

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 made available for purposes of research, for instructional use, for publication, or for other related purposes.

I, Sip Freeman, 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.

Sip Freeman  
Interviewee (Signature)

6/4/77  
Date

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWER AGREEMENT

I, Dennis Caldwell, in view of the historical and scholarly value of the information contained in the interview with Mr. Sip Freeman Sr. knowingly and voluntarily permit Jackson State University, Jackson the full use of this information, and hereby grant and assign to Jackson State University, Jackson all rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or not such rights are now known, recognized or contemplated.

Dennis Ray Caldwell  
Interviewer (signature)

1977- 1  
Interview Number

5/5/77  
Date

Transcript Oral History

Dennis Caldwell

This is an interview with Mr. Sip Freeman Sr. for the Jackson State University Oral History Project by Dennis Caldwell at 3118 20th Street, Gulfport, Mississippi on March 13, 1977, at 2:55 P.M.

C: Mr. Freeman what exactly are your earliest childhood memories?

F: Eight is the earliest.

C: Do you remember anything from back then that made you happy?

F: Shooting marbles, wrestling, and playing.

C: How exactly did you get along with your brothers and sisters?

F: Fine, because momma didn't allow us to fight.

C: Anything in particular would happen if you all were caught fighting?

F: It was a whooping for you! That's what it was!

C: Do you remember any games, or what have you, that you all played as a child?

F: We played let buddy out, Shoo Sly.

C: Which games did you enjoy playing the most?

F: Shooting marbles, hunting rats.

C: Hunting Rats?? HA HA.

F: That's True.

C: I hear you.

C: Do you recall any songs or rhymes?

F: Any Songs?

C: Uh uh.

F: Yes.

C: What are the names of a few of them.

F: Shine on me and uh uh... Keep your lamp  
trembling and burning.

C: Did you have any pets or what have you?

F: One. A little shaggy dog.

C: What type of dog was he?

F: A little Shepard.

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C: Do you remember his name?

F: Jailer.

C: Jailer? why did you call him that?

F: That was his name, we just named him that.

He was a bad little fellow.

C: Well did you have a nickname. MR Freeman

F: Yes, "Dad". That's what my parents called me as my nickname.

C: So that's how you got the name from your parents?

F: Yes, that's how I got it.

C: Mr. Freeman do you recall exactly what type of clothes they were wearing in those days?

F: Little knee high britches. Short pants.

C: what were they called?

F: Corduroy

C: Well, when was the first time you can recall riding in an automobile?

F: Along in 1914?

C: what type was it?

F: A little Essie. That an old make.

C: Was that one of the first ones they made?

F: I don't know if it was about the first they made but it was the second one I seen.

I was a little boy.

C: Well where did you see this one?

F: In Tison, Alabama.

C: Who owned it?

F: Hamp Mc. Ferguson

C: Did you work for him?

F: Yes, I work for him. I took water to the hands in the field. Ride around with him and open gates

C: Open gates for him?

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Q: Yes, so he could drive through.

C: Well did you go to Sunday school very much?

Q: Pretty often.

C: What faith were you in?

Q: Baptist.

C: Well who <sup>had</sup> the most influence on the decisions made in the family? Who was the boss?

Q: My daddy.

C: Why?

Q: Because he was the head of the house.

C: Did your parents have a happy relationship?

Q: Absolutely, yes, they got along fine.

C: Keeping that in mind, do you think you brought your children up according to the way you were raised?

Q: No I didn't, because I was brought up tough. And when I was told I could go out and play and told a certain time to be back there, I had to be back there. If I wasn't, it was a killing. But now the children go and come when they get ready. You just as well say,

C: So you are saying kids nowadays have it much easier.

Q: Much easier.

C: As you were a little boy, do recall any encounters with whites. Did you ever come in contact with whites?

Q: No I didn't come in contact with whites.

C: Well what were you taught about whites?

Q: Nothing but stay in my place and tend to my business and beat them right. That was saying Yes Sir and No Mam. I was taught that.

C: You would do this or else?

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J: If I didn't do it and old lady Maybelle found out, I had something torn up. That's right

C: That's your mother, Maybelle.

J: That was my mother.

C: Being raised and taught under this influence, over the years, have your feelings changed about whites?

J: Back along in the years when I was coming up white people were whipping colored people. But now they don't do that, they are treating colored people much better, I knew that. That's true.

C: Do you recall any whites that you found to be very good to you?

J: Yes, John Mill.

C: Where did you come in contact with this people?

J: Just by going around where they were and at that time my wife was working some with them. And I found them to be very nice.

J. W. Anderson was just a nice of a man I want to meet. John Mill was the same way, Mr. Worth was the same way. Just nice as I want to meet.

C: Where were you living at this time?

J: When I was with Mr. Anderson, sometimes I was in Alabama and sometimes I was in Georgia. And the rest of it I was here in Mississippi.

C: Can you recall when you first came to Miss.

J: It was in '68 I believe. Yes, it was the first of '68. No, it was the last of '68.

C: Do you like it here better or do you like Georgia?

J: Yes, I like it here alright.

C: Well why did you move to Mississippi?

J: Well my wife got sick and wanted to come where her children were.

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J: I moved down here with her.

C: ~~Black~~ Getting back to how you said whites are looking ~~black~~ better. Did your families pass on any stories about slavery?

J: Well my mother's Daddy and her mother told me often about slavery. Said that back there in them days the big boss over them would go out there and put two of them to a double surge buggy and pull it around over the field backwards and forwards where people were working for him at. Didn't have a horse to pull no buggy. Men pulled it.

C: The Black Slaves pulled the white ~~master~~ around as if they were horses.

