

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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

MISS DOLLY SMITH

Interviewed

by

Miss Deborah Denard

on

June 23, 1976

O. H. 76.19

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, Dolly Smith 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.

X Dolly Smith
Interviewee (Signature)

June 23, 1976
Date

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INTERVIEWER: Ms. Deborah Denard

INTERVIEWEE: Ms. Dolly Smith

SUBJECT: "Good Old Days"

DATE: June 23, 1976

D: Today is June 23, 1976. I'm in the home of Miss Dolly Smith. Miss Dolly Smith at 1079 $\frac{1}{2}$ West Pascagoula and we're going to talk about the "Good Old Days" in Jackson. Miss Smith do you understand that this interview will be on tape and that it will be put in Jackson States' Oral History Collection for research?

S: No, I didn't know that.

D: You did not?

S: I did not, but I'm at the first beginning.

D: Yes, ma'am, well is it alright with you if we . . .

S: It's alright cause I'm just gone to tell what I know. That's all I can do. I like to tell the truth, as far as I know.

D: Yes ma'am. When you hear the "Good Old Days," what does it mean to you? When you hear somebody say the "Good Old Days"?

S: Well, that means long ago and everything seemed to went well with you. That's what I call "Good Old Days". Things then wasn't as high as it is now, not like it is now. And look like people was more loving and neighbor to one another than they are now.

D: This was when you were growing up?

S: Yea.

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- D: Uh,uh. Okay, where were you born?
- S: Brookhaven, Mississippi.
- D: When did you come to Jackson?
- S: As far back as I can remember,--it's been so long--but as far back as I can remember, it was in 1919 or 1920.
- D: What do you remember about Jackson when you first came, as a little girl?
- S: Well, when I first came to Jackson, I was a girl. What--what did I learn in . . .
- D: What do you remember about Jackson? What are you recollection?
- S: Well, what I. . . my recollections about Jackson ah, when my mother came here she applied for a job. That's what she did. She was the mother and you know I didn't have a father. I was raised without a daddy. My mother worked for a white family--a white lady was by the named of Mrs. Whitfield, My mother cooked for her. And ah, later my mother got me a job nursing for a man that used to be a judge and his name was (loud noise) Herman L. Thompson. Yea, he used to be some kind of judge here in the city. I worked for him and ah, I nursed with him and helped around the house, cause I was a girl then, you see. And ah, that's the first thing I know about Jackson?
- D: Were you going to school while you were working for him?
- S: Yea, going to school and worked with him, thats right.
- D: Why did your mother come to Jackson?
- S: To work - wasn't nothing to do in Brookhaven. It's a small town. Things then was--as you say, "Good Old Days." People got the work done practically for nothing. They wasn't paying nothing. She came to Jackson to live better, 'cause she could get more work to do here than she could in Brookhaven. It wasn't much down in Brookhaven. Most people there was leaving and going to other places to get some work to do to support their family. And that's why my mother came here. She came here to better her condition.
- D: Where did you live in Brookhaven? I mean who did you live with in Brookhaven?
- S: My mother use to own a home. She lived on Union Street and she use to own a home.
- D: Were your grandparents from there?

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S: Yes.

D: How many sisters and brothers did you have?

S: Well, my sisters and brothers are dead now and my grandparents, which was my mothers' mother and father, are passed now.

D: Okay, were your sisters and brothers living with you when you moved to Jackson?

S: You mean when my mother moved to Jackson?

D: When your mother moved to Jackson.

S: Yes, they were with her. My mother left Jackson as near as I can come to it - she left Jackson after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. She left Jackson and went North. Then up North, you know, just to and fro, because she had to support herself, you know.

D: Where up North did she go?

S: She lived in Detroit.

D: She still lives there?

S: That's where she . . . Detroit.

D: Okay now, when you first came to Jackson, what school did you go to?

S: Smith Robinson.

D: Do you remember any of your teachers?

S: Yea.

D: Give me the name of some of them.

S: Miss Betty Marino was one of them. She's passed. The 'Y' is named after her, Miss Betty Marino.

D: That's the Y. W. C. A. ?

S: Yea, on Farish Street.

D: On Farish?

S: That's the 'Y' in front of Central Church.

Miss Marino, Betty Marino, she's passed. I had another teacher. I used to go to was named Miss Jones, Miss Mary Jones and they named a school

after her. She's passed.

D: Do you remember any of the others?

S: Some teachers who I was under? Why I mentioned them. Professor Lanier was running that school then. You know, over here Bloom Street.

D: That was Lanier?

S: Yea, Professor Lanier was the principal, he's passed.

D: He taught you too?

S: Yes, he was the head of it.

D: Okay, what are some of the good days that you remember at school? What kind of good times did you-all have?

S: Well, we didn't have ah, a nice cafeteria then like we do now. (Laughter) I remember that quite well. They use to push a wheelbarrow up there. Somebody, be mostly a man and ah, he'd have some sardines and loaves of bread on that wheelbarrow and cookies, you know, little stuff like that and pig feet. We use to buy it with our little nickles and dimes, what we have to get lunch with. A lot of us waited until we got back home to eat because we didn't have no nickle and dime. (Laughter) But now . . . children now has cafeteries and can sit down and eat a hot meal. And, it's very nice.

D: How much could you buy for a nickle and dime?

S: How much could I buy? Well, all weekend I have got two boxes of sardines and you pay thirty-five cents for them now (Laughter) plus tax. And, I have got two for a nickle. Them was good days. And, you could take a nickle and get a big bunch of greens and cook 'em and feed your family. Them was good days, but you can't do it now. A bunch of greens now cost you at least thirty-seven cents, if not more. Food was cheap then and I call them good days. You'd go down to the store and a dime would buy you some lard. (Laughter)

D: Where were you all living when you first came here?

S: Living in Brookhaven.

D: I mean where were you-all living in Jackson? Where did you-all move to?

S: Oh my, we lived . . . my mother lived . . . my mother lived on North Jefferson Street.

D: North Jefferson.

- S: Uh, huh, that's right.
- D: What are some of the good times that you remember at home? What did you all do at home to have a good time?
- S: Oh, we played. I just tell the truth, we played.
- D: What kinds of games did you play?
- S: We played "Little Sally Walker Sitting In The Saucer." That was one of our games. We called our self playing ball and we did a lot of little old things around there we called good times.
- D: What about church? What church did you go to?
- S: Ah, little ole church down there under-the-hill. I use go go to ah, little ole church under-the-hill. I don't know where it is now because after they tore down, the street built up you see, since then.
- D: Do you remember the name of the church?
- S: Farish Street Baptist Church?
- D: Under-the-Hill, under-the-hill. The little log . . .
- S: Mount Beulah. Yea, little ole wayside church used to be down there wasn't much of nothing. Anyway, we used to call ourselves going to Sunday School churches there. But, after that way my mother moved on you know, Church Street and I come to be a member of Farish Street Baptist Church. I was getting to be a good size little girl then.
- D: What kind of good times did you-all have at Mount Beulah?
- S: They'd give programs and the church would give programs and we thought it was nice. They'd have ice cream sometimes serving, sandwiches and sometimes the ladies would bring baskets and we called them good days.
- D: What kind of songs and things did you-all sing when you were little. Do you remember any?
- S: Oh yea, oh yea, we used to let me see - some of the songs what we sanged?

