

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF INTERVIEWEE

Henry White Madison is an 84 year old Black man who was born in Jackson, Mississippi. He quit school when he was in the 4th grade. He lived for a while in Indianapolis, Indiana where he owned two homes and later sold them. While in Indiana he worked at the State Automobile Insurance Company and was in charge of the basement where he was very dependable. He talked about this with pride. He has been back in Jackson thirty-one years. He has one son, Charles Henry Madison. His wife died while he was in Indiana.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

Two assistants, Deborah Denard, and I arrived at the Robinson Street Senior Citizens Feeding Site around noon just before the Senior Citizens had finished their noon meal April 1, 1976. After careful arrangements through site visits and telephone conversations, interviews had been scheduled. However, there was no ideal place for the interview to be taped. The interview occurred in the back of the Feeding Site food serving area in a relatively quiet atmosphere. The interview lasted about fifteen minutes. It was then time for the Senior Citizens' bus to return Mr. White and citizens to their homes.

During the fifteen minutes, Mr. Madison indicated that the "Good Ole Days" were when he was a child. He recalled his 3rd grade experiences which were enjoyable, Church. He further recalled a neighbor, Aunt Phoebe telling about when the stars feel when she was about 12 years old. Also he recalled his work experience for Mr. Frank Pridgeon's grocery store. Mr. Pridgeon was a great checker player who often forgot the grocery store when he was playing checkers.

This interview is to be rescheduled for completion. The rescheduling of the interview with Mr. Madison was pleasant. He was in good spirits. However, the arrangement was not good, in that we were permitted to sit in the dining area of the Robinson Site. There was constant talking in the background, although Mrs. Agner Allen did her best to keep loud distractions to a minimum.

Mr. Madison revealed additional information about his recollections of the "Good Ole Days", which were when he was a youth with his band, where he played baseball and worked for Mr. Pridgeon and at a lumber company.

Dr. A. Harrison

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, Henry White Madison 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.

Henry W Madison
Interviewee (Signature)

Aug. 11, 1974
Date

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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

INTERVIEWER: Dr. A. Harrison

INTERVIEWEE: Mr. Henry White Madison

SUBJECT: "The Good Old Days"

DATE: April 1, 1976

H: It is April 1, and we're at the Robinson Senior Citizen's Site. We have selected for an interviewee today, Mr. Henry White Madison, who has just finished his lunch and has kindly agreed to participate in this project with us.

We had a pre-interview with you, Mr. Madison, and we learned several interesting things about you. One of them was that you were actually born here in the city of Jackson.

M: That's right.

H: Do you have any recollections of those days? What was the city like?

M: Well, to my remembrance, the first thing that I can recollect was ah, . . . We were staying on East Pearl Street. I don't know what year it was, but I was small. We ah, (my mother) was in something. I reckon this was my mother, I don't remember my mother.

H: Um, hum. She died when you were very young?

M: Yes, she died when I was a baby. I . . . That was some kind of an organization. I think it was a women's organization. And they was, look like they had about four or five tables in the backyard, that was in the summertime, and the lighting bugs was going on and ah, some part was in prayer, and some part of it was in song, I was nothing but a child.

H: Where was this? What location?

M: Some kind of organization. The white people stayed in the front. All this was going on in the back. Look like the colored people

what worked there or something had organizations that met there in they backyard.

H: Maybe like the Y. W. C. A. ?

M: Like something like that. It was a women's organization 'cause they had about four tables, and all four tables I think had four women look like. I wasn't nothing but a child. I can remember we were playing 'round the . . . running 'round playing. I don't know what we was playing. About four or five little kids about my size running around--that's the first thing I ever remember in my life, playing in the backyard.

When we were trying to write you know, and everything the women's had just about three or four tables and each table had about four women at the table. I don't know what kind of organization it was but . . .

H: So you were really having a good time?

M: We were. We were playing.

H: Your earliest recollections in the city of Jackson was having a good time. Do you know where this was located, what street?

M: That was on West Pearl Street. On the other, I don't know exactly we were staying there or not, but they say we were staying there on West Pearl Street right on the other side of State Street. This was all in the backyard . . . All in the backyard honored by three or four tables, but it was all colored. That's the first thing I remember.

H: Okay, what is your next earliest recollection?

M: Let me see now. Yes. About three or four years old, I wasn't over four years old, but I remember that after we were making so much fuss. They had to stop us for awhile.

H: Let me see if this thing is working. (Referring to tape recorder) Okay lets continue with this interview. I'm sorry about the interruption. What about your early school days in the city of Jackson?

M: Let me see. Well, let me see. I don't know what age I'd be, but I was going to that school.

H: Smith Robinson's School?

M: Yes, but I don't know whether it was named like that then. That is the place where that school is now. It is nothing but a long shed. It was equipped . . . No I am thinking about something else.

That is the laboratory I'm thinking about. The school I was going to . . . that school . . . I was on the third floor. Yes, I was on the third floor and in the third grade. Lets see. I forget what the teacher was named now, but you had to go up two flights of steps to get to this floor, I think. So, I forget what the teacher . . . I think my teacher was ah, Sally Pickens, I think that's what her name was Sally Pickens, I think. And we were ah, let me see now, I forget what the other teachers was named, but we was on the third floor. We walked up the steps, up the stairs and some. I must have been in the third grade at that time. Classes was run by one teacher.

H: Do you remember having a good time in the classroom?

M: No. It wasn't a good time.

H: Did you ever have a good time at school?

M: No, I wasn't going to school at that time.

H: You didn't have a good time when you went to school?

M: Oh, yes. That was after I had grown up then to a good size. I was in the third grade, I think then. Sally Pickett was her name. I think thats what her name was.

