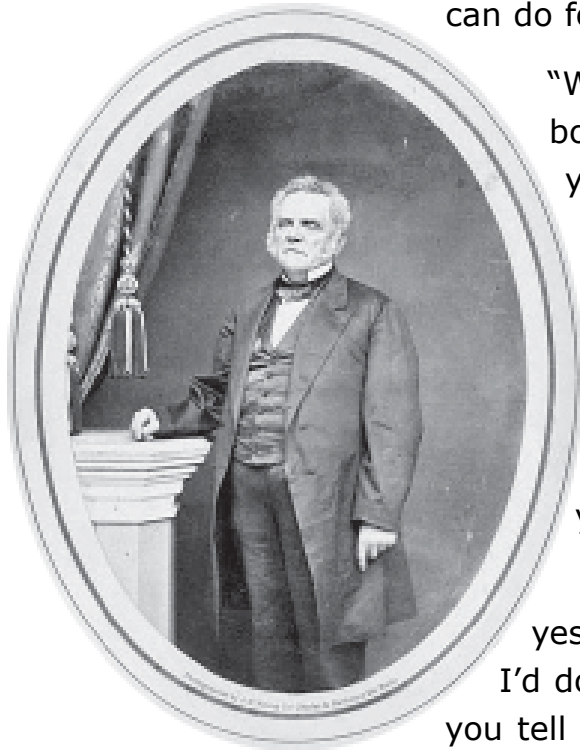
weak and tired. And he would come bring in the two cotton sacks, and he would come in and throw them down and the master would come down, "Jesus boy, you're a fine young man."

He'd stand



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with his head down, and he'd say, "Thank
you, Master. Master, is there anything I
can do for you?"



"Well, Jesus
boy, I want
you to
come in
and have
some
lemonade
with me,
would
you?"

"Well,
yes, Master.
I'd do anything
you tell me too."

Jesus boy loved his master.

The master loved Jesus boy.

The white man's son was very jealous.



He would come in and ask his dad to do something or interrupt in some way. His father found his son now very spoiled and often embarrassing to him.

But he and the white woman had just loved their only son so much, and they just wanted him to have everything, and now he was a young man and quite spoiled.

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The master tried to get him to take an interest in the plantation. He brought him a big white horse, and gave him a fancy riding outfit.

He began to tell him to work the cotton fields and go out with the slave and take care of the business.



\$2,500 **REWARD!**

RANAWAY, from the Subscriber, residing in Mississippi county, Mo., on Monday the 5th inst., my

Negro Man named GEORGE.

Said negro is five feet ten inches high, of dark complexion, he plays well on the Violin and several other instruments. He is a shrewd, smart fellow and of a very affable countenance, and is twenty-five years of age. If said negro is taken and confined in St. Louis Jail, or brought to this county so that I get him, the above reward of \$1,000 will be promptly paid.

JOHN MEANS.

Also, from Radford E. Stanley,

A NEGRO MAN SLAVE, NAMED NOAH,

Full 6 feet high; black complexion; full eyes; free spoken and intelligent; will weigh about 180 pounds; 32 years old; had with him 2 or 3 suits of clothes, white hat, short blue blanket coat, a pair of saddle bags, a pocket compass, and supposed to have \$350 or \$400 with him.

ALSO---A NEGRO MAN NAMED HAMP,

Of dark copper color, big thick lips, about 6 feet high, weighs about 175 pounds, 26 years old, with a scar in the forehead from the kick of a horse; had a lump on one of his wrists and is left-handed. Had with him two suits of clothes, one a casinet or cloth coat and grey pants.

Also, Negro Man Slave named BOB,

Copper color, high cheek bones, 5 feet 11 inches high, weighs about 150 pounds; 22 years old, very white teeth and a space between the centre of the upper teeth. Had a blue blanket sack coat with red striped linsey lining. Supposed to have two suits of clothes with him; is a little lame in one ankle.

\$1,000 will be given for George—\$600 for Noah—\$450 for Hamp—\$450 for Bob; if caught in a free State, or a reasonable compensation if caught in a Slave State, if delivered to the Subscribers in Miss. Co., Mo., or confined in Jail in St. Louis, so that we get them. Refer to

**JOHN MEANS &
R. E. STANLEY.**

ST. LOUIS, August 22, 1852.