Well, we started off after I gotten older and got to getting around to other different places what we used to sang, then I was particular about. I wanted to sang something else. And I'll be honest. Ah, we used to sing "Jesus the Lover of My Soul" and "Rock of Ages"

and "Sunbeam" you know and like that. That's what we sanged something like that.

D: Yes ma'am, how long did you go to Smith Robinson?

S: I couldn't know how long I went 'cause thats so long I done forgot.

D: Was it an elementary school then?

S: Yes, it was a elementary school.

D: How far did you get in school?

S: About seventh grade.

D: Seventh grade. You always went to Smith Robinson?

S: That's where I went, Smith Robinson.

D: Why did you stop?

S: Well, I stopped 'cause I had to stop. I didn't have nobody to help me. I didn't have no daddy and I had to stop.

(Interruption)

D: You were saying you had stopped school because you had to what?

S: To help my mother 'cause I didn't have no father and my mother washed and ironed, you know, mostly for a living and jobs then wasn't paying nothing. You weren't worth but three dollars a week and a lot of 'em that's all they were paying, three dollars a week, and you know, you can't get no where with that, 'cause people won't hardly work for three dollars a day now, a lot of them.

D: How many were there in your family?

S: My mother had nine or ten children (Laughter) yea, was a big family.

D: Were you the oldest?

S: Naw, I wasn't the oldest.

D: Did all of you-all work?

S: Naw, I was my mother's main helper, 'cause I had to go get them clothes and go bring them to her and help with the pressing and you know, like that.

D: How far did you have to go to get clothes?

S: Well, my mother lived on a street, wasn't so far from the whites. This location was close to the fair grounds.

D: I see. How much did they pay you?

S: What? They didn't pay me, they paid my mother.

D: How much did they pay your mother?

S: Well, when my mother cooked she got five dollars a week, when she cooked.

D: How about the ironing?

S: Well, that would be different, the ironing. That's different, but when she cooked she got five dollars. If she layed off two or three weeks or something and didn't cook, she didn't get no five dollars, that's all. She just got . . . if she washed and ironed for other people, she got that and if she was sick she didn't get nothing. That's the way it was.

D: How much did she get for washing and ironing?

S: Well, she . . . a great big bundle of clothes, you washed 'em and ironed 'em in that day and time for a dollar and a half.

D: Really!

S: Yea, I'm telling the truth.

D: How did you all feel about that then?

S: Well, we thought it was good. We thought it was good, that's all. Mama done something to give us bread and we figured that was good days. But, children . . . younger race now ah, which I have nieces and nephews and things, they don't know anything about that. But, we called them good days, 'cause we was living and eating and we thought it was nice to live and eat and enjoy things.

D: That's right. Ah, let me see now. Okay, you were living near Church Street then?

S: Part ways.

D: You say you were living at Jefferson Street?

S: North Jefferson.

D: North Jefferson then.

D: Two-hundred thirty-two North Jefferson was the number.

S: Do you remember some of the people who your mother ironed for?

S: Yea, Mrs. Broomfield. I don't know whether she's dead or living. She's a white lady and a very prominent white lady.

D: What's her first name?

S: Oh, its been so long. Fanny Broomfield was her name. I think that was her name and Miss Herman L. Thompson and I don't know whether she's dead or living 'cause I haven't seen them in years and years and years. But, them was some of the people who first people she worked for.

D: Okay, you were telling me you had worked for somebody who was a judge.

S: Thompson.

D: Thompson, uh, uh. When did you start working for him? How old were you about? Were you going to school?

S: Yea, I was going to school. I couldn't tell you how old then. Its been so far back.

D: Yes ma'am. Well, did you have any good times when you worked for people? Did you ever?

S: Yes, yes. I enjoyed it because I used to nurse. Mostly the people I worked for had children and I enjoyed children. I thought it was good days. It was with me.

D: How much did they pay you?

S: Well, I sometimes made two and a half a week. Sometimes I made three dollars a week and I thought that was big money in that day and time. See, I came along to be big enough to know something during the time when the Depression was on and nobody had nothing 'cause so many people lost, what did have a home. They lost it, 'cause they had nothing to go forward to, you know, to have an income to take care of it. We thought we were somewhere living in town (Laughter) and eating good something to eat. (Loud Laughter) That was wonderful to me.

D: Okay, the Depression now, what kind of condition was your family in during the Depression?

S: Well, my mother was a smart women. She was smart, and she liked to be doing something to help somebody and lots of times they would give

her something extra and that counted with a woman with a family.

D: What else did she do other than the cooking and ironing?

S: Washing and ironing.

D: Washing and ironing?

S: Well, you know, your house cleaning, you know. I guess you would say domestic work. And ah, that's mostly what she . . . what she did mostly.

D: Okay, what about the other kind of aid that the government was giving out?

S: Well, I didn't know nothing then except when ever she worked . . . first off start she didn't get no aid 'cause we didn't know nothing about it. And, the first aid I ever knowed my mother get was from the NRA.

D: Now, do you remember what that stands for?

S: Naw, I sure don't.

D: But it was from the government?

S: Yea, it was a welfare project, I'll say that.

D: Okay, what about the . . . Okay, did you all receive commodities or anything like that?

S: Yes, my mother did.

D: Do you remember what she had to do to get them?

S: Yea, she had to sign papers.

D: What about soup lines? Were there any soup lines around here?

S: Yea, they had it in Chicago and they talked about it around here. But, my mother got food. She didn't go somewhere and get a bowl of this and that. They let my mother have like meal or flour, you know, and butter and can stuff, you know like that - 'cause my mother had a family. But, she had to sign up to get it. That's right she had to sign up to get it.

D: Did most people in your neighborhood or most people that you know get food too like that?

S: Yea, a lot of them got it.

D: A lot of them got it?

S: A lot of them got it.

D: Was it hard for other people to find jobs?

S: Yes, it was hard for everybody 'cause men were walking the streets like blackbirds - had nothing to do and couldn't find nothing to do. But, my mother could always - if this person wasn't using her somebody else were. She kept busy and that's the way it was, and I thought them was good days 'cause things come and went nice look like to me. I call them good days 'cause I enjoyed them.

D: Okay, now after you left Smith Robinson, who were you working for? After you left school?

S: After I left school, who did I work for? Let me see. I helped around cafes a lot too . . .

D: Cafes where?

S: Here in Jackson.

D: What are the names of some of them?

S: Well, I used to help at . . . What's that cafe named? The woman's dead now. Well, the people now call it Edward Lee's Cafe. I used to help there. Then I helped at a cafe on Farish Street, Miss Cotton's.

D: Miss Cotton ? What was the name of the cafe?

S: Let me see, what did she call that cafe? Miss Cotton had a little ole cafe on Farish Street. I don't know what she called it. And, then I used to help in Roy McCullen's cafe, but he's dead and I don't know where his wife is.

D: Where was it?

S: On Farish Street.

D: How much did you make?

S: Well, when I was working around the cafes jobs were getting a little bit better then than they was way back. (Laughter) I use to make five and six dollars a week.

