

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

ORAL HISTORY STUDY OF:
SENIOR'S CITIZEN'S
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE GOOD OLE DAYS

INTERVIEWEE: Mr. Alphonso Alexander Barron
INTERVIEWER: Ms. Deborah Denard
DATE: March 10, 1976
SUBJECT: The "Good Ole Days"

D: Today is March 11, 1976 and I am interviewing MR. Alphonso Alexander Barron at the College Park Auditorium on the "Good Ole Days".

Mr. Barron, when you hear the phrase "Good Ole Days" what does it mean to you?

B: Well, to me the good ole days means days of my early childhood, what I did in elementary and high school and also my college life and early marriage life. I look upon that as the good ole days cause thats the days of my youth.

D: Yes sir. Okay, when and where were you born?

B: I was born ah, at Mount Olive, MS, October 13, 1905. I grew up around Mount Olive. I attended public school in the county and course in those days you had to go off and ah, go to a high school and then to college. So, I went to elementary school in ah, Covington County-- Covington County Public Schools and ah, later I went to Alcorn College and ah, I was able to make second year high school and that was my begining of high school. I attended high school at Alcorn College and also attended and finished college there.

D: Um hum. They did have public elementary schools in Covington County at that time.

B: At that time they did.

D: Yes sir.

B: But it wasn't complete by any means.

D: Okay, now when did you leave Covington County and go to high school?

B: Well, I left Covington County and went to high school in the fall of 1922. And I completed ah, my high school work there in the spring of 1925. And ah, the fall of 1925 I began my freshman year in College at the same place and I completed college in the spring of 1929.

D: Um hum. Well, Mr. Barron from what I read of History it was sort of rare for black people to be able to go on to high school back in those days. How was it that you were able to go?

B: Well child, I don't want to make this brag it wasn't a matter of being in those it was whether or not you had the will to go and wanted to go. And of course, I be frank, thats all I had a will to go and the opportunity presented itself, so I worked my way through.

D: Yes sir.

B: As so many did. Ninety percent of the blacks. . .well, we called it Negroes back there in our days ah, were found to be working students at Alcorn A & M College. That was our paradise if you had the will to go, then the way would be provided.

D: Yes sir. What good days do you remember in the elementary school?

B: Well, the good days in the elementary school ah, we were at home and ah, we had ah, a lot of hunting and ah, of course playing baseball then we had activities that boys and girls would play together--- jumping, skipping rope and what have you. Playing hide-n-sick and a lot more of those games that seem to take care of the situation. We shot marbles, usually the boys did; we had plenty fun doing that.

D: What do you remember about Church during that time?

B: Well, in Church we had ah, we were fortunate ah, there we had Mount Pleasant Church; that was our membership. It was the center back out there in the rural community and people generally ah, had ideas and ah, they were interested in having a good church school for the young people as well as the adults.

And ah, we liked to go. And that was a good fellowship for us;
and we had plenty fun going.

D: Yes sir. Okay, what about your high school good days, when you went
to Alcorn?

B: Well, when I went to Alcorn the think about it I. . . met ah, new
boys and girls. And ah, course I wasn't long meeting them and getting
acquainted with them and after that we formed what we called a

fellowship there that was not only lasting in
those days but, I meet those fellows now in life and ah, they gave
me a nickname there if anybody call
me now, I would feel real good
cause thats some ole commerads that knew me.

So, we ah, that and then we ah, along with our studies there participated
in Y-work. Of course we started the ah, boy meet girl and we set
that for a romance in those days back there. Posing as the older
folks would know it; and we just had plenty of fun and that carried
over into ah, courtship and ah, acquaintances, and then married life
today.

D: What about your family?

B: Well, I was fortunate in those days, ah, I met several girls there.
Of course, they said I was kind of a "flick" type but, I don't think
I was that. But, I did look at ah, a lot of girls but, I met one
there that ah, look like we made a decision at that time to um, marry,
and that was ah, . . .her name was Hattie Cora Cameron and of course
she was in high school when I was in college. Very fortunately, we
courted ah, the latter part, well whatever three years I might say
because we started going after I met her later years, married then
first year.

Then ah, we completed it and we got married when I completed college in September 1929. To our union, we have ah, we think the best of all four lovely children. And those ah, children I think is our highest idea because it seemed to be devoted children one girl first, and then the three boys.