(PLEASE STICK UP.)

One day, the white man's son was on his white horse riding through fields, and he looked over and saw an old slave fall. It was awfully hot.

The slave fell.

Jesus boy put his cotton sack down, rushed over and picked him up, and carried him out of the cotton field and laid him down by a tree.



He went down to a little stream and brought him a rag filled with water.

When he made him comfortable, he knew that every slave had to pick their quota daily or their rations were cut. Immediately he picked up his bag and the bag of the old slave, and he began to pick twice as fast. He could do it. He could fill his sack. He knew he could fill his sack.

He began to pick twice as fast. As he did, he brushed some of the cotton plants along and suddenly the white horse came rushing down.

The white man's son jumped off of the horse, and he stood with his big whip over him and he said, "Jesus boy, and what is this that you think you are doing?"

And he looked up, and he said, "Why young master, I'm picking cotton. "

And he said," If you think that you are

by Hettie Lue Brooks



going to be such a big help, don't keep ruining these cotton plants.

"The next time I see you brush one of these cotton plants and destroy what you are destroying, you will get a lashing. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Master. Yes, young master. I'll try harder. I'll try harder. I'll try to do right. I will. I really will."

"Very well." He got on his horse and rode up the way.

Oh, the hatred that was in Jesus boy for the white man's son. All he could say to himself was "I hate the white man's son. I loves my master, but I hates his son. I hate him. Oh, I hate him."

Bitterness, hate was growing in him.

He began to pick, and as he got a little tired, he brushed a little plant and the

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corner of the sack fell over on the side of the plant, and out of nowhere came the white horse.

The white man's son came and said,
"Jesus boy, you go to the shed."

"The shed?" The white man never used



the shed, but the shed was there, and they knew what was there, it was the strap. It's where the slaves would be taken if they were

disobedient and lashed.

A long time ago, there had been some bad slaves, and they had been lashed.

Jesus boy knew it, but not in a long time.

He said, "You go to the shed."

"Young master, I..."

"Don't you talk back to me, Jesus boy!"

"Yes, young master." He picks up his

by Hettie Lue Brooks

cotton sacks, and he brings them in, and he lays them down.

He said, "To the shed, Jesus boy."

The white man's son was thin, frail, undeveloped, spoiled. He took Jesus boy in and strapped him up, his back was already bare. He tied him to the strap, and with his big whip, he began to lash his back until it bled profusely.



He would lash, and the blood would run.

He would lash, and with all the hatred

and jealousy he had for a strong, fine, loving, good young man, he took his bitterness out on him. Jesus boy never uttered a cry.

The white man drove up and heard the lashes. He opened the door, and he said, "Son, what are you doing? Son, what are you doing?"

He said, "I'm giving this disobedient slave of yours a good whipping, Father. He's destroying your crop, and I'm giving him the lashing that he needs."

The white man jerked the whip from his son and said, "Go to the house."

He said, "Very well, Father, I'm through anyway." And he spit and walked to the house.

The master took Jesus boy down, and he said, "Son, son, I am so sorry. Please forgive me. Jesus boy, I hope you can

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understand. I realized how spoiled and sometimes awful my son is. But Jesus boy, he is my only son, and we waited so

Jesus Boy

long for him, and his mother, well, Jesus boy, I hope you understand."

Jesus boy looked up with a little smile, and he said, "Aw shucks, Master, it ain't nothing. It ain't nothing. Now don't you worry none. It ain't nothing."

What love!

The white man said, "Come. Mammy must doctor your back. She must put



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medication on your back. Come."

He took Jesus boy in. When Jesus boy came in to the kitchen with the stripes across his back, Mammy never flinched.

She went right to a little medicine chest they had, took out some of the liquid she had, took a little rag, and she began to hum. "Steal away home, Lord, steal away home. Ain't got long to stay here."

The white man left.

Jesus boy sat there. Mammy said, "Why, son, you're all fixed up."



He turned around, and he said, "Mammy, Mammy, white boy did this to me. "

And she said, "I know, son, I know. "

He said, "Mammy, ain't you got no feeling?"



