

SLAVE TO THE EX-SLAVE NARRATIVES

by

DaNean Olene Pound

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of
Northwestern State University of Louisiana
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the
Master of Arts in English

April, 2005

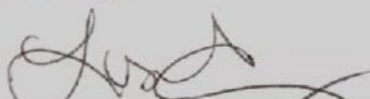
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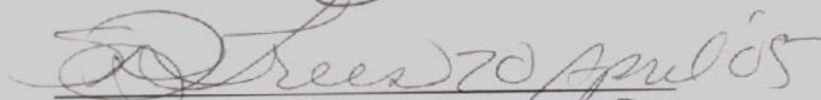
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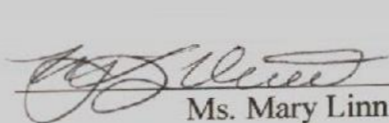
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Abstract

Created as a result of the 1929 Stock Market Crash, the Works Progress Administration established The Federal Writer's Project (FWP) under its Four Arts Program. While the principle purpose of the FWP was to gather information and publish state guidebooks for every state in the nation, the FWP was also the springboard for individual state writers' projects, including The Louisiana Writer's Project (LWP).

The LWP was not only responsible for the publication of the *New Orleans City Guide*, *A Guide to the State*, and *Gumbo Ya-Ya*, but also had satellite offices around the state where information from their respective areas was gathered with intentions for its publication as part of the Louisiana state guidebook. Part of the information gathered came from interviews with ex-slaves and the documents created from these interviews were used by Ronnie W. Clayton in his book, *Mother Wit: The Ex-Slave Narratives of the Louisiana Writer's Project*.

For the purposes of this thesis, the first task I undertook was to survey, synthesize, and compare Clayton's book *Mother Wit* and the ex-slave narratives of the LWP, focusing on the editing practices of the narratives established in *Mother Wit*, as well as the interviewing skills and the editing practices of the LWP interviewers. Second, I cataloged the working papers for *Mother Wit*, which are located in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center (CGHRC) of Northwestern State University. Third, I typed and saved each narrative to disk in order to facilitate their inclusion on the Cammie G. Henry

Archives web page. Fourth, I identified and pulled search terms from each narrative so that visitors to the web page can navigate the site. Finally, I included seventy-four of the eighty-two ex-slave narratives contained in Mother Wit, and provided readers with a substantial statement of my editorial practices, including the scholarship that influenced my choice of these practices. In doing so, I assert that I have maintained the validity, substance, integrity, and historical value of these ex-slaves' narratives.

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INTRODUCTION:

On October 5, 1929, the United States Stock Market crashed, causing the worst depression this nation has ever seen. Millions of Americans, once productive, bill paying, and grocery buying members of society, were now jobless, penniless, and starving. Their daily productivity now consisted of standing in soup kitchen and relief lines with their families. Many were now also homeless, and either lived in their vehicles or in "shanty" villages under bridges and in alleyways. Once prosperous, the great United States of America was now consumed with poverty.

In an effort to provide relief for the millions of Americans affected by the Great Depression, the New Deal was signed into effect. Also, in May 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized "outright relief grants worth \$500 million to be available to the states with the passage of the Federal Emergency Relief Act" (Penkower 9). In his book, *The Dream and the Deal*, Jerre Mangione states, "Although the New Deal favored job programs that would preserve human skills and talents, its chief concern was the three and a half million persons on the relief rolls who, in effect, were paupers" (38). Mangione continues, providing an astounding quote from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, which was first given in a message to Congress in January 1935:

The Federal government must and shall quit this business of relief. I am not willing that the vitality of our people be further sapped by the giving of cash, of market baskets, a few hours weekly of working cutting grass, raking leaves, or picking up papers in the public parks. We must preserve not only the bodies of the unemployed from destitution, but

also their self-respect, their self-reliance, and courage and determination. (39)

However, Roosevelt realized that the Federal Emergency Relief Act was not designed to provide the type of assistance he felt the nation needed, so in 1935 Congress passed the Emergency Relief Act, which was the catalyst for the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

The Federal Writers' Project (FWP) was established under the Four Arts Program of the Works Progress Administration, and the only director for the duration of the WPA was Henry G. Alsberg. The principle purpose of the FWP was to gather information and publish state guidebooks for every state in the nation. According to Monty Noam Penkower, author of *The Federal Writers' Project: A Study in Government Patronage of the Arts*, in February 1934,

The Author's League...suggested to Civil Works Administration officials in Washington a project that would be of 'social usefulness' to the government as well as to readers and writers. The plan, 'a survey of varying aspects of everyday life as it is lived in all parts of the United States,' was the first of many that would later be adopted as the American Guide Series proposal of the Federal Writer's Project." (13)

However, the FWP, implemented on July 27, 1935, "stemmed directly from the formal proposal submitted on June 25, 1935, by the WPA Professional and Service Projects Division before the Comptroller-General's breakthrough decision. The proposal called

for the preparation of a guidebook of the United States, reports of WPA progress, an encyclopedia of government functions, and a limited number of special studies by qualified individual writers. The draft suggested that the major work be issued in five regional volumes and be henceforth called the American Guide" (Penkower 27). In theory, the publication of the guidebooks seemed to be a relatively simple task but in reality, the WPA was met with opposition from every direction.

The first of the attacks on the WPA came in 1938 when Texas Congressman Martin Dies formed a Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities. The Dies Committee's prime targets were the Federal Writer's and Federal Theatre Projects, and Dies had no qualms about charging them with "communist activity and propaganda" (Mangione 4). The second attack came after the Dies Committee held its final hearings on the projects. This time, Congressman Clifton A. Woodrum of Virginia headed a subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations and resumed the attack. These two attacks proved almost fatal to the WPA for two reasons. First, they "encouraged other congressmen to proclaim their antagonisms" for the WPA Federal Writer's and Theatre Projects, and second, "the majority of Americans were inclined to believe the front-page headlines created by Dies" (Mangione 5, 6). In an era when millions of Americans were out of work and starving, the people were looking for someone or something to blame. By believing the Dies headlines, they got both. In creating the WPA, Roosevelt effectively told the American people that in order for the economy to improve, they had to get off relief and go to work. In doing so, their "vitality" would no longer be "sapped" and they would again become productive members of society and the economy would improve (Mangione 39). For some Americans who did not have a

particular trade and who relied solely on government handouts in the form of cash relief or food, Roosevelt's statements came as an insult. Furthermore, some of the Americans on relief were further insulted by the WPA act itself because they felt that it only provided jobs for writers, actors, musicians, and artists.