- D: Was the work hard?
- S: Naw, it wasn't so hard.
- D: About how old were you then?
- S: I can't tell it just how old I was then, but I was a good size girl.
- D: Were you about a teenager or something like that?
- S: Huh.
- D: Were you about a teenager or something like that?
- S: Yea, I was round a teenager.
- D: Round a teenager.
- S: Yes, I was a girl.
- D: Okay, around that time what kind of good times did you all have? When you were a teenager.
- S: Well, I enjoyed going to programs in the church.
- D: You were at Farish Street then.
- S: Yea, and also Mount Beulah that first church I told you about. Mount Beulah they had programs, but they wasn't good as they are now. But, it was programs in that day and time. And, those people learned a little bit more about things now than they did then. Cause, they didn't know to much about things look like then like they do now. Cause, it's a modern day and time and we done added to everything some now.
- D: What kind of social activities did you-all have when you were a teenager?
- S: Well, when I was a teenager and young, they had what you call hay rides. I never hear talk of none of that now, (Laugther).
- D: Have you been on a hay ride?
- S: Yes.
- D: Tell me about them.
- S: Well, they'd have a truck or station wagon or something like that.

They'd carry a bunch of us, know, all the church people. They'd go somewhere and have something like a picnic. Sometimes they'd have sandwiches and whatever they want to serve--they'd have in that truck. They'd go somewhere and you'd eat and drank, and Folds then wasn't associating with liquor like they do now. And liquor and beer was not legal. We heard about it. And, if you saw it, you better not touch it cause the old folks didn't approve of it.

D: Where would you all go on these hay rides?

S: We'd go out to different places. Anywhere they wanted to stop and sing a song or two and like that--sometimes in the middle of the road, sometimes side the road,--and eat that food and drank that cool aid drank or whatever it was. You had to drank lemon aid or something. 'Cause, I've been--some of them they had lemon aid. And, somebody cooked a cake and had that to serve and we called them good days.

D: These would be church people?

S: Yes, church people.

D: Okay, what about the community people?

S: Well, I didn't fool with the community much. I mostly associated with the church people.

D: Why was that?

S: Huh.

D: Why you didn't fool with the community too much?

S: Well, mother didn't approve of it that's all. My mother didn't approve of it.

D: Okay now, how was Jackson by the time you where a teenager? What do you remember it then?

S: What you mean?

D: You know, I asked you about you first impression of Jackson when you first came here. Okay, what was it like when you were a teenager to you, the city of Jackson.

S: Well, Jackson has built up quite much since I been here. It didn't seem to be as large--so many modern buildings in Jackson now. Since that day and time, its a sight-seeing to me.

D: What about when you were a teenager, how was it?

S: Well, it wasn't as much of Jackson as it is now. It has so many different new buildings now that it's a sight seeing to me. It's a long ways now from what it use to be.

D: Do you remember the trolley cars down town?

S: You mean old street cars.

D: Street cars, yes'am.

S: Them old street cars what use to go up and down Capitol Street, yea.

D: Do you remember those?

S: Yea.

D: Did you ever ride on them?

S: Yea.

D: How much would it cost?

S: Well, we paid seven cents and five cents. Seven cents, it was seven cents when we first came here and then later the fare dropped. Times were hard, you know, and the fare dropped to five cents.

D: Okay, what about when you were a child and a teenager, what were the businesses around town?

S: Well, I didn't know too much about business then, and cause it ain't nothing like it is now, not then.

D: Do you remember any of the businessmen downtown?

S: Yea.

D: From when you were a girl?

S: Yea, I suppose to, I was raised here in Jackson.

D: Tell me some of them.

S: Well, ah, I thought anybody having money and operating a place I call that a business. Edward Lee, I can say this, he has a hotel now.

Then he run that same cafe what I used to work at long ago when Miss Wilson had it. She's passed now understand me. She's passed.

D: This was a Black business.

S: That's right, a Negro business.

D: Now, what's Miss Wilson's first name?

S: Hattie Wilson was her name?

D: Hattie Wilson, she owned the Edward Lee Hotel before . . . ?

S: She didn't own the Edward Lee Hotel.

D: She ran the cafe?

S: That's right and she let him have it. And, I call that a business and the people who operated anywhere and run any kind of business well I thought they were doing good cause I didn't know.

D: Yes ma'am, who were some of the other ones?

S: Hum?

D: Who were some of the other black business men that you remember as a girl?

S: That lady I told you I use to work for on Farish Street named Mrs. Cotton and it was a good business and Mrs. Redmond. I worked for Mrs. Redmond too. They were nice people and prominent people. They were colored.

D: Now what's Mrs. Redmond's first name?

S: Well, the first Mrs. Redmond I worked for her name was Mrs. Jonnie Redmond. She's passed.

D: Who was her husband?

S: Dr. Redmond, he's well know here in the city. He owns look like more property than anybody else.

D: Yes ma'am, how was it working for them?

S: They were nice people all I can say.

- D: How did you come about working for them?
- S: How did I come about . . . Well, I lived in their community and they knew of me and so they gave me work too approve, so I was glad to do it.
- D: How old were you then?
- S: Well, I was grown when I worked for Mrs. Redmond. When I worked for Mrs. Redmond, she was a nice person. Then I worked when I was a girl for Dr. Thomas and he's passed and he's not here.
- D: Was he Black?
- S: Yea, he was colored; he's passed.
- D: Doctor Thomas?
- S: Yea, he's passed. He was colored; he's passed.
- D: He was a medical doctor?
- S: That's right.
- D: Where did he live?
- S: He lived right here in Jackson. Operated right here in Jackson.
- D: I mean in Jackson.
- S: Where was his place of business? He owned ah, here on Farish Street. He had a office on Farish Street.
- D: You worked at his house?
- S: I worked in his office and his house.
- D: Oh, where was his house.
- S: On Church Street.
- D: Now, how much did he pay?
- S: Three dollars a week and then they gave me a raise to five and then sometimes I'd make six or seven like that. Worked extra sometimes (loud noise) on six or seven.

- D: Who were some of the other black businessmen around Farish Street?
- S: Well, Mrs. Cotton had a husband. I don't know. They are moved or they are in Chicago now. She had a husband. All I know is Mr. Cotton.
- D: Did they have any other kind of business other than a cafe?
- S: No, not that I know of. They lived in the . . . I was told they lived in the Tougaloo Settlement. I don't know what street. It was in the Tougaloo Settlement and they run a cafe on Farish Street--rented a building and run a cafe and I was her helper.
- D: Okay, now let's go back to 1927. Do you remember the Flood of 1927?
- S: Yes ma'am. I ain't been . . . course I've been to Arkansas since then but I did not know nothing about it before that.
- D: Wait a minute now, did it flood here in Jackson? Well, what about the Arkansas Flood? What were you saying about Arkansas?
- S: They brought alot of people from there here to shelter until they could get back.
- D: Where did they house these people?
- S: Well, they turned school out. All I know, the teacher let us go home and told us they wanted to use the schoolhouse for the refugees. That's the way she brought it to us. She turned us out early and let us go home cause she said they wanted to use the school house to help shelter the people in the flood. The Red Cross would feed them. Now that's the way she gave it to us in school.
- D: Okay, so I didn't know that. Okay, now do you remember when Hawkins' Field opened in 1927 too--The air field?
- S: That's over there where that . . . Yea, I remember but I couldn't think . . . Yea, but I know about it 'cause I, you know, looking at the papers all the time and I was reading, but I didn't know where Hawkin's Field was (Laughter) but I know now 'cause I been over there. If that's where you talking about--where those airplanes stop now?
- D: Okay, now ah, okay you were saying that your mother left right after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. That was in the 40's.
- S: Yea.
- D: Okay, now ah, when she left did she take the other children with her?