She said, "I got plenty of feeling. I got plenty of it. I gonna believe God's gonna do something here. In the meantime you know what's happening? You gonna grow up to be just like the man Jesus. "

"Mammy, I ain't gonna grow up to be like the man Jesus cause I hates the white man's son! I hates him, do ya hear me, Mammy? I hates him!"

And Jesus boy stalked out.

She went to the door, and she threw the screen door open, and she said, "I don't care what you say, son, do you hear me? You gonna grow up to be just like the man Jesus."

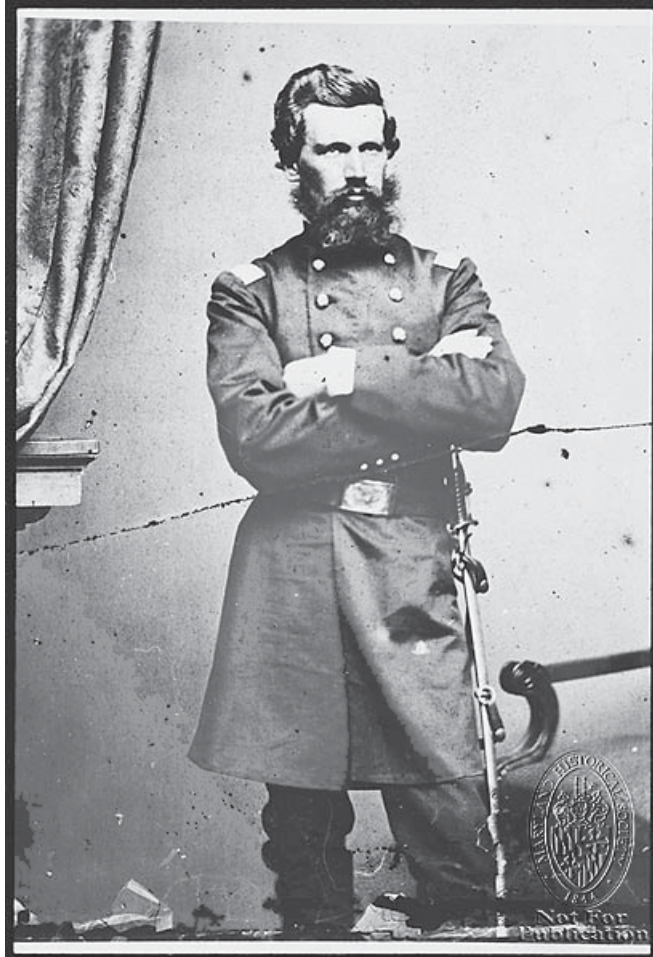
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She slammed the door.

"Steal away home, ain't got long to stay here," she began to sing.

"Father," she prayed, "my son gonna grow up to be just like the man Jesus. I just want you to be patient with him. He gonna grow up to be just like the man Jesus."

She went to washing the dishes.



One day, horses came up to the white man's house. Young men came inside and talked. They stayed awhile, then they rode away.



Then there were more riders and excitement.

Jesus boy went into the kitchen and asked,

"Mammy,
what's
happening?"

And
she said,
"Laws,
son, I
don't
know, but
something
happened.



I figure it's something bad. I never
heard such loud talking and no such
carrying on, something about a war. I
don't know nothing about it, but
something about a war, something about
folks fighting and killing one another,
something about them trying to take away
our plantation. Laws, son, I don't know,
I'm just a praying."

He said, "A war, Mammy?"

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She said, "Yes, son, where people fights one another and kills one another.

"There's something about these young men that are coming.

"They're telling the white man all about it. I don't know exactly what it is, but it's bad. We gotta pray tonight, son."

Jesus boy was concerned. That night they were down under the moonlight.

There's Jesus boy over there, looking up



Jesus Boy



by Hettie Lue Brooks

into that moonlight that always shone down on that spot where that willow tree was. Jesus boy had his eyes closed. He could just feel that soft breeze coming all over him. The slaves were singing their love for Jesus.

Something was happening in his heart.

Suddenly he heard something. He looked and saw the white master running down the path.

"Jesus boy? Jesus boy?"

