

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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

MR. NEWT DALLAS

Interviewed

by

Mr. Shawn Knox

on

April 29, 1976

O. H. 76.13

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW AGREEMENT

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

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

I, Neunt Dallas, 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 know, recognized, or contemplated, to Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi.

Neunt Dallas  
Interviewee Signature)

oct 12 1976  
Date

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF INTERVIEWER

Mr. Newt Dallas is 68 years old and was born March 15, 1908 in Newton, Mississippi. He came to Jackson in 1926. He worked for the city, a Crane Company, and the old V. A. Hospital. He was married on May 27, 1934, and he and his wife have been living in Jackson since. He now resides at 4120 Sunset Drive.

### SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

On April 29, 1976, around 10:30 a.m. two other students and I arrived at The Christian Brotherhood Senior Citizen's Site. Mr. Dallas was already there and we proceeded immediately to get the interview underway. The interview was held in a small dining room. The interview lasted about forty-five minutes. In talking to Mr. Dallas, he was very quiet. I found him to be a very religious man. He met his wife in a church and said he didn't go very much in the "Good Old Days" and don't now.

In talking about his first job in Jackson (working for the city), Mr. Dallas mentioned that they had only two trucks and they used mules to pull many of the garbage carts or crates. He remembers prices being cheaper and \$80-\$90 was very good wages every two weeks. He has been going to the Church of God in Christ every since he's been to Jackson. The church is located on Northside Drive.

He lived on Roach Street and Boyd's Alley before moving on Sunset Drive. He enjoyed baseball as a pasttime every once in awhile when he was young.

One of his friends he remembers is Sam Baker, who was a janitor when he worked at Old V. A. Hospital. He remembers two black dentists who were fairly wealthy in the "Good Old Days," whose office was on Farish Street by the name of Harold and McCoy around 1936.

He also remembers the crank telephone that didn't dial. Mr. Dallas was very hard to interview.

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INTERVIEWEE: Mr. Newt Dallas

INTERVIEWER: Mr. Shawn Knox

DATE: April 29, 1976

SUBJECT: The "Good Old Days"

K: Today is April 29, 1976, and I'm here at the Christian Brothers' Senior Citizens Site. My name is Shawn Knox and I'm here to interview Mr. Newt Dallas.

Okay, Mr. Dallas, the first question I want to ask you is, when did you come to Jackson and why did you come?

D: I just come here.

K: Okay, well ah, what was the city like when you came here?

D: It wasn't as large as it is now.

K: What year did you come to Jackson?

D: Twenty-six. I worked for the city in twenty-seven.

K: Did you find a job right away?

D: I started, I come here about the last of twenty-six and I went to work in twenty-six.

K: Do you remember how old you were when you came to Jackson?

D: Seventy-eight now.

K: I talking about when you first came to Jackson--how old were you then?

D: I haven't figured it out.

K: Alright.

D: I mean sixty-eight.

K: (Clear throat) You're sixty-eight now?

D: Um, hum.

K: Okay. What kind of reputation did the city have when you came? What was people saying about the city? Was Jackson, a good place to come to, or was it a bad place to come to?

D: It was alright.

K: You didn't have no special reason to come, you just wanted to come to Jackson?

D: Um, hum.

K: Alright, (Clear throat) what were the "Good Old Days" back then? What did you-all do for entertainment back there in the "Good Old Days? I know it was hard work and everything when you first came here, but what did you do to just relax?

D: Nothing but work every day.

K: You worked for the city right?

D: Um, hum. They had mules and wagons then.

K: Can you remember what year that was when you started work?

D: Nineteen hundred twenty-six.

K: Around twenty-six or twenty-seven when you first started work in Jackson, okay. Now, they didn't have any trucks. They had mules?

D: They had two trucks.

K: Can you tell me about how big was the city? I know, it wasn't this big as it was then. Can you give me a description of it?

D: No, I couldn't do that.

K: Did you ever go to school in Jackson?

D: No.

K: Well, where did you attend school?

D: Pelahatchie.

K: Were you a teenager when you came to Jackson?

D: You can just count up from . . . .

K: I know you were young.

D: Um, hum.

K: Let's see, you were born in 1908?

D: March 15.

K: You came to Jackson about 1926? So that was about eighteen years old when you got here, right?

D: Yeah.

K: Okay, as a teenager now, what did you-all do back then to have a good time. I know you were working, but did you-all have time to go out to dances and things like that?

D: No.

K: You were too busy working?

D: I didn't go.

K: What did you do to have fun back then?

D: Didn't go to dances or neither ballgames.

K: Did you do anything to have fun when you got off work to just relax after a hard days work?

