

This Oral History Interview is compiled of 59 typed pages and housed in the Margaret Walker Alexander National Research Center, formerly known as the Institute for the study of the History, Life, and Culture of Black People.

This Interview depicts the life of Mrs. Ethel George McCallister. In her interview she talks about her childhood memories, church, family, the plantation where she was raised and worked, education (school), and social life with the other plantations. During the time of the interview Mrs. McCallister was living in the Oak Haven Apartments for Senior Citizens with her husband. She was very open-minded about her life history experiences.

The oral history interviews were conducted by Dr. Alferdteen Harrison, Director of the center. This transcription is made available to scholars at the Margaret Walker Alexander National Research Center at Jackson State University.

**Jackson State University
Oral History Program**

Interviewer: Alferdteen Harrison
Interviewee: Ethel George McCallister
Subject: "Earliest Childhood Experiences"
Date: September 26, 1980

We are in the home of Mrs. Ethel George McCallister, in Yazoo City. We've driven up here from Jackson State University to interview her about her life experiences. I am Alferdteen Harrison, an Oral Historian at Jackson State University. Today, I will be talking to Mrs. McCallister about her earliest childhood experiences.

Harrison: So that we can get started and for the record, why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself, what are you doing today, and just who are you ?

McCallister: Well, I'm a housewife, and I do different cooking. I cooks pound cakes, and I goes to Sunday school and I goes to church every Sunday, some place. Of course, my church is the third Sunday out in the rural where I was raised. Out on the Schaefer's Plantation. And today, I'm sewing, I'm cleaning, I'm doing something all the time.

Harrison: Do you sew for other people ?

McCallister: No, just only for myself. Quilts and sometimes fix pillows, spreads, you know my pillows, ticks, and all like that. And my home, that's right. And I love flowers, I raises pot flowers, and I also had a beautiful flower yard this summer. And that was my enjoyment, I just loved that.

Harrison: In spite of the dry weather you had a nice flower.

McCallister: Yes, because we had air conditioning and I didn't let that bother me. I kept it on and see about my flowers, come back and do all like that and I'd be satisfied. I enjoyed that life and cooking. I loves cooking.

Harrison: Do you cook for other people ?

McCallister: Well, sometimes I bake cakes for certain people and I bake pies for certain people.

Harrison: So, are you active in any senior citizens activities ?

McCallister: Well, not yet, but our boss lady says after and in October some time, that she was going to have it up here in the office so all of us could participate in it. And I told her that we would all be ready because we don't want to hold our hands, we wants to and we don't want to just go along and not do nothing, we wants to go out doing something.

Harrison: That's right. Now, who is the boss lady ?

McCallister: Ah.....

Harrison: Is that the person who is in charge of these apartments ?

McCallister: In charge of these apartments.

Harrison: Oak Haven Apartments.

McCallister: That's right, Oak Haven Apartments.

Harrison: Do we have mostly senior citizens living out here or do we have some young

couples ?

McCallister: Well, that's all, unless it's some handicapped people. We have a few, not too many of those. All of them is senior citizens.

Harrison: Well, how do you like living here ?

McCallister: Oh, I just love it. It's the most comfortable place I've ever been in my life.
And I just love it. I works from one time to the other cooking, working in the house, outdoors, doing different things; I like that.

Harrison: How long have you lived here ?

McCallister: I moved here April last year, I've been here a year and some months.

Harrison: That would be April, 1979.

McCallister: That's right, 1979. And my husband he loves out here, he's been ill mostly ever since he been here.

Harrison: Oh, I see. What seems to be his problem ?

McCallister: He's well, it could be old age, as well as myself because he was 83 the third day of March, this year. And I think he's doing fine.

Harrison: Yes.

McCallister: He's a church man too when he's able to go.

Harrison: Now, you indicated that your church was out in the rural areas, what church

was that ?

McCallister: Yes, out in the rural area, well, it was on Schaefer's Plantation, where I've been all my life.

Harrison: What did they call the church ?

McCallister: We called it New Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church. I've been there all my life. When my parents came there, I was too small to remember. And we stopped on another place on the first beginning of the plantation; they called it Begwell Quarter's. I was very small.

Harrison: Big ?

McCallister: Begwell Quarter's.

Harrison: Begwell ?

McCallister: Beg, BEG. Begwell Quarters. Well, after such a length of time, the boss man, which was Marx Schaefer, built my father's house. And guess what, when we moved there it was two quarters on the plantation. The middle quarter had a plenty of houses in it in my child days. And the road for these houses was on the lakeside and through the fields and keep on round by the river.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: And see we didn't have these new roads and we would go the old road to Yazoo City. It wasn't like it used to be in my childhood. I was very It was like this, was all the way around the water stream, from the lakeside to the riverside.

Harrison: Do you know the name of that lake ?

McCallister: Yes, I do.

Harrison: What was that ?

McCallister: They called it, we all called it Schaefer's lake because we was on the plantation.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: And Wolfe Lake emptied into it; it emptied into the river.

Harrison: What river was that ?

McCallister: Yazoo River. It wasn't no bridge up like it is up today. We went all the way on the dirt road. It wasn't even gravel in my child days.

Harrison: I see.

McCallister: To the big bridge that crossed the old Yazoo River what they has cut out today. On into Yazoo City.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: I was small, I was too small to remember and when my parents moved because my father died in 1917, March. My mother, Lizzie George, raised me and also Mr. Marx Schaefer, she was their servant. And he would ship me and my brother, which was Charlie George, and I would pinch him sometimes. Well, I pinched Mr. Schaefer, then he whipped me, I didn't know, and after I saw he meant business, well, I stopped pinching him and

I would have to mind him, me and my brother. He would see to us because my mother was in the house working for him. And then to, now , he had a dairy in my child days. Plenty cows, and a dairy where men people could milk the cows.

Harrison: By hand ?

McCallister: By hand, ah hum. And the lady people, one of them was my mother, would carry the milk into another room and separate the cream from the sweet milk. And they had a colored man, Charlie White, to take that milk to Yazoo City and they capped that milk. You see milk bottles, they capped that milk and put it in a wagon and had customers to carry milk and eggs to different people (and butter) in Yazoo City. I was raised up on that plantation and I know. First, milk, etc. was carried by horse and cart and later by truck.

Harrison: Now, did they cool the milk or anything ? Did they separate it and put it in bottles ?

McCallister: No, they didn't cook it, they had something they put up there and it come down in a stream down it. It come down like that, it was wide, just about that wide. And they was ...

Harrison: About your feet?

McCallister: Uh yea, something like that and it was galvanized and they would and that milk would come that, well, the cream would go in one direction from the sweet milk and the milk would go and they would set the bottle there and catch the quart bottles of milk and cap it up with a paper cap and it couldn't come out. They call that separating milk.

Harrison: You say it was galvanized ?

McCallister: Galvanized, it comes up, it had ridges in it and it would come down like that.

Harrison: Um huh.