In August 1939, a \$17 billion WPA Relief Bill discontinued the Theatre Project but it had a provision written into it that "stipulated that henceforth, the Writers', Music, and Art projects must function through state sponsors that would furnish ...25 percent of their maintenance costs" (Mangione 20, 21). In spite of his reservations, President Roosevelt signed the bill because to do otherwise would have put "two and a half million WPA workers" out of work the next day (Mangione 20). However, under this new law, the remaining projects had only two months to find state sponsors and despite the bad publicity generated by the Dies Committee and later the Woodrum Committee, "forty-six out of the forty-eight states found sponsorship within the time limit" (Mangione 21). Hence, the individual state Writers' Projects were born.

As director of the FWP, Henry G. Alsberg's duty was to appoint directors for the various state writers' projects. In Louisiana, the appointed director was Lyle Saxon, who accepted his appointment in 1935 and after selecting his staff, promptly began work on the Louisiana Writers' Project's three main publications: the *New Orleans City Guide*, *A Guide to the State*, and the Louisiana folklore book, *Gumbo Ya-Ya*. Headquartered in New Orleans, the Louisiana Writers' Project (LWP) also had satellite offices in Alexandria, Lake Charles, Baton Rouge, Shreveport, and Lafayette, all of which were closed in 1936. While in operation, the main function of the satellite offices was to

gather information from their respective areas, which would later be published as part of the Louisiana state guidebook.

Part of the information gathered came from interviews with ex-slaves. In this case, both black and white writers hired by Saxon ventured out into society and interviewed ex-slaves still living in Louisiana. However, since these interviews have been the center of some controversy and are a primary focus of this thesis, I will provide more information pertaining to them later in this introduction and in substantial detail within the body of this thesis.

In order to provide work for African-Americans in Louisiana, Saxon developed the Dillard Project, so called because of its location at Dillard University. The Dillard Project was to collect information pertaining only to the history and heritage of African-Americans. However, in order to implement the project, Saxon needed the approval of Alsberg, which he obtained in 1936. Shortly afterwards, Saxon appointed Marcus B. Christian as head of the Dillard Project. In his article, "The Federal Writer's Project for Blacks in Louisiana," Ronnie Clayton states, "Alsberg authorized Saxon to employ ten additional writers, five of whom could be blacks to begin work on the Dillard Project" (330). The five white writers were hired for the LWP.

Although they faced opposition while attempting to research their project in the 1930s south, the African-American writers of the Dillard Project managed to compile a "manuscript consisting of 1,128 pages which constituted forty-six chapters. A conclusion apparently was all that was required to complete the work" ("The Federal Writer's Project for Blacks in Louisiana," 334). However, the conclusion has yet to be written.

On December 4, 1942, President Roosevelt ordered the liquidation of the Works Progress Administration and all of its subsidiaries because of the nation's involvement in World War II. He gave the WPA two months to cease all operation and left the decision of where to house the collected materials with the individual state directors. In Louisiana, the decision of where to house the information collected fell to Lyle Saxon. In disposing of the Dillard Project materials, Saxon chose to deposit them with Dillard University "since the records were there and Christian and A.W. Dent, President of Dillard University, promised completion of 'The History of the Negro in Louisiana'" ("The Federal Writer's Project for Blacks in Louisiana," 335). However, this work was never completed and the whereabouts of the records are unknown, as it is with the ex-slave narratives of the LWP. Instead of depositing the remaining LWP materials in one place so that they could be catalogued and easily accessible by scholars, researchers, and laypersons, Saxon deposited the material in at least three different locations.

During the course of my research, I have found the majority of the ex-slave narratives used by Ronnie W. Clayton in his book, *Mother Wit: The Ex-Slave Narratives of the Louisiana Writers' Project*, in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center (CGHRC) in the Watson Memorial Library at Northwestern State University. All of the ex-slave narratives I found in the CGHRC are located in the Federal Writers' Project collection. I located three other photocopied documents containing ex-slave narratives used by Clayton in the Hill Memorial Library archives at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. However, I am still attempting to locate eight of the eighty-two narratives.

Ronnie W. Clayton's 1990 book *Mother Wit: The Ex-Slave Narratives of the Louisiana Writers' Project* was a hugely anticipated scholarly publication in Louisiana.

However, Mother Wit was a short compilation of the ex-slave narratives of the LWP, with Clayton preparing a short introduction, compiling ex-slave narratives, and creating an index.

In Clayton's work, during the editing process, the ex-slave dialect was changed to Standard English, punctuation was added and deleted, and in more than one instance, the format of the narratives was changed, which in turn, changed the meaning of the ex-slave's narrative. Furthermore, while more details concerning the rationale for his editing practices could have deterred any confusion, Clayton provides readers with only a limited critical apparatus as to his duties as editor within Mother Wit. This thesis seeks to present the ex-slave narratives in an accurate unchanged manner and to do so, I have relied on the scholarship of D. C. Greetham.

In the introduction to *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*, D. C. Greetham distinguishes between publishers' editors and scholarly editors stating, "publishers' editors live very much in the present, whereas scholarly editors live at least partly in the past (even when that past is the literature of this century or this decade or this year)" (Greetham 2). Greetham further differentiates between publishers' editors and scholarly editors by explaining that "scholarly editing is thus the archaeology of the text" and as such, scholarly editing is "inevitably concerned both with the words of a text and with its physical embodiment in book, page, and type or script [because] both features contribute to the text's history" (Greetham 2). This concern with the words of a text, as well as their appearance on a page, is my rationale for reproducing the ex-slave narratives of the LWP exactly as they were created in the original documents. Although I had to change the type font, type size, and margins of the narratives in order to conform to the

Northwestern State University Graduate School requirements, I created exact renditions of the original ex-slave narratives for the CGHRC.

CHAPTER 1 – Survey, Synthesis, and Critique of Research

While conducting research for this thesis, I found that a number of the ex-slaves had either been interviewed more than once, or that there was more than one version of an ex-slave's only interview. Upon comparing these findings with the ex-slave narratives included in Mother Wit, I discovered that in some instances when an ex-slave had been interviewed more than once, only one of the interviews was included in Mother Wit. Also, in instances where there was more than one version of an interview, either the interview versions were combined to create one narrative, or only one the of the interview versions was used in Mother Wit.

For example, Jim Anderson was interviewed twice, once in May 1937 and again in June 1937, but only the interview conducted in June is included in Mother Wit. I located the May 1937 interview at LSU in a document entitled "Folklore: Interviewed Aged Niggers." Included in this document were a total of eleven ex-slave narratives. However, not only had the interview of Jim Anderson not been included in Mother Wit, there was also not any mention or inclusion of the narratives of Charlotte Lang, Carrie Jefferson, Louise Batum, and another from an unknown man although the remaining seven narratives in this documents were included in Mother Wit. I also located another document at LSU that contains the ex-slave narratives of Mandy Rollins and Patience Scott. However, only the narrative of Mandy Rollins was included in Mother Wit. Furthermore, Francis Doby was interviewed twice--once by McKinney in 1938 and again by Michinard in 1940, but only the 1938 McKinney interview is included in Mother Wit.