D: What about your parents?

B: Well, my parents were. . .you might say. . .a common people, a farming people. They were interested in ah, all of us going to school. They didn't ever. . .they told us if we ever wanted to amount to anything in life ah, education was the key to our success. I might say we believed that religiously and all of us didn't have any trouble getting us to go to school. So, when the opportunity came my way and it fortunately did. . .all of us ah, took advantage of that and finished college. That is from me and down ah, I happen to be the first one to go through college and then the rest of my brothers followed too. Of course, they went higher into education than I did. But, they've all went into teaching and ah, look like they made that their ah, life of work. So, the Barron's speciality of my brothers teachers. We gave our best go in Mississippi. I had one brother who finished Morehouse in Atlanta. He went into the college work, and he did most of his college teaching at Pine Bluff, Arkansas. He retired last year.

D: Yes Sir. What good times do you remember at home with your brothers and your mother and father? What kinds of things did you do?

B: Well, the things that I did mostly, I was very fortunate ah, unfortunate so far as I am concerned, the girl was born on the beginning and the end.

So that made me come up there . . . I was the fourth child and ah, come on that so, that my oldest sister was ah, kind of the mother for the rest of us and ah, of course, in the end ah, the baby was ah a girl and she was kinda too small. So, I might say I helped me mother mostly. my oldest brother, one boy was older than I am. He could play ball; he was very good in playing ball. He was a pitcher and he would help my daddy more or less. He kind of resented look like, doing apron string work as he thought about it in those days. So he wouldn't do that. I didn't mind helping my mother but, look like, I wanted to take all the load off her, so I would fit in and help her do the chores around the house; wash dishes, wash clothing, sweep, and do those things. I did that as "wet work" in the field. I didn't mind working anywhere. I was a all around boy. I milked cows and still fortunate when I went to Alcorn I knew how to milk cows and I got to be an
Come in real handy!

D: What was your major in College?

B: My major in college was vocational agriculture. I ah, majored in that and fortunately when I finished I got work in the rurals in
County, Monticello, MS. I worked there for my first seven years. I was principal and at that time a vocational and agriculture teacher and we blacks mostly had to do a combination in fact to exist. So, I filled the two jobs I caught.

D: Well, ah, what was the name of this High school in Monticello?

B: It was called at that time, the Lawrence County Training School. Now, I believe it is known as the McCullough High School there.

If you ever go there, . . .but originally it was called the ah, Lawrence County Training School.

D: What were some of your experiences while you were there?

B: Some of my experiences while I was there; I was ah, very fortunate I was energetic and I got the ah, the boys and girls to have pride in themselves. My wife was young and she was teaching home. . . what you call then. . .Home Economics. Now its call Home Making. We were glad to get the boys and girls to first of all, have pride in themselves and ah, through joint efforts and work after we were there for the first three years ah, we got those boys and girls to actually revolutionize the home.

Wood piles in those days were found on the front and ah, the farmers would put their old plow gear on the front porch thats the only place look like he could find to put it. Well, through our efforts at school we got the whole community to revolutionize that. We were able to move the wood piles to the back and ah, men found a place on the back to put his plow gear and the girls and boys too for that matter took pride in ah, developing a front to grow grass in the yard and ah, flowers on the borders and ah, ah, good home we called it, a beautification programming system existed as well as boys would ah, be interested in doing things in the garden too. We had what we call in those days, the vivid home program. And that seemingly was just like ah, spreading ah, ah, well fire in the community it just swept the whole tide and those boys and girls I tell you the truth, they never have forgotten us; and we never will forget them. But, the first seven years I think was our years in revolutionizing a community ; changing.

- D: Well, would you say the good times was the...
- B: Was all that; that was part of it. I would say that was the total of all of these things I mentioned are just part of the thing that added up to it.
- D: Yes sir. What did you do after that?
- B: Well, after that ah, I went to ah, down on the Coast and I worked a couple of years there.
- D: Where?
- At Moss Point, MS. I was ah, principal of school there at that time. at Moss Point. And ah, that's where after I served there two years, I was appointed to Camp Educational Advisor (CCC), that was the Conservation Conservation Co-op in those days and that came up with President Roosevelt ah, instituted this program and it helped out. A lot of the boys. . .unemployment was running rapid in those days. And as a result of that, we called it CCC and I happen to make application and was employed as one of the in this great work
- D: Okay, now what the name of the high school in Moss point?
- B: Well, we called it at that time. . .we called it the. . .well it was two year high school. We just called it the Colored High School there in Moss Point.
- D: Colored High School?
- B: That's really what it was--elementary and high school combined.
- D: When you were appointed CCC Camp Advisor,
- B: That was in May, 1938.
- D: Was that down there? Alcorn?