H: Can you tell me something you did that you really enjoyed doing?

M: I like to play ball and we did that when I was in school. When we were all inside, we couldn't do very much playing ball. (The yard wasn't big enough.)

H: Do you recall having a good time at Church?

M: Now at church, this after I got out of bo . . . childhood. Well, my grandparents, my mother was dead . I think of my mother when I was 'round on Pearl Street. I think that must have been my mother I was living with then 'cause I was a small child. We were running around and playing around. The moon was shining and everything.

H: You were at church then?

M: No, that was when I was on Pearl Street. Now, this church business . . . Before I ever started church, I had got to be a good size then. And the first church . . . I don't know where, but if I get to speaking about churches I would be up about five or six years old. If I'm going to speak about some churches, I think I don't remember going to no church but the saintified church. That was C. P. (Thoin?) at that time.

H: Did you have a good time at the saintified church?

M: No, not in the church.

H: I mean did you enjoy what you were doing when you were in church?

M: No, it was the opposite. It wasn't any playing in church.

H: When you hear the phrase "Good Old Days," what does it mean to you?

M: What it mean to me? Now in my childhood life, the biggest thing I can remember is living on South Street. I was living with my aunt (my mother's sister.) Her name was Miami. It was a lot of children there, me and Husky had two boys--two little boys and myself.

I remember one Christmas we got a wagon so they could pull. We had to pull one another up and down South Street. South Street wasn't paved then. It was muddy then. It didn't have no pavement no where. Everything was muddy then. We'd run up and down the southside of the street.

H: Do you remember how old you were?

M: I reckon I was about three years old. I reckon between three and four years old. My aunt Miami, I stayed with. She was living then--her and her sister, Bes . . . Betty. Her daughter name Betty. That was her child. Johnny was her son, and I . . . That was my aunt. I was living with my aunt Miami. Betty was aunt Miami's daughter. She had a son named Johnny. (Repeats again the facts about the wagon.)

It began to get dry from the rain, and it was dry and we had to run up and down in the part that was dry.

H: So the "Good Old Days" were when you were a child?

M: Yes, when I was a child. An old lady Phobie, who stayed across the street in a two-story house right across the street from my aunt Miami house had a great big house. Look like it had been white peoples. It was a big two-story house kind of looked like an apartment. It kind of look like an apartment because more people stayed in there besides old lady Phobie. Old lady Phobie had been there when the stars fell. She used to get us together and sit out on the front porch. When the sun shinned, she would tell us about . . . She wasn't nothing but a young girl then--when the stars fell. She used to tell us how everybody was so scared when the stars fell. Aunt Phobie, got a kick out of having us out there telling us I think. She said, "She was about thirteen years old when the stars fell." Aunt Phobie was about that old.

MADISON

- H: She would just tell the children stories about when the stars fell. Can you recall another story, or any other stories that she use to tell?
- M: No, I might recall some, but that was the most interesting story. That's when she was a girl about twelve years old, I think. (Repeats the story of Aunt Phobie about the stars.)
- H: Did you believe it when she told you?
- M: Sure. That was in her days, see. She was a young girl then.
- H: Do you remember seeing the stars fall?
- M: No, I don't remember seeing the stars fall. She would just tell us the stories about them.
- H: Do you recall anybody else who use to tell you stories when you were a child?
- M: No, I think I had growed up out of that. My mother died on Pearl Street between this time.
- H: Yes, between the time you moved. Did you move to stay with your Aunt Phobie?
- M: My aunt Phobie . . . Aunt Phobie, she wasn't my mother. She was a old lady. She stayed right across the street from us. All of us was on the corner of South Street and West Street 'cause the two-story house was right across in front of us. Our house was right in front of that.
- H: Well, why don't we move on to the time you were a teenager?
- M: Yes.
- H: How did you have a good time when you were a teenager?
- M: Let's see now. My teenage . . . I didn't have much good times. I worked when I was staying with my grandfather, him and my step grandmother.
- H: What was your grandfather named?
- M: Edwin Brofford. Edwin B-r-o-f-f-o-r-d.
- H: Was this in Jackson?
- M: Yes, all this was in Jackson.

H: What kind of work did he do?

M: Gardening, that's all the work he could do back in them times.

H: Did you help him with the work?

M: I wasn't big enough.

H: You said you were a teenager now, and you were living with your grandfather--what kind of work did you do?

M: I don't think I was doing any work at that time. I know one place I was working down on South State Street with Frank Pridgen. He run the grocery store, and I worked with him. I use to help with the grocery store. He liked me. I was going to school at that time.

When I was coming back from school, I had to stop at the grocery store at Frank Pridgens and help him. He was a good checker player. He use to play checkers for money. People all over this country use to go down there. I don't know where they went to play at, but I know sometimes he had a grocery store and forgot all about his grocery store and leave me there. In those days a person running a grocery store stayed upstairs. His wife had two children. He would go off and ah, leave me in the store by myself while he was playing checkers. Sometimes, he would stay all the evening playing checkers for money. People use to come from up North down here to play.

(Completing interview with Mr. Henry W. Madison.)

H: Today is April 7, and I'm going to complete the interview with Mr. Madison. I was just asking you about your educational background. How far did you go in school?

M: Well, I was promoted to the fourth grade, but I didn't get a chance to get there because I . . . Let me see. What did they do with me? I left here and went to Indianapolis. I think that's what it was.

H: So, you went to Indianapolis when you were a young boy?

M: Well, I was married.

H: I see. Did we get a good definition from you before on what the "Good Old Days" were?

M: Well, I played baseball. Those were good days with me.

H: When you played baseball, how old were you?

M: I was in my teens.

H: What position did you play?

M: I use to catch. My brother pitched. (Laughter)

H: What was your brother named?