McCallister: Now that was in my child days.

Harrison: Um uh.

McCallister: We had pecan orchards from the bridge. You see, wasn't no bridge there now.

Harrison: If I wanted to get to that bridge, how would I go to get there now ?

McCallister: You would just go west.

Harrison: West, down 49 ?

McCallister: And you get down to Yazoo City, go west down 49 and you gonna go through the intersection and that's the new bridge, but the old bridge is condemned, you can't cross it, what I cross when I was a child. It's got iron banisters up over it, but you don't cross it anymore. You crossing the new bridge where they cut the river and going in another direction. The old river. And he had a gin and in my child day that gin was run by wood and steam. And they gin the cotton there.

Harrison: What do you mean it was run by wood and steam ?

McCallister: They gin the cotton like that then.

Harrison: Oh, you mean to make the machinery run, they used wood and

McCallister: And steam, and some kind of steam to gin the cotton.

Harrison: Oh, the machine was running, you put the wood in there to make the... generate the steam, the furnace.

McCallister: Yea, now that's when we had a little old commissary. At his house, his house was on the right hand side after you get up there and on the other side was his gin and that's where the people would get their grocery once a month out there anytime that you needed stuff. He would give it to you.

Harrison: Now, I want to go back to this gin ?

McCallister: To this gin ?

Harrison: Yes, ma'am. How did this operate, you said ah ?

McCallister: They, my father 'em and other men would get out wood. And they must have had a boiler of some kind, but I'm knowing they had a furnace and gin would use wood to heat it with and it bounded and went by steam. And they would gin the cotton.

Harrison: Where did you get the cotton from ?

McCallister: We would have, you know, in the field, we had a big farm that we lived on.

Harrison: And what was the main crop ? The main thing that you raised in the field was what ?

McCallister: Cotton, corn and peas whatever you wanted to.

Harrison: O.k. Before the phone rang we were talking about the crops that were raised on the plantation. Now tell me how you got the cotton to the gin ?

McCallister: Well, we had trucks with big ole tall beds on them and we had different men to come out there or go to your cotton house and load it up and carry it. The truck bed was pulled by a tractor. And they would carry it there and gin it and whoever had another bed they would carry there, and do the same thing.

Harrison: You mean different people in the plantation had different lots. Who would these people be who had the cotton ?

McCallister: Well, now sometime it would be Lynn McCallister, sometime it would be Mark McCallister, sometime it would be Columbus Willis; just all of them people. It was a big lot, was farming just a plenty people on the plantation at a time.

Harrison: Now did the McCallisters own the cotton themselves ?

McCallister: Naw, we worked on the half, one-half was ours and the other half was the bossman's.

Harrison: So you would be How did that work now ?

McCallister: Well, now if I made 4 bales of cotton he'd get half of each one of those 4, you see. If I made three he'd get half of each one of those, and I'd have mine that's the way it worked on the half. Or if I made 8 bales of cotton he had 4 and I had 4, like that.

Harrison: Now what did he contribute to this, you worked, right, and what did, who is this Mr. Marx ?

McCallister: Marx Schaefer.

Harrison: Schaefer, what did he supply ?

McCallister: Say what did he supply ?

Harrison: Why did you give him half ?

McCallister: Because everything that was put in there, the seed, the fertilizer was his, then we would work it. We did everything and sometimes turned around and picked it.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: We had all of that to go up against.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: We didn't just make a full crop like other people made ourselves, they plowed it with the tractor, they tractored the land, they planted it and did everything to it and then sometimes picked it out. That's the way we were.

Harrison: So you feel like everybody was contributing his half his share in it.

McCallister: It was.

Harrison: And then you shared the profits ?

McCallister: Um hum.

Harrison: Who took the cotton to sell it ?

McCallister: Well, the bossman did that. Now, he would settle with you when time come. Sometime in November or the first of December and you could always clear some money. It wasn't no whole lot, but you could clear some money. And they turned around in my child days they would loan you so much money for your family.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: Never wanted for nothing that was reasonable for you to ask him for.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: He was nice to his hands.

Harrison: Now, you call the hands the people who lived

McCallister: The people who lived on the plantation.

Harrison: How many families would be living there this time when they had the tractors and all ?

McCallister: Oh, my God, it was just some people there. But see, all those people is dead.

Harrison: Um Hum.

McCallister: But yet, my husband is the only one or the oldest one that's on the plantation of today living. But in those days the plantation was just loaded with people.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: But the people died.

Harrison: Um Hum.

McCallister: Because they was old, you know, and well ...

Harrison: So their children didn't stay there ?

McCallister: The children, well, some of the children, like mine, are up north. And then some of the children, mine haven't died, but some of them have, they've gone home. You know, at home on the plantation and all of that.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: But we did real good. We didn't have no bad times because he was a Jew. And he didn't give us to be rich, but we did fine.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: And I nursed Miss Rebecca (pause) Allen.

Harrison: Rebecca Allen ?

McCallister: Um hum.

Harrison: What do you mean when you say you nursed her ?

McCallister: I, well, I nursed her liked this, Miss Adeline Blundell, her mother and Mr. Frank Blundell was her father, they lived in Yazoo City. They're both dead. And they would bring them out, you know come out and visit the family. Well in those days I would, you know, go down there and rock her in the hammock; she was small.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: See, it wasn't but three of them. Miss Julia, Mr. George is a doctor and Rebecca, but Rebecca, I see to her when she was small.

Harrison: How old was she when you stopped taking care of her ?

McCallister: Well, she was about three years or four years or something like that. Because I imagine she was spoiled some.

Harrison: What do you mean spoiled ?

McCallister: Well, I did, she'd see 'bout me.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: Yes, she see' bout me.

Harrison: So what kind of a relationship did you have with her after you stopped taking, nursing her when she was three. ?

McCallister: Well, I would know when the company come down here because I had

known all the Schaefer's all my life and after my mother died, well, she and my sister was down then she would come and see about me, when she would come and see Miss Helen Mae. Schaefer, that's Mr. Emile Schaefer's sister. And she would come see my sister, my sister was an invalid. And she wouldn't come down to visit without seeing her, her and David Schaefer, that was her first cousin, and they would all come to see about me. And now she'll call or see about me today.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: Sure will, and I can call her.

Harrison: Okay, I want to go back to the plantation.

McCallister: Alright.

Harrison: To talk about that a little more. What is your earliest memory of that plantation ?

McCallister: My earliest memories of that plantation was this, the cows was one, I was scared of them.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: And then he raised his own mules and horses. And just a plenty of them.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: Plenty corn, plenty everything. And see, I was scared of the horses. I was scared of the mules and I was scared of the cows. Well, he had

jersey cows on account of we had that dairy in our first days. Well, my father passed in 1917 of March, but he give him an old mule to plow. And we can remember riding the old mule, but we can't think of the old mule's name. And we would call our daddy Mr. George because we lived in a project, in a quarter, and all the children were saying Mr. George and me and my brother , Charlie George, said it too. So every time they take the mule out from the plow for my daddy to come home, we would run out there and get up on the mule. And ride it, I would ride it with my back to my brother, and my brother got his head to the mule; I was scared of him.