D: No.

K: Describe your recollection of the church in the "Good Old Days" in Jackson? What was the church like?

D: It was alright.

K: Did you like going?

D: Um, hum.

K: Well, what church did you go to?

D: Church of God in Christ.

K: What did you-all do to have good times in the church--can you name some of the things you-all use to do?

D: They had church service.

K: You-all never had any one special day in church that something might have happened?

D: No.

K: A picnic or something like that?

D: No.

K: Do you remember anything about tent meetings and camp meetings?

D: I never did go to any tent meetings.

K: But, did you remember what they were like?

D: No, I never could go to any.

K: Alright, Mr. Dallas, I want to ask you about some of the other jobs besides working for the city that you had trying to earn a living while in Jackson?

D: I worked with the Crane Company.

K: Where was that at?

D: On Gallatin.

K: Is it still there?

D: No, they are out of business, I think.

K: A Crane Company--what kind of work is that?

D: Sold plumbing parts.

K: What other kind of work did you do?

D: That's about all.

K: What about ah, the Old V. A. Hospital?

D: I worked there first.

K: Okay, now where was the Old V. A. Hospital located?

D: Out there off of West Capitol at the Overhead Bridge. It was not far from the Overhead Bridge.

K: Is the building that the Old V. A. Hospital in still standing?

D: I reckon they is. I was out there when they were building on it.

K: You were out there when they built the overhead?

D: Um, hum.

K: Alright, can you remember the year it was when you worked there? It ain't have to be the exact year, just approximately what year was it?

D: As far as I can remember, it was 1936.

K: Okay, well do you know of any other persons that worked with you or did work similar to yours? (You know, they might be here. Some of your friends that might have worked with you way back there in the "Good Old Days.)

D: I know one, but I don't know where he is.

K: Can you think of his name?

D: Sam Baker.

K: What did he do with you?

D: He was a janitor out there.

K: At the Old V. A. Hospital?

D: Um, hum.

K: Was he a real good friend of yours?

D: Um, hum.

K: Out of all the jobs you had, which one did you like the most?

D: Crane Company was a fair job.

K: Was the pay pretty good?

D: Yeah, they paid very nice.

K: Can you remember about how much it was they paid you back then?

- D: Back there, wages were cheap.
- K: Yeah, everything was cheap back in the "Good Old Days."
- D: I got about \$90, \$85, or \$90 'till two weeks.
- K: That was good back then, wasn't it?
- D: Um, hum.
- K: Which one of the jobs did you dislike?
- D: I didn't dislike either one of them.
- K: (Laughter) All of them were pretty good, huh?
- D: Um, hum.
- K: Okay. (Clear throat) Did you-all ever have any good times at work? Did you-all ever do anything special or just kinda kid around with the guys on your lunch break?
- D: No, I never did care much for that?
- K: Mr. Dallas, do you recall any of the following activities in areas in the city of Jackson--such as "Street Peddlers, or"Vendors of Goods who advertised by singing"? Do you remember any of them?
- D: No, not now.
- K: But, in the old days do you remember such things as "Street Peddlers"?
- D: Um, hum, it was. They use to be.
- K: Can you give me a description of how they did it?
- D: They just sold sweet potatoes and different things like that?
- K: What about coal--did they ever sell coal back there?
- D: No, they didn't sell coal.
- K: What about the ice man? Did they ever have any ice men?
- D: Yes, people use to sell ice.
- K: Well, what did they use for transportation?
- D: Trucks.

D: Ice trucks.

K: Nobody used no mules or nothing?

D: Not as I knows of.

K: Alright, okay--let me see. You've been married right?

D: That's right.

K: What was your family like in the "Good Old Days"? Do you have any kids?

D: Yeah, I got eight children.

K: Eight children? What did you-all do to have good times in the "Good Old Days," like you and your wife and your kids? They were probably little, but what did you-all do to have fun?

D: We didn't have no fun, not going out or nothing.

K: Well, I'm talking about fun going to church (church activities) and stuff.

D: That's the onliest life we were living--going to church.

K: Did you enjoy going to church?

D: Um, hum.

K: Okay, ah, have you ever heard of "Hamboning"?

D: I've seen it - a picture in the paper.

K: Can you give me an example of that?

D: No, I just saw a name.

K: It isn't anything like this is it? (Demonstrating)

D: No, no. It was a man.

K: Um, hum. What did he do?

D: I just remember that?

K: Let me see. Can you remember any songs that you use to sang from way back then that they still might be singing today?

D: No, not now.

K: Well, what church did you say you went to?

D: Church of God in Christ.