M: Lee, Lee Madison.

H: What teams did you play with?

M: Well, I played with school teams.

H: Were they here in Jackson?

M: Yes.

H: What school were you attending?

M: I was attending the public schools?

H: Do you know the name of that school?

M: Well, lets see. I forget now. It had a name to it.

H: You can't remember what school that was--well, maybe you can remember that later on.

How did you really have a good time as a teenager?

M: Playing marbels, playing ball, and mostly everything that came then.

H: Now as a adult, can you tell me how you had a good time?

M: Yes, I use to go to dances. I use to play music. I had a band of my own, one time. I had a string band. I had a bass violin. Jerry Gardner was a guitar player and I played the mandolin.

H: What is a mandolin?

M: You pick it with a pin . . . needle. You hit it this was. (Demonstrating.) Yea, I had me a band. I played for Governor Vardaman. I played in the Governor Vardaman's mansion. He use to take us out to see his family. We played at their big picnic.

Governor Vardaman was one of our . . . He would take us out all the time.

H: One of your sponsors?

- M: Yea, Governor Vardaman.
- H: What was your band called?
- M: Madison Band. Three piece guitar, bass violin, mandolin.
- H: Did you ever do any singing?
- M: Yea.
- H: What were some of the songs you sang?
- M: "Down by the old mill stream where I first met you. (Singing)
You eyes were blue and your gaze was true.
It was there I know that I loved you so.
You were sixteen my littlest queen
Down by the old mill stream." (Loud laughter)
- H: Very good. No wonder, I can imagine why Governor Vardaman had . . .
You were good.
- M: Yea, he use to take us out. He was our governor. He believed in
the Madison Band.
- H: Oh, he believed in the Madison family?
- M: Yea, the Madison Band.
- H: Who were the other members of the band?
- M: Jerry Gardner, he was the guitar player. Tom Frisco, he was
the bass violin player. We didn't have but three pieces.
- H: You played for white groups.
- M: And colored too if they wanted.
- H: Would you describe your music as Jazz, Rock & Roll, or was it
Rag Time?
- M: We played for dances. We could play for church too. We had all kinds.
We had just naturally good music. We didn't have no ruff stuff or
nothing like that. We had good music.
- H: Did you make good money doing that?
- M: We made pretty good money. The governor had us playing for him and
the white boys dressed up to go to school. If they had knew anything

that way they could get us. We got a lot to do.

H: Did you make good money?

M: Yes. We made pretty good money.

H: Could you give me an example of how much you would make on a given night?

M: Sometimes we would make about four or five dollars apiece.

H: I guess that was pretty good back then.

M: Yes, that was pretty good back then.

H: Vardaman was governor around 1904-1908, right?

M: Yes. He would get us to play too. It must have been good 'cause he would take us around to some of his folks who worked for him in his business to serenade them and everything. "This here is my band," he said, "The Madison Band."

H: What other kind of work did you do during that time?

M: I worked at Enoch's Lumber Company down there. I wasn't nothing but a younger then. I was in my teens. I worked down there about ten years. I was the head packer down there. My coach was the packer when I went there. I was young then. He was the head packer and he died. He was the boss of that thing. They give me his job.

H: You spoke very highly of Governor Vardaman. Did everybody like him the way you did?

M: Like Governor Vardaman? Well, I don't think everybody 'cause you know how some people are about the governor. They want him to do some things sometimes. He won't accept them. He was popular. He was a fine man.

H: Fine Governor.

M: All the church people, when they had something big would get him to take head of it. We played for them over in Rankin once or twice. We went over there and played for them at some of those big picnics they had over there.

H: Could you describe one of them for me?

M: We played for one big church picnic over there, then another.

Some of the young people had something over there and we played there. We played for mostly everything. We played for dances around here in town for white people. Mostly the white people got us to play for dances mostly. We kept up with all the late music. Jerry could play by note. He had some fellow he knew well. When they get this here notes, this new music "man" we're have the late music already.

- H: That's really interesting. I'm so glad to hear about that kind of experience you had. Now ah, did the black folks accept you just as much as whites did?
- W: Well, not quite as much. They didn't give me anything. We had young boys in those days, you know, young white boys. They had more things than colored kids, because they were able to get them. The daddies had to pay us something. We kept up with all that late music. Jerry had a fellow who played piano and he played by note. We'd go and he'd learn us all that late music coming in. We learn all the late music along with everything else. There wasn't a thing they could call almost we didn't know it.
- H: Were you ever a member of the Secret Societies?
- M: Let me see. No, I didn't get into any of those things.
- H: What about any other community groups?
- M: Well, a lot of colored people get us to play for them and them things of that kind. You had a lot of colored people.
- H: I'm going to ask you about a series of things. I want you to tell me whether you remember them.
- M: Okay.
- H: Excuse me just a minute. Were continuing here with Mr. Madison about events that you might remember in your life anytime in the city of Jackson? For example: during the Flood of 1927?
- M: Let me see. Well, not the Flood that came up above the old Capitol. Back in those days, the river wasn't closed in. They hadn't closed the river in. When the river overflowed, it would just come all the way 'cause they didn't have any levees back there in those days. They hadn't built no levee for protection. So, the river then would come to the old Capitol. Everything over on the hill was under water back there in those days. We didn't have many things. They have baseball games now. We have that there in the park. Now, what else could we have--that is what you wanted to know isn't it?
- H: Um, hum. For example, do you remember anything about Hawkins Field?

M: No, I don't. Where was that?

H: I know it was opened in 1927. That's the airfield out there.

M: What airfield?

H: I may be wrong about that. Okay, what are some of the jobs you had that you really, really enjoyed where you earned a living other than with your music. You told me about your band, now.

