

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
THE FARISH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

INTERVIEWEE: Edward Lee  
INTERVIEWER: Alferdteen Harrison  
DATE: July 16, 1982 (Date of Interview)  
SUBJ: Farish Street Businessman (Owner of Edward Lee Hotel)  
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H: ~~July 16, 1982 and I am Alferdteen Harrison~~ <sup>we're</sup> in the home of  
Mr. Edward Lee, and we have his wife with us and his daughter.

I didn't get your name.

ER: Eldina Robinson.

H: Eldina Robinson, and your name is ~~?~~ ?

AL: ~~Allie~~ Lee. Elle Lee

H: ~~Elle~~ Lee, Mrs. Allie Lee, but we are interviewing Mr. Edward Lee. What we are going to try to do Mr. Lee is to have you just begin to recall your boyhood. ~~So~~ I want you to tell me about your very earliest recollection. I understand that you were born in Hazelhurst, so your very earliest recollection.

L: ~~I was born in the country from Hazelhurst.~~ I was born about fifteen miles from Hazelhurst in Copiah County. My daddy had sharecroppers where they would farm ~~in~~ and he would give ~~em~~ <sup>them</sup> half of what they made. I didn't like the country after I got up about 12 years old, and ~~he~~ let me go to Drew, Mississippi to stay with an Aunt for about two weeks. ~~I would go there and work for two weeks and buy me something new to go back to school with.~~

H: Where was it that you went?

L: Drew, Mississippi, ~~baking~~. I learned to be a baker, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> after I would go there every year, ~~so~~, the last year about 1916, the War broke out, I was going to MI College. He sent for me to come home and get ready and go to school and I fooled around and found out that the principal <sup>ipal</sup> of the school was getting \$40.00 a month, his teachers were getting \$20.00 and \$15.00, I'm making \$100.00 a month, and I wanted to know what am I going to school for, you know. You know, here's the principal, and ~~so~~ when the War broke out in 1916 ~~and~~ I went back <sup>home</sup> from school, from M.I. College and I didn't,

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- L: He couldn't get me to go back. ~~Cause~~ I'm <sup>was</sup> making \$25.00 a week and they ~~were~~ making \$25.00 a month. ~~Didn't make sense. So I wouldn't go back to college. So I made a mistake and that's life you know.~~
- H: Why did you choose to go to M.&I. College?
- L: You could go there for nothing.
- H: Oh I see.
- L: It was a trade school.
- H: You had to work while you were there?
- L: ~~Well, we didn't have to,~~ I didn't have to work cause my daddy paid my fare. He was able to pay my fee ~~there and that's the reason I didn't have to work.~~
- H: Well how far did you get in school?
- L: Eighth grade.
- H: ~~So~~ M. I. College at that time went through the, how far?
- L: Twelfth grade.
- H: Twelfth grade, ~~Now~~ <sup>How</sup> how old were you when you started working in the fields?
- L: About six years old.
- H: What were your tasks when you were working in the fields?
- L: ~~Everything.~~
- H: ~~What do you mean everything?~~
- L: Feed the cows, hogs, mules, and wake up the ~~people,~~ the sharecroppers that was working ~~and all such as this.~~
- H: So your father was like an overseer?
- L: No, he was the owner.
- H: He owned ~~the farm.~~
- L: ~~Yes,~~ he owned ~~the farm.~~
- H: ~~And~~ he had people working for him?
- L: ~~For him.~~ <sup>Yes, he did.</sup>
- H: ~~Oh, I see.~~ Now is this in Hazlehurst or Drew?
- L: ~~This is Hazelhurst,~~ this is out from Hazlehurst, ~~between Hazlehurst and~~ ville.

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H: ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ ville? Is that where you own where your folks own 200 and some acres of land?

L: No, that was ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~, Hazelhurst, out in the country from Hazelhurst.

H: You were telling me about your father's farm, would you call it a farm or a plantation?

L: *A* Farm.

H: ~~A farm~~. How many other Blacks in that neighborhood would have had sharecroppers working for them?

L: There were a few of them, maybe one or two families. White people would have 'em and they would have 'em too.

H: Now in the community, <sup>when</sup> you were six years old, was there a public school that you went to?

L: Yes, *it was*.

H: Do you know the name of that school?

L: ~~Well~~, the Church was Pleasant Hill Church, I <sup>guess</sup> reckon that was the name of the School too. It's been so long I don't remember.

H: Now how far did that school go? ~~That is 1st. through the 3rd. grade or fifth grade?~~

L: *To* Fifth grade. Most of ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ children to go to school. ~~When they got up large enough, they got out and went to work.~~

H: ~~Now~~ what grade were you when you went to M & I College?

L: Sixth.

H: You were in the sixth grade?