Mammy walks over and says, "Master, what you doing over in here?"

"Oh Mammy, oh Mammy, I've got to see you and Jesus boy immediately."

"Why sure, Master. Jesus boy, get off and come over here."

He jumped off of the big stump. "What is it, Master?"



He said, "Walk down the path with me a little bit." They walked down, and he said, "Mammy, Jesus boy, there's going to be a war. It's a war between the north and the south. Our states in the north part are declaring war on we who are in the south, and they are saying it's not right for us to have slaves."

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Mammy said, "Sho nough?" Jesus boy got still.

He said, "Yeah, Mammy, they are telling me it's not right to have slaves.

"Mammy, let me tell you what's happening. My son, my son got all carried away with the young men who came back here who are going to war to fight for their plantations and to fight for the South.

"They are loading their things.

"You know my son, how I can't seem to do anything with him, Mammy, he said he's leaving in the morning to go to war with these neighbor plantation young men he knows.

"They talked him into going."

"Sho nough, Master?"

"Yes, Mammy. My wife is up there, and she's crying, and she's in bed.

"She's ill.

"She'll have a nervous breakdown. Our son can't go to war. Why he can't even shoot a gun enough to kill a rabbit. He can't go to war. I know he's going, and we can't stop him. Mammy and Jesus boy, the war is all about setting you free."

"Master, you saying I wouldn't live on the plantation no more with you?"

"That's right, Jesus boy,"

by Hettie Lue Brooks



Mammy says, "Master, we love you, we ain't gonna go no place."

The master said, "I understand that, but not everybody feels the same way. I mean it's all about setting you free, and I've

come to ask you something. Mammy, I want to make it so... Jesus boy, I will not force you to go, but I've come to ask you if you would go to war with my son and take care of him for his mother and for me."



"Leave the plantation? Leave Mammy? Leave the slaves, and most of all, leave the master?"

Jesus boy stiffened.

He said, "You don't have to tell me now. If you will go, be at the house at sunrise." And the master turned and walked off.

Jesus boy clenched his fist. Mammy

by Hettie Lue Brooks

turned. Her face was stern and more serious than Jesus boy had ever seen.

She lifted her big round face with her big eyes up to him, she said, "Son, what ya gonna do?"

He said, "Mammy, I ain't gonna go take care of no spoiled white man's brat. I ain't gonna do it, Mammy. I can't. I hate this white man's son. I can't go."

She said, "Wait a minute, boy. Have you asked the man Jesus bout this thing?"

"Why? Mammy, I ain't gonna do it. I ain't gonna go."



She said, "Don't you tell Mammy nothing. Don't you say nothing, boy. I don't want to hear nothing out of your mouth. You shut your mouth. You go on down the way, and you ask the man Jesus what he wants you to do."

"Mammy, you want me to go to war? Mammy, you tell me you want me to go take care of that white man's boy, you tell me you want me to go off with the white man's son? Is that what you telling me?"



by Hettie Lue Brooks

"I'm telling you once again, son, what I want you to be. I want you to be just like the man Jesus."

And she walked off.

"Well, I ain't want to be like the man Jesus. I can't be like the man Jesus. I can't! I ain't the white man's son, and I can't be like the man Jesus, Mammy!"

That night when the slaves finished singing, they all went to their little shacks. Mammy lays awake for hours praying.

Jesus boy was way down in the holler alone. Finally, he looks up and there's a star twinkling in the sky.

"Jesus, Jesus? Do you want me to go? You want me to go?"

Mammy hears footsteps softly coming on the porch. She rises from the mat.

"Son, what did he say?"

He gets down on his knees, crawls up close to his mother, and puts his arm around Mammy.

He said, "Mammy, I gonna go."

She said, "She said the man Jesus, he done told ya."

"Yes, Mammy, He done told me. But Mammy, I hates the white man's son."

"Don't make no difference son, don't make no difference. Mammy'll get ready. I'll go up and I will cook you some bread. I'll make you some johnnycakes. I'll fix you a snack."

By the time the white man and his son



by Hettie Lue Brooks

were rising, down in the kitchen there was the smell of bread cooking, and coming up the lane was a tall boy with a stick on his shoulder and a little bag, a little round bag that contained all of his possessions.