However, the most perplexing examples are the narratives of Frances Lewis and Robert St. Anne (A.K.A Cousin Bob). There are two interview documents for Frances

Lewis--one conducted in 1940 by Posey and the other does not have an interview date or an interviewer name listed. In this instance, both of the interviews were used, but there is not a statement in Mother Wit to distinguish to readers that the narrative produced is actually two interviews combined into one. In Mother Wit, the Frances Lewis narrative begins with the interview conducted in 1940 and ends with the undated one, but the heading used in Mother Wit for Frances Lewis's narrative gives September 27-30, 1940 as the dates for the interview.

Furthermore, there are three interviews conducted with Robert St. Anne (A.K.A. Cousin Bob). In this instance, there is an interview with Robert St. Anne conducted by Maud Wallace, which is undated, an August 1940 interview of Robert St. Anne conducted by Michinard, and a June 1940 interview with Coz. Bob Brown conducted by Michinard. All three of these interviews were with the same person because all three of them either mention that the ex-slave was born August 10, 1844 or they mention his age. All three interviews also mention that the ex-slave was born in Plaquemine and was owned by Mr. Guillot Chartier. Furthermore, all three of these narratives also begin with either "Cousin Bob, as he is known" or "Coz. Bob, as he is known" However, in Mother Wit, two of these narratives are presented as being from two separate ex-slaves. The undated Wallace interview is used in Mother Wit as the entry for Robert St. Anne and the June 1940 Michinard interview as the entry for Coz. Bob Brown. The August 1940 Michinard interview is not used, nor mentioned, in Mother Wit. All versions of interviews with each ex-slave that I was able to locate are included in Chapter 5 of this thesis. Also, I have included the two documents located at LSU, in their entirety, at the end of Chapter 5.

The second discovery made during the course of my research was the changes made to the narratives' punctuation and grammar, and by extension, the dialect of the narratives included in Mother Wit. However, Clayton provided readers of Mother Wit with a brief statement regarding his editing practices of the ex-slave narratives on page seven. He states,

In keeping with the national goal of retaining the flavor of the narrations while also making them intelligible and readable, I have standardized dialect in accordance with the FWP's dialect suggestions, included missing punctuation, deleted some repetitive pauses of speech, and corrected misspelled words. Interviewers' comments are noted by parentheses and those of the editor by brackets. (7)

This statement, however, fails to mention that the FWP's dialect suggestions did not include the standardization of dialect. In fact, the "Negro dialect suggestions" provided to interviewers by the FWP included only those dialect spellings they were *not* to use.

The following is the list of barred spellings:

Ah for I	Poe for po'
Hit for it	Tuh for to
Wuz for was	Baid for bed
Daid for dead	Ouh for our
Mah for my	Ovah for over
Othuh for other	Wha for whar
Undah for under	Fuh for for

Yondah for yonder	Moster for marster or massa
Oman for woman	Gwainter for gwineter
Ifn for iffen	Fiuh or fiah for fire
Uz or uv or o' for of	Poar for poor or po'
J'in for jine	Coase for cose
Utha for other	Yo' for you
Gi' for give	Cot for caught
Kin' for kind	Cose for 'cause
Tho't for thought	

This list of barred spellings of Negro dialect is included on page six of Mother Wit, yet Clayton states that the standardization of dialect is "in accordance with the FWP's dialect suggestions" (7). However, the editing of the ex-slave narratives included in Mother Wit, went beyond the parameters of the statement of editing practices.

For example, in the Michinard interview of Edward Ashley included in Mother Wit, commas were changed to semicolons; dashes were added-- words were added to sentences; some words were replaced with other words-- such as replacing "with" for "by," sentences were ended where the original narrative continues, new paragraphs were begun where they were not in the original narrative, and changes to the original narratives use of "I'se" was inconsistent. For example, in one line within Ashley's narrative, "so I'se said" is changed to "I said" but on the very next line, "I'se going" is changed to "I'm going." Although these changes would make the narrative grammatically correct, editors should be more concerned with preserving the integrity historical value of the narratives of Mr. Ashley and others like him.

Periods were also changed to exclamation points in the Edward Ashley narrative, perhaps in order to dramatize the tale that Ashley was telling during his interview. Edward Ashley's father's name was Robert, and Edward Ashley recounted to the interviewer, a childhood incident he remembered. The original narrative states:

One night when Robert and his family were assembled in his cabin, some one knocked at the door. On opening, they were confronted with two men, who asked to be sheltered for the night and to put their horses in the stable to be fed. Robert hesitated, then one of the men said, "I am Jesse James, you know what crimes I have committed, I need shelter for myself, brother and horses now if you refuse we will leave you here dead."

However, the same portion of the Ashley narrative in Mother Wit reads:

One night, when Robert and his family were assembled in his cabin, someone knocked at the door. On opening, [the door], they were confronted [by] two men, who asked to be sheltered for the night and to put their horses in the stable to be fed. Robert hesitated; then one of the men said, "I am Jesse James! You know what crimes I have committed. I need shelter for myself, brother and horses. Now if you refuse me, we'll leave you here--dead!" (19)

As we can see from this example, commas were added, words were added and changed, and periods were changed to exclamation points. Because the ex-slave narratives were

created from interviews conducted approximately thirty years before the first audiocassette recorder was available for purchase, the only people who know what was said and how it was said during an interview were the ones present for the interview. That being said, we do not know for certain what or how much emotion Edward Ashley portrayed when he told the Jesse James tale. The only way we can know is by reading the interviewer transcripts, yet these are the documents that were edited for their inclusion in Mother Wit.

Words were also omitted and the dialect of the ex-slave narratives altered during the course of editing the narratives for their inclusion in Mother Wit, yet these omissions and alterations are not consistent with the statement of editing practices given in Mother Wit. For example, in the Mother Wit version of the ex-slave narrative of Peter Barber, words were not just omitted, but so were phrases and even an entire sentence. The transcribed interview begins with the sentence, "It is a reality and a fact is not to be denied" but in the Mother Wit version, this sentence is omitted altogether. In addition, in the fourth sentence of the narrative, which, according to the original should read, "Peter Barber is about six feet tall and at this age weighs one hundred seventy pounds and is well-proportioned," the phrase "and at this age" has been omitted.

Furthermore, in editing the transcribed interviews with the ex-slaves of the LWP for inclusion in Mother Wit, the dialect, as written by the interviewer, was altered. This was done despite Clayton's quote of B. A. Botkin who states, "it would be unnecessary and unwise to set up new regulations for dialect" preferring instead "to capture 'the flavor of talk' without undue emphasis on rules for dialect" (Clayton 6). Again using the

narrative of Peter Barber as an example, we can see in the following table how the eight-page narrative was changed with the following words:

<u>Original Narrative</u>	<u>Mother Wit</u>
Ya	You
Gonner	Goin' to
Jes	Just
Outter	Out of
Argyin	Arguin'
Gonner git	Goin' to get
Kinder	Kind of
Git	Get
Gittin	Getting'
Outer	Out of
Gotter	Got to

However, the dialect changes are not consistent. A prime example of this can be found on page six of Peter Barber's narrative. Here, Barber used the word "muster" for must have, yet it was not changed, making this is the only instance of dialect not altered throughout Peter Barber's eight-page narrative, while every other verb form ending in "er" that Barber used was altered.