- S: She took some of the family.
- D: Some of them?
- S: Yes.
- D: You stayed here?
- S: Um, hum.
- D: Did you . . .
- S: Yea, I stayed here, yes.
- D: Why did you stay?
- S: Why did I stay?
- D: Uh, uh.
- S: Because somebody had to stay home and take care of what she had.
- D: Oh, I see.
- S: See, my mother never left her house by its self. If she go away she leave somebody here.
- D: Why did she go? Why did she leave Jackson?
- S: Well, she left Jackson because I had . . . my sister was older than I am. She's a whole lot older than I am and my sister was married and she was raising a family and she went up there to be with my sister, and ah, be some help up there, while she was up there she got on welfare and welfare up there paid a lot better than it did here and she just contined to stay on up there. And, I stayed on here. I ain't been up there yet.
- D: Okay, how many of you stayed here? How many of your sisters and brothers and you stayed?
- S: My sister had . . . she's passed too. Now my sister have ah, my brothers died too years ago. His name was Rudy.
- D: I mean how many of you-all stayed when you mother first went? How many of you-all-- you know, stayed in the house?
- S: In the houses? My brother had a family of three. Let me see, it was five

or six of us.

D: Five or six of you. You were in charge of them?

S: Yea, I stuck with my mama and whatever mama say do that's what I'd do.
(Laughter).

D: Was it a hard job keeping up with all of them?

S: No, it wasn't so hard.

D: Did they mind?

S: Yes, they mind alright.

D: Were you working in the cafes then?

S: Sometimes. Sometimes.

D: When you weren't, where were you did you work?

S: Sometimes when I was sick. I didn't work nowhere when I was sick.
When I was well enough, I always done something.

D: What were some of the good times you all had at home after your mother left you and your sisters and brothers?

S: Well, I just enjoyed life the best I could.

D: What did you'll do?

S: What did we do? My sister-in-law worked out and I worked out. And, sometimes she'd be off away from her job and then sometimes I'd be away from my job. We'd pull together and whenever one had bread the other one would have bread. If I didn't have nothing I'd eat just the same and if she didn't have nothing she'd eat just same. We lived as one. And, whatever we had to give . . . We always had children, little children, in our family. We did everything we could to make it pleasant for them.

D: Yes ma'am. Have you ever been married?

S: No.

D: You just never did get married.

S: That's right. Never did meet no man had nothing to give me. Everytime

- I'd meet a nigger he looked like he needed help. (Very loud laughter).
I didn't want nobody didn't have nothing.
- D: So you just never did?
- S: Naw, later on I met the man I loved and he passed, so I wasn't interested. I been asked to marry too many times, but when you are not interested in it I didn't see no need of going through with it. Cause I needed help all the time, so they didn't have what I want. Well, it was just the other way.
- D: Do you remember anything like community canning, where people in the neighborhood would get together and can their food together?
- S: Ah, my mother used to do a lot of canning, but I never did can.
- D: I mean did the people in the community ever can with her or did she ever go can with them?
- S: Well, I don't know cause one while she used to go to the Temple--a Welfare Department used to meet at the Temple. The Temple was a big church to do, you know, over on Lamar Street.
- D: What was the name of it?
- S: The Temple is all we called it. The Temple, and ah, my mother used to go over there and I don't know what they had them doing over there but, it was a welfare project.
- D: Uh, uh. What about quilting bees?
- S: My mother know about quilting, but I don't know anything about it. (Dog barking) I know how, you know, to do around home, but I didn't go out in public.
- D: Did she ever go to quilting bees or did they ever come over her house?
- S: I don't know what--they made quilts over there, 'cause she told me they did. I don't know I never did go over there. I was young in in them days and I didn't never go over there.
- D: Uh, uh. Did people have hogs and cows and things like that to butcher?
- S: Naw, the city made them move them things.
- D: They did?

- S: Yes, a lot of people use to have hogs and things, but the city made 'em get them out of the city limits. 'Cause my mother use to have pigs cause the city got to the place they didn't approve of it.
- D: Yes ma'am. You all were living over on Church Street then?
- S: That's right. That's right.
- D: Okay, what about street peddlers? Do you remember people who did . . .
- S: Yea, I know all about that, go up and down the streets and have milk and butter to sell and greens and stuff. Well, that's the biggest thang you saw. (Laughter)
- D: (Laughter) people si--si, hollering them out.
- S: Fresh home butter milk, churned buttermilk, and butter twenty-five and thirty-five cents a pound. And now, they cost you a dollar and something.
- D: That's right.
- S: (Very loud laughter)
- D: That is the truth.
- S: And, buttermilk then wasn't but fifteen and twenty cents a quart.
- D: Do you remember any of the street peddlers who be singing the songs out?
- S: Woo. Let me see who used to do that. Most people I know then, they called themselves country folks and lord I expect they dead and gone. I don't know. I'm telling you we bought much stuff for little or no-thing. I can tell the world that. (Dog barking and birds singing).
- D: Do you remember the people on Farish Street who played banjoes or played music on the corner (Loud noise) or things like that.
- S: Yes, 'cause we went to (Noise level increases) a lot of little parties. Let me see. They had a little band around. They called it . . . (Noise continues) use to be a man . . . I don't know, I guess he's dead too now. Ah, use to be a little old band they called Cy Willis' Band.
- D: Cy Willis' Band. Where did he play?

- S: Up and down for different house rent. We called them house rent parties then. That's what we had them named.
- D: He'd play in people houses?
- S: Yea, yea, they use to go 'round and play music in folk's houses and for a couple of dollars, two or three dollars. They don't do it now, but they did then.
- D: Okay, do you remember any other men in his band?
- S: Naw, I sho' don't, but he was the head man to talk with to get the band. Ah, let me see what that other man name - he's in Chicago now. We called him Mr. Lennox. Le . . . Arthur Lennox. Arthur Lennox. Yea, he played piano.
- D: How do you spell his last name?
- S: I don't know how you spell it.
- D: Its Le . . . would it be Linnex?
- S: Arthur Lennox. They all lived here long ago, you know, and are in the North. Those were people who play music in people's houses. We'd take a collection, I just tell the truth and give him two or three dollars to thank them for coming and playing. We'd give him two or three dollars.
- D: What kind of music did they play?
- S: They had banjo and if we had a piano, they used that and they played a little guitar and banjo and we'd dance. (Laughter)
- D: Was that good times?
- S: Yea, that's good times, yea.
- D: What kind of dance did you'll do?
- S: Well, they had "Dirt Dobbin" in that day and time.
- D: "Dirt Dobbin"?
- S: Yea, waltzs.
- D: Oh, waltzing?
- S: (Both laughing).