Harrison: So you turned

McCallister: Yes. And so everything on the plantation was real good and he would make a fall garden for the plantation people. Greens: Mustard greens, turnip greens, he would just plant in patches. And also peas. We wouldn't have to do that unless we wanted to. We had a fall garden because he would see 'bout it being planted.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: We ate some. And my early life, when I got, see when I moved there, I wasn't old enough to go to school and that made my mother bring Mr. Emile Schaefer and Miss Helen Mae Schaefer home with her every evening when she come home. Well, that would make me and my brother go back and we would play till sundown. And then we would come home.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: Well, they had a shetland pony where two of us would try to get up on it and it would go down to the ground with the two in it and so mama would make us get off : one ride awhile and the other get up and ride awhile.

Harrison: So you played with the Schaefer's children ?

McCallister: Oh, I was going to school, I ought to have been round about eight years old, to my remembrance. And cows would fight. And I was round 'bout eight years old when I was running and hollering from the mules.... See at that time he had a whole lot of them, had two lots of them. He raised them and who wouldn't be scared of them (laugh), ooohhh it was some of them. And he had plenty hogs, plenty everything and all the people on the plantation would raise up plenty hogs. And just kill up plenty meat every year.

Harrison: Now, could you tell me what your house was like that you lived in when you were about eight years of age, what do you recall about the house that you lived in when you were eight years old ?

McCallister: Yea, yes, I can tell you we lived in a long shotgun house. A front room and a little room and a kitchen with a back porch on it. They wasn't making house like they is today. They call them shotgun houses, you know 'lloonngg', they have them today.

Harrison: Right.

McCallister: And that's the kind of house that he built for my father after he stayed in the quarter so long before my dear father died.

Harrison: Now your house was not in the quarter ?

McCallister: Naw, he didn't build it in the quarter, but that's where he stopped us when they moved from somewhere, but I was too small to remember.

Harrison: You don't remember hearing your mother saying where you came from ?

McCallister: Yea, I heard her say where we moved from they called it Simmons Lowe Field. I know where it is today; its on

Harrison: Simmons Lowe Field ?

McCallister: Uh hum.

Harrison: Was that another plantation ?

McCallister: It was just a piece of Simmons, but it belongs to the Schaefer's today, but I was too small to remember when they moved from there to Schaefer's. I don't know nothing but Schaefer's, my life.

Harrison: I see, but do you remember hearing your mother tell why they moved from the Simmons to the Schaefer's ?

McCallister: Why they moved ?

Harrison: Uh huh, from the Simmons to the Schaefer's ?

McCallister: Yea, they said my father said, he was gonna move from Mr. Peter Simmons down at Simmons Lowe Field and move with Mr. Marx Schaefer and his daddy, not Mr. P.T Clark because they was rich white

people that's what he would always say. And he would give him a fair deal in living and which I say he did.

Harrison: Do you recall your mother saying how things were with Mr. Simmons ?

McCallister: Naw, but I never hear her say it, but my father did all the saying.

Harrison: What did he say ?

McCallister: She said that he said he wasn't gonna stay at the Simmons, it was a low muddy place, he said. And which I know it is so today. She said he said, well I'm gonna move away from here. I'm going to Mr. Schaefer. You see, Mr. Schaefer and his daddy was boss at that time.

Harrison: So you were telling me about what you remember your father having said about living there.

McCallister: My mother would always, whatever he said, she would take side with him. Well, after they come from out of Simmons Lowe Field she was an old lady working, cooking for the Schaefer's: called her Belle Watts.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: Well, they come and got my mother and she trained my mother what to do for the Schaefer's and my mother stayed there till she got disabled and died. And I don't know whether it was 30 some odd years, which I know it was from my child days 'cause I was throwing _____ children when she got to the place where she couldn't go to work for 'em.

Harrison: Well, who went to work for them after your mother became disabled ?

McCallister: Well, who worked for them after my mother was disabled. Josie Jackson, uh huh, Josie Jackson, she worked for them after my mother was disabled. My mother was old, too, but she'd go there and they never bother her and she worked liked she wanted to cause she was, they were used to her.

Harrison: When your mother became disabled, what happened to her ?

McCallister: What happened to her ?

Harrison: Uh huh.

McCallister: Well, she couldn't walk, she had a wound on her leg and well, she got so she could work for 'em and right 'round 49, 50 'bout 49 in the year 49 and 52 she just geared plumb down and in August of 52 she died.

Harrison: Oh I see, but she was still working for them as long as she could go to their homes.

McCallister: As long as she could go to their homes, rain or shine, sleet or snow. She went to those white people and worked for the Schaefers, 'sho did.

Harrison: Do you recall her saying how they treated her when she got old ?

McCallister: Yes I did.

Harrison: What did she say ?

McCallister: She always say, well, she called Miss Ray, 'Miss Gray, she not gonna bother me, she tell me what to do and I do it.' And I satisfied. She didn't have no trouble with her. Cause whatever she said she was gonna do she always did it. Whatever they told her to do she did just whatever they wanted her to do. And if anything got wrong with her they seen about it. And sometimes she would have a little attack and he'd bring her home. And the next one or two days she be up and she'd go back to 'em again. She just work till she couldn't go. Sick or well she went to work.

Harrison: They took care of her ?

McCallister: Yes, they would do for her, they was really good to her.

Harrison: Yes ma'am, now I wanted to know about, you were talking about when you were eight years old and you told me the kind of house that was built for you, wrong, your parents, right.

McCallister: My parents ?

Harrison: Your parents, right, now what kind of home do you call what other people were living in ?

McCallister: They were good houses, but they wasn't up-to-date houses, but they was good enough to keep 'em all warm. They would haul wood when the cotton was picked, men would go out in the woods and gather up the winter wood. Some of them, and all that kind of stuff, and they kept warm, they didn't have no trouble. And they wasn't real warm houses, but they was warm enough to keep you warm. They was pretty comfortable. Sho did, had plenty chickens, plenty everything like that.

Harrison: Okay, now when you were eight years old you went to school ?

McCallister: Yea.

Harrison: What was the school like ?

McCallister: Well, we weren't in a school at that time. We were in a church, New Tabernacle Church. It was on Schaefer's at that time, but Schaefer had a school. But we was on Peter Simmons' plantation about well, a half a mile, but the half of a half a mile from where the school is today. Some of my older children went to the church, that was a church. Well, so many years when Schaefer took this place over, he had a little store there, a little commissary some other white man built.

Harrison: Mr. Simmons ?