M: Well, when I worked at Enochs.

H: Enochs, where is that?

M: He was the manufacturer of all kinds of furn . . . You could, well he had a big place that ran from the river up to State up to the railroad. It took in that whole block from the river down there up to the . . . I forget the ah, name of the street what the trains run. It was ah, West Street.

H: What did he do? He manufactured what?

M: He manufactured glasses, doors, blinds. He sold by the carloads. He sold stuff, all over the state of Mississippi. He had a big plant. He had one of the biggest plants you have, and ah, he manufactured all kinds of stuff: Doors, blinds, and windows he carried in stock. He loaded stuff by the carloads. He had one of the biggest plants in Mississippi during them days, and I was the head of the Packing Company. My coach was the head when I first went there. I was young then. I was in my teens. My coach died. I was working up under my coach--so, I learned all under my coach what I knew about packing. Then I took over where my coach had died and left off. I took over that part. Then, I had charge. They'd bring the bills down. They'd bring the stuff down. They brought the bills down and I had a file. 'Madison, say now this is the so and so. That goes out. We want that group of stuff first because we got to ship that first. But this one over here, it got to go out the second time, the second time.' I had responsibilities. I wasn't nothing but a young kid at that time. It wasn't anybody had been working in that thing long enough to know anything about it but me. I had that job myself. When they bring the bills down, they say, "We want this group of stuff first, Madison. Put that there second where it says . . ." Well, I had to make my arrangements with Enochs 'cause I was bearing theresponsibility. They got carloads of stuff. They got a big order for shipping stuff North. "That's almost a carload of stuff, Madison. You've got to have that stuff ready at such and such a time. I'd put that bill . . . Now, this her stuff you stuff on the botton because this goes to such and such a place. I'd have them separated, so when they go to load it in

the cars, they'd know exactly where to go and get them cases. I had a big responsibility. Some of that stuff went way up in New York and Chicago. I had a responsibility.

H: Was there a period during the day that you would relax?

M: Yes. Twelve o'clock to one o'clock.

H: What did you do during this time?

M: Oh, sometimes we would sing. Sometimes some good fellows ah, some of the good dancers would dance.

H: The men did the dancing?

M: The colored. In that time, they'd separate us. We use to have dancing and singing and everything. I could sing and somebody else could sing. Jerry Gardner didn't work at Enochs, but I did. I worked there for about fifteen years.

H: Was it after that that you went to Indianapolis?

M: Um, hum, yea.

H: Do you ever recall a group of people in Jackson called the "washer women"?

M: No. What did they do?

H: They washed clothes for other people. I just wanted to know if you recalled any of that.

M: We had groups that did washings like that 'cause my wife washed for a family. I forget what their name was. She washed from when the baby grew up to near about to a manhood.

H: Would she go to their home or would they bring it in to her?

M: She would go to their home. My wife didn't finish her schooling, but she was smart.

H: I bet you recall some street talk from the "street peddlers"?

M: Street Peddlers?

H: Um, hum . . . Vendors.

M: Go around and peddle, yea.

H: Do you remember anybody singing while they were peddling their goods?

M: Yea, yea, sure.

H: Could you sing a song for me?

M: The Japanese would go around with . . . Well, ah, let's see. Language was hesitant to me. I never did get that kind of singing. But, I have seen people go around and sing. I wasn't in no group like that. We would go down and sing for churches.

When I was working for Enochs, fellows down there would give dances. They would get us to play for them and sing for them at the dance. We's go to groups like that.

H: In your own family, (with your two sons and wife), how did you have a good time? You had two sons, right?

M: No, I ain't got but one son.

H: And your wife. How did you have a good time?

M: The group that I had fun with was in a different area.

H: Did you have a good time with your wife and son?

M: Well, when we first started, we wasn't married. She'd come to the dances sometimes.

H: Oh, I see.

M: Yea, she'd come to the dances that we'd give. We'd play for dances and we'd give dances our own self and we'd give dances and invite people out.

H: Did you ever think of just having a good time with you and your wife and your child?

M: No, I didn't have no child by my first wife.

H: Oh, I see.

M: I had one by my second wife.

H: Well, how did you-all have a good time?

M: We went to church. She was a big church member. My first wife was a church member, too.

H: What church did you belong to?

It took in that whole block, from the river ^{down these} up to the... I forget ~~the name~~ of the street what the trains run. It was ~~at West Street, I...~~

H: What did he do? He manufactured what?

M: He manufactured glasses, doors, blinds. He sold by the carloads. He sold stuff, all over the state of Mississippi. He had a big plant. ~~He was the biggest plant~~ ^{He had one of} and ~~it manu-~~ ^{you have and he manu-} factured all kinds of stuff.