L: Yes.

H: When you finished the fifth grade, do you remember what kind of a school closing you had, was there a graduation like ?

L: Yes, They had a graduation, but I was a country boy, I didn't know how to appreciate it. ~~but~~ they had a *program*

H: A program?

L: *Yes*, Program and all. *They had a program*

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H: Do you recall anything about what it was like? What would people do?

L: Everything that they are doing now, the best that they could, ~~you know~~  
~~what I mean.~~

H: ~~Right.~~

L: ~~They would have programs just like they having now.~~

H: ~~Okay~~, so then you went to M & I College.

L: ~~Oh~~ that's where I'm talking about, M & I College, now.

H: ~~Oh~~, I see.

L: It wasn't no such thing as ~~a~~ school program in. *Hazelhurst, they'd* just say that's the last day of school.

H: At M & I College, that's where you had the school program?

L: Yes, *it was.*

H: ~~Okay~~. ~~Now~~ I want to go back to your childhood just a bit. What ~~kind of~~  
~~home, what~~ was your home like? ~~The house in which you lived?~~

L: We had a big a ~~real~~ nice house. My daddy had a nice house. ~~He~~ built it from the ground.

H: Could you describe it for me?

L: . . .

H: I ~~mean~~, how many rooms did it have, did it have <sup>a</sup> ~~one of those, what you call~~  
~~it~~ dog trot hallways? ~~or . . .~~

L: No, in those days it was a fine home to us, the architect wouldn't dare to have a room with a chimney down the center, <sup>I had a</sup> room over here, a room over here and a dining room and kitchen back there.

H: Well that would be a pretty nice house now.

L: Oh it was a nice house.

H: ~~Now . . . about~~ when was that? I have some feel that it was around the turn of the century.?

L: I was born in 1898.

H: Born 1898, ~~well~~ I had it about right. Tell me about your father.

L: ~~Oh~~ he was a little man. My mother was a big woman, she did the work and my father did the supervising.

*Start*

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- H: ~~Oh~~, he told her what to do?
- L: No, he didn't tell her what to do, she <sup>e</sup>knowed more what to do than he did.
- H: Did your father ever whip you?
- L: I don't think so, I don't remember.
- H: How about your mother?
- L: Oh goodness, she tore me up.
- H: ~~Well~~ what did you do to deserve whippings?
- L: Everything, ~~everything~~ that lil ole bad boys could do.
- H: You classify yourself as a bad boy?
- L: Oh, yea.
- H: Could you just name a few of those things?
- L: Fight ~~ing~~.
- H: ~~Okay~~, fighting and . . . what else? Slip off from home?
- L: Oh yes, ~~See~~ I was suppose to come home early and I'd slip in there in the morning sometime, ~~and all such as that.~~
- H: This is before you were twelve years old?
- L: No, ~~no~~. This wasn't before I was twelve years old, ~~this was when I was~~ . . . they kept a good watch on me ~~alright, oh until~~ after I got 12. After I got 12 they saw they couldn't keep up with me.
- H: So they let you go?
- L: They let me go.
- H: ~~Now~~, who took care of the sharecropping arrangements, your father or your mother?
- L: ~~My father.~~
- H: ~~Your father?~~
- L: My father took care of everything. My mama ~~she~~ kept up with the workers. See if they all worked together. ~~You don't know nothing about what you~~ asking me. You don't know <sup>any</sup> ~~nothing~~ about ~~no~~ farming.
- H: A little bit, I sure do. I grew up out ~~there~~ in Brandon, and yea I know a little bit about sharecropping but you see, many of my students don't know and for you to describe that is an educative process for them, so that's why I was asking you, you know what happened, what was it like.

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H: How do you think your father treated the people who worked for him?

L: ~~Well~~ that's one thing I didn't go along with my father in taking half of what those people made, course that was the program. ~~If~~ you work for me, I'm <sup>going to</sup> gonna furnish you your meals, your food and everything and then when settling day come, if you haven't got enough to pay me well I'm just out of it. So ~~that's~~ <sup>that's</sup> the way that sharecropping <sup>ers</sup> do, Share and share alike.

H: So your wife kept up with all of this business angle, who owed what?

L: No, yea, well my mother and father worked together. ~~They were~~, if you come in there and buy something they would put it on the book.

H: So your father had a store too?

L: ~~Oh~~ yea, he had a ~~commensary~~ commensary.

H: Did people use the commensary other than those persons who worked for him?

L: ~~Oh~~ yea, ~~see~~ ~~he had~~, they don't need nothing but tabacco and snuff and ~~sardines and crackers and all such as that~~. Anybody could go in there and buy.

H: ~~Okay~~. How about the church, in your early life?