As with the ex-slave narratives of Edward Ashley and Peter Barber, punctuation and grammar were altered, and words were added and omitted in the narrative of Ceceil George included in Mother Wit. However, with Ms. George's narrative, the attempt to standardize the English is more evident. In most instances within this eight-page

narrative, the dialect was changed to reflect standardized English with the following exceptions and inconsistencies:

Page 4 – “Dere” is changed to “deir,” but on page 8 of Mother Wit, “dere’s” is left as it is.

Page 4 – “Pore” is changed to “poor,” but on pages 6 and 8, “Pore” is changed to “Po’.”

Page 4 – “Yes, sah.” is changed to “Yes, sir!”

Page 4 – “chile” is changed to “child”

Page 6 – The sentence “Fo’ God’s sake, I don’ wanna be killed” is changed to “For God’s sake, I don’t want to be killed.”

Page 8 – The word “pumkin” is not changed

If, for the sake of argument, we as scholars were to agree to standardize the English and correct the punctuation of documents such as the ex-slave narratives, we would have to consider (A) that the revisions we made to the documents would need to be consistent not merely within one narrative but within all the narratives, (B) that revising the documents might, and in some cases would, compromise the historical value of the original documents, and (C) that we would compromise the integrity of the ex-slaves’ narratives.

While changes were made to punctuation and grammar and words were added to and omitted in the narratives in Mother Wit, there were also structural changes made to the narratives, which in some instances dramatically altered their meaning. An excellent example of these minor structural changes drastically altering the meaning of narratives occurred with the editing of the ex-slave interview given by Ceceil George.

The sixth and seventh paragraphs of Ms. George's narrative read:

We come here on de ship, dis was before de War an' I remembers it well. I was about twelve (?) years ole den. I can see us now, riding on de water. One morning, we come out lookin' an' see nothin', but sky an' water, an' we had been used to pine trees everywhere, an', yo' listen, when we look, a person was sittin' in de water, on a rock, combing her hair an' singin'. - I called my father quick, I was afraid she'd get drowned, - but yo' know, who she is? A Maremaid (Mermaid) what lives in de water, half fish an' half woman. I get so scart (scared) - dey drag us in quick.

Yes, I remember de water, dey made us go by de sea, because den we can't go back, God help us!

However, the same two paragraphs in Mother Wit read:

We come here on de ship—dis was before de war—and I remembers it well. I was about twelve years old den. I can see us now riding on de water. One morning we come out lookin' and see nothin' but sky and water, and we had been used to pine trees everywhere. And you listen; when we look[ed] a person was sittin' in de water on a rock combing her hair and singin'. I called my father quick; I was afraid she'd get drowned. But you know who she is? A maremaid what lives in de water, half fish and half woman. I get so scart; dey drag us in quick. Yes, I remember de water. Dey made us go by de sea because den we can't go back.

God help us: We come to de most wicked country dat our
 God's Son ever died for. De old people used to cry; dear Lawd,
 how dey grieved. Dey never thought dey'd have to live in a
 heathern country. Dey all dead now. (84)

In the original narrative, the placement of the phrase "God help us" leads the reader to believe that Ms. George is asking for God's help because she is on a ship surrounded by sea and sky, with no hope of returning home. In Mother Wit, the placement of the same phrase leads the reader to believe that Ms. George is asking God to help her because America and its people are wicked. Therefore, the position change of three words dramatically altered the meaning of the narrative.

However, editing the narratives for their inclusion in Mother Wit was not the only opportunity for editing to be performed on the transcripts of the ex-slave narratives of the LWP. While the interviewers of the ex-slaves were given a memo by Henry G. Alsberg regarding general suggestions for interviewing the ex-slaves, they still had ample opportunity to manipulate the ex-slaves during the interviews, alter their final handwritten copy of the interview, and to influence the outcome of the final typed copy of the interview. A copy of this memo is attached with this thesis.

The manipulation of ex-slaves to provide answers the interviewer was looking for and not necessarily the answers the ex-slave was trying to give, was not evident in any of the ex-slave narratives except one. Zoe Posey, the interviewer of ex-slave Mary Harris, was not only manipulated Ms. Harris, but also included the manipulation as part of the final copy of the interview transcript. Ms. Posey's manipulation occurs on page two of Ms. Harris's narrative where Ms. Harris is explaining the treatment of slaves. The

passage reads, "I never got a whippin' either, because I was good an' did my work an' never talked back. My ma tol' me she was brutally beaten an' she was bitter all her life" (2). It obviously took a tremendous amount of courage for ex-slaves to be as honest about their treatment during slavery as their masters, in many cases, were brutal to them, yet Ms. Posey ignores Ms. Harris's courage and honesty by stating, "We admitted that slavery was a most unfortunate thing – but that all masters were not cruel. Old slaves still tell of their love for 'ole Miss' and ole Marse," and the loyalty and love existing between them could never have been created in rancous hearts" (2). Ms. Posey's attempt to manipulate and sway the interview had the desired effect because Ms. Harris immediately adds the following statement:

The plantation was owned by Mr. Gaudet and I've hearn tell that Frenchmen were the hardest people an' almos' squee'd blood outen their slaves. With Americans, it was different so jes' set it down when you hear of brutal treatment that it was foreigners. (2)

Not only had Ms. Posey manipulated the interview, she had also sufficiently intimidated Ms. Harris to the point of retracting her original statement by clarifying that it was the foreign slave owners who were so brutal and not the American slave owners. In fact, Ms. Harris was so intimidated that when Ms. Posey returned to again interview Ms. Harris, her son was waiting, "as if standing guard" (2). After talking a short while about why Ms. Posey wanted to interview his mother, the son states, "Bitter? Yes, I'm bitter – I have a right to be. My mother tells me about the brutality of those days, how they whipped unmercifully their slaves." The dialog continues with Ms. Posey explaining

“every slave-holder was not like that.” However, the son continues on his justifiable tirade:

Yes'm, I'm bitter and the more I think about it the madder I get.
 Look at me they say I could pass for white. My mother is bright too.
 And why? Because the man who owned and sold my mother was
 her father. But that's not all. That man I hate with every fibre of
 my body and why? A brute like that who could sell his own child
 into unprincipled hands is a beast – The power, just because he had
 the power, and thirst for money. (3)

After Ms. Harris's son unleashed his justifiable anger and outrage on Ms. Posey, she decided not to re-interview Ms. Harris because she was “afraid.” She ends her transcript of the interview with a sentence explaining why she was afraid: “It was our first experience with a madman!” (3)

Because interviewer manipulation occurred in this ex-slave narrative, it raises the question of how many ex-slaves were manipulated in this manner during their interviews? We may never know because the only existing documentation of the ex-slave interviews of the LWP are the ones that were typed from the interviewer's handwritten notes. If the interviewer chose to omit words or phrases indicating interview steering of the ex-slaves from their handwritten notes, they would also be omitted from the final document the typist created.