McCallister: Naw, it wasn't Mr. Simmons, I can't think of the name, but anyway he had a little commissary on the road there and after he, after Mr. Marx Schaefer, taken it over. Well, they went to him and he let them, you know, had school there. They had school in there so many years and after that the governor built them a school across the road for the children to go in. And they took that store and built the church that we in today and give it to my husband and some more deacons of the church. And he said there ain't but one thing that I want ya'll to do and that's have it ready so my negro children can go to school. He believed in that and they did. A man by the name of (pause) Todd Bailey built it, he's dead now. He's through and that's where we're having services in today the foundation that built for us.

Harrison: Now this school for you when you were in the eighth grade, you went to

the church right ?

McCallister: I went to the church, New Tabernacle School.

Harrison: How many teachers did you have ?

McCallister: How many teachers did I have ? I had my first teacher, who was Bertha Tucker. My second teacher was Tecova Davis and my third was a man, Allen Miller.

Harrison: O.k. Now the first year when you were eight years old and you went to school, how many teachers were in the school ?

McCallister: One.

Harrison: Only one teacher, for how many children ?

McCallister: Oh, it was a gang of us, it was over a hundred.

Harrison: How did she manage ?

McCallister: Oh, she did well for the big children, she'd have them by her and she learn 'em lesson ... she was something else. She was a teacher, Bertha Tucker.

Harrison: Miss Bertha Tucker took care of all the children that came to the school to the church.

McCallister: Uh huh, that's right and you better get your lesson. I know that in those days and you didn't pass a book and so when my children

went there, my older children went there to school, but not to them teachers. Well, now Schaefer had a school of his own, recalled it on Schaefer's Plantation. Now I can't remember it. I just knowed some of the old foundation I see. But now my sister 'em and the people pass on they remembered it.

Harrison: They went to Schaefer's school.

McCallister: Schaefer's School, it's recorded in Schaefer's name up in the field up there I forget the name, but he had a school.

Harrison: For the colored people who lived on the plantation.

McCallister: Uh huh, yea, I imagine they was along with my sister, my sister is 90 years old.

Harrison: Are they still living ?

McCallister: Naw, she dead. Been dead for 2 years, will be in October.

Harrison: But in this school, now after you had your lessons, well just tell me about a typical day, what was it like ?

McCallister: We had to be there at eight o'clock.

Harrison: At eight ?

McCallister: Uh huh, and she take in you know and recess and like that we take our dinner in little bags or boxes, you know, and when time to go the bell would ring and all of us would pass out. Teachers didn't allow you to run out ! You would have to go out in a line. This one behind this and that one behind that one so that's the way

we came in school but they didn't have no rippin' and running in the schoolhouse. Naw and so when I finished eight grade, I went to number two high school over there in Yazoo City.

Harrison: Now before we go that far I want to know when you first went into the classroom in the morning what's the first thing you do.

McCallister: Learn my A B C's, we had a chart and it was wide, it was about this wide and it stood up on a stand like a hat stand and she'd turn them great big old leaves over, she learn us A B C's on that chart. And then we had tablets rough tablets to make them A B C's and then when we got through learning A B C's she'd learn us how to count she'd turn that over she'd learn us tables and all like that and different things like that on the chart but it was real wide, leaves hanging up on a stand, we had it like that. Now you didn't get off one word until you knowed what you was spelling, that's right.

Harrison: Did you have, is there something that everybody together did when you first got into the classroom every morning ?

McCallister: Uh huh.

Harrison: What did you do ?

McCallister: We would stand up and sing and after singing first one then the other would stand up and say " Our Father". We bow our heads and after we did that then we would take our seats and then she would call

Harrison: And as a first grader in school you had spelling in the afternoon ?

McCallister: Yes, in the afternoon, spelling in the afternoon but there were so many of us it

would consume all the (expenses?).

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: And _____ morning, you know, and after before we get ready to come home you will have spelling.

Harrison: Did you have much writing to do ?

McCallister: Oh yes, we had plenty writing to do and made a low mark, she would put you back on her whipping bench.

Harrison: The teacher whipped you in school ?

McCallister: Uh, the teacher whipped us, oh uh, you couldn't be noisy in school in them days and didn't talk back to your teacher.

Harrison: How would she whip you ?

McCallister: She'd give you whipping like your mother on your back. See my teacher didn't believe in whipping children in the hand, she whip you like your mother whip you at home and then if you was unruly with her. And the time that I was going to school, children wasn't unruly, children obeyed the teachers because they know the teacher whipped then and when they go home their parents is gonna whip them but it ain't like that no more.

Harrison: Now what other things, what was recess like ?

McCallister: Oh, we would have the time the children would get out there and the girls would, we would throw, uh, playing ball you know, and the big boys would have the girls

on each side to bat for them. The teacher would come out, stand and look and she'd enjoy it and then we play hop-scotch on the ground sometimes the teacher will come out and she'd get a chip and play hop-scotch with us.

Harrison: What would you use as chips ?

McCallister: You know it was like this, it's the first part in hopscotch, well, see we'd throw that chip and that would turn us back to that part, kick it out with our feet and us had two more bases to hop on one foot see and if we could pick it up like that then we'd hop it and then we'd take that chip and throw out that lawn again and if we'd throw it on one of them marks, well, we was out.

Harrison: What did you use for chips ?

McCallister: Uh ?

Harrison: What would your chip be, what would you throw ?

McCallister: You'd throw it over until it made first, second, third and fourth and that was the rest. At the back, if you made it to the back and that old _____ well, you'd put it on your foot and throw it out there and whoever caught it you was out, but if nobody would catch it then there would be another game.

Harrison: Now where did you get the chips from ?

McCallister: Well, they burned wood at my school.

Harrison: Oh, I see.

McCallister: A wooden heater and see sometimes a stick might be in a log and the boys

would cut it off and then we'd have chips outside.

Harrison: Oh, I see that's what you meant by chips.

McCallister: Uh huh, yes, we had wood heaters, but it was warm.

Harrison: Now what other kinds of games would you play at recess ?

McCallister: Well, she learned us how to handwork.

Harrison: What do you mean?

McCallister: You know, needlework and at twelve o'clock we would get out. The girls what was needleworking this week would get they needle and she'd sit in the middle of us, you know the teacher, a row on that side and a row on this side.

Harrison: Uh huh.

McCallister: Go on that side and go on this side and she would needlework. She would teach us crotchet, but I never could 'cause she knowed how to do all that and then some. She'd tell us to bring a dress or a pair of pants or something and she'd learn us how to patch. Bertha Tucker, she learn how to make a blouse, she did all that. She was a real teacher.

Harrison: Now as you went on up in the grades how did that teach any experience that you had when you were eight years old change ? Did it change your experiences ? Did you continue to have recess ?

McCallister: Yea.

Harrison: Start school at the same rate ?

McCallister: Yea.

Harrison: What were you in or how old were you when you had more than one teacher ?