Doors, blinds, and windows he carried that in stock. And, he loaded ~~stuff~~ ^{stuff} by the carloads. ~~I was the head of the~~ ^{He had one of the biggest plants in Mississippi.} Packing Company. ~~My coach was the head, when I first went there.~~ ^{during those days and I was the head of the} ~~My coach died. I was working~~ ^{My coach died. I was in my teens,} up under my coach and so I learned all under my coach what I knew about packing. Then I took over ~~where my coach had died a left~~ ^{at least} off. ~~I took over that part. At least the~~ ^{company put me on that part.} ~~the kind of the company put me on that part,~~ ^{then I had charge they'd bring the bills down. They'd bring the stuff down.} They brought the Bills down and I had to file. ~~Madison say~~ ^{bring} now this, so and so and so, ~~it goes out first because we~~ ^{in the} want to ship ~~this first.~~ ^{that goes out. We want that group of stuff first because} But this one ~~we got to guard~~ ^{over here it got to go out the second} ~~this a certain time.~~ ^{at that time.} I had responsibilities. I wasn't nothing buy a young kid, ~~I was the only one working in~~ ^{It wasn't anybody had been working in that thing} that thing and didn't anybody else know anything about it long enough to know anything about it but me. ~~I had that for myself.~~ ^{I had to make my arrangements with Inids because} When they bring the bills down, they say we want this group of stuff first ~~Madison~~ ^{I was bearing responsibility.} I was bearing responsibility. They get caught on to stuff put that on second where it says 4th... Well I had to make my arrangements with ~~and asked me to have this stuff ready at a certain time.~~ ^{Inids? Cause I was bearing the responsibility.} They got carloads of stuff. They got a big ~~I'll put that bill (see these right here) and have them~~ ^{order for shipping stuff North. That's almost a carload of stuff Madison you've got to have} separated, so when they get ready to load them in the cars that stuff ready at such and such a time and I'll put that bill (see these two like ~~they would know exactly where to go and get the costs. I~~ ^{here) Now, this here stuff you stuff on the bottom because this goes to such and} had a big responsibility, ~~such a place. I'd have them separated, so when they get to load it in the cars~~ ^{it in the cars, they'd know exactly where to go and get them cases.} I had a big responsibility.

Because some of that stuff went way up in New York and Chicago, and all them places like that? ^{and I had a big help with alot of all that.} I had a responsibility.

H: Was there a period during the day that you would relax?

M: Yes. Twelve o'clock to one o'clock.

H: What did you do during this time?

to relax? M: ^{and sometimes} Sometimes we would sing. ^{oh, some of the good dances} Some good fellows would dance.

H: *she men did their dancing?*
I would sing, somebody else would sing. I worked at Inids

M: *the colored. the colored. In that time they'd separate us, you see. And we use to have for about 15 years.*

H: *dancing and singing and everything. And I could sing and somebody else could sing. Jerry Hardie*
~~H: Was it after that that you went to Indianapolis.~~

well he didn't work at (Cassio?), but I did. I worked there for about 15 years.

~~M: Yes. H: Was it after that that you went to Indiana... Indianapolis.~~

M: *um hum, yea.*

H: Do you ever recall a group of people in Jackson called the "Washer Women."

M: *Washer Women.*

M: No. ~~I don't recall that.~~

H: *you don't recall that.*

M: What did they do?

H: They washed clothes for other people. *I just wanted to know if you recalled any of that.*

M: We had groups that did wash ^{my} like that. ^{cause} My wife washed for a family... I forget what their name was... She washed from when the baby grew up to near about to a manhood.

H: Would she go to their home? Or would they bring it in to her?

M: She would go to their home. My wife ^{she} didn't finish her schooling, but she was smart.

H: I bet you recall some street talk from the "Street Peddlers?"

M: *Street Peddlers?*

M: ~~Yes. H: um hum, yea~~

M: *Go around on — and peddle. yea*

H: Do you remember anybody singing while they were peddling their goods?

M: *Yea yea, yea sure.*

H: Could you sing a song for me?

M: *Well, ah, let's see sometime* ~~Well, the Japanese would go around with something — their~~ *languages were different. I never did get that kind of* ^{stuff, you know and sometimes the} *was hesitant to me.*

singing. But, I have seen people go around and sing. I wasn't in no group like that. We would go down and sing for churches.

When I was working for ^{Emochs} ~~inid's~~ fellows down there would give dances and they would get us to play for them *and sing for them at the dance; need up to groups like that.*

H: In your own family, (with your two sons and wife), ~~how did you have a good time?~~ *In your own family, with your own sons (you had two sons right?)*

M: ~~I had only one son.~~ *No, I don't get but one son.*

H: Right. And your wife. How did you have a good time?

M: The group that I had fun with was in a different area.

H: Did you have a good time with your wife and son?

M: Well, when we first started we ~~wern't~~ ^{wasn't} married. She ~~ordinarily~~ came to the dances sometimes. ~~We would give dances sometimes~~

H: *Oh, I see*
~~on our own and she would come.~~

M: *yes, she'd come to the dances that we'd give. We'd play for dance and we'd give dances our own self.*

H: Did you ever think of just having a good time with you ~~and your~~ ^{own self} wife and ~~son?~~ *your child?* *and we'd give dances and invite people out*

M: ^{No} I didn't have no child by my first wife. ~~I had one by my~~

H: *Oh, I see.*
~~second wife.~~

M: *I had one by my second wife.*

H: Well, how did you'all have a good time?

M: We went to Church. She was a big church member... My first wife was a church member too.

H: What Church did you belong too?

M: I belonged to the Baptist Church here, but when I went to Indianapolis, I was an elder in the Presbyterian Church.

H: *Oh, I see.*
~~What Baptist Church was you a member here?~~

M: *Now let's see, the Baptist Church I joined in the first time Oh, I forget... it's been such a long time. I was young then. Young then. Young fellow, yes, he was, he know me, you know.*
The only church work I did was when I went to Indianapolis.

Start

I had done grand olden, got older, I had got older. I was an elder in the Presbyterian Church in *Indiana*
 H: Tell me how you use to spend your weekends?

M: Well, according to where I was, *now sometimes when* when I was working with Inids's the church would have weekend things. I would go and sometimes the women in the organization *my wife belonged to* would spend *sometimes with* them at the weekend. *We had* ~~there were~~ different things, *different things* we didn't have no special thing.

H: Did you have socials at the Church?

M: Yes, *they had some socials at church. We'd be in them sometimes.*

H: Did you belong to any clubs outside the Church? *any organization outside of Church?*
 M: *Well,* I belong to the Baseball Club.

H: Was this when you were past thirty? *or before you were thirty?*

M: Before...it was in my younger days.