L: ~~C. M. E.~~ I belonged to ~~C.M.E.~~ Pleasant Hill *C.M.E. Church.*

H: ~~Pleasant Hill~~. Were your parents active in the church?

L: ~~Oh yea~~. We all <sup>were</sup> I go down practically every fourth Sunday in August <sup>New York</sup> ~~New York and different places.~~

H: ~~Now~~, what did you do as a youth in the church?

L: Fight.

H: In the church? Is that the truth?

L: ~~Laughter~~ No, I never was a big church worker.

H: ~~As a young boy?~~

L: ~~As a young boy.~~

H: Did you go to Sunday School?

L: My mama would make me. She would make me go to Sunday School, class meetings and all such as that.

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H: What about your friends, ~~your~~ <sup>e</sup> who did you run with?

L: ~~Well~~ it was a big family of us down there.

H: Now ~~e~~ what else did you do between the ages of 6 and 12 other than go to school, help with the farm and ~~you went~~ <sup>go</sup> to Sunday School?

L: I couldn't say I went to school much, I didn't get no higher than the eighth grade,

H: But you did go some.

L: ~~Oh~~ yes, <sup>I did</sup> did

H: ~~You remember~~, when you all start school, about October and go through ~~what~~, April?

L: No, I tell you it started when cotton got up big enough to hoe, you'd go back to school.

H: Till the last day of school. . .

L: Yea, when you got opened, when cotton could be picked, forget it.

H: Forget it.

L: ~~See~~ <sup>In</sup> the Delta they'd have two shifts. They have one shift start, I know the last one started in August, course they have quit that now. Our people had a very poor time getting an education.

H: How about recreation, let's <sup>say</sup> when you got out of the field and the sun wasn't down yet, what did you do to play?

L: Rag ball.

H: ~~Rag ball~~ and . . .

L: ~~Rocks~~, swimming, <sup>and</sup> a ~~great big creek~~ down there to swim in ~~Bayouptere~~

H: ~~And~~ you would just go swimming with your friends?

L: ~~Oh yea~~, we all would meet up at the swimming hole we called it.

H: With the rag ball, what did you play?

L: That's a ball.

H: ~~Baseball?~~

L: ~~Yea~~ <sup>baseball</sup>.

H: Was it a softball or did you call it rag ball?

<sup>It was a</sup> L: Baseball. ~~See~~ we didn't have <sup>any</sup> no money to buy a ball with so we'd take a string.

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L: and wrap that ball tight and play just like you play here.

H: ~~So, by the time you come to Jackson. . .no, you went to College right?~~

L: ~~Right.~~

H: ~~And you went to the 12th. no, the eighth grade?~~

L: ~~Eighth grade.~~

H: How old were you ~~were~~ <sup>when</sup> you finished the eighth grade?

L: I didn't finish it.

H: You went to the eighth grade?

L: I went till, 1916, ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> my last time in school, when school closed ~~in~~ 1917  
 I was suppose to go in the Army but so happened I didn't have to go to  
 the Army.

H: ~~Why didn't you?~~

L: ~~\_\_\_\_\_ was signed before I got there and I didn't have to go to  
 the Army.~~

H: ~~Well what did you do then?~~

L: ~~Started the things that I told you already.~~

H: ~~Oh. That's when you. . .no, in 1917 is that when you were working as a  
 baker in Drew?~~

L: ~~Well see in, when I was working at the bakery in Drew I was still was in  
 school.~~

H: That's what I thought.

L: ~~See when my daddy would let me out he would let me go over to see my Aunt,  
 and I had a bakery shop there that would give me \$25.00 a week for two  
 weeks for three weeks, to buy some clothes, <sup>and</sup> then when I got that I went  
 on back home and went to School. I must have been about 15 or 16 or  
 something like that.~~

H: What happened between 1915 and 1925 when you came to Jackson ~~what happened?~~

L: ~~Oh when I came to Jackson, I married.~~

H: Before you came, I want to get just what happened between.

L: ~~Well see, before I came to Jackson that was when I was I <sup>was</sup> around up there  
 in school.~~



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H: ~~Oh~~, you came from Ohio, right?

L: No, I haven't been to Ohio yet.

H: ~~Okay.~~

L: ~~See~~ when I came to Jackson, I found my wife here and <sup>she</sup> ~~they~~ was working for a woman that had a restaurant. ~~They was, she,~~ her mother got sick and she got after me to take the restaurant and I told her I didn't have ~~no~~ <sup>any</sup> money for ~~no~~ <sup>a</sup> restaurant. She said. . . basically I don't know nothing about cooking. She said well your mother-in-law cooks for me. She run my place she and her aunt and look like they ought to be able to run yours. And that's where I got the idea from. ~~Now I done been to Cleveland, Ohio, worked in the bake shop up there . . . well I was back here on a vacation and that's about it.~~

H: Now... , who, was this a Black lady that you bought the restaurant from?