K: Have you been going to that church every since you've been in Jackson?

D: Yeah.

K: Can you remember when that church was first established?

D: No, I sho' don't.

K: Well, where is it located at?

D: On Northside Drive. I've heard tell of it ever since I was a little boy. I was raised up in it.

K: Um. Well, what about the pastor--is it the same pastor that pastored over it?

D: No, it ain't. Some of them are dead.

K: Can you remember one of the pastors when you were a little boy that pastored the church?

D: Reverend Curry.

K: Alright, well, have you been staying in the same place in Jackson ever since you've been here?

D: No.

K: Name some of the different streets you use to live on.

D: I lived on Roach Street.

K: Where is that?

D: That's off of Hamilton.

K: Okay, what other streets did you live on in Jackson?

D: Before I was married, I lived in Boyd's Alley, off Lynch.

K: I've heard of that?

D: Um, hum.

K: It was an Opera House around Pearl Street between Mineva and Rose Street; do you remember anything about an Opera House?

D: No, I sho' don't. If I did, it done slip my memory.

K: Okay. When you got off work and everything, what did you do maybe on Friday evenings and Saturday? I know what you did on Sundays! What would you do on Saturdays in the "Good Old Days." They didn't have no television. What did you usually do?

D: Not anything.

K: Okay, let me see. Can you remember what downtown Jackson looked like in the "Good Old Days" in the twenties and thirties?

D: Well, it done changed up some from what it use to be.

K: Um. Well, can you just give me an example of what has changed?

D: The whole thing.

K: Um, hum. Buildings taller now and stuff?

D: Naw, more buildings and everything.

K: Um, hum. Did you do much shopping downtown?

D: No, not much.

K: When you were going downtown for instance, did you ride the bus or anything to get there? What kind of transportation did you use to get downtown?

D: I didn't use no transportation.

K: What?--You were always in a place to walk or something? How did you get there?

D: When I was in town, I stayed where I could walk.

K: No, I'm talking about from home to town--how did you get to where you lived to town?

D: Sometimes I would walk to Five Points and catch the bus.

K: Can you remember about how much bus fare was then?

D: I think it use to be twenty cents.

K: Five Points--what is that?

D: That's ah, 'tween here and town. That's a street.

K: That's the name of the street-Five Points?

D: I think it is.

K: Or is it just five different streets meeting or something?

D: No, it ain't but about two or three off of "49." Far off of "49" and Woodrow Wilson.

K: Oh, yeah, I see why they call it the Five Points now. They call it the Five Points because two "49's" going across right, and Woodrow Wilson crosses it, right.

D: Um, hum.

K: Yeah, I see why they call it the Five Points now. Okay, in your earliest recollection what was the ah, business community like around the downtown area?

D: Farish Street?

K: Yeah, around Farish Street--do you remember any Black businesses that were on Farish Street.

D: I ain't go to nothing but the barber shop and cafe.

K: Can you think of any of the owners or people that ran them?

D: I never did know them.

K: What about Alexander Williams, as a store owner? Do you remember any-- think about him?

D: No, I sho' don't.

K: Do you remember anything about Sam's Bakery?

D: Sam's Bakery? I can't recall it now if I did.

K: Well, what about ah, let me see. What about the American Trust & Savings Bank. It was on Pearl and Farish Street somewhere. Do you remember about that?

D: No, I sho' don't. All I know of was a dentist on the corner.

K: A dentist on the corner of Farish and . . .

D: Capitol.

K: What it a Black dentist or White dentist?

D: You mean a bank on ah, . . .

K: It was a bank somewhere around Pearl or Farish? A black bank?

D: I think it use to be one of them back there on Farish Street.

K: Did you ever do business in the banks in the "Good Old Days"?

D: No.

K: Let me see. Do you remember anything about old L. K. Atwood or H. K. Risher?

D: No.

K: What about Doctor Redman?

D: I know of him.

K: Is he still living?

D: I don't know.

K: Well, what kind of doctor was Doctor Redman? Was he a dentist or physician?

D: I don't know what kind of doctor he was.

K: Were you'll personal friends, or you just remember him?

D: I never did learn what kind of doctor he was.

K: Did you ever talk with him?

D: No. He had a lot of houses in Jackson?

K: Was he a fairly wealthy man in those days?

D: I think he was.

K: Ah, can you remember any particular ah, Black businessmen in the "Good Old Days" that were wealthy besides Redman, any others? They don't have to be businessmen, just wealthy blacks in those days?

D: Dennis Hale and McCoy were on Farish Street.

K: Would you repeat that please?

D: Dennis Hale and McCoy.