McCallister: Let me see, Mrs. Burter was one, Mrs. Tecova, I don't, well, I stopped school when I was in the seventh grade out at rural, around me. I was about 13 or 14, something like that. The teachers at that time took their time with the children, you learned something from your books, you hear, and arithmetic. You had to learn your arithmetic under Mrs. Burter because she would keep you on the money table more than anything else. We just had a wonderful time in school because we participated so many little thing. She carried on everything in that school. And time for to give us a spelling contest against the other school, Lake City School, we had that on a Friday. And when time for the school to close we had what you call a exhibition, and ball games and running races and all that kind of stuff. And we had basketball. We had all of that, well, the people would be there just like that.

Harrison: You mean lots of people ?

McCallister: Oh, my God yes, and they had plant the maypole drill. Just different dialogues, all of that. See the teachers in the rural was of today in those days.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: The people would cook just like they was cooking for a big state convention . Just bring food there, honey, you should _____. And people, my land, the children playing ball, against this school, Lake City School or just any school who wanted to come and participate. And we did the same, spelling matches and

everything.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: Um hum. We had a wonderful time.

Harrison: Well, if you, if a person, were successful, did you ever win the spelling match ?

McCallister: No, I never was in the spelling match. It was the bigger children.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: And we had a boy who could really spell, Carl Eubanks, but he's dead. You could say that everybody died.

Harrison: In the spelling match ?

McCallister: Yes.

Harrison: Well, that's a young man.

McCallister: Yes, um hum.

Harrison: Did he live on the plantation ?

McCallister: Well, no he lived on another plantation, but he went to that school.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: We had a wonderful time. Spelling matches were worth while.

Harrison: So, did you graduate from the seventh grade ?

McCallister: Ah ah, they didn't have that back then .They started this in my children's time of going to school. They didn't do it in the rural.

Harrison: So, did you, how far did you go in school ?

McCallister: Am I (pause)

Harrison: What's the late, ah, highest grade that you completed ?

McCallister: I didn't complete; I was in eight grade, I married.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: But, I could say I did because my children finished high school and I would help them as far as I knowed. And then I would learn, you know, from them a whole lot. Because I could work algebra.

Harrison: Oh.

McCallister: See, all of my children is good, but one. I had to do it.

Harrison: Now as a child growing up on the plantation, what were your responsibilities, what did you have to do ?

McCallister: At home ?

Harrison: Um hum, or did you have to work for Mr. Schaefer ?

McCallister: No, ah, ah.

Harrison: You never worked for Mr. Schaefer ?

McCallister: No. I was in the fields.

Harrison: In the fields ?

McCallister: Ah ha, but in the morning, I had to clean up every morning make up my bed and sweep up.

Harrison: Before you went to school ?

McCallister: Yeah, before I went to school. Then get ready for school. My sister would plait my hair. I couldn't plait it, but that to do.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: Come back in the evening I would have to get in the night and get, you know, that winter time. And if it was in the summer time we'd have to get the stove and put it in the kitchen for the next morning and get water and put it in the kitchen so when she got up she wouldn't have to go in the kitchen. And would be cleaning up while she was cooking.

Harrison: Okay, now, you all went to church on the plantation ?

McCallister: Yeah, third Sunday we went to New Tabernacle, but it's not where it is now, it's on Schaefer's plantation, now. That's west. East was the fourth Sunday, we went to Tobeka.

Harrison: Tobeka ?

McCallister: Tobeka, T-O-B-E-K-A. See it was two churches on the plantation. One east and one west. The second Sunday is down west over down white land. Number three church is my church. Number four church is Tobeka. Number one church is the mother church of the Baptist. That's Wolfe Lake Missionary Baptist Church. I was raised from church to church, you know. You had to go to church, you know, Sunday school for the children, we was raised like that.

Harrison: What were some of the experiences that you remember about going to church ?

McCallister: Well, when we were children, you know, we had to go to covenant meeting that was one. That's on second Sunday.

Harrison: What's that ?

McCallister: Covenant meeting, that's when you tell your Christian experience, your religion things like

Harrison: Uh huh.

McCallister: Well, the older people would have us to go there, every second Sunday. Every third Sunday was our pastoral day see. Alright, on the second Sunday the people would tell there christian experience; tell the people about how they got religion; how they living; how they want to help make heaven my home when I die. When I was a child, alright we would have that kind of church, our children like people when they come round. Alright third Sunday the preacher would preach; we would always remember his text and that week when us children be playing together we had one of the boys to preach his text, like marking him. We would moan and some of them would shout.

Harrison: So, what would you play in church ?

McCallister: Church, playing church ! No, at home what they done preached at us church the third Sunday. Us children would play it and what ever say about their christian experience we would remember it. Who ever shouted we could shout like them. And that's the way we did (laugh).

Harrison: Did you ever shout like somebody ?

McCallister: Yes, just jump up you know, you know people up play like that flat footed and shout when I was a child. But now, the people, you know, do that (clapping sound) and holler, but when I was a child they jumped up and holler and shout and it was beautiful to me I loved it. And I could mock them. Yeah, I did that all the time.

Harrison: Did you ever have any real experiences shouting yourself when you were not mocking someone ?

McCallister: No, not in that say, but in this day. Since I've gotten older I have. I get happy and clap my hand and cry and hum today. When the preacher's preaching that's the way I do. But at that time I didn't know, I didn't even have religion, just mocking.

Harrison: Well, tell me about the social life, you know as you grew up and maybe when you became a teenager. What would you all do when you weren't working and you weren't in school and like on Saturday afternoon what would you do ?

McCallister: Well, the old people kept us at home. We never, the girls in my class, never did get out and go no place, but church and Sunday school or to another's house. You know, sit down and talk, you know and after which we could stay after the sun goes down. The houses wasn't far apart and that what we would do. And see

in my time didn't 'low the boys to come up and court you like today. They would have to have they coats. They didn't have but two or three hours to stay at your house then they'll have to go. Mama would tell them to go. So that's the way it was. We was raised like that. And we never went to parties or nothing like that cause we didn't have things like that.

Harrison: How old were you when you began to have boys come to the house and stay for a while ?

McCallister: Well, I was about 16 years old. And then she would tell him to go home if he stayed over two hours. And I'd be so embarrassed (laugh). Um hum and mama would say something like, "well its time to go now; it's seven, eight-thirty or something like that you have to go." "Yes' am" and they'd go head.

Harrison: Well, what was the closest town that you use to

McCallister: Yazoo City.

Harrison: Yazoo City, when would you come ?

McCallister: Oh God, once every month or something like that I could come they's bring us a wagon and sometime she would have

Harrison: You mean a wagon ?

McCallister: With mule driving it.

Harrison: Uh huh.

McCallister: And ah, and then sometime they'd bring us when they'd get grocery something

like that. But we didn't come to town regular.

Harrison: How often did your parents come and get grocery ?