L: ~~Yea.~~

H: ~~Do you know her name?~~

L: Hattie Wilson. (Hattie Wilson)

H: ~~Hattie Wilson (Hattie Wilson), and what was the restaurant called?~~

L: Mill and Oakley.

H: It was just called Mill and Oakley, ~~was the name of the restaurant?~~

L: ~~Yea.~~

H: ~~Mill and Oakley Restaurant.~~

L: It was Hattie Wilson's Restaurant till I got it and when I got it I changed it to Mill and Oakley.

H: Mill and Oakley. Is the building still there now?

L: ~~Yea,~~ very much so.

H: Is there a restaurant there now?

L: They got a club, they sell food there though.

H: Now does the building look like it looked <sup>then?</sup> ~~in 19~~

L: No, I built a new building.

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H: When did you build that building?

L: ~~Oh that building, it was an old shack and look like to me~~ I built that building in 1952. I had a four store front building there.

H: Yea I thought it looked like a pretty nice substantial structure there. You still own that building?

L: Yea.

H: Okay, what kind of food did you serve in the restaurant?

L: I served food when I was in the restaurant business. ~~I served~~ . . .

H: Tell me about it. . . I'd just like to know. . .

L: I served everything that a first class restaurant could ~~do~~.  
Fish, shrimps, sirlion steaks, pork chops, liver, everything. ~~Anybody~~  
~~can tell you about that restaurant. You was too young to know it.~~ It was up to par then, it was one of the best in town.

H: How long did you keep it open?

L: Until about two months ago.

H: . . . ~~Now is this~~, you had this restaurant from 1925 on?

L: No, ~~no~~ that's not the restaurant that I had from '25'. The one I had from '25', I sold it in '26'

H: What was that one?

L: Mill and Oakley.

H: Okay, now the one, which restaurant are we talking about now?

L: Mill and Oakley.

H: We are talking about Mill and Oakley, but the restaurant that just closed ~~that's~~ the one on Church Street?

L: Church Street, Edward Lee.

H: Okay, fine. ~~Now~~ did you remeber Lawrence C. Jones, of Piney Woods.

L: Do I? He was one of my good friends.

H: ~~Well~~ the reason that I asked that is that I have done some work on him and I am not sure if it was he or one of the Cotton Blossom singers who said they use to come there after they performed to eat.

L: To eat, that's right.

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L: ~~-----~~ a couple years ago, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> one of them came around to see me. Professor ~~and~~ Jones, all of them use to come, ~~that was,~~ ~~I couldn't say all of them but I had all I could take care of.~~

H: Did you have a parking problem?

L: ~~Well,~~ I didn't have much of a parking problem, course you can park on the street.

H: ~~Now~~ I was <sup>always</sup> very surprised when I would be talking to one of them and they would say, after we would finish our concert at College Park or wherever, Dr. Jones would always take us to down to Edward Lee. I would say where is Edward Lee, ~~I didn't . . .~~ (laughter) ~~You know,~~ I wasn't sure of what it was like, Could you describe the dining room or the area where you served them at that time?

L: ~~Well we was.~~ . . .

H: ~~Does it look that way now?~~

L: ~~Yea.~~ It's that way now, just like it was then. ~~See~~ I would have ~~been done~~ sold it but the place burned and I wasn't able to fix it. It had upstairis and downstairs. I had a quarters downstairs long as across this building. That's where my family stayed. I had twenty-four rooms, ~~where~~ <sup>that</sup> we rented.

H: ~~Now,~~ I guess I'll have to go in that area, one of the young ladies, that I talked to, . . .described coming in there and you not permitting drinks to be served and stuff while they were there.

L: ~~No,~~ I didn't serve drinks.

H: ~~Well,~~ that was one of the things that I was concerned about. I would say ~~well~~ why would students go in the Edward Lee Hotel? And she'd say oh it was very nice, he wouldn't permit anything to happen while we were there.

L: ~~No,~~ ~~but~~ a few years ago, they turned these boys alose from Parchman and these inmates from over here ~~to~~ <sup>ed</sup> the assylum, and they just come there and took over. ~~Now~~ I couldn't go there and just shoot it out with <sup>th</sup>em, cause that's what they wanted to do. ~~They wanted to do anything wrong.~~ You see, ~~and~~ I just couldn't do <sup>any</sup> ~~no~~thing with them and the police I'd go get them and they couldn't ~~..~~ <sup>them</sup> didn't want to kill <sup>them</sup>em, you know, didn't want ~~to do~~ <sup>any</sup> ~~nothing~~ to them, so ~~it just~~ I lost a fight.