- S: We called it "Dirt Dobbin".
- D: I haven't heard of it like that. What other kind of dances did you'll do?
- S: They did the "Two-Step." They had a "Charleston" (Laughter). You don't ~~here~~ nothing about that now.
- D: Not about people doing it. I've heard of it - "Charleston" and "Two-Step." Did you have the band in your house?
- S: Naw.
- D: They didn't never come? You just went to other parties?
- S: That's right.
- D: Do you remember the Crystal Palace?
- S: Yea.
- D: Did you ever go there?
- S: Yea, yea. Mr. Hodges was the owner of it.
- D: Hodges? What's his first name?
- S: He's dead and gone. Hodges is all I know.
- D: Hodges.
- S: Yea, he'd dead and gone.
- D: What was it like in there?
- S: It was nice in there.
- D: What kind of bands did they have?
- S: Different bands from different places. You had the band use to come up here and play sometimes called "Bud Scott's Band" ^{that} out of Natchez. Oh, everybody look like would try to be there to hear Bud Scott's Band. And, I remember one time we had a big celebration. Let's see what was that they had now. They had the Bud Scott's Band out of Natchez. They would be up here and we'd get invitations to go. We thought it was nice. We called it good times.
- D: What about the "big bands"?
- S: What you mean?

D: Like ah, Benny Goodman.

S: They use to come there.

D: They come there?

S: Yea, yea, yea.

D: Count Basie, do you remember him?

S: Yea, yea, I remember that.

D: Did you go see him?

S: Sometime I did.

D: How much would it cost to go in one of those shows then?

S: Well, ah, a dollar. Use to be a dollar. Dollar and a quarter sometimes.

D: Would a lot of people go?

S: Yea, quite a few. 'Cause wasn't nothing else good to enjoy, but something like that. But, girls now days, you don't know where they are now.

D: Did they play "Ragtime" then?

S: Yea.

D: And "Blues"? Do you remember any of the blues singers?

S: Yea.

D: Who were some of them?

S: Some of the blues singers what be with the band?

D: Yes, ma'am.

S: Well, they didn't live here and I didn't know them, but let me see what that woman named. Use to come a lot of times with . . . Tiny something, I don't know what 'cause she didn't know, but I've seen her.

D: Her name was Tiny something?

S: They called her Tiny. I can't remember the other part of her name. She went for a famous blues singer. Bessie Smith not Bessie Smith, that was before I got to be big enough to be out, but ah, Clara Smith.

- I went to a lot of times when they had dances and things and she come in here. She was a famous blues singer at that day and time, Clara Smith.
- D: But, you had heard of Bessie Smith?
- S: And, Mary Smith. I knew about Bessie Smith, but I wasn't big enough to go out then.
- D: Yes, ma'am.
- S: But, Clara Smith and Mamie Smith. . .not Mamie, but Clara Smith (Loud noise) and Mary Smith and Clara Smith I know about them 'cause I went to a lot of times. They would be in the picture show. They'd be in the picture shows performing.
- D: Where was the picture show?
- S: The picture show was on Farish Street sometimes and then they moved it on Amite Street. (Airplane noise)
- D: What was the name of it?
- S: Mr. Layman was the head man.
- D: What was his first name?
- S: That's all I know, Mr. Layman. I didn't know nothing but Mr. Layman. He was a Jewish looking white man. And, now they call it Alamo theater. It's on Farish Street now. It used to be on Amite Street. When I was a girl, it was on Amite Street, but it's on Farish Street now. So I don't know. Since then, I don't know who has it now, but in my day and time Mr. Layman had it.
- D: Do you remember Ma Rainy?
- S: I don't know, but I remember her.
- D: You remember her name.
- S: Yea, I remember Ma Rainy. I sho'do. Yea, she was famous too. She was a I would say a black star.
- D: Okay now, we talked about the Crystal Palace. What about the Four O'clock Tea Room?
- S: The Four. . .that's out yonder--ain't it?

- D: I think so, Four O'clock Tea Room.
- S: I don't know nothing about it.
- D: You don't know nothing about it.
- S: I ain't never been there.
- D: Yes ma'am.
- S: I don't know nothing about it.
- D: What other night clubs did they have around?
- S: Well, if they had anymore I didn't go.
- D: You just went to the Crystal Palace?
- S: I just went where I was allowed to go. (Laughter)
- D: Yes ma'am, I see.
- S: I went where I was allowed to go.
- D: Okay, what about the minstrel shows? Do you remember the minstrel shows?
- S: Yes, I remember the 'Good Old Days.'
- D: Did you go to them?
- S: Yes, those was some good days. Silas Green and
- D: Rabbit Foot.
- S: Don't leave that off. (Laughter)
- D: Why?
- S: Because that was the main show.
- D: It was? Tell me about that one.
- S: It was good. It had some good singing and some good "Blues."
- D: Who were some of the people who would be singing?

- S: I can't remember the names now. It's been so long, but I've been to the Rabbit Foot so many times. It didn't come here much unless I went. (Very loud laughter)
- D: Where was it?
- S: In Silas, let me see, Silas Green and Rabbit Foot and ah, let me see, wait wait. Another show come here, it was Get Lucky Red-View or something.
- D: What?
- S: That was good. Get Lucky Red-View, but it was good.
- D: Get Lucky Revue?
- S: Get Lucky Red-View, but it wait, wait I know some mo. . .wait now let me think about it. Silas Green. . . . (Silence. Birds in background) and Rabbit Foot. Sho' do.
- D: Get Lucky Revue. Okay, now you can't remember some of the people who would be singing or performing in the show.
- S: I'm trying to think now, Its' been so long. Nobody talk about them days and they just by-gone.
- D: Yes ma'am. Did Ma Rainy ever sing in any of those shows? Do you remember?
- S: I can't remember it been so long. But, I know about Má Rainy.
- D: So you enjoyed those shows.
- S: Yes, I enjoyed them. I tell the truth. 'Cause we'd love to hear some good "Blues" when I was young back then.
- D: How much it cost to get in those shows?
- S: Let me see, we were children and we paid-it wasn't hardly over fifty cents or a dollar, not then 'cause people didn't have money then like they do now. They charge you a triple price now, look like to go to something. But, in those days it wasn't high.
- D: Who were some of the local people who performed in the shows? People from Jackson - Did people from Jackson perform in the shows?
- S: Yea, sometimes they'd take somebody. Ah, well one while

Mary Smith Lee attend. She lived here one whole . . . But mostly she stayed in New Orleans, so she said. And, she went to different places, all up in New York. She traveled lots of times with the shows.

D: Did you know a man named Cecil Stift?

S: Yes.

D: You knew him?

S: Yes. You kin to him?

D: No, mem.

S: I know Cecil Stift. The Cecil Stift I knew use to do printing and draw pictures. The one I knew. He was tall. Yea, I knew him. I certainly did.

D: Did you know about his work? You knew about his art and stuff?

S: Yea, he was an artist. He use to draw and I remember he drew a picture (Interruption) had a grave on it and the shovels was laying across the grave like that. One this way and one that way across the grave and it said "Please do not ask for credit, poor credit is dead, bad pay killed him." (Laughther) .

D: What cafe was that in?

S: He placed it in a cafe. We placed it in the Sunset Cafe long ago.

D: Sunset.

S: Yea, the cafe was named . . .

D: Where was that?

S: It was on Farish Street.

D: Sunset Cafe.

S: Yes. And that's the motto he put on a sign and hung up in a cafe, "Please do not ask for Credit. Bad pay killed him. Credit died in 1800, let me see, Credit died in eighteen hundred-four-and-a half." That's the way he had it. Eighteen hundred-four-and-a half. Credit died. Bay pay killed him. And, he use to fix little signs with mottoes on them like that and sell'em to folks. And Mr. Hinderson use to do work like that too. He used to make little signs like that and

place them around in cafes and it would trickle us to read them and see what they said. I would sound funny to us because we were young then.