Another unanswered question regards the qualifications and prejudices of the interviewers. Most of the interviewers were hired from relief rolls and while some had writing experience, others did not. Furthermore, for most of the interviewers, the term

“writing experience” did not include interviews and dictation. In fact, some of the interviewers had experience in creative writing or aspired to be authors within the creative writing genre, as the ex-slave narrative of Frank Moss will attest. The beginning of this narrative, created by Edmund Burke from his September 1940 interview with Moss, reads more as a beautifully detailed and almost romantic view of slavery and Negro life within the bonds of slavery than a narrative depicting the oftentimes sad and gruesome life-story of an ex-slave. The opening sentence of Burke’s final document created from his interview with Frank Moss reads, “The life of Frank Moss bears a marked resemblance to those of thousands of other Negroes who have contributed their brawn and labor to help in the building of and in the progress of a nation (1). Burke further states that the Negro had a “natural ability to do hard work,” which coupled with the rewards they received for their labors, “formed an incentive that aided in the full expression and expansion of the South” (1). It is doubtful that former slaves had this perspective on their own situations. With Burke’s colorful description, one is led to believe that slaves in the South were laying railroad tracks and picking cotton with smiles on their faces because they were more than happy to assist their masters and his friends and family to “express and expand the South.” Some masters expressed the beliefs of the South on their own when they brutally mistreated the slaves. As far as expansion of the South, it is highly unlikely that any slaves wanted to see the South, or the institution of slavery, expand, nor did they have time to ponder this proposition.

In addition to blatant manipulation of the ex-slaves during interviews and the interviewers’ lack of experience conducting interviews, another question regarding interviewers is raised: how were the interviewers creations of the ex-slave interview

manuscripts influenced by prejudices the interviewer may have had? This question is unanswerable for two reasons: 1. We do not know what prejudices the interviewers harbored, and 2. The interviewers' portions of the interviews with the ex-slaves are not documented. While we may not know *how* the interviews or manuscripts were influenced by any prejudices of the interviewer, the *why* is provided to us by Guy Bailey in *The Emergence of Black English*. He states, "Linguistic texts are not objective entities that exist apart from the person who composes them" (Bailey ix). Therefore, an interviewers thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and morals are part of the manuscript they created from their interviews with the ex-slaves. However, evidence of prejudicial influence on the narrative documents is non-existent because in the course of preparing their manuscripts, the interviewers did not include their portion of the interview, including the questions they asked of the ex-slaves, although John A. Lomax provided each interviewer with a list of potential questions to ask the ex-slaves (Attached).

The ramifications of omitting the questions asked of the ex-slave by the interviewer include confusion of the reader and the compromising of the integrity of the interviews. For example, because the questions asked of each ex-slave are not included on the manuscripts, how does the reader know what led the ex-slave to speak of a certain topic? How do we know that these are accurate transcriptions of actual interviews with ex-slaves at all? We do not, and the ex-slave interview of Ceceil George by Maud Wallace attests to this. I located the typed carbon copy of Wallace's final draft of Ms. George's interview in folder 192 of the FWP Collection in the CGHRC of Northwestern State University. However, while scouring other folders within the collection in an attempt to locate additional narratives for this project, I came across a most stunning

discovery. I found Ms. Wallace's handwritten transcription of the interview with Ms. George; however, it was in pieces. The handwritten transcript had been torn to separate the paragraphs of the interview and then placed onto a sheet of paper and taped down. Because this new document was created out of the only original, we do not know and will never know if the paragraphs were placed in the order in which they were spoken during the interview. Perhaps the paragraphs were rearranged to make the narrative more interesting or it could be that sections were purposefully omitted from the interview. We will never know. The omission of the interviewer's questions within the context of the actual transcripts, together with first, the interviewers manipulation of the ex-slaves and then the interviewers editing of the interviews, as well as the editing of the narratives for their inclusion in Mother Wit, raises more questions as to the validity of the ex-slave narratives of the LWP than they provide answers.

CHAPTER 2 – Summary of the Ronnie W. Clayton Collection

Entitled the working papers of *Mother Wit: The Ex-Slave Narratives of the Louisiana Writer's Project*, the Ronnie W. Clayton Collection contains little relating to Mother Wit. After spending countless hours in the CGHRC of Northwestern State University's Watson Library studying the material contained in the Clayton Collection, I discovered that these are not Clayton's working papers for Mother Wit, but appear to be documents pertaining to Clayton's 1974 dissertation entitled "A History of the Federal Writer's Project in Louisiana."

Out of nine boxes of materials, four boxes and portions of two other boxes are devoted to information pertaining to The FWP; including articles, documents, and correspondence of The Federal Writers' Project, The Federal Theatre Project, The Federal Music Project, and The Federal Arts Project. One could pose the argument that Clayton relied on this information to write the introduction to Mother Wit, but I would argue that he did not for three reasons: first, I do not believe that Clayton used this information for the introduction to Mother Wit because he wrote his dissertation sixteen years prior to the publication of this book and in writing his dissertation on the history of the FWP in Louisiana, he had to become quite knowledgeable in first, the FWP and then, the LWP. Second, the Clayton Collection, which Ronnie W. Clayton donated to the CGHRC as his working papers for Mother Wit, do not contain any drafts of the book, notes by Clayton specifically pertaining to the book, or anything mentioning the words "Mother Wit." Third, Clayton did not provide readers of Mother Wit with an extensive overview of either the FWP or the LWP although one would expect a comprehensive synopsis of both of these entities based on the amount of historical information found

pertaining to them in the Clayton Collection. In fact, Clayton provides readers with only a brief overview of the FWP and the LWP.

In an effort to make sense out of the materials contained in the Ronnie W. Clayton Collection, as well as to provide a means to better facilitate research within the Clayton Collection; I undertook the endeavor to compile a "Clayton Collection Finding Aid." In order to do so, I had to first organize the materials. To my dismay, this task could not be accomplished with the materials in the order they were placed in during the processing of the collection.

Collection processing occurs when a donation is made to the Archives. During this process, the donated materials are cataloged in the exact order in which they were donated. However, in some cases, materials are disorganized when they are donated to Archives. The term for cataloging materials in the order in which they are donated is "provenance," which facilitates the researcher's ability to acquire a better understanding of the origin and custodial history of the documents that they are researching. In other words, according to Mary Linn Wernet, Director of the CGHRC, provenance is "the reason why documents were created, how they were kept, and why they were kept." Therefore, in order to explore the provenance of the materials Clayton donated to the CGHRC, they were initially cataloged in the order in which they were donated. However, in order to classify and organize the Clayton Collection, I emptied the contents of every folder in all nine boxes, decipher the subject of each document, and create a stack, or category, for each subject. This was a monumental task and eventually the subject stacks overtook not only the large conference table in Mary Linn Wernet's office, but also part of her office floor.