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H: Well, I appreciate that cause that's one of the subject I am most interested in is Dr. Jones and his life, and that kind of thing. How would you describe Dr. Jones, what kind of man do you think he was? Person, you know how you size up a man?

L: Well, I tell you one thing, he was one of the best men that I knowed. If he could do anything for you, you could go down there without any money at all, and he'd find a job for you, and let you get a start. He was a fine fellow. We use to go down there ~~and~~ to the ballgames and to the singing and all like that. I remember the last time I went down there, they were having a picnic or something and he called Me on stage. ~~And I say~~ <sup>said</sup> you mean he called a little man like me to come on his stage. I wasn't no talker but I had to go up there ~~and~~ ~~and~~ what his daughter's name

H: . . . His daughter?

L: Yea.

H: ~~Somebody Woods, Helen Woods?~~

L: ~~No.~~

H: ~~Not Helen.~~

L: What that girl's name? Miss \_\_\_\_\_

H: Miss Moman?

L: No.

H: That's not his daughter ~~though~~. . . Now I know about his son.

L: He didn't have ~~no~~ son did he?

H: Yea. Warren, Junior, ~~and now here~~ I can't think of his sons names, as well as I know them but he had two sons.

L: ~~Miss. . . I liked to called this woman's name.~~

H: \_\_\_\_\_

L: ~~No~~, she worked at the Post Office.

H: Oh, that's his sister.

L: Was that his sister?

H: Well, I know who you are talking about, she lives right up here in those

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H: apartments on Robinson Road,  
L: ~~Now?~~  
H: ~~Yes. Miss Bass.~~  
L: ~~Miss Bass.~~  
H: Nellie Bass, I was gonna hate myself if I couldn't think of her name.  
Nellie Bass. Yes, she's been there in those apartments up there down  
from Krogers.  
L: ~~See these girls. . . see I'd go to football, not football, baseball and~~  
~~singing and music, and that's why they knowed me. I'd go down there at~~  
~~different times to~~ <sup>try to get a</sup> ~~program, and that's why all of them. . .~~  
H: ~~Oh,~~ you'd have them to come t Jackson to sing.  
L: Yea,  
H: ~~Oh I see.~~ Where were they performing in Jackson?  
L: Out at the skating ring.  
H: Where was the skating ring at? <sup>Willie</sup>  
L: It use to be where the old Stevenson' use to be.  
H: ~~Okay.~~ Where else would they sing?  
L: ~~Anywhere.~~ They'd sing anywhere in town.  
H: ~~Well, I can see what kind of relationship.~~ <sup>now</sup> ~~Okay,~~ I could go on and on  
talking about Dr. Jones, but let me switch a little bit ~~and ah,~~ do you  
remember the Palace Auditorium?  
L: Crystal Palace?  
H: Not the Crystal Palace. The Palace Auditorium that is up the street from  
the Crystal Palace.  
L: ~~Wasn't no Palace . . .~~  
H: ~~Palace Auditorium?~~  
L: No.  
H: ~~You know, let's see.~~ . . Kirk McQwen owns that building now.  
L: No.  
H: ~~But it's up there from the ah . . .~~  
L: No, it's the first place where I use to have my dances.  
H: Where did you have your dances now?

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L: <sup>Up there</sup> Wherever you talking about.

H: Crystal Palace?

L: I had them at the Crystal Palace, and also the place you talking about.

H: The Palace Auditorium?

L: Yes, ~~not the Palace.~~ . . . . it's the Crystal Palace, <sup>There wasn't a</sup> ~~wasn't no~~ auditorium there, that was the Crystal Palace Hall.

H: Now you talking about the building where Harmon's Drugstore is now?

L: Yea, yea.

H: So you use to schedule dances in the Crystal Palace?

L: Yea. See it was a place open where anybody could rent, <sup>a date</sup> and I use to give. . .  
~~in fact I had a lease during the War~~ and myself.

H: What kind of dances would you have?'

L: (Laughter) What kind of dances?

H: Okay, well.

L: Well.

H: You just had the big bands. . .

L: The big bands, EARl Hines and all that group. . .

H: Who?

L: Earl Hines, you may not know him.

H: Earl Hines, ~~no~~, I don't know him.

This is still July 16th. and we are talking to Mr. Edward Lee,  
. . .opened up the Masonic Temple down on Lynch Street.

L: Yea, on Christmas Day with the Ink Spots, that's the last time I played them. I use to bring some mighty good attractions in here. You wasn't old enough to go I don't think.

H: I guess not. I am learning a lot about it. I am hearing people talk about it. Describe the Crystal Palace, what did it look like?

L: It was just a plain building with good floors had a big fan in it.

H: Where was the fan?

L: ~~Back~~ in the back.