D: Okay, do you remember an Opera House being here up around Pearl and Minerva and Rose. Up in that area.

S: Wait, wait now. (Silence) Well, ah, I don't know about the Opera House, but long time ago.--Naw, I ain't been to no Opera House around. I use to go . . . sometimes I go to, let me see what you call it now, I don't know whether they moved it or not. I ain't been there in years. This was pointed on Pearl Street. Wait minute, let me see what we call that. It was on Pearl and Congress, I thank. Pearl and Congress. . . it was Pearl and Congress or either Pearl and President or something. It was some kind of something there. We use to go there and they'd have fights and programs and things. I've been there a number of times, but its' been long, long ago.

D: Was it the City Auditorium?

S: Yea, that's what we called it.

D: City Auditorium.

S: Yea, that's what I'm trying to say.

D: Did black and white people go there together?

S: (Loud noise) Well, I'll tell you colored folks then didn't mix with whites like they do now.

D: So, how would you go? How did you ah . . .

S: Well, if you go, you'd go to the door and buy your ticket and gone on in.

D: Would white people be there too when you went or would it be just black people when you went?

S: Well, white people. . . it's some white gone be when something going on. But, they are mixing more now than ever before in my life than I've seen. I seen more in the late years.

D: How was the seating arrangement?

S: Well, if the white folks are mostly sitting on that side, the niggers would mostly be in this side. Now, that's the way that worked. And

ah, things that you go to then, the white people didn't like to mix like they do now. I've seen more of this mixing since the "freedom riders" than I ever saw in my life before. I'll be honest. But, colored didn't go there as much as whites.

- D: Yes, ma'am. I see. Okay now ah, lets go back again to when you were a child and first moved here. Did you all have electricty and city water and things like that?
- S: Yea, we had a hyrant on the back porch. Had a hyrant on the back porch.
- D: Did you have electricty then?
- S: No, we didn't have electricty. We had coal oil lamps.
- D: How much was coal oil?
- S: I think it was fifteen cents a gallon or a dime a gallon, one.
- D: Okay, what about sewage? Did you all have sewage?
- S: No, not in that day and time.
- D: When did you get them?
- S: They had out houses. I called them little house.
- D: When did you all get a bathroom inside? Sewage inside.
- S: Ah, well, we got a bathroom. . .we had a bathroom in ah, forty. What about electricty?
- S: We had electricty in forty. We had a complete bathroom in forty and electricity.
- D: Okay, what about World War II? When World War II was going on, what kind of situation were you-all in?
- S: Well, we were in pretty good standing in World War II. We was in pretty good standing.
- D: Did you have a job?
- S: Yes.
- D: Yes, ma'am.
- S: Yea, I was working. I had a job.

D: Do you remember the CC Camps and the soilders coming here?

S: Yea, I believe I do.

D: What do you remember about?

S: Well, the soilder would met people from all parts of the worlds. And, the war lasted so long, and we were all upset. Look like the town was worried--when is the war gonna cease,--because so many things was happen- ing and people was all a wondering when is the war gonna cease. My mother use to tell them "This is God's world and it's left with the war'll cease. When the time come, it'll cease." But, if I make no mistake, . . . ah, World War II lasted five years. Lasted about five years as near I can come at it.

D: You were taking care of your sisters and brothers then weren't you?

S: Naw, I wasn't taking care of them. They were getting off my hands.

D: They were getting off your hands then. (Laughther). Where were you living then?

S: We lived on Church Street.

D: Still lived on Church Street.

S: Yea, we stayed practically up and down Church Street all the time.

D: Yes, ma'am.

S: Yea, see the family had growed to be larger.

D: Ah, okay, what about after World War II?

S: After World War II, you know, they had another war come about called the Korean War.

D: Yes, ma'am. Was it the same kind of situation?

S: Yea, well, I had some little nephews then and they ended up in the Korean War. I just tell the truth. I think things were in bloom then, I thought because we were getting more then for our work. What ever we do, we get more pay and better pay. I got a job working at the hotel and I thought it was good and I called myself doing good.

D: How much were you making then just about?

S: Oh, I was making. . . called myself making good then. We were getting

paid off every two weeks and I called myself making good then. (Laughter)
I just be honest. I had a job during the war --the Korean War working
at ah, Trailway Bus Station and Hidelburg Hotel.

D: What kind of new people would you meet while you were working over there?

S: I'd meet a kind of folks. I just tell the truth. I meet some were very nice and then I meet some I didn't care too much about.

D: What kind of good times did you have when you were working during those times?

S: Well, sometimes we'd get together . . . I just tell the truth and ah, we'd--whatever we done we thought it was good. Mostly it was things that we'd get toghther when a bunch of us get together and we'd go to some place or other and be socialable. We call that a good time.

D: Yes m'am. Did you have a car then?

S: No, I didn't never own no car. My mother have owned two. But I ain't never owned no car.

D: Yes ma'am. Who were some of the other black doctors? Okay, we talkéd about Doctor Redmond and Doctor Thomas. Who were some of the other black doctors you remember?

S: I remember Doctor Johnson.

D: What was his first name?

S: I don't know. All I know was Doctor Johnson.

D: Any others?

S: Yea, I knowed other doctors, Negro doctors. Doctor Johnson and Doctor Barnes and Doctor Christine, they were all colored. I only gave you the names of the ones who I worked for. I knew them and they all had to be together cause Negroes then couldn't be where white folks were like they do now.

D: Yes m'am. Do you remember any black nurses . . .

S: Ah, Catherine Battle, I remember her. She was suppose to been a nurse. She use to work at the Charity Hospital, long ago.

D: Do you remember any other one?

- S: Yea. (Silence) I'm trying to get this gal's name here. I'm trying to get her name. (Silence) I can't think of her name. Well, I use to know another colored gal, she's named Minnie Pyles. She lived in the Tougaloo Settlement, but she worked around in town here.
- D: What about midwives?
- S: Well, the town was full of them then. (Loud laughther)
- D: Who were some of them? Do you remember any of them?
- S: Let me see, who was then. But, that's the biggest thing folks used then. She stay right out here on Valley Street. She's a bright woman now. Let me see, what her name is, Flora.
- D: Flora what?
- S: I don't know what she go by. But, her name Flora. She worked at the University Hospital and a lot of other hospitals too around here.
- D: Being a midwife?
- S: She is a nurse, Flora.
- D: Oh, this one was a nurse.
- S: Flora was a registered nurse. She did midwife work.
- D: She did?
- S: Yea.
- D: Uh hum, I see.
- S: She was a nurse. I would say a city nurse, 'cause she'd be a different places taking care of folks.
- D: Did any of the nurses go around to your houses?
- S: Yea, she would go to your house.
- D: She was a public nurse then. Do you remember the Sally Harris Clinic over here at St. Marks'? Did you ever go there for services?
- S: Sally Harris Clinic.
- D: Uh hum. Over there at St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