J: Absolutely. Yes

C: Well how do you feel about that Mr. Freeman?

J: I figure it was pretty tough.

C: For the Black man?

J: Yes, it was pretty tough for him. I telling you.

C: Mr. Freeman you mentioned earlier that you attended Sunday School. Are you still a member?

J: Still a member.

C: Of the Baptist?

J: That's right, of the Baptist Church.

C: How much influence did your religion have on your family?

J: I have to say that it was very important, because all of them have united with the Church.

C: What exactly do you think is the function of the Church?

J: The Church at nothing but a place that

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J. <sup>cont.</sup> was appointed for you to go worship. That's what the church was for. And it is a leader in that church and we are suppose to follow as a Christian.

C. Well Ah was Music a very important part of the church?

J. Yes, Music was very important in the church.

C. Were you a member of the choir?

J. Well I was in the hymn part not the choir.

C. How did your religion effect the way you brought up your children?

J. Well it effect me pretty good, but I often thought over that they didn't come up like I come up. But I never did scold them and do them like a heap of fathers I have known to do their children. Cause I never did go up beating them and dragging them and going on. So they were brought up... Well just say near about according to the way I was, but ~~might~~ not like I was.

C. Well do you think that the way you brought your children up is better than the way you were brought up. In the sense that the men you mention would beat their children, you know, do you feel your way was better?

J. Yes, My way was better, it didn't take all that beating for them. Not to learn him. You know you can go to beating or something, a child, you can put the devil in him. See? But back in my day you were dared



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to show up that you had the devil in you when your parents got at you and gave you whipping. You better not, they'll take something and knock you in the head!

C: Well did you rely on the Church teaching to guide you?

J: Oh yes, I feel that would be perfectly true and right. If I didn't I wouldn't attend that Church.

C: Is your Church racially integrated?

J: Not saying that it is integrated, but we have some whites visiting there every once in awhile.

C: Mr. Freeman were you married in the church?

J: I wasn't married in the church, but I was married in my wife's mother's home.

C: What type of wedding was it?

J: It was a fine wedding. Everything went out just lovely. No fussing, no fight, nothing of that kind. It was just a swell wedding. Everybody that was in the wedding went out and told others what type of wedding it was.

C: At what age did you marry?

J: Well when I married, I was about twenty.

C: Mr. Freeman getting back to the subject of slavery, ~~at~~ were your grandparents slaves?

J: My mother's daddy and my mother's mother said that they were back there in slavery time.

C: Did they tell you any stories about slavery?

J: Yes, they had to get up from there and get out and go to that man's field and work from sun up to sun down.

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C: No break or anything, how did they manage to go along like that?

G: All I know is that she said that was the way it was. I don't know if they managed to do such as that, but that's the way it was, so they say.

C: Will have you ever, we are going to change the page a little faster, and I want to know if you have ever belonged to any organizations.

G: Yes, I belong to the Masonic.

C: Oh, you were a Mason?

G: Mason.

C: Were there any other particular ones?

G: Brother; Sister home protection.

C: What uh, I have heard of the Masons, but what kind of organization is the Brother sister home protection.

G: That was just a society.

C: Oh that was a society.

G: Uh uh MM.

C: Well what went on in the society.

G: Well when you got sick, they paid you benefits, when you died, they gave you a burial.

C: So you think you benefited from this society, you know, with it taking care of your burial and so forth, paying you benefits.

G: Oh yes, I am certain of that, they been doing it so far.

C: Are you still a member of either one of these?

G: Yes.

C: Which one are you still a member of.

Dennis Caldwell

J: Mason

C: Mr. Freeman I want to ask you about the education you've had. How far did you go in school?

J: Well now when I was going to school things were regularly tough. And the doctors, your people ~~people~~ had to buy your looks for you. They had to pay ~~a~~ a teacher for you to go to school. And I went up to the, well I finish the fourth and was promoted to the fifth. Momma them wasn't able to keep me fixed to go to school. So I had to stop.

C: Mr. Freeman when you were going to school; how did you get to and from school?

J: ~~Had~~ to get in the road and walk.

C: Everyday? There was no other...

J: Everyday. There wasn't no other way, but to walk

C: Well uh, how many hours a day were you in school?

J: Well I was in there about seven hours, cause we take in at 8 light, out at twelve, back in at one, out at four.

C: Well did you take a lunch?

J: Yes, some Cornbread, some syrup;

C: Some syrup? That's all you carried with you

J: Sometimes I carried a sweet potato, sometimes I would put some ground peas in my pocket.

C: Some ground peas? And this carried you until you returned home.

J: Yes.

C: The school that you attend, exactly what did the building look like?

J: Well I tell you, the building look like

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G: a building near about to fall down.

C: Oh yeah, it wasn't fit for a building  
to have school in?

F: No it wasn't fit but that's what they  
made out with.

C: Well ah. One last question Mr. Freeman,  
how was the building heated.

G: old heater, old wooden heater. And the  
older boys had to get out to ~~take~~ take  
wood. And to make a fire in that  
old building, and they'd set up there  
and part the time them children be  
sittin up there shakin'. Cold.

C: Oh yeah, just that cold?

F: Yeah cold. I did myself.

C: Were you one of the ones that went get  
the wood?

F: Yeah I had to go get that wood  
they'd send about three or four of us out  
there and get that wood and bring back  
and put it down for the heater.

C: Well Mr. Freeman I would like to thank  
you for this interview and like could  
we have your consent for this ~~tape~~  
tape to be turned over to the Jackson  
State University OAH History Department.

G: Absolutely, welcome to it. Don't have any  
objections at all of it.

C: Well I appreciate that and I would like  
to thank you once again for the tape.

F: Alright.

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