H: How was it decorated in the ceiling?

L: It wasn't decorated.

H: It didn't have anything up there?

L: No, we didn't know <sup>any</sup> nothing about ~~no~~ decoration then.

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H: Did you have a ball or anything?

L: A ball?

H: I am trying to think of why it was called Crystal. Did you have anything crystal.

L: I don't know. It belonged to Mr. Hodges, he bought it. ~~He just thought of that I reckon, cause I ain't seen no crystal roound there nowhere.~~

H: Were there any paintings on the wall that you recall?

L: No, it wasn't no painting on the wall. Maybe it was some decoration all right cause he had a decorator, but I don't remember any.

H: Now, did Mr. Hodges build that building?

L: Yea, he built it, around 1931 or 1932.

H: Could you recall the building contractor who built that, I mean who he used to built it?

L: No. I know one man but he couldn't, he in my shape nearly, he couldn't tell you too much.

H: Who is that?

L: Cecil *Stiff*.

H: How is Mr. Stiff?

L: He's doing alright, he hollered at me yestiddy.

H: ~~But~~ he's still living down ~~there~~ <sup>Church</sup> on Oakley Street?

L: Yea, right across the street from where he was. ~~on Church Street you mean. . .~~

H: ~~I mean Church Street, right.~~ So you booked dances both for the Crystal Palace and the Palace Auditorium up the street?

L: No, I was booking for myself.

H: Okay, but in those buildings.

L: I would rent those buildings.

H: ~~And~~ you used both of them. Do you know anything about that sign that's on that building that says the King Hiram *Grand Lodge*

L: ~~Grand Lodge. . .~~

H: ~~Grand Lodge.~~

L: Yea, that building, that's the one you talking about, just while ago, ~~see~~ I use to give dances there too. We had that place leased, Bill and myself.

H: ~~Bill~~

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- L: ~~Yea.~~ It belonged to the McQuen<sup>s</sup>; I think old man McQuen<sup>is</sup> dead ~~now,~~ I reckon.
- H: Kirk McQuen?
- L: I don't know his first name, we just called him Mr. McQuen. We kept that place... a long time ~~until~~ <sup>Lodge</sup> the King Hiram rented it from us, ~~see that~~ the one that got that Masonic Temple out on . . .
- H: ~~Mill?~~
- L: ~~Whitfield Mill,~~ yea right.
- H: ~~And they were renting from you. . .~~
- L: ~~No,~~
- H: ~~They took it over after you. . .~~
- L: ~~Yea, see the War, after the War they took it. See I had it before the War.~~
- H: ~~Okay,~~ now we got that aspect of entertainment. You had big bands that use to come there.
- L: I got every big promoter that's ever been to Jackson on my wall.
- H: Where is this?
- L: That's down at the Hotel.
- H: ~~Down at the Hotel?~~
- L: I covered them up to keep from ever playing them anymore.
- H: You covered them up?
- L: Yea, they covered up now, you know they just got ply wood over them.
- H: ~~Oh,~~ that should be . . .
- L: I got everybody's picture , the last band I played here was Otis Redding, and he got drowned the next week, in a plane wreck.
- H: ~~But~~ he played at the Crystal Palace?
- L: No, that place wasn't big enough. I played him at the auditorium downtown.
- H: ~~Oh.~~ When was that?
- L: ~~Oh,~~ I've played, I ~~moved~~ down there about six or seven years.
- H: Your last year doing that was when? ~~About?~~
- L: I don't know what year it was. . .
- H: Mid seventies, about seventy-five?



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L: ~~Yes~~, it was in seventies.

H: Okay, now having come to Jackson around 1925, . . .

L: . . . renting it down there now, the pool room. . .

H: The pool room at ~~the~~, where is that?

L: That's the Crystal Palace.

H: Can you remember, are you comfortable?

L: Yea.

H: Can you remember what ~~the Crystal Palace~~ looked like? ~~Did it have. . .~~  
~~not the Crystal Palace, I already asked you that, the Palace Auditorium.~~

L: The Palace Auditorium?

H: Upstairs, where you use to have those dances.

L: I told you it looked just like this, just four walls put together.

H: Okay, now you remember on the corner of Mill and Hamilton Street, they called it the Green.

L: ~~Owned that cafe some \_\_\_\_\_ use to run that place, and I don't remember what they called it, the Green something. . .~~

H: ~~You know they use to have carnivals, that use to come to Jackson.~~

L: Yea ~~but see~~ that was ~~that was~~ a show.

H: A show?

~~L: Yea. Trying to think of . . .~~

H: Rabbit Foot?

L: Rabbit Foot and it was two of <sup>them</sup> ~~em~~, Rabbit Foot and another one.