B: Yeah, I was living at Moss Point but, I wasn't. . .I was appointed by the Fourth co-area in Atlanta. They were the ones handling the appointment and I left there and ah, worked. We called it in deed and that was in Alabama, out from Alabama.

D: Oh, yes sir! You went to Alabama. . .

B: Yes, I went to Alabama first of all working with the veterans, World War I veterans. They were there. I worked there, then I was transferred later to what we called the boys camp. And I worked ah, at ah, a little place called ah, ah, it was out from Alexandria, Alabama. Then from Alexandria, Alabama, we all went down.... transferred the whole camp went to Georgia, a little place called ah, ah, ah, P Georgia. And from I stayed until the camp disbanded.

D: When did the camp disband?

B: The camp disbanded, I believe after Pearl Harbor--the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941. I believe it was December 7, 1941 and our camp disbanded the next year; it was 1942. In June ah, June 30th, the offical day when camps were disbanded. But, World War II was ah, rapid then. And that was the last of the "good ole days" in camp.

D: Okay. Let me ask you this? Okay, now you went to Alabama to work with the World War I veterans after you left Moss Point?

B: Yes. MOss Point that was the camp I was assigned to.

D: What did you do with the World War I veterans?

B: Well, I tell you the truth, I think I did some of my greatest teaching because ah, I have vividly remember twelve ah, twelve of those men who had never signed a payroll. They would just make a 'X'. And I stayed in that camp eight months and while there I got everyone of those ah, people to write their name on the payroll. And ah, that was I think a mark because some of them told me with shaking

and he said there is no use or me doing up in the

and I never could write my name and I got bad there and I--no use. I got just about three of four more years to be up in this boat, it ain't no use to me trying to do it. And sold them the idea that this was a happiness that can come to you and I have an opportunity, thats what I have to give you. And oh, my! You would be suprised ah, when he was able to go through. . . now everytime when they first tried to sign the payroll, he would mess up. . .some of them would. But, eventually one of them got where he could do and then the consolatory part about it, they were able to write home for the first time. I would tell them to bring their letters by me and let me look at. . .I don't want to read, I just wanted to see if it (the letter), the postmaster could make out the address. Of course, they did. He wasn't happy until his wife would tell him, "Yes, we received your letter." He was happy then that he was able to do his own communication.

D: Yes sir.

B: I think that was the crowning part. Other than that, I taught those fellows in camp how to do basic things; spelling, reading, and writing and have his own necessities and everything like that. That was ah, I ah. . .in other words manhood was uttermost in them and

cont., I had the option to do that because I was working for the federal government and I had a high credit record. But, I didn't go into maybe its good I didn't, because I would have gotten rich and probably been dead like most receipts.

D: (Laughter)

B: Yea, able to---enjoy the good old life in my Senior Citizens years.

D: Okay. We were talking about when you first came to Jackson. What kind of reputation did Jackson have? What had you heard about it?

B: Well, Jackson ah, had ah, a good/reputation. Schools were ^{very} coming; of course, they weren't paying anything. They were like the rest of them. There were three or four places in the State at that time ah, were paying more than Jackson was. Ah, but, they had look like everything in the makings that was going to be. And its location you could see it was really the cross section of the state. . .central part of the state and the capitol happen to be h-e-r-e. And ah, the most progressive, look like at that time, elements were here. But, ah, it hadn't caught fire in those days so it was very slow. But if you would look around and seek and search you could see this was going to be the coming city.

D: Well, where did you live when you first moved here?

B: I moved to Jackson and lived right there.

D: Right where you are living now? Um, hum.

B: Where I'm living now 1202 Montgomery Street. We built that.

D: Okay. You came back from Perry, Georgia to be with your family?

B: Right.

D: Had Jackson changed that much from the time that you had initially moved them here?

B: No, no it hadn't. It hadn't changed too much?