The white man said, "Jesus boy?"

He stood there, and he said, "Master, I gonna go. I gonna go to the war."

He said, "But son, do you realize that you are fighting against your own cause? Do you understand that you



fighting against your own freedom?"

"It don't make me no difference. Master, I loves you. I gonna go."

He said, "Jesus boy, will you bring my son home to me?"

"Master, you kin count on Jesus boy.

"The good Lord, he done told me to go. I gonna go, Master. I gonna take care of your son, and I gonna see he come home to you."

"Oh, Jesus boy, thank you!" and he put his arms around him.

The white man's son walked in, "so he's going to go." But he was glad because he had never done anything for himself. Jesus boy had already done most of it all of his life anyway.

They packed the boys up and off they went on their horses to fight a war with

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Jesus boy going out of obedience to his master and fighting his own bitterness all the way.

Time went on. It was talked about. It was talked about in the army.

It was talked about all of everywhere. "Have you seen the white boy always followed by the big slave? Have you seen him? Can you believe it?"



"Can you believe that that slave would come and fight against his own cause? Have you noticed he's never very far from his master, always carrying not only his load, but the load of his master?"



It was nothing to Jesus boy. For a long time he had been carrying the loads of the slaves who were old or sick or incapable.

It was talked about all over the army.

The white man would get news from him, and he would run down, "Mammy, I heard from the boys. They are going more

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and more northerly all the time.”

And then a long period of time came and they didn’t hear, and they didn’t hear, and they didn’t hear where Jesus boy and the white man’s son were. It had begun to

snow, and it was cold.



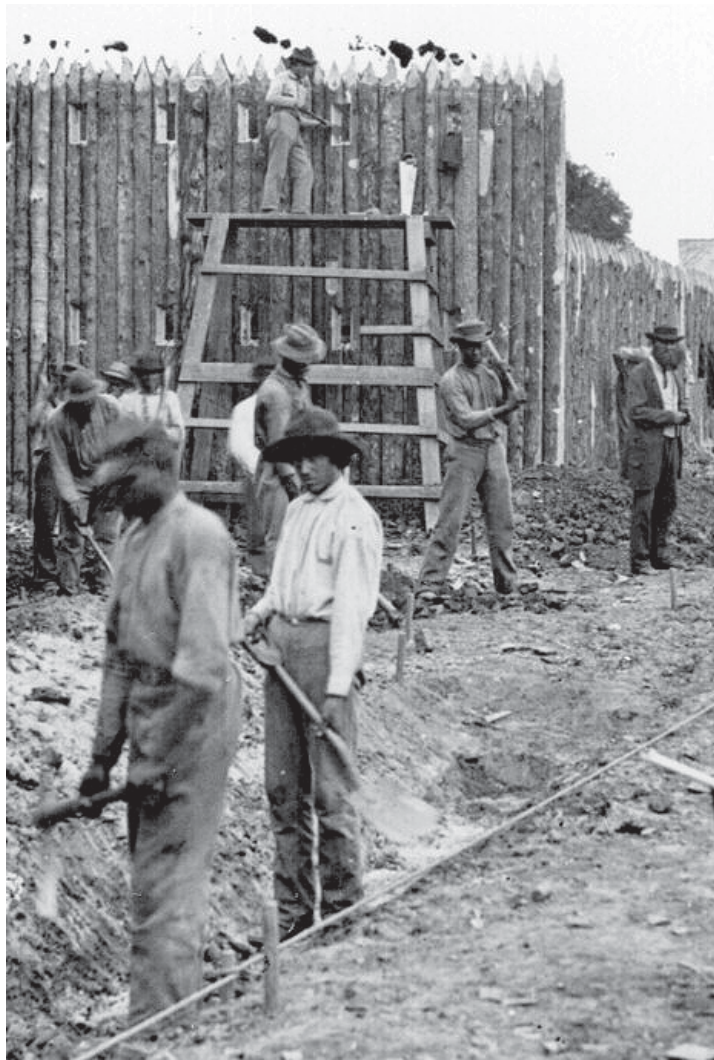
Their boots had worn out, and their clothing was ragged.