McCallister: Not much cause we would get supply to last from January up until March. Well, they didn't have to much to get because they had every thing except sugar and flour. They had they lard, they had they flour, they had they meal, because they grind it. They had they molasses cause they had everything. The people didn't buy they food like they do today. They raised they meat, they made they lard, they made they molasses. We didn't know what buying that was. She get a barrel of flour, a half a pound of lard, fifty pounds of sugar or a hundred pounds or something like that. And they mostly put up plenty fruit. 'Cause see in my day it was plentiful. Everywhere they'd have fruit from one end of the year to the other one. A hundred yard of fruit wasn't nothing to us. And have home cured meat pretty much from one end of the year to the other, wasn't like today. And then they would kill cows you know and have that pretty much for everybody. Milk and butter, plenty of that kind of stuff.

Harrison: Now when you came to Yazoo City where would you go on these special occasions. Say, but if you went to the circus or if you came to show where would you go ?

McCallister: I wouldn't know cause you see I was too small.

Harrison: You were too small ?

McCallister: Too small to go into town, cause you see once I grew up on the Trust Land, anyway I'd lay down and holler cause I was scared of the train.

Harrison: Oh, you didn't want to ...

McCallister: Didn't carry us regular enough, none of the children.

Harrison: Uh huh, so if you saw a train you'd

McCallister: Holler !

Harrison: What'd you think it was ?

McCallister: I was scared, I didn't know. You see it was over Leonards Trust Land and they'd drive wagons under the Trust Land or down the low part. The land cross the track, so I wouldn't be scared then. Sometime the old freight train would be over the Trust land and i'd just have a fit over it. Then I'd got a whipping too. (laugh).

Harrison: Um hum, yes.

McCallister: (pause) _____.

Harrison: Now, Mrs. McCallister I want to know what kind of social relationship did the farmers have on the plantation, that in the tenant farmers, did you associate with each other like the people on Simmons plantation or those on Schaefer's Plantation ?

McCallister: They all went together, you couldn't tell one from the other. Just one on Mr. Marx Schaefer's plantation and the other up there on Clarks or whatever plantation it was, it didn't make any difference.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: And see, we had a big old pasture over there and some boys that played ball. Called the ball _____. They played there every Saturday, I guess different and they all was just like one.

Harrison: What was one of the names, could you give me the names of one of those teams ?

McCallister: Um hum, they just called them Schaefer team.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: And they would get them people out there at Benton and Clarks people. All they would come down there and play, just different teams.

Harrison: Different plantations had their own ...?

McCallister: Now Schaefer's and Clarks people played against one another Benton would come to Yazoo City they called it Schaefer Plantation at first. And way out in the hills further called it on ah, Ledbetter Plantation, they would come and play ball. They'd go to then different places and play ball.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: They go to Clarks and play. They all participated together in that.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: But see all those people dead because my brother was a big ball player.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: He's dead.

Harrison: Um hum, ah, I want you, we should start to wrap this up on the plantations now, ah, what were some of the things that you did not like about the plantation as you would call it ?

McCallister: I didn't want to work in the field.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: I didn't like to work in the field, but I had to work in the field. I didn't want to chop cotton and I didn't want to pick it, but I had to pick it and I had to chop it. Now them was the only two things that I didn't want to do.

Harrison: Who tended to make you do that ?

McCallister: My sister. My mother was at Schaefer home. And if I didn't do it, my mother would whip me when she come home.

Harrison: Ah, ah.

McCallister: It was the only thing I didn't want to do.

Harrison: Uh hum.

McCallister: But I had to do it.

Harrison: What was the relationship like between the blacks and the whites ?

McCallister: At that time ?

Harrison: When you got older, I know you told me about your playing with the Schaefer children.

McCallister: Yeah.

Harrison: But as you became a teenager and just before you got married, what was ..., did you ever have any relationship with the whites then ?

McCallister: Yes, but it was the Schaefer's. Because when I got married, Mr. Marx Schaefer wife, Mrs. Ray, cooked for my wedding.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: They was good to my mother.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: But the other white people on the plantation, they didn't bother you. You didn't have no trouble with them. (According to M. Allen, there were no other white people: Mr. and Mrs. Schaefer, Helen and Emile, half sister Miss Valerie Schaefer and aunt of Miss Clara, Marx Schaefer).

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: See, just like Clark plantation people, those white people didn't bother you. The next plantation, white people, they didn't bother you. And if they see'd anybody bothering the Schaeferes or the Clarks, they stopped them.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: That was pretty much as it was in the rural.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: But you know it always has been a naughty somebody. Didn't have no trouble, none like that.

Harrison: Were, what were some of the things that you would be unhappy about ?

McCallister: At home ?

Harrison: Relative to living on the plantation ?

McCallister: I wouldn't be unhappy cause see

Harrison: Wouldn't be unhappy except for going to the fields ?

McCallister: That's all, cause you would go to school everyday and Saturday come you had to wash or press or mop or do something like that.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: Well, if it was visiting that you did, all, everybody was on Sunday School after you come from Sunday School. People didn't just get up and visit, you know, like that.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: No, you go sometimes.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: Children were raised in Sunday school and church.

Harrison: Um Hum.

McCallister: Public or colored school ?

Harrison: Now, when you got married, where did you live ?

McCallister: On Schaefers.

Harrison: Um hum, your husband, where did he come from ?

McCallister: He come from the plantation of, called Eldorado.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: In 1917.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: December.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: And he courted me and we married in 1920, fifteenth day of April.

Harrison: So, what, where was he living in the meantime, before you got married ?

McCallister: On Eldorado.

Harrison: Ah, now, he'd come to ...

McCallister: Schaefer's.

Harrison: Schaefer's, in 1917, right ?

McCallister: Um hum.

Harrison: Now what did he do between that time and before you got married ?

McCallister: Well, he drove tractors all the time.

Harrison: Oh, he was working for Mr. Schaefer ?

McCallister: That's right.

Harrison: I see.

McCallister: Driving tractors, plowing sometime, but he then he was a truck driver. Trucked all the cotton and everything to the compress. Then he would drive about, wherever they wanted to go off in the cars.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: That what he did.

Harrison: Um hum, now how old was he, do you know ?

McCallister: Nah, but you can count back. Let me see, I think he was about twenty (pause) let me see, 61 and 20 what would be (pause) 21, he 83.

Harrison: So you're saying 61 from 20, from 83 so he'll be about 19.

McCallister: Ah ah, he was 21 when I married him.

Harrison: Twenty-one when you married him ?

McCallister: Um hum, he eighty-three now.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: Is that right ?

Harrison: Right.

McCallister: Well, from that on, he would work with the Schaefers till we moved right here.

Harrison: Oh.

McCallister: Night and day.

Harrison: Oh.

McCallister: They'd get him up out of bed. Just anywhere they tell you to carry them anywhere in the car. Just anywhere they wanted to go (pause) Louisiana, New Orleans (pause) wherever they wanted to go, he drove them there.

Harrison: So he was their chauffeur ?

McCallister: That's right.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: And he trucked all the cotton to the compress. He would see 'bout Miss Helen Mae. This very woman what told you to come here, mother, take her about (pause) Miss (pause)

Harrison: I had forgot her, ah, Rebecca.