H: Do you recall any Tent Revivals?

Revivals? Well now that's a ~~all~~ *see, near about* the churches, in *those days* ~~that time~~ had church revivals! *Now* ~~we~~ went to *that* a church over on Farrish Street...Farrish Street Baptist Church. That's the first church I joined.

H: Farrish Street Church?

M: No, it wasn't ~~upon~~ *it was* Farrish Street, a church *upon* on Farrish Street.

It was on the south side of South Street. *that was my younger days.*

H: *I want to ask you about some buildings that were here at one time?* Do you ever recall an Opera House that was on Farrish Street?

M: *Well, if it wasn't on Farrish Street on Capitol Street near Farrish Street.* Yes. There was an Opera House on Capitol Street *then.*

H: Tell me about it?

M: *Well, a* different plays *use to* would come there, *and everything.* It was just a place where

big plays would come *to*, in Jackson, *that place on was on Capitol Street was about the onliest place to have that happen back there in those days.*
 H: Did you ever attend?

M: *yes* Yes, I use to go all the time. *they'd have different shows to come from different places you know and everything and I'd go to all the shows. That way you'd get a lot of songs thing like that, we had to entertain people too.*
And everything. We would sing songs like that, we had to entertain the people too.

Now, where *H* ← *U* Was this Opera House on Capitol Street? Was it near Farrish and Capitol.?

M: It was up near State Street, ^{back there in them days} They had built that for an

H: Oh, near State Street on Capitol. ^{where they built it} I know where it was built, but they have torn

M: They built that for an Opera House. ^{you know where the building is} You know where the building is.

H: ~~It down now.~~ I know where it was but they done tear that down.

H: Can you think of any of the plays you saw there? *Or any of the plays.*

M: I can't place them. *nothing back there.*

H: ~~How~~ What about some of the songs?

M: Those plays were above my time.

H: Well you're doing real well so lets go on here and ah, ~~How~~ What about some of the Black businesses that were here that

time? From about 1900's to the 1930's.

M: Let me see...

H: Do you recall any Black banks?

M: Well, I don't think we had got that far. *Black banks.*

H: In 1903, ^{didn't} they had an American Trust & Savings Bank ^a located on Pearl ^a on Farrish. Do you recall that?

M: I remember, they had that down there. I didn't have much dealings with them down there.

H: How about ^{Risher} Roucher's Bakery?

M: ~~What kind of bakery?~~

M: ~~Yes, they had a big bakery down there, Harry Roucher...~~

H: ~~Risher. It was owned by a Black man.~~

H: ~~What kind of person was he?~~

M: ~~Loucher, Oh yea, Roucher's. They had a big bakery down there. They did big business.~~

M: ~~He spoke a different kind of language. yea, they did. Harry Loucher,~~

H: ~~Harry Loucher was his name. What kind of person was he?~~

H: ~~Was he Black?~~

M: ~~He spoke a different kind of language.~~

M: ~~Yes, he was colored.~~

H: ~~But he was Black?~~

H: ~~What kind of language did he speak?~~

M: ~~Yea, he was colored. But they had alot of business.~~

M: ~~I think it was French.~~

H: ~~What kind of language did he speak?~~

H: ~~Did you know anything about his family?~~

M: ~~I think he spoke French.~~

M: ~~Not very much.~~

H: ~~Do you know anything about his family?~~

M: ~~No, not very much.~~

H: Do you remember Mr. L.K. Atwood?

M: ~~Was~~ ^{Aint} that a lawyer?

H: Yes. Um hum.

M: I remember ^WAtwood, but I'm trying to place what he was. He was a big man, but I can't place what the name was.

H: Do you recall the first telephone you saw in the city of Jackson?

M: I was working at Frank Pridgen, when they were putting in the telephones.

H: Frank Pridgen?

H: ~~What did you think of the first telephone you saw?~~

M: ~~Um hum, he runs the grocery store. I was telling you I use to work there when I was nothing but a kid and take care of all his business.~~

M: ~~Well, it was something I hadn't never had dealings with and~~

H: ~~What did you think of the first phone you saw when you were there. I had to catch on to it. It was wonderful.~~

M: ~~First phone, it was something I had never had dealings with and I had to catch on to it. It was wonderful.~~

H: Can you describe to me how you felt then? ~~Wonderful.~~

M: I felt a little more of myself then, I felt I was going some place. A thing of that kind, you had to use it. And you had to get use to it.

H: How about sewer and running water? Did your first home have sewer and running water?

M: My first home ^{was} down back of the hill.

H: ~~What hill?~~ ^{What's the hill?}

M: ~~The one~~ ^{That's what they call back of the hill in them days.} back of the Old Capitol. I think I told you about me building me a house back then. I built a house back ~~then~~ ^{there} and bought a lott and built a house on it. Had a house built on it and all the children was in the kitchen in those days.

~~When~~ ^{and} I built this house, I was working at ^{Emechs} Inids. I got my doors and blinds and things and got them cheaper down there cause I was working for ^{Emechs} Inids. I had a nice house. Two

doors fronted on the front porch, they wasn't behind *one another*.
 Two ^{front} doors with a half of kitchen, they were building them
 different back there in those days and your kitchen had a
 porch on the outside. And your porch run on the outside
 from your room to the outside to the kitchen. Kind of a
 L-like. I was about the first one ^{that had} to have a house built like
 that ^{way} too. Cause, I had got all my lumber from ^{Enough} Inids. I
 was working for Inids, in ^{them} those days.

H: How did you pay for all this?

M: Well they would take it out. I payed by the week.
pay by the month or something.

H: They took a little bit out of your salary?

M: Yes, out of my salary.

H: I understand when you had a good time, ^{most of the time} ~~mostly it was~~ when
 you were younger.