They had been sent on a special group mission.

As they were on this mission, somehow Jesus boy and the white man’s son and six or eight other soldiers had been cut off from the rest of their battalion.

They tried to find their way, and they

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tried to make their way, but their food supply was gone.

They were cold, and they were shivering. How many months and months and months had Jesus boy tagged after the white man. How many months and months and months and there was one thought, one thought that drove Jesus boy on. "I gonna get the master's son back home to him. I gonna take care of the white man's son cause I loves my master."

Always close, always caring for him, now



Jesus
boy,
frustrated
begins
to pray
like
never
before.
"Jesus,

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I need to get the white man's son back home to him.

"Would you help me?"

Mammy, standing down in the moonlight, "Lord, I ain't heard from my son in so long a time.

"My prayer to you, God, is that the boy that I offered to you from the moment

that he was an idea in my heart, he's growing up to be just like you, Lord Jesus. I gonna have a son just like the Lord Jesus Christ."

Freezing, clothes worn out, they began to stumble and fall. The white man's son stumbled, and Jesus boy, with all the energy that he has and with his hands



almost numb, begins to pick him up and tries to keep him going, but one by one the soldiers are falling in the snow.

Jesus boy takes the white man's son, pulls him over by a tree, and props him up.

He kneels down, and the white man's son is sitting shaking with his eyes closed

by Hettie Lue Brooks



against the tree. Jesus boy looks at him, and in a flash he sees when he was in the little wagon and got pushed out.

The scars are still on his back from this young man. Over and over and over again, he was tormented, and rejected, and treated with disrespect.

He looks at him there and all of a sudden Jesus boy hears a kind of music he never heard before. He begins to feel something, and he looks at the white man's son, and all of a sudden he doesn't see a spoiled white boy. All of a sudden, he doesn't see an enemy. All of a sudden, with a love he never dreamed he could ever know, the music of heaven swept over him, and the love of Jesus in his heart reached out, and he knew love where there had been no love.

Immediately, a new surge of energy came.



by Hettie Lue Brooks



He jumped up, and he reached over, and he took the white man's son, and he said, "Master, Master, young Master."

And the young master, who was freezing, opened his eyes.

"Young master, I loves ya.

"I don't want you to die. You hear me? You fight. You gonna fight. You gonna live, you gonna live. Jesus boy loves ya, white master."

The white man's son looks up, and for the first time ever, he smiles as he closes



his eyes.

"No, master. No, master! You come on now! You come on now, master!"

And Jesus boy unloosens him from

his grip, and he can't open his hands, so he takes his arms, and he begins to scoot back the snow.

He finds a little dip, a little ravine, and he crawls down.

With his arms, he scoots back.

Then he goes up, and he lifts the white man's son and crawls on his knees until he gets him in the spot where the snow had been cleared.

Piece by piece, he takes the clothing from his body and wraps it around the

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white man's son. He scoots back the ragged socks from his feet, and the clothes he has on, he puts around the white boy.

He takes his coat and puts it gently over his head with only an air space.

Then Jesus boy falls headlong over the master's son and begins to breathe his breath.

The next morning, a search party,



searching for the lost platoon begins to look, and a man yells, "Look, there's one. Oh, look here's another."

And they begin to see the frozen bodies of the men.

One says, "Look!"

And they looked over there, and there was the stiff, frozen body of a young black man, the stripes on his back visible.

"What is it?" And they said, "Look, there's a soldier."

And they moved the stiff body of the black man.

One knelt down and said, "Look, come, come, he's alive! Look, he's still alive!"

And they begin to marvel.

This young black boy gave everything he had for the life of his white master.

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They quickly gathered up the white boy, and they rushed him back to the battalion, and they began to work with him.

Some time later, a horse runs up to the white man's house at the plantation, a man jumps off of his horse, and bangs on the door.



The white woman is in bed.

She's frail, wasting away and grieving
over her son who has been lost in the
army with no word for so long.

by Hettie Lue Brooks



The white man opens the door, and the courier said, "Sir, I bring you good news. Your son is alive, and he will be home soon."

"My son's alive? My son's alive! He's alive! Mother, Mother!" and he runs up the stairs and bursts into where her bed is, "Mother, our son is alive! Our son, he's alive!"