The next step in classifying and organizing the Clayton Collection so that I could create a finding aid was to put each individual stack into chronological order. Organizing the piles in this manner was relatively simple in some instances, such as with Clayton's Dissertation stack because, in this instance, each chapter was separate and instead of having a date, they had chapter numbers, which is how I organized the materials within this category. However, some categories took vast amounts of time and work to put into chronological order, such as with the individual stacks of The Federal Writers' Project, The Federal Arts Project, The Federal Music Project, and The Federal Theatre Project. As each of these entities had materials that could be classified as "Articles," "Documents," and "Correspondence," there were three stacks for each of the Federal Projects for a total of twelve stacks – each of which had to be put into chronological order separately.

After arranging the materials within the Clayton Collection into chronological order, the next step toward creating the finding aid was to organize the individual chronologically ordered stacks into a logical order so the folders and boxes in which the material would eventually be housed would be in logical order. This reorganization of the folders and boxes facilitates the ease of research within the collection by placing related materials together within a folder, box, or both. For example, I organized the now chronologically ordered chapters of Clayton's dissertation into five folders, filling box number two, which is devoted entirely to "Clayton's Dissertation." The articles that Clayton had pertaining to "Southern History and Folklore," "Oral History," and "Slavery," are now permanently located in folders one, two, and three, respectively, and these folders are housed in box number three, which is devoted to "Articles and

Correspondence.” Again, the most time consuming aspect of this step toward creating the finding aid was organizing each of the Federal Project piles into folders and boxes. I accomplished this by keeping each of the individual Federal Project stacks together within a box. For example, for the FWP, its “Articles” are housed in folders 5-A and 5-B, its “Documents” are in folder six, and its “Correspondence” are in folder seven and each of these folders are in box number four, as are the “Articles,” “Documents,” and “Correspondence” for The Federal Theatre Project. Finally, each of the folders was labeled with its contents and placed in a chronological and searchable order within the boxes. In all, the materials in the Clayton Collection filled a total of sixty folders and nine boxes.

At last, the “Ronnie W. Clayton Collection Finding Aid” could be created. In order to facilitate this portion of the process, I copied the contents of each folder onto a separate piece of paper, along with the box number in which each folder was housed, the titles of any articles, essays, or chapters, the range number indicating the location of the boxes within the CGHRC, and the conclusive dates of the materials included in each folder. Using a photocopy of another finding aid given to me by Mary Linn Wernet as a guide, I completed the “Ronnie W. Clayton Collection Finding Aid,” which is attached as Appendix A. The second archiving project of this thesis involves the actual Federal Writer’s Project.

CHAPTER 3 – Slave to the Narratives

Cammie G. Henry, collector of Louisiana documents, resided at Melrose Plantation in Louisiana, and it was here that writers and artists came to enjoy the company of Ms. Henry and the tranquility of the countryside, as well as to further explore their creativity. It was also at Melrose Plantation that Lyle Saxon, director of the LWP, spent a significant amount of time working on his manuscript for *Gumbo Ya-Ya* and developing a lasting friendship with Ms. Henry. Saxon spent weeks and even months at a time at Melrose Plantation, and perhaps because of this, he left numerous documents pertaining to the FWP with Ms. Henry. Included within this collection of documents were many ex-slave narratives taken from interviews conducted by the workers of the LWP.

After her death in 1948, the family of Cammie G. Henry kept the collection of documents that Saxon had given to Ms. Henry. However, in the early 1970s, these documents were deposited at the CGHRC by the family of Cammie G. Henry. Due to the enormity of the collection, now known as the Federal Writer's Project Collection, a complete inventory and subsequent creation of a thorough Finding Aid was not completed until 1995. Completion of the FWP Finding Aid was the first step in facilitating research within the collection. The second step was to incorporate the narratives onto the CGHRC web page.

In an effort to lay the groundwork for the partnering of Archivists with researchers, I worked with Sonny Carter, Digital Imaging Specialist, to design a web page that would incorporate the ex-slave narratives as well as introduce the ex-slave narratives and the FWP to scholars, researchers, and the general public. However, due to

budget constraints, the web page construction has been placed on hold. Despite this pothole on the road of academic advancement, I continued with my commitment to see to it that the ex-slave narratives become more accessible to scholars, researchers, and the general public.

The first step in compiling the information that Carter can later use in creating the web page is to locate the ex-slave narratives that Clayton used for his book Mother Wit. Rather than search through countless documents located within over six hundred folders encompassing the FWP in the CGHRC, I first turned to the Finding Aid for the FWP Collection. Using the Table of Contents of Mother Wit as a guide, I looked for the obvious within the Finding Aid – the names of the ex-slaves. To my dismay, there were only about eight narratives located under this heading. I again returned to the FWP Finding Aid, this time to read every description of every folder located within the collection. Looking for phrases such as, “Negro narratives,” “Ex-slave tales,” “Life Histories,” and “Ex-slave interviews,” I located a majority of the remaining narratives used by Clayton. However, there were still twenty-two narratives that I have been unable to locate.

In an effort to locate the remaining twenty-two narratives, I visited the Special Collections housed in Hill Memorial Library on the campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. After speaking to the Archival Assistant, Margaret Stevens, and explaining that I was looking for twenty-two ex-slave narratives of the FWP for my Master’s thesis, she assisted me in locating the information I was seeking. After perusing their card catalog, locating the WPA cross-reference number that correlated to the WPA Collection’s Finding Aid, and searching the Finding Aid for the WPA cross-reference

number, I was finally rewarded with the number of the box that would presumably hold copies of the FWP ex-slave interviews. Taking the box to a nearby table, I carefully opened it and was instantly overwhelmed. There were hundreds of documents in this box. Locating the narratives I needed was going to be like finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. I reminded myself that I found all but these twenty-two narratives in the over six hundred files housed in the CGHRC, and I proceeded to methodically peruse every document held within the box. Eight of the twenty-two missing narratives were in this box in the form of photocopies. Little did I know that finding these needles in the haystack would be the easy part of my expedition. The hard part was securing permission to photocopy these photocopies of the narratives.

After turning each of the narratives that I wanted to photocopy sideways in their folders, I took the folders to Mrs. Stevens and asked her if it would be possible for me to photocopy the narratives. She promptly but politely told me "no." She further explained that forty years prior, the Library Dean had implemented a regulation that prohibited any photocopying of WPA materials. While I understand that Mrs. Stevens is not responsible for institutional policies, I explained to her that I might understand this policy if had I wanted to photocopy original documents, but the information I wanted to copy was already a photocopy. I further explained to her that obviously they had received the document from somewhere else because it was a photocopy and not an original document, and as such, I should be granted the same courtesy they were given in securing a photocopy of the document. Mrs. Stevens paged the Assistant Archivist, who then conferred with the Archivist, and I was given permission to photocopy the narrative photocopies. After securing the photocopies, I asked Mrs. Stevens where I might locate

the other FWP ex-slave narratives. She stated, "Copies of the narrative accounts of ex-slaves made by the WPA during the 1930s are available at the Louisiana State Library Louisiana Collection in Baton Rouge."