K: Can you remember what kind of business they had?

D: They were dentists.

K: Oh, two Black dentists. When was this around the thirties, twenties, forties, or what? Can you remember?

D: They were in business in 1936.

K: Hale and McCoy - two Black dentists?

D: Um, hum.

K: They were located on Farish Street?

D: Yeah, on Farish Street.

K: Alright, do you remember anything about the Crystal Palace that use to be on Farish Street?

D: No, I sho' don't. I never did fool with nothing like that.

K: I'm talking about do you remember it being there?

D: Um.

K: You don't remember the Crystal Palace?

D: No, I sho' don't.

K: Ah, we are going to get to the telephones now--can you recall the first experience you had with a telephone?

D: Yeah, in Jackson.

K: Did you see one when you first got here?

D: No.

K: Alright, the first time you talked through one of them, what kind was that? Was it one of those old black ones?

D: Just the regular size they got now.

K: The first one you saw, around what year was it?

D: I just don't remember what year it was now, but I know they use to have them--they rang. (Disturbance)

The first one they had, they use to turn them with a little handle to ring them. They ranged. They didn't dial.

K: You just crank them with the handle?

D: Um, hum.

K: Can you remember around what year this was? It doesn't have to be the exact year.

D: No, I can't recall now.

K: But, you do remember one of the telephones that you use to . . .

D: Yeah, they had them.

K: Did you ever talk through one of them?

D: No.

K: Okay, we are going to talk now about water and sewage facilities. Around the twenties, what source did you-all get your water from? Did you-all have wells or did they have faucets that you turn on?

D: Some people had wells.

K: Um. Around twenty-six when you first came to Jackson, did you-all have wells.?

D: No, we had hydrants.

K: Did you have to pay extra for the hydrant or something?

D: No, just the water bill.

K: Alright, what about ah, electricity? Did you-all have electric lights for instance?

D: We had lamps.

K: What did you burn, coal?

D: Kerosene.

K: Kerosene Lamps.

D: Um, hum.

K: Well, what year was this? Can you remember what year that was that you use to have the lamps? Was it when you first got here?

D: Twenty-six, we use to have lamps.

K: Um, hum. When did you and your wife get married?

D: May 27, 1934.

K: Did you-all still have lamps then? In the thirties, can you remember?

D: Yeah, we still had lamps.

K: Your wife--is she still living?

D: Um, hum.

K: Okay, what was the wedding like? Tell me a little bit about the wedding.

D: Didn't have (nayum?).

K: You-all didn't have a wedding?

D: Um, uh.

K: Well, where did you meet? Tell me a little about that.

D: I met her here in Jackson.

K: Where about, can you remember?

D: Out in the country. We were in the country then, but it's in the city limits now.

K: Do you know what part of town it is in now?

D: Sunset Drive, over here.

K: Oh, that was the country?

D: Um, hum. It was in the country then.

K: It wasn't the city limits?

D: No.

K: Well, where did you meet her at, a church, at somebody's house, or . . .

D: I seen her at church.

K: You want to talk about it, or do you want to get on to something else?

D: Well, we can talk about something else.

K: Alright, ah, Black doctors--do you remember anything about Black doctors? Did you go to Black doctors when you got sick or White doctors?

D: Lets see. I never did go to a doctor much.

K: But, when you got sick, what kind of doctor did you go to? Was he Black or White?

D: They were white.

K: Well, why you didn't go to a black doctor?

D: They jest in the hospital. I went to the hospital--they had White doctors.

K: Um, hum. What hospital was this?

D: State Hospital.

K: Is it still here in Jackson?

D: Yeah, out in Rankin.

K: Okay, ah, do you recall the opening of the Sally Harris Clinic?

D: Um, hum.

K: In 1940? It's on Pearl Street?

D: No, I sho' don't.

K: What were the leading health hazards of the twenties, thirties, or the forties while you were in Jackson--you know like the reason so many people got sick?

D: The twenties? I d-o-n-'-t know.

K: You know the flu, just some of the diseases that . . .

D: I just remember now.

K: Okay, tell me about some of them.

D: I can't remember.

K: Well, what about the water? Was the water good?

D: Yeah, it was alright.

K: Were slaughtered hogs and fresh meat packaged like they're packaged today, or were they packaged?

D: It was like it is today, some of it.

K: And some of them just did it yourself, right?

D: Yeah.

K: Okay. Do you remember where Georgetown is now? What they call Georgetown is like what they call Five Points.

D: I haven't saw in Georgetown for years. I saw it one time . . . a few times, but I haven't saw it for years.

K: Um, hum. What about West Jackson?