She sits up, and they hug and embrace each other, and she weeps, "He's alive, He's ... Jesus boy, Jesus boy?"

And he runs down, "What ... I sent a slave with my son ... and the slave, they're coming home together?"

"Oh, yes sir, I forgot to tell you. Your son is alive because your slave died."

"He died?"

"Yes, sir. It was spread throughout the army that the young slave gave his own clothes and the last breath of his body. Because he did, your son is coming home."

"Oh, God.
Mammy, oh
Mammy. Oh
God, Mammy!
How do I tell
Mammy?
What will I



by Hettie Lue Brooks

say? How could
he...How could
he do it? My son,
my spoiled son
and Jesus boy,
so wonderful and
so fine and so
good, oh.

The white man
took some
flowers, and in
the evening
when he knew
the slaves were
in their time of worship and prayer, he
finally got the courage. He must tell
Mammy. He made his way down the path,
and he can hear them singing, "Coming for
to carry me home." He got up close, and
there was Mammy leading them, "Swing
low, sweet chariot, coming for to carry me
home," with the glory of God on her face,

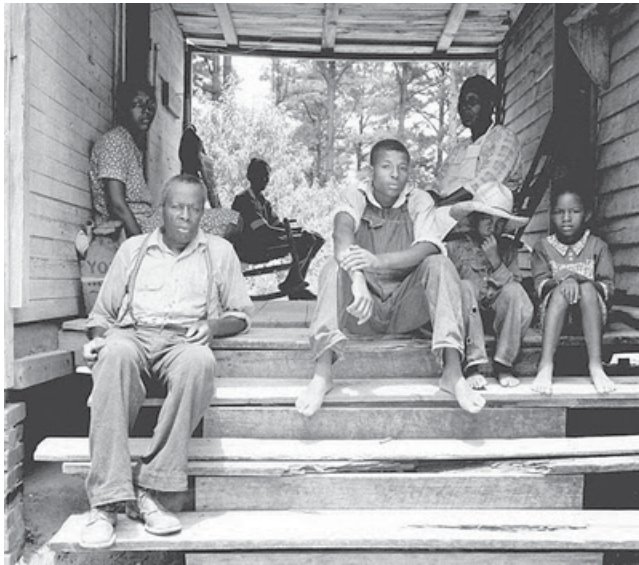


worshipping and praising God. How could he tell her, oh Mammy, how could he tell her?

Mammy looks over. "Why master, welcome master. What you come for, master?"

"Uh, Mammy, uh, could you walk down the way with me?"

"Why sho, master. Now what's troubling



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you tonight, master?"

"Um, I need to talk with you, Mammy.
Walk with me."

"Why yes, master. I don't 'spect it's
nothing too big for Jesus take care of."

"Well, uh," and they walked in the very



places where
little Jesus boy
had grown up
to be a
man, and
then they
stood in the
little opening, the

very place where he had asked if Jesus
boy would go to war and protect his son
and bring him home, the very place where
he had made the request, his mind turned
back. He could hear Jesus boy up in the
kitchen where he could smell the
johnnycakes cooking.

He could hear Jesus boy saying, "Master, don't you worry none. I gonna send your son home. I gonna see that your son comes home to you, master. Don't you worry none."

He could hear it. He could see his face.

He could now see Jesus boy's face the night he asked him to go for his unworthy son, his spoiled son, and fight against his



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own cause. "Oh God, how can I tell Mammy?"

Mammy said, "Master, I'm listening. I'm listening to ya." She said, "Master, have you got word from my boys?"

He said, "Yes, Mammy, yes, Mammy, I have. I got word today. My son's coming home!"

"Your son's coming...the boys! Glory to God!"

"Mammy, wait a minute..."

"Glory to God! Hallelujah! Praise you, Jesus!"

"Wait, Mammy, Wait!"

"Master? Oh, master. What is it, master?"

"Mammy, my son lives because your son died."

Mammy turned her big face up to the moon. The tears started rolling down her face.

She broke out into a smile, and she said, "Glory to God! My son done grewed up to be just like the man Jesus!"

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Jesus Boy