D: What kind of work did you do when you came back here?

B: Well, when I came back here, I went into industry. I mean I went into business. I worked for the Universal Life Insurance Company for I guess about a year and a half. Then, I started back teaching by working with the veterans; I had done a good job that was World War II boys camp out at that time. Thinking about it-----prior to that may I say I went into when I got back here after the camps disbanded I went into industry. To be frank, I was dodging bullets because they were trying to get me into service. They said I had a good record of handling boys. So I ah, just slipped away from here and I just told them I was going on to work in industry--do war work until they got ready for me. And by doing war work away from here, that gave a deferment on account of my work. For that reason, I just stayed on up there until the war was over and I came back here really in and after the. . . I didn't come back at the time the war were. I worked on up there.

D: Up where?

B: In St. Louis. I was working really at General Steel Cask and Cooperation. That was a little town out from, call Grand City, Illinois but I was staying in St. Louis.

cont., But ah, after I came back here then that's when I started to work with the Universal Life Insurance Company and worked for about a year. And I did that work until I started back to teaching. Look like teaching is my longest line ah, I started back to teaching with the boys ah, who had gotten out of service and they were practically, I think I was the first one that mounted ah. . .the teaching Veterans in the adult educational program at that time. They had a lot of camps ah, that were called the boys would come in and he would go to these places where he had the skills and that would teach skills and everything like that. But, we started in the educational program. Started right here at Jim Hill, old high school, called it Blackburn School now. But, we started to work them in dealing with these boys and we worked through with them and I met a lot of people. At that time, we were still able to teach those boys who came back from the service that you're back here, you've saved the country, now you can help this country by being a M-A-N. Ah, just register and vote, participate in that as well as these other activities because you are a citizen and show your citizenship. So, we were able to get those boys to see that he ah, could make citizenship meaningful to him and I might say in a peaceful manner, in a straight forward manner, "We did just that." I am eminently proud of the boys we touched and helping them to rehabilitate themselves.

D: So, this was in the late 40s right?

B: This was ah, really in the late 40s and 50s.

D: In early 50s.

B: Yes, we started this program off in the late 40s, I believe here and then ah, went on through until all of them came out in the late 50s.

D: When you came to Jackson, what kinds of ah, businesses were here?

B: Well, then most the businesses ah, here were. . . Well, we didn't have but-say ah, anybbig businesses ah, other than working in the stores and ah, we had that generally. Maid service, chauffer service for the blacks as well as ah, ah, during ah, jobs around homes. It was good. The main thing: If a boy had good skills and a girl skills he would work at the hotels as a maid and also as what we call a bellhops and everything like that. Those were the main go of it. Now, we did have a few skill workers: carpernters, and brick layers but, there were only a few. And ah, from that ah, this ah, started and now industry, course wasn't thought about in those days and especailly in the light that it is thought about now, because two thirds of the white folks didn't want industry here.

D: Why?

B: Well, the reason why I say it was because of the economy. They just didn't want to see ah,. . .they figured this: If a dollar come into the hands of too many of the ah, Negroes--the Negro would get to be where he was, kind of independent. Thats the way I look at it.

D: Um, hum.

B: Well, it was just ah, shortsighting us on the part of our good white people.

cont., But now, they have changed and they see the light; and everybody see it. It's just like Booker Washington said years ago, "You can't throw your brother into a ditch and keep him there unless you stay down there and hold him. So, I think ah, the South made a malice mistake by not listening at Booker Washington because ah, Roosevelt said in later years when he came. . . "I'm speaking of Franklin D. Roosevelt who instituted this job.

"The South was at one-third of the nation

and that was largely due to
the relationship that one had on the other. "We gonna keep you down." But now, we're finding out it kept the state down, it kept our whole segment down. Let's get more income in here then everybody would be up. I am glad to see how, our State is in that light that I prayed for all these years to come to reality. It's reality now and I am enimently happy.

D: Um, hum. Since you were talking about black and white relationships, what were the status of black-white reaatationships when you came?

B: Well, ah, when I came, here's the thing about it is ah, I

fortunate because I have always been personally
out-spoken. When it comes to what I think is right and what I think is wrong. Then in my own manner and in my own way with those who I work with I always expressed that.

D: Um, hum.