M: That's right.

H: You were dancing, ^{I mean and} playing in the band ^{and stuff like that} you had a good time.
And you had a good time in church.

M: ~~Yes.~~ *Yes.*

H: How did you relate to the City Government?

So the city govt. M: Well lets see now. ~~When I was working with Frank Pridgeon,~~

H: He mayor. ~~When I was working for Frank Pridgeon~~
 M: ~~I had dealing with the city government.~~ But, I was trying

to think what it could be. . . One thing, Frank would go
 off and play checkers, I think I told you about that.

He'd play checkers all day and I would be the only someone
 there to run the store. In those days, the people who run
 the business stayed upstairs right down on State Street.

The white people stayed up stairs, and I had charge of the
 whole thing.

- M: All that come into my cause Mrs. Pridgeon, she didn't want to be in amongst a whole lot of public thing like that. Well, she had kids to take care of and so, I would have every thing to take care of. Any business that had to be done, I could take care of just like that like Frank Pridgeon could. He had that much confidence in me.
- H: Did you vote during those days?
- M: No. *I wasn't voting I don't think in those days.*
- H: Did you ever vote in the city of Jackson?
- M: Yes, *I think I have.* I have voted here in the city of Jackson.
- H: When was that?
- M: *Well, let see, I can't tell ... I don't know...*
- M: I think the first time I voted, I think ^{*when*} I was working at *Enochs* Inids, *I think it was.*
- H: *You voted, how hum.*
- H: Do you know who you voted for then? ^{*I mean*} Was it a city election?
- M: I think it was a city election, cause they took us out there in one of the trucks. They took us out on the voting out on Farrish Street, if I'm not mistaken.
- H: Can you tell me in approximately ^{*in terms of*} years, when you worked for *Enochs* Inids?
- M: *How many years?*
- H: *No, when?*
- M: Well, I was young then.
- H: How young? In your twenties?
- M: No, I was in my teens.
- H: Did you tell me when you were born?
- M: I was born on the twenty-second of May, I think it was. . . .
- H: What year?
- M: I think it was. . . 1883.

H: So you were still a teenager, when you worked for ^{Enoch} (Inids)?

M: ^{yes} Yes, and I'm still using that voting age now.

H: ^{Hi Oh really!} You do go and vote now, don't you?

M: ^{yes} Yes. I go and vote now.

H: We have talked a little about recreation, do you ever

remember any ~~rabbit foot~~ shows?

M: ^{rabbit foot} Dr. J. J. Green shows.

M: ^{of rabbit foot} No, I don't think so. What kind of ~~shows was rabbit foot~~ shows?

H: ^{Well, they} ~~It was~~ just a show where people came.

H: How about some fairs?

M: Fairs. . .

H: State Fairs?

M: ^{State Fair} ~~Yes~~, we use to go to fairs of that kind.

H: What was it like?

M: They showed. . . ~~What did they show?~~ . . . They showed animals and things. Sometimes I think they would show some kind of show for the fair.

H: Did you use to have a good time at the fair?

M: ~~Yes~~. Yes

H: You were still a teenager, then.

M: ^{yes} Yes, I was still a teenager.

H: When did you come back to Jackson?

M: ^{When did I come back to Jackson, after I left here and went to Indianapolis?} When did you leave to go to Indianapolis?

M: I was in my teens. I think I was about 17.

H: Before you left, you had worked for Mr. ^{Enoch} (Inids), Mr. Pridgeon you had left as a teenager and went to Indianapolis. You didn't come back here, until you retired?

M: That's right.

H: How long have you been back here?

M: *How long have I been back here now.*

M: Well, when I retired, *lets see what did I do?* I was working up there in Indianapolis.

H: When did you come back to Jackson?

M: I came back here. . . I forget what year it was. I was married then. I was around about...

H: Was that before World War I or after World War I? *I mean after World War II.*

M: It was after the war.

H: How many years have you been back here?

M: I reckon about 40 years. That's right. . . I stayed up in Indianapolis some of that time. I stayed up there about thirty years.

H: You are 84 years now. What was Jackson like when you came back to the city?

M: It had changed right smart.

H: How?

M: Well the location of things and that *kind* ~~time~~. Like the back of the hill had stopped up *built up, had* with ~~the river~~, *when the river rise you see, you didn't* ~~cause they didn't~~ have no protection *back there in* ~~during~~ those days. The water would come up near about to the Old Capitol. . . That's *the reason* why when I built my house, I built it up near *Belhaven,* Belhaven College, so that the water wouldn't catch me right away when it started rising. I was up on the highest lott, *highest*

H: Did you own that land?

M: I owned that land.

H: Do you still own it?

M: No, not now. I sold that when I went to Indianapolis.

Went up there and bought property.

H: How did you buy that land?

there!
M: *No, here over there by Belhaven, how did you buy it?*

M: I think somebody owned that property. The owner owned a great big place over there. My lott^{what I want} was on that place.

H: Do you remember any public parks here in Jackson?

public parks? M: Let me see. . . This baseball park that they got here now back there in those times but it wasn't where it is now.

I forget where the park was. *all that built up after* I stayed in Indianapolis around about 40 or 50 years, so it made me miss alot.

H: Well, I have about six general questions, I want you to answer. Tell me which one of these you had the best time in. When you were in this area?

H: When you were playing music, *at church?* When you were working? At ~~home~~ *home or* special occasions, like weddings, sports, card games, where did you have the best time at?