McCallister: Rebecca Allen, mother, Miss Adeline Blundell. He would drive Mr. George Blundell to the doctor. And right now when he do go to say a few words or study or something, he'll say, " I'll never forget the way you treated my mother."

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: It was fine people in the Blundell.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: That's right. That's fine with us.

Harrison: Okay, now, when you and ah, your husband were married, and he was doing the driving, what did you do ?

McCallister: What did I do ? (pause) I had a baby every fourteen months.

Harrison: (laughing) YOU had a baby every 14 months ! How many children do you have ?

McCallister: I had fifteen.

Harrison: Fifteen children !

McCallister: Um hum.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: My oldest child (pause) I was married fourteen months before she was born and she was fifty-nine years old the fifteenth day of June. And from then on, I had babies every fourteen months.

Harrison: Every fourteen months ?

McCallister: Um hum.

Harrison: You didn't have any birth control in those days ?

McCallister: I wished they had, honey (laugh).

Harrison: (Laughing).

McCallister: I wish they had.

Harrison: Ah ha, now ah, did you have to work any ?

McCallister: Well, not when the babies was small enough. I did very little work then. Cause see, I couldn't, I had a baby wasn't walking properly and my baby on my lap well I couldn' t do to much.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: And then Mr. Marx Schaefer say, 'Stay there and tend to them babies'. I'd tell him, 'I ain't thinking about you'.

Harrison: So it was your husband who was doing the work and you stayed home and took care of the children ?

McCallister: That's right. I had to (pause) I raised and nursed them at home. Now she's really fat like him. She weigh about (pause) I reckon she weigh 100 pounds.

Harrison: Now ?

McCallister: Um hum, they're small people.

Harrison: Your husband ?

McCallister: Um hum, he weigh about 130 pounds, I guess. My daughter, my fourteenth child. She weigh 90 pounds something (pause) she got seven boys and two girls.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: My baby got five girls and four boys, but she done had fourteen babies.

Harrison: Are all of your children still living ?

McCallister: Yeah, (pause) nah, I don't have but seven. I have six daughters and one son living. That's him. (son enters).

Harrison: You were telling me about your children, right ?

McCallister: Yeah.

Harrison: That you had, you had fifteen children, now you have seven of the children living?

McCallister: Yeah.

Harrison: Now, the thing that always interested me, is about child birth on the plantation, what was it like ?

McCallister: Well, we had midwives, well, them that had to have doctors, well, he would take them to the hospital, course I didn't. Somebody, well, if they couldn't deliver, well, the doctor would do it. We didn't have no trouble; whatever we do we had one midwife- we called her Haney Marah. Um hum, she's dead now. She was the

granny that's what we called her.

Harrison: Well, how did she learn to be a midwife ?

McCallister: Well, back in the olden time his mother was to. She was the granny of some of my children. They just knowed.

Harrison: Ah, so you had no complications with the births of your children ?

McCallister: No not none what-so-ever.

Harrison: Not even with the last ones ?

McCallister: No, when he would go, when my husband would go after the midwife I'd say well you have to go get the midwife and before they could get back, well it wasn't for before my baby would be here. I never had any trouble. Course out of the whole births I didn't have but two boys. That's 27 and 28.

Harrison: Now, was that typical of the women on the plantation, did the other women have problems with the births of their children?

McCallister: Well, some of them did, uh huh. It was a lady there by the name of Lily Wright. She was short and she didn't have no turn around and she couldn't have no folks to do any doctoring. Dr. Denton would take it, but they'd be big old nine pound babies.

Harrison: Uh huh.

McCallister: Uh huh, my boy was a ten pound baby, but I didn't have any trouble.

Harrison: Now, after the baby was born how would you get their birth certificate and all ?

McCallister: Well, they did that in town at the health department at that time. They would give you a copy of your baby's birth and I could send it to Jackson and get a copy of your baby's birth certificate.

Harrison: Uh huh, who turned that in ?

McCallister: Well Dr. Gilruth Darrington at that time. Haney Marah, the midwife, would turn it in to them. And they could send it to Jackson and keep a copy in Yazoo City.

Harrison: Did they, did babies have shots during those days ?

McCallister: Yes, naw, naw, never did.

Harrison: What, go ahead ?

McCallister: They just started to doing that when my daughter, the one I told you got those nine, seven boys and two girls, she was a health department baby. She was so tiny till they couldn't find her and they sent me to the health department to get a x-ray under Gilruth Darrington to see was I pregnant or not. And so they sent me to Dr. Fuller and I was, but he couldn't find no trace of her she was so small.

Harrison: Now, what type of childhood diseases did your children have ?

McCallister: Coming up on the plantation ?

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: They had a beautiful childhood.

Harrison: Um hum, what kind of diseases, did they have sickness ?

McCallister: No kind.

Harrison: Um hum.

McCallister: Children was healthy then. And if they had anything if was something like a cold cause they slipped they shoes off in the winter time, warm days and wade in water or pull off some of they winter clothes, you know like that and hide, but it wasn't no difficulty with children. Mightly seldom a child be sick.

Harrison: But, what would you (cough) what was the basic diet, what did you cook the children, cook for the family ?

McCallister: Oh, we had plenty vegetables. We had peas, we had greens, we had okra, we had plenty food. But it was vegetable food. And we could cook that every day. We didn't have to wonder about cooking food cause we had that, we raised it.

Harrison: Right, now ah, you stayed at home and took care of your children ?

McCallister: Yes, I did.

Harrison: How many of the other women lived on that plantation, black women, stayed at home and took care of their children ?

McCallister: Just any of them what didn't have no one to take care of them. We never took our children to the field. Boss man didn't like that. When you didn't have nobody

to see 'bout you baby you see 'bout it yourself. Your husband was working; you was working at home.

Harrison: How old were your children before they had to go to the fields ?

McCallister: Well, I had some didn't go.

Harrison: Um.

McCallister: They had to stay at home with the little children. They'd be ten, eleven, and twelve years old. They'd stay out there a while, wouldn't work then a whole day you know let them go home. And the next day I'd take the next one , that's the way it begins. The boss man didn't appreciate children then.

Harrison: Well, how old would they be before they'd have to stay and work all day.

McCallister: Well, some of them be round fourteen, thirteen like that. Work all day and then they be going to the day field half working and getting pay.

Harrison: Going to where ?

McCallister: To, they called it, you know where they were paying you to chop cotton or pick cotton. They'd do that. Cause see they was working for themselves. See when we was children we would be the "water toter" you know, they'd call us somebody to carry water to.

Harrison: In 1980 with Mrs. Ethel McCallister and you were telling me about sometimes that you used to go carry up to the fields.

McCallister: Yeah, once a crew would drink that up, we'd go back and get another. We'd just continue to take it to them until it was time to go home. They'd always go home at eleven o'clock and come back in the evenings and we'd do the same thing....
(extraneous noise) and that's the way the children did. And they'd made money like that.

Harrison: Those your children ?