B: But ah, to answer you question specifically what was the relationships? Generally, I would say it was this: That two-thirds of the black folks didn't tell the white folks the truth. They asked them "How you were feeling, he would try to answer what he thought the the white man wanted to hear, instead of telling the white man the truth."

- cont., You see it wasn't no use in me hypocriting, when you ask me how I feel and I don't have enough in my stomach, I tell you, I'm a little hungry.
- D: Yes sir.
- B: I think if our black folks had been just a little more anxious to. . .
- D: Okay, we were talking about the relationship between the white people and black people in Jackson and what you thought about it.
- B: (Cough) Well, I would say it was a good relation when you take everything in consideration, because ah, at that particular time it seemed that lynching had suddenly dropping. It was rare and pretty much on the decline. And ah, people seemingly wanted to solve problems by letting the law take its ah, proper course.
- D: Um, hum. You mentioned lynching. Do you remember anyone having been lynched while you were in Jackson?
- B: No, not in the city of Jackson. Lynching occurred before that but vividly I remember quite well the lynching that occurred at ah, I believe it was a small place down at County. I don't recall the exact time but, I believe it was Mack Parker. I remember that much.
- D: That was in the early 60s., late 50s or early 60s.
- B: Yes that was ah, . . .I don't know exactly now what date it was but, that was one of the ah, lynchings that occurred in the state of Mississippi.
- D: Do you recall anything about a man named Albert Lee who was tried for rape here?

B: No, I don't ah, recall. . .well, you mean that the ah, let me see was this a teenager or was this. . .

D: He was a young man around eighteen or nineteen years old. He was college age. He was charged with raping a white person.

B: Well, it doesn't fit into the picture right now

D: Okay. In the early fifties do you recall the atmosphere around the time of the Brown vs Topeka Case?

B: Oh, yes sir! I remember that ah, quite well when segregation as such the ah, Supreme Court handed down that decision, I ma that's what you talking about. All of us know that quite well, especially those who were teaching school. And ah, of course that happen to be in May, I believe it was May , I don't know the exact date. . .May 17, I believe in 1954 the decision reached. And ah, it seemed like to me ah, the ah, people at that time didn't want to accept , especially the ah, white people and some of the blacks too--thought the Supreme Court had gone too far in ah,. . .I remember quite well saying that as a citizen especially the black people had no other course to accept. The ah, decision of our courts because we couldn't defy that decision; we had always subject to the courts and at this particular time teaching, we had no course to tell our children that you have to accept the decision of the courts. And if you want to change the decision of the courts, you have to go about it by the methods that's outlined to get a change to seek the necessity to get those things. But, I believed in the court then; I believed in that decision. And ah, I said it was going to take some time, of course, I think ah, the authorities ah, stayed ^{at} the crossroads too long.

cont., I think they should have went right on and implemented it; it would have been much better off, then they just now reaching it. And once, I made the statement that the people in Mississippi, in the South generally, ah, agree that that was the only course they had; they would accept that and I think you can see the way it is. We are not having trouble that they're having now in some part of the Nation, because everybody now can see that the best thing to do ultimately is to accept; and if you don't like it then ah, go about to get a redress ah, through the proper channels, not defined.

D: Okay, well then following that the Equal Pay for Teachers Case came about.

B: Oh, yes. The Equal Pay for Teachers ah, really ah, started ah, yes and that went through federal courts. That drugged on for a long while before, look like the authorities wanted to come to the ah, conclusion that the blacks were in power to bare-share under the law as ah, any other teachers. It was a thing that ah, really Mississippi and the South generally in segregation ah, said separate but equal. Now, they kept it separate but, ah, (Laugh) the equality side never was ah, thought about in making it equal. So if they had read the law, and been good enough to ah, certainly make the law applicable to all the situations, why. . .we never would have had that dispairity the black and the white teachers. It would all be based on basis, but they would reneigh when it come as I said to the money, or economy. It would always be someway to try to keep you back.

D: Well, in the early 50s again, Emmett Till was murdered, what was the atmosphere then?