- S: Over here on Pearl Street?
- D: Yes ma'am.
- S: No, but I remember when they were carrying work on, but I never did go there.
- D: Yes ma'am. What were some of the health hazards while you were growing up, when you were a child? What did most people get sick from or die of?
- S: I just tell the truth. They most of them, they'd get sick the mostly with fever.
- D: Fever, what kind?
- S: Yea, malaria fever.
- D: Malaria, around here?
- S: Well alot of folk use to have malaria.
- D: Uh, hum. Did you ever have anything like that?
- S: Yea.
- D: You did?
- S: Uh hum.
- D: How would they treat it?
- S: Well ah, how would they treat it? Well, alots of times mama would get somebody who lived near her that would know about looking after people like that and say "My child is sick." And, they'd come over and do what they could. Whatever they done was alright.
- D: Uh, hum, I see. Well, you didn't go to a doctor then?
- S: Naw, people didn't use doctors then. Nobody did as much as they do now.
- D: What kind of remedies ah, home remedies did they use for malaria?
- S: They use to make tea. Pull up old weeds, old bitter and different things and make a tea. That bucket there's mint. They would take

that and boil it and make tea (loud noise) three or four times a day. Half-a-cup or cup of that tea or something like that. Then they'd get--have ice bages lay it on your head if your worried you or something. They'd treat you like that. They'd give you some pills or some liquid medicine or something.

D: Do you remember people who use to make medicines and stuff when you were younger.

S: Yea, yea. This man is . . . I heard he's dead tho'now. He's not living now, I heard. His name was Sess Ballard.

D: Sess Ballard.

S: He used roots. Yea, he use to sell roots.

D: He sell roots. Uh, hum, where did he live?

S: He's dead tho' now. He lived in the Tougaloo Settlement.

D: Tougaloo. How do you spell that Sess?

S: All I know Sess Ballard was what he said he was named? He claimed he'd tell you what all it was good for. That's all I know.

D: He was the only one you knew?

S: Yea, he sold roots.

D: Okay, when you got older what were some of the health hazards? What did people get sick of as you got older, when you were out of your teens?

S: Well, anybody could have fever.

D: Uh hum. Other than that.

S: Yea.

D: What did people have? What kind of diseases? Did you know a lot of people be dying from.

S: I tell you (loud noise) when I was a child you didn't hear much about cancer. You very seldom heard of somebody with cancer.

D: Yes ma'am.

S: I'll be honest, and now everytime you hear somebody mostly they got heart disease or cancer.

- D: Yes ma'am.
- S: But, I didn't hear to much about heart trouble and cancer not much then, not much, very seldom.
- D: Yes ma'am. Okay, now ah, what about people who believed in Hoodoo and stuff like that?
- S: Well, I couldn't tell you anything about it cause my mother taught me that don't believe in that stuff.
- D: Did you know any people in the community or anything . . .
- S: Yea, use to be some people. . . yea, it was weak minded people.
- D: It was . . . Who were some of them that believed in that or that-- you know how people have these little signs out around their house?
- S: Yes, I know how they do. I know how they do. But, my mother taught me that was ignorant. Anybody who beleived in Hoodoo. She said "put you truth in the Lord."
- D: That's right. Now, do you remember any of the people who did any way?
- S: Call themselves Hoodoo?
- D: Call themselves Hoodooing people.
- S: It was a heap of folks in that day and time use to called themselves know something, and ain't knowed nothing. Mama use to call them two headed folks.
- D: Who were some of them? Do you remember any of their names?
- S: Yes, I do and a lot of them dead and gone too.
- D: They are?
- S: That's right.
- D: Will you tell me who some of them were?
- S: Well, I'll be honest, people was weak then. But a lot they done got above that now. You see they're not as ignorant now like they was then, 'cause didn't look like the world knew as much then as they do now.
- D: Yes ma'am.

- S: But, my mother trained us from the cradle, don't believe in stuff like that, 'cause she said "that's idlesome hands" and she say "idle-some hands is the devils' workshop. She talking about the community then.
- D: Well ah, I know you didn't believe in them but, do you remember some of the people who did, you know, the people who like. . . who some could go to to get somebody fixed or something like that?
- S: Give you a hand. (Loud laughther)
- D: Who were some of them? Who were some of them?
- S: The old folks then would send children out to play. They didn't let you sit up and look in their face, they'd send you out to play to keep you from being smart and knowing something. They's send you to play that's all. Tell you to go out and play. Go out and bring some stove wood, something like that. Thats what they'd tell you.
- D: Yes, ma'am. Who were some of these people who would fix folk?
- S: Well, them I knowed who they claimed could do things, they dead and gone. I knowed a lot of folks what called they selves know something and fooled money out of people.
- D: What were some of their names?
- S: Well, they dead and gone now.
- D: You can't tell me their names?
- S: (Laughter) Yea, I can tell they names.
- D: Tell me some of their names.
- S: One old man was named Mr. Williams.
- D: What was his first name?
- S: John Williams was his name.
- D: Where did he live?
- S: He lived here. He's dead and gone now.
- D: Did he lived over near Church Street or out this way?
- S: He lived out in this vicinity . . . South Jackson that what they

said. But, people like that ah, mama didn't allow us to fool around with--with people like that.

D: Do you remember anybody else?

S: Sho'do. Well, that's what, lets' see, Mr. John Williams was this old man and others my mother tell us don't have nothing to do with so-and-so 'cause they say she's two headed and don't fool with them. And, we'd just say yes m'am and we wouldn't. And, we'd be particular, say 'yes m'am' and be particular. That person she'd tell us don't have nothing to do with, we didn't, thats' all. And, children did sit up and look in old folks mouth when they talking then like they do now.

D: Yes, ma'am.

S: 'Cause they tell you go do so-and-so, go bring some water or sweep the yard or do something. And that was to keep you from looking in their face when they talking.

D: What about burial back then? What kind of ceremonies did they have for peoples funerals and stuff? How did they handle it?

S: Well, the way I think they handled folks along time ago it ain't much difference. Naw, its not much difference.

D: Did they take them to the funeral home?

S: A lot of them went to the funeral home and alot of them didn't.

D: What did they do when they didn't take them to the funeral home?

S: Well, I don't know what they did 'cause I wasn't in their house. But, I do know people died and the undertaker would come to their house. And Mr. Layton use run a funeral home and so did Mr. Collins run a funeral home that I knew. Some of them, they carried away from the house. Some of them they didn't. Like they carry all of them from the house now.

D: Uh, hum. I see. Did you ever go to funerals at people houses or did they just have the wake in the house?

S: Well, I have been to wakes in folks houses and they served coffee. Yea, they served coffee. They sure did.

D: Uh, hum. Okay, what about weddings?

S: Well, I went to house weddings alot of times. I've been to quite a few

of them. Girls use to marry on the front porch.

D: On the front porch? Uh, hum.

S: Yea, a lot of them would marry standing on the front porch. And, the preacher would be standing with his back turned towards them steps there and she'd be in front of the doorway and he'd read the ceremony. All of us would be standing around gathered like sheep on a rock. We thought that was a good day. And, they'd throw rice (laughter).

D: Yes, ma'am. Okay, what do you recall about Black and White relations when you were a girl? Black people and white people, how . . .

S: Well, I'll tell you, we was this way when I come up, not like children is now. Ah, respect those white folks and not only respect white folks my mother taught us to respect yourself. Just like you do, say self examination first. That's what she would tell us when we were little, small. And, we come up that way. We respected white folks and we wouldn't do anything wrong that we knew was wrong. We were very careful.