H: I had the best time when I was playing ball. Cause that took you to different places. If you were good, you had a opportunity of going on up. But, I never did get chance to go up further. Because I did different kind of work. I was the first one to build a house back of the hill and I had to build it back way up further 'cause the water was coming in when the river rises, because they didn't

have nothing to stop it. They didn't have no levee. *After they built the water stopper. She was stopped then from rising up to the Old Capitol like that.*

New, I just have me more questions. H: → What do you do now to have a good time? *When you really enjoy yourself.*

M: Well, I belong to the church down there. But, we don't get no *whole lot of* good time down there. Very seldom, I get out for

big
a ~~good~~ time, for a good time.

H: How did you enjoy yourself?

M: Well, I could enjoy myself at some of the things they give at church. Now, sometimes I am invited out to different things of that kind. The church gives big things, too.

H: Do you enjoy playing cards?

M: No.

H: Checkers?

M: I use to enjoy playing checkers, but I never did care much about playing cards, *but I played cards.*

H: Do you play checkers or any ~~game~~ *thing* now?

M: No, I don't play any checkers now. (Laughter)

H: Do you like to read?

M: Yes, I like to read.

H: Do you enjoy that?

M: Yes, I enjoy reading.

H: I want to thank you for your cooperation. You've been most generous to talk to me.

M: You think, so.

H: Yes, sir.

H: If we can find anyway that this tape can be useful to us, do you mind we use it to publish an article?

M: No, I would be glad then.

H: You understand that this tape will belong to Jackson State University, and we will try to make it available to the public, to persons who may be interested in what a 84 year

old man recalled about how he use to have a good time?

M: That is interesting, isn't it?

H: Yes.

M: (Loud laughter)

H: You know that's what life is made of, "Good Times".

M: Really is.

H: You were the first person to see a car come down South State Street. (Suprised)

M: Yes. It was a mule car. Thats the first kind of car that was running. It didn't go no further than ^{Isle's} ~~Police~~ Brown Street.

It was the only thing that had brick in it. (South State Street.) Of course, Capitol Street and North State Street were the only streets paved, then. ~~Capitol~~ Capitol Street didn't go no further than the railroad. It didn't go across the railroad at all. On the other side of the railroad, wasn't no big rich white people lived over there at all. All of them was poor people mostly.

Capitol Street was built after the car start running. When the mule cars was brought from down town, they would get out at the ^old Capitol. They would have to turn around and take the mule and things and take him back. We were young boys. ~~When~~ the women got on the cars, they all wore long dresses, and we would get on there and see the legs. . . (Loud laughter)

M: Yes, they got on the cars, pulled their dresses up because it was muddy. There wasn't any streets paved.
(Loud laughter)

H: Would you describe yourself as the "little mischievous boy?"

M: ^{yes} Yes, I think I was. Because I was interested; the women would laugh themselves. The women would have to pull up their long, long dresses, and that's the only way you would get chance to see their legs. (Loud laughter)

H: What are some of the other things you would do like that?

M: *Well, I don't we was very much interested in anything. . . .*
M: Well, we would go down town and see the women get off and on. ^{we had a big time.} In those days, it was "freedom". But, it got larger and larger, and freedom kind of broke off cause people took freedom a different ^{kind of} way. They would use it for their purpose, look like.

H: What did "freedom" mean to you?

M: I had freedom to make my life, what it should be. I worked at Frank Pridgeon and I had the idea of doing that. I started at Frank Pridgeon, cause he gave me the opportunity of doing so. I had to weigh up everything that was sold: Flour, sugar, coffee, rice, ^{and all that stuff} ~~etc.~~ had to be weighed ^{up}. The bags you put it in were numbered; 10,

8, 9, they wouldn't hold no more than that stuff. ^{And you had to put it up by that stuff cause back in those days you didn't open business. That was my job. When the people came in there on Saturday, was my job to weigh up that stuff and put it aside, cause now when the people come in on Sat. mostly the country people, to buy that stuff. ~~It was~~ they want coffee, sugar and rice and it's already put up, ~~already put up~~.}

H: *And you had responsibility for all that.*

H: Did you keep the books for him? *Let me see the money.*

M: Well.

H: Did you keep track of the money?

M: They stayed up stairs, *his wife upstairs with the children. That's where she was,* ~~so they would be right there. I~~
In those days, they built upstairs. I
had charge of all that stuff downstairs.

Frank Pridgeon, was a big checker player. They come

from New York, to hear about Pridgeon playing checkers.

And they come here, play for money.
~~If he became interested in the game, wasn't no way~~
He'd get in a game and he get interested in the game. He ain't going to get out the game.
~~he would come out. (laugh)~~

H: Did you learn to play checkers from him?

M: No. I never did get chance to see him playing. But, I know how to play checkers.

H: Was he a good person to work for?

M: Yes, he was. *I had charge of everything.*

H: Did he pay you well?

M: No, back there you didn't get much. But, I was satisfied.

Business wasn't like it is now. The bags had pounds and stencils on them, and I would have to be careful about that.

I had as much business to tend too, about the store as he

did. Sometimes, his wife would come downstairs and ^{sometimes} Frank

she wouldn't know where Frank was.
~~would be gone.~~

I would have to be down there taking care

of the business. *She got children up stairs, she had two children up stairs she had to see after. She did have time to come down there.*

When I was at ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~ids~~, I learned how ~~to load them cars.~~

^{to take care of that business}
I would have to get the stuff out and pack it and put

it in different places. I had to put the cart, date and

everything on. I had to put all that on there by hand,
~~etc, by hand~~

H: So, you have had a lot of responsibility during your lifetime.

M: Thats right.

H: Two big things in your life where you have a good time is here at the Senior Citizens Site and Church?

M: Thats right.

H: Could you explain how you have a good time here?

M: You have to make it. I beleive that is the only thing you would get here. Now we could make it, if we could get a group here and get them together to do something.

END OF INTERVIEW

MADISON, HENRY WHITE

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