B: Well, yes I remember that quite well. We were fortunately in California, that was my first trip. I was taking my family to California, and it was on our way back to Mississippi, we got it over the radio that this ah, Emmett Till ah, was murdered with a little boy up in the. . .the thing about it, he came from Chicago but he happen to be visiting some of his relatives in the Delta. Now, this ah, of course ah, had a tremendous impact, not only in Mississippi and the South but throughout the nation itself. And, I think as a result of that we had the last Exodous of our people leaving in masses and groves going to the North. They just couldn't stumble this situation. And ah, by the thousands, and thousands of people left Mississippi, especially the Delta part going NorthEast and everywhere but here. And, as I said as a result of that, the impact and everything began people to look upon mentioning a new light and I think following that and other things, it wasn't long before lynching as a way of life was eliminated ah, not only in Mississippi but in the South generally. And mankind stepped up ah, another notch in the rem of human relations and the rem of ah, "Am I my brother's keeper." So, I think you might say the result of this thing a lot of good came out of this dark and dismal ah, job of lynching this little

D: Okay, lets go back a minute to the 40s again, I'm interested in what you saw when you came here? Do you recall any flourishing black businesses?

B: Well, there is always a few, but the in the black business was what ah, went over was the people who was in the funeral home business.

cont., It seemed like ah, they flourished. The undertakers ah, not only in Jackson but in the surrounding, in Vicksburg, Meridian and in all the areas whether it was those up in the Delta had a tremendous ah, growth and development. As a result of that they were able to ah, give small employment to a few people and a way of life for those who would seek that. And blacks begin to see that properly managed and handled, that he could manage business. And ah, I think from ah, that point of view as well as some of them going into small grocery stores, owning filling stations, and what have you, ah, the blacks begin to see that if he is going to succeed he had to go into some of these businesses adventures.

D: Okay. Well, ah you. . .Are there any businessmen who you remember? Are they any who were here when you came?

B: When I came here?

D: Yes sir.

B: Yes ah, there are some I remember. I remember ah, quite well ah, Earl Banks ah, who was ah, the ah, leading power is what we call Peoples Funeral Homes Burial Association Establishment. The fact about it ah, he was a young educated ah, ah, black man at that time. Well, of course, as you know all the businesses and well as everything else started off in a small manner, but he had a vision to stay with his father-in-law. . .and ah, give his ah, time and effort and his talents in developing this and it certainly paid dividends. I remember of course, Dr. Redman, who was at that time the leading ah, businessman generally. He was a lawyer, a doctor, a politician, a real estate man, what have you. He had a master of personal fortune here, in ah, ah, Jackson, and in the state of Mississippi.

cont., To think about it he is computed to be the ah, wealthiest black man in Mississippi. And he was here and he had ah, given a lot of time but he was an individualist. He ah, ah, believed in rugged individualist. He didn't ah, and couldn't see the necessity look like of ah, business enterprises being ah, ah, developed ah, on ah, basis of ah, . . . why you take like the Credit Unions, and things developing. I remember the President of Jackson College then, Dr. Reddix., was ah, early. . . matter a fact about it, he was a fineer in the development of our Credit Union Program. He brought that in. Dr. Redman didn't like that because ah, it was not the individual himself, it was kind of a group participation in there. And he attacked it in its early days, but ah, President Reddix was smart enough to just go right on with/^{his}program and ignored the challenge didn't try to answer it at all. But he just went on throughwith it and as a result of that, we can see today not only do we have Hinds County Educational Credit Union--its up in the millions of dollars but ah, the State Mutual also developed on that I call it cornerstones in ah, black business that somebody had to have the vision and dream and then/^{the}others had to see that vision and be willing to follow it, to make that a reality. And so, now we are look like, on a solid foundation because we got groups participation. A matter of fact, he was able to ah, have an idea and then by cooperation and ah, mutually assisting, and mutually pulling what little you have together that you could make these giant institutions; and we are all proud of ah, as I said Hinds County Educational Credit Union--as well as State Mutual. It will always be monuments to Dr. Reddix.

D: Yes sir. How did Dr. Redmen attack this effort?

B: You say how did he attack. . . Well, he told it--it was not ah, free enterprise system, that he was able to. . . and he had plenty money and some silent socialistic ideas .

cont., You know, no you don't know but, I know when President Roosevelt ah, brought on Social Security. A lot of the people had money attacked the program. Social Security was on and it was socialism instead of being American enterprise, free enterprise system. And they attacked it on that ground, so Attorney Redman was ah, as I said he was a civic leader, political leader, and he was ah, a doctor and everything which ah, believed in rugged individualism at that time. So he was just the that's why I think he I don't think he had anything personally against President Reddix, you know.. .but, he just figured that wasn't coming too good, what we call it that time free enterprise system. They would look at anything, the Socialist.