D: How did they treat you?

S: They treated me alright. I don't have any kick because, I tried to treat them nice. If you take care of yourself and respect white folks, they will treat you nice - the majority of them. That's all, take care of yourself and if you lived in that day and time they'd take care of you. But, Negroes now, a lot of them don't have respect for themselves and nobody else. But, when I come along, you were taught from your parents to respect white folks. That's what they'd tell you.

D: How did white people treat your mother?

S: They liked her. Her name was Mary and she did their work and they was always glad to see her. She worked for a white lady named Mrs. Holden. Mrs. Holden worked for Kennedy and every turn around, Mary was her dead right-hand person. And, she worked to suit them and they thought well of her. They were nice to her. I just tell the truth. They were nice to them.

D: How did you see other white people treating other black people?

S: Well, we'd hear about things. When they don't act right, we'd just hear different things.

D: Like what?

S: Well, when they don't act right?

D: When who don't act right?

S: When Negroes don't act right, they didn't have no job alot of times.

D: What would you hear about them?

S: Well, sometimes, ah, I just heard such and such a nigger gal sassed Miss So and So or something like that and sometimes nigger gal say "she quit" and so that's the way it would go.

D: What would the white people do about it?

S: Well, I don't know what they would do, 'cause I didn't visit none of the hearsayers. I say "I just hope that happen to me" and I tried to be nice and be respectable to white folks.

D: You hoped what didn't happen?

S: When you worked for white people, mama taught us this way when we come up. Go to Miss So and So's house and I'm sending you there for so-and-so and you tell Miss So and So, so and so. Yes m'am alright. We said "yes m'am" to our mother, and that's the way it was. But now, folks tell children don't say now yes m'am now. Say yes and no. But, we didn't do that. We were taught to say yes m'am and no m'am. Thats what we said.

D: What do you recall about lynchings?

S: I-I don't know nothing about that, but what I heard folks say and what I see in the paper.

D: Uh, hum. What did you think about it?

S: Well, I thought it was awful . . . To do a thing like that cause you can't give no life. I tried to always . . . I was brought up this way to anything that I could exist to do. Try not to have no parts in something wrong. My mother was a Christain woman. A lot of bad things I didn't want to do. I just tell the truth. If I be with a bunch and they didn't act right, I just wouldn't get with them.

D: Yes ma'am. Were you ever afraid of white people?

S: Naw, I wasn't scare of nobody, 'cause I always treated them nice and they treated me nice.

D: Did you get news from the surrounding areas like Bolton and Raymond? Did you-all get news from them places? Do you remember around 1928 that a man named James Martin was lynched in Bolton and one named Frank

West?

- S: I got news when I was a girl about . . . I don't know how old I was then I can't remember. It's been so far back. But, anyway I got news about Herd Lee. That's was down in ah, towards out from Clinton. One boy was named Lee and the other'en was named Herd.
- D: Herd. They got lynched?
- S: Yea.
- D: Uh hum. In Clinton.
- S: Naw, naw, they were lynched. They were hung. They wasn't no lynched. They were hung. I'll say that. You see the city use to hang folks and didn't give them the electric chair. They use to hang'em and then later the city quit hanging and went to sitting them in the electric chair.
- D: What did they hang these two for? Do you remember that?
- S: They did some shooting or something.
- D: Do you remember the Albert Lee Rape Case--Where this man was accused of raping a white woman? Albert Lee in the 1940's?
- S: I done forgot, I done forgot, I heard mostly everything because I'd always . . . I was a hand for reading papers but I just done forgot it. But, Lee and Herd, they were hung in the City Jail. That's what paper said. They were hung in the City Jail. And ah, I saw the bodies afterwards when they had them in the funeral homes. And, they had them in Mr. Layton's funeral home. When he was living--you know, Mr. Layton is dead. He's passed, Mr. Layton is passed. I saw their bodies. Mama carried us to see them. She said "I'm going to carry you and let you see the people they hung because when you don't do right thats what happens. And, it should be a lesson to all children to see this."
- D: Oh, that's what she said?
- S: Yea, that's what she said. To see, because when you don't do right this is what happen. Things come like this. But they weren't lynched they were hung and when I saw them they had a black cap over thier face.
- D: They had a black cap over their face?
- S: Yea, and I asked, "Why is he got that cap over his face"? They said to keep you from seeing his tongue? That little black cap over his face

and I never will forget it . . . Them was the first two people I ever saw hung.

D: And, they had a black cap over their faces.

S: Yea, had a black cap over his face. Pulled down over his face. It wasn't no cap like a man have a cap put on his head and pull the bib down. This was a-a little--it looked to me like a homemade cap. And, it was black cloth and it was pulled down-like that. (Demonstrates) I've never seen nothing like before. That was the first I ever saw and I hope it will be the last. But, since then they, you know, elect people, what I read about it, like that. But, these was from the gallows.

D: What do recall about Emmett Tills' lynching?

S: I don't know, I haven't saw that.

D: Did you hear about it? That was in the early fifties, Emmett Tills was lynched up in ah . . .

S: Yea, yea. Oh, yea, I know what you talking about. I forgot yea, I heard about . . .

D: What do you recall about that?

S: I don't know what to say. I just tell the truth it was bad, all I can say.

D: What about what went on here about Civil Rights in the early sixties.

S: I just tell the truth. A lot of folks got beat up I heard.

D: Did you ever attend any of the meetings or go to any of that?

S: Yea, I went to places. Anything you go to then, had something to say about the freedom riders. But, I never was no part of it. I didn't belong to it because I was scared. I'll just be honest. I was scared.

D: What were you scared of?

S: Well, I didn't want to be connected up with them white folks whooping me thats' what. I wasn't gone hit them and bother them and I didn't want them to hit me.

D: Yes ma'am. What were your thoughts about white people them.

S: Well, I just thought niggers ought to stay to themselves like they wanted

you to do and don't worry the white folks. If you do anything white folks didn't like way back yonder it was too bad junior. You come up with a wooped head that's all. Police then looked like ruled the Negroes. More so then and you didn't have look like a fair chance. And, you go to tell them something ah, look like everything you would say would make it worst and worst. That's what it looked like in that day and time. But, looks like you gets ah, fairer trial now, when something come up then you did then. 'Cause in that day and time, they say they didn't get no fair trial or nothing.

D: Yes ma'am. I see. What happened to your father.

S: My mother said he died with smallpox when I was a baby. That's what she said. Smallpox, she said use to break out in families every year. But, you don't hear about it now since this Board of Health has taken over and like that. But, way back yonder, she said that was a common thing just like a cold cause so many people had it.

D: So, he died with smallpox. Did anybody else have it in the family?

S: Not that I know of. But, she said he died when we were little.

D: Okay, what were the best times that you remember in your life? What are the best times you ever had?

S: Eating and sleeping.

D&S: (Laughter).

S: And playing. And, when I got a big enough to do anything, my mother had a job for me.

D: Yes ma'am. So, eating and sleeping and playing were the best times you had.

S: And, I use to would hate to see Monday come 'cause I had to go to school. (Laughter).

D: You didn't like school.

S: Not too much. Not too much.

D: So, Miss Smith, I want to thank you for this interview and I enjoyed talking to you.

S: Uh, hum. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

SMITH

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