D: I don't know too much about Jackson now since it built up.

K: When Jackson was small, was this where we are right now, considered country?

D: Yeah.

K: All of this was out in the country?

D: Yeah.

K: Okay. Did you stay in the country or in . . . I know you said you stayed somewhere out west, right? You told me a couple names of some of the streets--did you ever stay out toward the country?

D: I was in the city limits in Boyd's Alley.

K: Do you remember anything about the Rabbit Foot Shows or the Silas Green Shows?

D: I use to go to them.

K: Can you just describe what they were like? What did you see when you were down there?

- D: All I know they were ministerial shows.
- K: Preaching and stuff?
- D: No, dancing.
- K: Oh, ministerial shows.
- D: Um, hum.
- K: Did they play the guitars and stuff too?
- D: Yeah.
- K: Did you have to pay to see them?
- D: Um, hum.
- K: About how much?
- D: I done forgot how much now.
- K: Well, did they just come through and just go through towns or did they just . . .
- D: They came through on the "green."
- K: What's on the "green"?
- D: It use to be on ah, Hamilton Street.
- K: Um, hum. Is that why they called it Silas Green?
- D: Naw, just a place where they come. (Interruption of a lady in the background singing, "I Can Hear My Savior Calling.")
- K: Okay, how often did they come?
- D: I don't know.
- K: Once a year?
- D: Once a year, I reckon.
- K: What was your favorite sport as a child?
- D: Not anything.
- K: Can you remember any of the games you played as a child?

D: No, I don't.

K: Any kind of games--shooting marbles - or anything?

D: Yes, I use to play marbles.

K: What else?

D: Use to play a little ball.

K: What kind of ball? What was your favorite?

D: It was hardball.

K: You're talking about baseball.

D: Um, hum.

K: Okay, do you recall anything about jumping over the broom to get married. Do you remember any old traditions like that?

D: No.

K: Have you ever heard of them?

D: Um, ugh.

K: Okay, when you came to Jackson what was the Black/White relationship like? Did the Whites give the Blacks much trouble or did the Blacks give the Whites much trouble?

D: No. They didn't give either one no trouble.

K: Everything was alright between Blacks and Whites, huh?

D: Yeah.

K: Okay, do you remember anything about lynchings?

D: Lynchings?

K: Um, hum. Where they use to hang people.

D: No.

K: Did you ever hear of any?

D: I heard tell of it, but I haven't saw any of it.

K: Well, did you hear about James Martin. It was in 1928 that he was in Bolton and got hung for rape? Do you remember anything about that? Did people use to talk about it or anything?

D: Naw, I sho' don't.

K: Okay, do you recall anything about the Albert Lee Case? This case came about in the 1940's.

D: Naw.

K: Okay, do you recall the murder of Emmett Tills? Do you remember anything about that?

D: Naw.

K: Alright. Let me see. Can you tell me some of the good things about the Black/White relationships of the twenties, thirties, and maybe the forties?

D: Well, they were getting along alright as far as I know. Only, it was Jim Crow.

K: You remember the Jim Crow era?

D: Um, hum. They had a certain place to ride on the busses.

K: As long as everybody rode in their certain places, everything would be alright, huh?

D: Yeah.

K: Okay, what about the parks and stuff. Did Blacks have their own park, or did they . . .

D: Naw, they didn't have their own park.

K: Well, could they go to the parks with the Whites?

D: I reckon, they could.

K: You didn't go to them.

D: Um, ugh.

K: Okay, what about your boss? He was white, right when you were at all your years at the companies?

D: Yeah.

K: Did they ever give you a hard time?

D: No.

K: Did they ever give any of the other Blacks a hard time?

D: Not as I know of.

K: They never did fire any of them to hire Whites or nothing like that, did they?

D: Um, ugh.

K: All of them were pretty "cool"?

D: Yeah.

K: Is there anything you want to add to this interview that we might have missed going over that you might wanna just . . .

D: No.

K: It could be anything?

D: (Silence).

K: What about the service--you never did go to any service?

D: No.

K: Okay, what were things like during World War II, for instance? Can you remember anything like that? Were there plenty job openings, job closings or what, around Jackson?

D: I don't know about jobs. I had one, but I don't know about the rest of them.

K: Can you remember what things were like during the 1940s - around World War II?

D: I think jobs was pretty good.

K: Well, did many ladies happen to be working or anything like that?

D: I don't think it was them many.

K: It was more men working during World War II?

D: Um, hum.

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K: Well, I guess we've covered about everything. I want to thank you very much, and I really enjoyed talking to you. I appreciated it sir.

D: Alright.

END OF INTERVIEW

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