D: Okay. This was S. D. Redman, Sr.

B: Yes, S. D. Redman, Sr. That's right.

D: We need to go back just a minute again. Okay, do you recall any places of social gatherings, when you came. Like ah, the Crystal Palace?

B: Yes, the Crystal Palace happen to be a place of social gathering for the blacks that were under the ah, over the ah, drug store. I believe it was ah, 540 Street, down there at Farrish Street. You know where Farrish Street?

D: Um, hum.

B: And this Crystal Palace was over the drugstore and that's where the blacks or the Negroes had their dances.

D: Um, hum. Do you recall any big bands going out there?

B: Well, now big bands, when they came, they would usually go across the River. At that time, we had something we called the Gold Coast over across the River.

D: The Gold Coast?

B: Gold Coast. That was a place where you say. . . Jackson at that time was strictly dry and of course, ah, over there in Rankin County it was dry too. But, the bootleggers had control over the Gold Coast, and you could get your spirits and every thing else there. The Jacksonians would go to the Gold Coast to have these things, so they could get theirs. And that was one of the things...they made some nice. . .what we call night spots over there and big bands would come in--they would play at the Gold Coast.

D: What were some of the big bands that played at the Gold Coast?

B: Well, now the big bands that came in in those days was ah, Calloway. Calloway came and we had a band here the other day ah, they use to play there ah, Count Bassie. Count Bassie came and gave a program and lets see, well. . .a long that line ah, just lots of 'em in that ah, band.

All of the leading black bands would come and go to the Gold Coast.

D: Who owned the Gold Coast?

B: Well, at that time ah, lets see. . . the man was named Hutchings. Sure, Hutchings was the manager of the Gold Coast., and he was instrumental. He was manager of the night spots and he had a personal connection with ah, ah, lot of the blacks who owned spots in Chicago, St. Louis, New Orleans, and what have you. It wasn't any trouble for him to ah,. . . he had what we called the connections to get in touch with these bands. And through him, and his influence and his associates these bands would come this way.

D: Um, hum. Well, what were some of the other night spots that might have been here in Jackson? Like the Four O'clock Tea Room?

- B: Well, the Four O'clock Tea Room at that particular time didn't have much existence. The fact about it. . .William Stevens ah, later built ah, ah, a night spot, and that night spot was one of the high tides. But, as I said in the early days the Gold Coast was the principle thing in Jackson that served its day. And ah, Jackson was not developed until ah, way in the late 60s before they started to develop something that was real and nice. It just had little eat shops, we might say, and little and things like that, we had them for recreation. But everybody in Jackson when they got ready to spend a evening or something would go over to what we called the Gold Coast. That's where we would have
- D: Okay, now what about Farrish Street as a business district?
- B: Well, Farrish Street in the early days, . . .that's where as I said the pioneer man who had the control in the ownership of ah, was ah, Dr. Redman. Redman. He was the big businessman and he had the ownership. He rented it out to the doctors, and to the lawyers down there on Farrish Street. They had their offices usually in the Redman building, as well as coming on up to Hodges's and everything. We mentioned awhile ago ah, the Crystal Palace, I believed they were the owners.
- D: Do you remember their first names.
- B: I don't recall his first name, but he was a businessman and it was Mrs. Hodges. . .died not too long ago and they willed some of the buildings holdings to ah, ah, Central United Methodist Church. They get part of their income now from that establishment Mrs. Hodges left after her death.
- D: Um, hum.
- B: That first name just doesn't tick with me who it was at that particular time.

- D: Okay, back to the time when you first came here? Do you recall any of the activities that took place on Farrish Street? (Like people being on the corners playing banjos and that kind of thang.)
- B: Well, yes that was ah, frequent. You could find that and we had a fellow here at that time who sold roots not only on Farrish Street but, he sold his roots on Capitol Street. Name of Seth Ballard.
- D: Seth Ballard.
- B: S-e-t-h, I believe Seth and Ballard. He would ah, sell that and people would buy it.
- D: Around what year was this?
- B: Ah, that was ah, in the ah, fifties and sixties, going on about that time. You could find those kind of people on Farrish Street. . . . Farrish Street was a peddling street to people who come in and they would sell. And you would have these fish fries and these small restuarants around there and everything. The people would buy fish and they would come out in the and drank their beer, especially on Saturday nights and everything like that. That was quite frequent.
- D: What kinds of things did they sell on the Streets other than this roots and. . .
- B: Well, now they'd roots and everything. The boys who would be interested in knowing the right person and the right person knowing you, you could buy some of these things if you could dodge the policemen. They'd slip that to you to, but the thing about it. ...it wasn't open like ah, people going over to the ah, what we call Gold Coast to sit down and dignity. But, these fellows existed down on Farrish Street, and usually he would tell you to stay here and you had to stay