H: I know two, the name of some town, that other show. Silas Green.

L: ~~Silas Greens. . . Yea.~~

H: Now what were they like, we want to recreate those kinds of shows.

L: Like ~~people clown~~, just a bunch of people clowning. <sup>(Harrison)</sup> ~~What the difference between Silas Green \_\_\_\_\_ ?~~

L: Same thing. (Lee)

H: They did the same thing. ~~Rabbit Foot to Silas Green. . . . , the same thing.~~

H: Would there be talking or just singing?

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- L: ~~Yea~~, it was talking, singing, dancing, cursing and everything else.
- H: People just get up there clowning.
- L: ~~Yea~~
- H: Would you have to pay to go see it?
- L: ~~Yea~~
- H: How long was the performance?
- L: ~~Well~~ it may be about a couple of hours.
- H: Did you ever promote these?
- L: No, they did their own promoting.
- H: ~~What~~ <sup>Did</sup> they ~~came~~ down and set up tents or what?
- L: ~~Tents~~, yea. *yes, they set up tents*
- H: What kinds of things did they sell at that time?
- L: ~~What~~ did them people sell, it wasn't nothing but national. . . I don't know what Rabbit Foot nem was selling now.
- H: I am speaking about what people were selling, popcorn, candy. . .
- L: They may had that I didn't ever go down to \_\_\_\_\_
- H: ~~Okay~~, how about a medicine man show? Do you ever remember seeing a medicine man show?
- L: I don't remember ever seeing one.
- H: That sounds like the old west or something, okay. Do you remember Mr. Seth Ballard?
- L: Who?
- H: They call him the root man, or sassarice man, a man who walked down Farish Street in big hollander shoes, with roots on his shoulder.
- L: I remember seeing a man of that type, I din't know his name.
- H: You didn't know who he was?
- L: No.
- H: ~~How~~ did you, did you ever interact with him or talk with him.
- L: No, I just see him, I just figure he was just clowning with his self.
- H: ~~Okay~~. I need to have the names of your children, we mentioned your children on the other tape but we don't have their names, ~~the names of your children~~.

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- L: My oldest boy is Edward  N.  Lee, Sr.  
H: Edward N. Lee? What's the N. for?  
L: He has his for Nathaniel, but it's <sup>suppose</sup> to be North.  
H: North, N-O-R-T-H?  
L: That's what my name is. My oldest boy is Edward N., so he is Edward N. Lee, Sr.  
H: Now is he still living?  
L: Huh?  
H: ~~What's he doing now?~~  
L: *No*, he's dead.  
~~H: Oh, I'm sorry, and let's see; you had two. . . .~~  
L: The other one is Eddie Lee, you got her name down?  
H: Eddie Lee, your wife's name?  
L: You got her name down dont' you?  
H: Yes, I asked when we first started, is that *Elle* Alley Lee?  
EL: Ellee  
H: Elle, E L L E.  
L: And the other boys' name is ~~Eddie Lee~~; Eddie L. Lee.  
H: Okay, now when you had the Pengium Restuarant, who was your partner then?  
L: Duke Williams.  
H: ~~Duke Williams?~~  
H: ~~Now~~ where was the Pengium?  
L: On the corner of Dalton where it is now.  
H: ~~Oh, that Pengium~~, I thought that was probably the Pengium that you was talking about, and it's good to get that straight. And your wife's Aunt name was Annie Belle, the one that you mentioned in the other tape. Oh yes, in the other tape also you mentioned having a contract with the Army. What was the nature of the contract?  
L: Sleeping and feeding inductees going into the camp.  
H: ~~So~~ I assume these were Blacks and the only place they could stay in town was. *your hotel.*  
L: *There was* those were the only two places. . . .  
H: Your hotel and *what other one?*

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L: Summers ~~Hotel~~

H: ~~And Summers Hotel.~~ Okay, did you apply for this contract or somebody just came and asked you if you would do that?

L: No, I applied for it.

H: What was the process, I mean how did you do that?

L: ~~I don't . . . what do you mean?~~

H: I am trying to figure out how you knew that the Army needed to sleep these people somewhere?

L: Well, see, I'm in business. . .

H: You in business. . .

L: I am suppose to keep up with it, ain't no sense in all them people getting away, me and Bill went in there and fought for it.

H: Okay.

L: We asked for them rather, we didn't have no fight.

H: Yea, see a lot of times it's a matter of letting people know. Now what I have not really understood is why the Army had soldiers in Jackson?

L: They had the camp here.

H: Where was the Camp?

~~L: Out here on. . .~~

~~H: In Clinton?~~

~~L: No, out here at. . . most of it is out there now, the Army had some people here.~~

~~H: Is the camp, somewhere I saw something, . . . that's not Fortification Street, no. . .~~

~~L: No, you go out. . . yea it's Fortification Street.~~

H: Way out Fortification?