McCallister: Well, some of my children and somebody else's children. Well there were three or four children gave water to the field to different ones out there. Everybody would drink. See in that day was biggest of people had pumps. Though it was higher that _____, but then we wasn't there, my husband was hog heading.

Harrison: Go ahead, no, I was going to ask you when you were a child and you went to school, when would school start ? What month of the year would school start ?

McCallister: September, I believe wasn't it ?

Harrison: I don't know. I'm just, hum hum. How long did you go to school ? Was it when the crops were over which start in September then be out of school, I don't know, how ?

McCallister: We had nine months of school. I went to school nine months. Now, the bossman didn't let nobody, no children drop out of school to work. In the field, now that was one time when he was much strict on us. He didn't want you out of school.
(husband in background)

Harrison: But, the other plantation owners took the children out of school, is that what you're saying ?

McCallister: Some of them did.

Husband in background: Some of them did have them out of school to work in the fields and the place where we stayed at they didn't do that. He wanted the children to go to school. That was old man Schaefer.

Harrison: Okay, I think that uh, we will probably just stop on this today and then we'll come back and explore some other areas of your childhood and uh things that you recall.

McCallister: Yeah.

Harrison: Just let me ask you this one other question here, so you recall your mother talking about her mother ?

McCallister: Yeah, uh huh, my mother was named Mrs. Lizzie George Sanders and she didn't have but one brother and one sister and I didn't know but the brother, Charlie Sanders. Her sister, Laura Sanders, she died before I was born and she would always say that her mother died when she was ten years old. My mother come from Alabama and my father did and they all located in Hinds County out there and then he come on to Yazoo County when he was in his young age. Because he married my mother in 18 and 84 and my mother's first child was born in 18 and 85 and she was aged when she passed.

Harrison: Did she ever mention anything about her grandmother ?

McCallister: She didn't know her grandmother, she just knew her mother. And her mother's name was Clarie Sanders and she didn't know anything about her father. He got killed and she just knowed her sister Laura and Charlie.

Harrison: Do you know where in Alabama that she came from ?

McCallister: From Selma, Alabama.

Harrison: Oh really ?

McCallister: Selma.

Harrison: Did she say what they were doing there ?

McCallister: Yeah.

Harrison: What did she say ?

McCallister: She said, the most they would raised sometimes would try to be corn, but the biggest she said they would raise would be tang, but they wouldn't last long. And raise hogs and things and it was cold.

Harrison: Did she live on a plantation, do you know ?

McCallister: Yeah, but she never did say what plantation. I guess she didn't know. I know she didn't know cause her sister was born the second year after surrender. But I don't reckon that there was but two or three years between them. But my mother couldn't raise them right, but her sister did. She worked for those Marks-her sister did.

Harrison: When your mother spoke of those early days do you ever remember her having any bitterness ?

McCallister: Among the white people ?

Harrison: Uh huh, about what she used to experience ?

McCallister: Well now, because she done run off from there you know in her early life with the Georges.

Harrison: Oh, I see, so that's why she

McCallister: That's why she married my father, see she left home, her and her sister and the brother and they came in the Hinds County to the Georges to the man that my mother married. She didn't know that much about the white people.

Harrison: Was that, so they were running away from the plantation that they lived on.

McCallister: Uh, Selma, Alabama.

Harrison: Uh huh.

McCallister: And she was raised and married, had her children here in Yazoo County.

Harrison: Okay, now, have I left out anything in your early childhood that you want to tell about.

McCallister: If it is I can't remember it . Like I told you about my father, and my father was half Indian.

Harrison: Oh, you didn't tell me that.

McCallister: I didn't.

Harrison: Ah, ah.

McCallister: Oh, he had straight hair, my sister did too, but I didn't.

Harrison: Uh huh.

McCallister: I take mine's after my mother.

Harrison: What kind of Indian was he, do you know ?

McCallister: Uh huh, he wasn't too dark, he light-dark, you know some like (pause). He was _____ and he had that hair, but my sister had that straight hair what passed. My brother had the curly hair and I had hair like my mother.

Harrison: You were telling me about your father, what did you say your father name was ?

McCallister: He was named Dock George.

Harrison: Why did they call him Dock ?

McCallister: Dock Boykins.

Harrison: Dock Boykins George, B-O-Y-K-I-N-S ?

McCallister: Uh huh, he was older than my mother he died in 19 and 17. She never married or courted anyone. He was mixed with Indian. And I put this on there; he was a very stout man. He could pick up a half barrel of flour with his teeth. Have you seen

anyone ...

Harrison: He could pick up a half barrel of flour with his teeth, huh, I mean.

McCallister: I didn't see him, but they told me.

Harrison: That's what they said about him ?

McCallister: My mother said.

Harrison: Now where did he come from ?

McCallister: From Selma, Alabama.

Harrison: Oh I see. So George is the one who came to Hinds County and then came on up to the plantation, the Schaefers ?

McCallister: The Simmons'.

Harrison: The Simmons' Plantation. What did he do so particularly other than

McCallister: Farm.

Harrison: Just did farm work ?

McCallister: At that time people was renting. He wasn't working on the half like we did.

Harrison: Oh I see, they rented a piece of land and they just farmed it all on their own.

McCallister: And they have one bale of cotton or two bales to give the man, the rest that was theirs, see, but they stopped that. That made them make money.

Harrison: Was there any particular reason why they stopped it ?

McCallister: Naw, I never did know why, but I know that's how my father used to do it, rent, all the older people rent. Two bales of cotton sometimes they'd pay their rent if they made seven or eight; (pause) well, that would pay it. It wasn't but ten cents a pound as I heard my mother say. Nobody didn't have no money because they raised everything, but the flour and they grind the meal. They made they molasses.

Harrison: But they had to pay to have that made ?

McCallister: Naw, place where they had that on the plantation where I lived. My father would drive the molasses more or less he would raised them that the way they did people didn't buy that you know. They had a mule to drive meal. You share your corn cabinet and make your meal. They wasn't buying like they use to.

Harrison: Ok, I think we'll just call this quits for today. Now I have to ask you this on this tape. If you mind us taking this back to Jackson State, transcribing it and using it for scholarly purposes ?

McCallister: Yeah.

Harrison: Do you mind ?

McCallister: Naw, I don't mind.

Harrison: See, we have to sure that you are aware of how we may use it. For example, I may use it in my classrooms or some other scholars, teacher or newspapermen may be writing an article about life on plantation.

McCallister: I want you to.

Harrison: And you don't mind if they use ?

McCallister: I want them to, I would be so glad. Be sure you put it in the paper for me now.

Harrison: We'll see what I can do. It will be quite a long process. Well, let's first formally thank you on the tape for cooperating with us and we will in due time get this transcribed at Jackson State University and we'll let you see what you said in typed before it's used by anybody else and we'll probably send Mrs. Rebecca Allen a copy if she's interested in seeing it and then we'll see where we can go from there.

-End of Transcription-