cont., there because he wasn't going to let you follow him before he go back and then the next ten or fifteen minutes he'd come back

D: This would be something to drink?

B: Something to drink. Right. That's the way it existed. So the ones who actually wanted it bad enough he was willing to pay the price, he could get it there.

D: What church have you been affiliated with?

B: Well, I've been a Methodist all my life. Go to think about it when I was down on and grew up in Covington County going to school--- my parents were Methodists. . .The CME Methodists. And ah, at that time we came to ah, Jackson. The fact about it when I went down on the Coast in Moss Point working, they had a CME Church but it was way cross town and the ME Church was pretty close to the school that I was working and my children were growing up and I didn't like to pass one church going to another because they would be too old to say that all the Methodist Churches is So we joined the ME Church there and when I came to Jackson, it was the same thing, I was living there and I would have to pass ME Church going to the CME Church so, we stayed on with the ME Church and I am connected with the ME Church.

D: With the ME Church? What kind of Church is that?

B: Well, later it was called Methodist Episcopal in those days. But, now its called. . .they changed the name United Methodist.

D: Okay, what were the good times that you remember in your dealings with the Church?

- Alcorn A & M College, p. 2
- Barron, Alphonso Alexander
 birth place, p. 1
 CCC Camp Educational
 Advisor, p. 7
 church affiliation, pp. 26-27
 concept of "Good Ole Days",
 p. 1
 education, pp. 1-2
 family, pp. 4-5
 occupations, p. 12
 school principal, pp. 5, 7
 World War I veterans, p. 9
- Black Businesses, p. 19
 Funeral Home Business, pp. 19-20
- Black/White Relations, pp. 15-18
- Ballard, Seth, p. 25
- Banks, Earl
 Peoples Funeral Home Burial
 Association Establishment,
 p. 20
- Big Bands, p. 23
 Cab Calloway, p. 23
 Count Bassie, p. 23
- Brown vs Topeka Case, p. 17-18
- Conservation Corps Camp, pp. 7-10
- Crystal Palace, pp. 22, 24
- Early Recollections of Jackson,
 pp. 10-12
- Equal Pay for Teachers Case,
 p. 18
- Four O'clock Tea Room, pp. 23-24
- Gold Coast, pp. 22-25
- Hinds County Educational
 Credit Union, p. 21
- Hodges, Mrs. p. 24
- Jim Hill School, p. 13
- Job Opportunities for Blacks,
 pp. 14-15
- Lawrence County Training School
 pp. 5-6
- Lynching, p. 19
- Mc Cullough High School, p. 5
- Mount Pleasant Church, p. 2
- President Reddix, p. 21
- Redman, Dr. S. D. , pp. 20-21,
 24
- State Mutual, p. 21
- Till, Emmett, pp. 18-19
- Tougaloo College, pp. 28-29.

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW AGREEMENT

You have been asked for information to be used in connection with the Oral History Program at Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi. The purpose of this program is to gather and preserve information for historical and scholarly use.

A tape recording of your interview will be made by the interviewer, and a typescript of the tape will be made and submitted to you for editing. The final retyped and edited transcript, together with the tape of the interview will then be placed in the oral history collection at Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi. Other institutions or persons may obtain a copy. These materials may be used for purposes of research, for instructional use, for publication, or for other related purposes.

I, A. B. Barron have read the above and, in view of the historical and scholarly value of this information, and in return for a final typed copy of the transcript, I knowingly and voluntarily permit Jackson State University, Jackson, the full use of this information. I hereby grant and assign all my rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or not such rights are now known, recognized, or contemplated, to Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi.

A. B. Barron
Interviewee (Signature)

Aug. 12th 1976
Date