L: Yea.

H: Now how would those men get <sup>from</sup> your hotel out to the Camp?

L: They'd haul them.

H: ~~The Army~~, they had Army vehicles. ?

L: Yea.

H: When I know more, I'll ask you a few more questions about that. These are kinds of things that I am really learning about at this point. Now

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H: you also mentioned in your other interview about a bookstore that was on Farish Street.

L: Yea, it's in the Crystal Palace.

H: You had a bookstore there?

L: No, I didn't.

H: Who did?

L: ~~I don't~~, I don't know who told you about cause I don't know . . .

H: I thought you mentioned something about a bookstore that was down there.

L: ~~Oh that's on . . . that YMCA~~, the YMCA is on Farish ~~is~~ right there on the corner of Farish,

H: The YMCA, that would be Farish and Monument?

L: No, Farish and Church.

H: The YMCA was on Farish and Church. ~~Where about?~~

L: ~~That's the one . . . on Mill and Church.~~

H: ~~Okay.~~

L: ~~Where you get your books, ain't that the . . .~~

H: ~~Oh, the Library.~~

L: ~~Library.~~

H: The Library, that's what you were talking about. Okay, see that's what I was trying to get cleared up, you know. ~~What you meant about that, the Library there. Okay. I know that. . .~~ What I need is that, if you can visually think how Farish Street looked in 1925. What did it look like? If I started there on the corner of Capitol and FARish and I walked north

. . . .

L: You'd have some planks to walk on.

H: Planks, what do you mean?

L: (laughter) Planks.

H: Planks? The streets were muddy?

L: Muddy, they put planks there for you to walk on. Let's see, what year did you say that was?

H: 1925, the year when you first came, ~~1925.~~

L: They'd just taken them up when I come here.

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H: All the way on the street or just a portion on the street?

L: ~~Well~~ I couldn't tell you how far they ~~wuz~~, <sup>wuz</sup> . . . but I do know that they had planks sidewalks, just as I was coming in here <sup>cause</sup> they was tearing them up.

H: I guess we don't want to go back there do we. . . ~~we~~ have planks on the streets, instead of having concrete sidewalks, they had planks.

L: ~~Planks, they put them sidewalks in there since, well they was putting them in here when I come here.~~

H: Okay. Did they ever have street lights, <sup>or</sup> gaslights on Farish Street?

L: I don't think so. I don't think they ever had gas lights.

H: How were the streets lighted?

L: Electric.

H: They wouldn't be the posts like they are now would they?

L: Yea.

H: ~~Like~~ when you first booked something at the Crystal Palace or the Palace Auditorium, how was the street lighting?

L: Just like they are now.

H: Like they are now?

L: They may <sup>have</sup> ~~be done~~ improved on some of them but they <sup>were</sup> regular lights.

H: What kind of signs did they have on the building?

L: Claude Hodges, 1931, I believe it is.

H: ~~That same thing that. . .~~

L: ~~The same thing that's on there now.~~

H: Okay, Mr. Lee, I really cannot think of any other questions, I hope you understand what I am trying to do that is trying to get a visual image of the way things look <sup>ed</sup> so that we can make.

L: ~~. . . I got on back round. . . course I got a pretty parking lot, area~~

H: ~~Around in the back?~~

L: ~~Un huh.~~

H: In the back of your building there is good parking?

L: Well ~~see~~, I got <sup>three</sup> ~~them~~ two houses before you get to the hotel.

H: Okay, a lady was talking about that today, she had seen the sign but I had not seen the sign.

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L: ~~...government planes going...~~ It ain't another Black person in Jackson  
in Jackson than I have.

H: You'd like to have it restored in some sort of way, wouldn't you?

L: I would like to have but I <sup>don't have</sup> ~~ain't got~~ the money.

H: Does the house look like it looked when you first bought it, in some parts?

L: Yea. Just like it was when I first bought it.

H: I really had not noticed it that clearly. I know that you have a sign out there that says Edward Lee Hotel and all, but that's something that we will have to just... Mr. Lee I want to thank you for your time and all. What I need to ask you on the tape, is may we use this for our historical research in the Farish Street Historic District and at Jackson State University. I am asking you if we can use the information that you have given us?

L: Now this information here, I know I made some mistakes, but I like the one, that first one was.

H: Okay, so what are you saying, you want to see it transcribed?

L: ~~See~~ I was clear when I had that one made, since then it seem like I got kinda all. ..

H: Well, it sounds good to me, . . . What are your wishes?

L: When you get it completed bring it back and I may can give you some more.

H: Okay, alright, I appreciate that very much.

END OF INTERVIEW