Mrs. Stevens's information was substantiated when I returned to the CGHRC and resumed my work with the Clayton Collection. Among documents related to his dissertation research was a photocopy of a letter dated January 12, 1942 from the Louisiana State Director of the Division of Community Service Programs to the Director of the Writers' Section of The Works Projects Administration, Mr. John D. Newsom (Attached). The letter concerns the final deposition of the material collected by the Louisiana Writers' Project and a report to this effect prepared by Lyle Saxon, State Supervisor of the Louisiana Writers' Project, is attached to the letter. In paragraph two of the letter, Hammond states:

One set of all important work such as manuscripts, research material not already used in printed publications, additional folklore material, etc., will be sent to the Co-sponsor of the project, the Louisiana Library Commission, and duplicate sets will be stored in New Orleans either in a library or in a room in the Civil District Courts Building, Royal Street, which will be loaned to the project by the State Department of Conservation.

Saxon provides additional details as to the deposition of the materials on page two of the attachment, which states, "This material has been bundled because the project's supply of filing cabinets is limited. The bundles have all been plainly marked, however, and an

index of their contents has been prepared." Furthermore, on page seven of Saxon's report it states:

One set of copies of all...manuscripts, research material not used already in printed publications, additional folklore material, etc...will be sent, complete with steel files (which are the property of the Co-Sponsor) to the Co-Sponsor; the Louisiana Library Commission in Baton Rouge. This material will be readily accessible to the public (if such a decision is made by the National Office) and can be used later...Duplicate sets will be stored in New Orleans either in a library or in a room loaned to us by the State Department of Conservation in the Court House on Royal Street. The reason for the separation is for safety of the files. This means that (A) the files will be safe; (B) that those remaining in New Orleans (which includes all correspondence, official records, payrolls, etc.) be stored until such time as they are needed again, or if the project's termination is final, they may be transferred to some New Orleans Library so they may be accessible to the public here.

Theoretically then, one set of the ex-slave narratives of the LWP should be housed in the State Library of Louisiana in Baton Rouge and the other at a library in New Orleans.

Also, according to both Hammond and Saxon, each of these sets of documents should be

made available to the public. However, I was discovering that although the documents may be housed with these organizations, they were not readily available to the public due to the policies of the individual institutions. My first introduction to this exclusivity of the ex-slave narratives of the LWP occurred at LSU's Hill Memorial Library. My second occurred when I returned to the CGHRC to find the letter from Hammond, and shortly thereafter, a photocopy of a letter addressed to Clayton from Clive Hardy, Archivist at University of New Orleans Archives and Manuscripts/ Special Collections Department, dated July 12, 1985 (Attached). In the letter, Hardy refuses Clayton's "request of June 20 for copies of the ex-slave interviews in the Christian Collection," stating "As you know, such materials are quite rare and highly prized by manuscript repositories. This last largely results from scholarly citations which, of course, note the holding institutions. We believe such copying could jeopardize the exclusivity that we enjoy as the source of these documents." At least the scholarly community now knows where to locate copies of the ex-slave interviews although we may never be permitted to view them, much less photocopy or use them for any purpose.

I spoke with Ms. Wernet regarding my findings and to discuss methods of recovering the remaining fourteen narratives. Ms. Wernet gave me the email address of Judy Smith, Head of the Louisiana Collection of the State Library of Louisiana in Baton Rouge and suggested I speak with her. Since I would be returning to Baton Rouge the following weekend, I decided to visit the Louisiana State Library then.

After contacting a representative of the Louisiana Collection of the State Library of Louisiana and being assured that I would be allowed to search within the Louisiana Collection in spite of the festivities of the Louisiana Book Festival, I traveled to Baton

Rouge to begin my quest. When I arrived at the State Library and requested information regarding the Louisiana Collection, I was informed that I could not search the Collection because that area of the Library was not open to the public due to the Book Festival. I instantly wondered if this was actually the case, or if they were enjoying their own "exclusivity" of the documents. However, I was directed to a gentleman who could instruct me about navigating through the Louisiana State Library's web site where the Louisiana Collection was being posted. The gentleman explained the navigation procedures and asked what I was looking for specifically. I informed him that I was looking for ex-slave narratives of the LWP. Since we could search the Louisiana Collection by state, we clicked on "Search by State." To our surprise, Louisiana was not listed! We located an Archivist from the Louisiana Collection who informed us that they were in the process of inputting all of their information onto the database and had not yet entered the documents for Louisiana. I was shocked. It seemed that the Louisiana documents should have been the first documents that were loaded. However, as of March 2005, Louisiana documents still have not been loaded into the database of the Louisiana Collection of the Louisiana State Library.

Returning to Northwestern State University, I again consulted Ms. Wernet who suggested we turn the list of the fourteen un-locatable narratives over to Dale Sauter, the Assistant Archivist at the CGHRC, to see if he could locate any of the narratives in the FWP Collection. Dale located six of the narratives, leaving eight remaining.

I also contacted Dr. Florence M. Jumonville, Chair, Louisiana and Special Collections Department, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans, gave her a list of the eight narratives, and asked if they are in UNO's archives. She responded by

stating, "I regret that our manuscript collections do not contain the narratives you are seeking." After speaking with Ms. Wernet, she suggested I speak with Lewis (Mercury) Morris at the Louisiana State Archives. At the time of the conclusion of this research, Mr. Morris has not responded.

In a last-ditch effort to locate the eight elusive ex-slave narratives of the LWP that Clayton used in his book Mother Wit, I turned to the Library of Congress. Accessing the web page of the Library of Congress, I navigated through the site to the "American Memory" Collection. Clicking on the link "Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938," I decided to search by state and to my great surprise, Louisiana is not listed. Considering there is presumably a copy at the Library of Congress, I decided to search the entire web site for each of the eight narratives. Individually entering the names of the ex-slaves interviewed, I was dismayed to discover that none of the eight ex-slave narratives is at the Library of Congress as of March 2005. Therefore, as of the writing of this thesis, eight of the ex-slave narratives that Clayton used in his book Mother Wit have not been located. The following is a list of these narratives:

Pierre Aucuin

Mother Duffy

Martha Grayson

St. Ann Johnson

Wilkinson Jones

Lydia Lee

Melinda

Thomas Steptoe

I contacted the publisher of Mother Wit, Peter Lang Group, in an effort to obtain contact information for Ronnie W. Clayton. They forwarded my email to Mr. Clayton, who then emailed me stating, "I don't know what I can do to help you but I'll try my best to be of whatever assistance I can be. I tried to explain the book in my introduction." During our brief correspondence, I explained the work I was conducting for my thesis; going into some depth regarding my work with the documents he donated to the CGHRC, and then asked him about the eight narratives I have been unable to locate. Clayton's response was "I guess it is possible that they are somewhere in my LWP documents," yet he does not say where his LWP documents are located or if he intends to look through them. I responded to this email with one of my own in which I informed Clayton that if he is "able to locate the eight narratives, please let me know." I then asked him the following two questions: what was his rationale for selecting the particular narratives he chose to include in Mother Wit, and what was his rationale for his editing practices of the narratives included in Mother Wit? His response was, "Regarding question one, I tried to include the narrative of those born during slavery. As for question two, I think I answered that in the introduction." However, Clayton's response to question one does not explain his inclusion of the narrative of B. M. Dietz in Mother Wit because Dietz was a white man and not a slave. At the time of the conclusion of this research, Clayton has not produced information regarding the whereabouts of the eight un-locatable ex-slave narratives, and I had no choice but to continue with my research and thesis without locating these narratives.

The second step in compiling the information that Mr. Carter could later use in creating the web page that would incorporate the ex-slave narratives as well as introduce the ex-slave narratives and the FWP to scholars, researchers, and the general public, was to input the narratives into the computer, edit each of the narratives for accuracy, save them to disk with a back-up save done to the hard drive, and then send them to Mr. Carter. This proved to be a tremendously tedious endeavor upon which to embark.

Our original attempt to simply scan each of the ex-slave narratives of the LWP into the computer proved to be too simple to succeed. After scanning several of the narratives into the computer, Carter attempted to convert the documents into *MSWord*® documents so that I could then edit and format them for presentation on the web site. However, the Character Recognition portion of *MSWord*® did not recognize the characters of the scanned documents, and all I received was one very large document with mysterious symbols and oddly shaped letters in random order on the page. Therefore, Carter, Wernet, and I decided that the only way to get these documents out to scholars, researchers, and the general public was for me to key them in manually--not the quickest way to the finish line, but the only way.

Making the process of keying each of the narratives in manually even slower was the format of the documents I was using. None of the ex-slave narratives of the LWP, that I found, is original documents; instead, they are all photocopies. However, they are not all photocopies of typed manuscripts. Some are photocopies of the original typed manuscripts; some are photocopies of the first carbons of the typed manuscripts; some are even photocopies of the second, third, or even fourth carbons of the typed manuscripts. These are extremely difficult to read in some cases, because after the

second carbon copy, the print smears, smudges, or is too light to see making it difficult to decipher what is typed on the page. In several cases, the most difficult manuscripts to decipher, however, are the photocopies of the handwritten interviews. I eventually entered into the computer and saved to disk with a back up saved on my hard drive all of the ex-slave narratives.

The next step was to proofread each of the narratives that I keyed in to make sure that they matched the ex-slave narrative exactly. I formatted each of the narratives as closely to the original documents as I could. I set the margins, tabs, font style, and font size. I also began and ended each line and each page of the narratives exactly as the document I was working from. I proofread for spelling and punctuation, which proved to be unnerving in some instances because within one narrative, the interviewer might have spelled the word "was" four different ways in an effort to capture the dialect of the interviewee. There were also many instances of commas put at the end of sentences instead of periods; however, I did not correct this or any other spelling or punctuation error. For the purposes of the web page design, each of the narratives I was recreating had to be as close to exact duplicates of the original documents as possible.

After sending Mr. Carter the computer files for the seventy-four ex-slave narratives of the LWP that we could locate, Mr. Carter is saving the files for a time in the future when the budget restraints at Northwestern State University ease and he can post the narratives to the CGHRC web page where scholars, researchers, and the general public can have access to them.

Marie	Conjure Tales
Laveau	Chicken
Hoodoo	Chickens
Spell	Animal
Witchcraft	Animals
Death	Dead
Die	Dying
Folklore	Louisiana
Tall Tales	Death
Tall Tale	Burial
Burial Practices	Negro Burial Practices
Burial Practice	Negro Burial Practice
Witch	Voodoo Queen
Dead chicken	Dead chickens
Dead animal	Dead animals

This identification of search terms was completed for each of the ex-slave narratives and for each subject within each narrative. While most of the ex-slaves interviewed for the Louisiana Writers' Project only spoke of one particular subject or a few subjects that were closely related such as their family, work, and housing, a number of the ex-slaves revealed information that was not always related. For example, in his eighteen-page narrative N. H. Hobley speaks of forty-six subjects, some of which are closely related and some of which are not related at all. Therefore, depending on the individual narrative, it is conceivable to compile a list of search terms that numbers in the hundreds because of

the necessity for simplicity as well as complicity in the search terms used. This search term simplicity and complicity is what will accommodate all levels of researchers, from scholars and researchers to the general public, as they navigate through the ex-slave narratives of the Louisiana Writers' Project portion of the Cammie G. Henry Archives web site of Northwestern State University.

CHAPTER 5: Typescripts of the Narratives

Statement of Editing Practices:

Continuing with my commitment to maintaining the integrity and historical value of the ex-slave narratives and by extension, the ex-slaves, I have not made any orthographic changes to the narratives. Nor have I edited the grammar, punctuation, or spelling of the narratives unless there were editing marks on the documents. In these instances, the intended corrections are reflected in my typescript of the narrative. However, if the intended corrections are typed on the original document, I reproduced them exactly as they appear. Also, a number of the narratives had the letter "x" within the typed documents to indicate where the typist had made a typing error. Here, the typist used the letter "x" to cross out the error, and continued with the narrative rather than begin anew. I reproduced these documents exactly as they were typed. Also, any unusual placement of punctuation, such as question marks in the middle of sentences, is reproduced exactly as it appears in the ex-slave interview document. In addition, as was the case with most typewriters, the keys occasionally became stuck causing one of the letters of a word to print higher than the others. In these instances, I unified the type by placing all letters of a word on the same line.

In their original form the margins, font type, and font size of the ex-slave narratives of the Louisiana Writers' Project appear in a number of different options. In order to conform to the Northwestern State University Graduate School's formatting conventions, I have changed all margins to a one and one-half inch left margin with one-inch margins on the top, bottom, and right side of each page. I have also changed the font to Times New Roman and the font size to twelve. On second and subsequent pages

of a narrative, I have omitted the page number of the narrative because it interfered with the required header of this thesis. No other editing has been performed on any of the ex-slave narratives of the Louisiana Writers' Project. In order to facilitate rapid location of the narratives, I have placed them in alphabetical order, except for the two documents located at LSU, which include more than one narrative. These are placed at the end of this chapter.

Folk lore – Central Louisiana

FOLK LORE * INTERVIEW WITH AGED NEGRO
JIM ANDERSON----AGE 77 YEARS, ALEXANDRIA

(Continuity	495 Words)
(Notes and Bibliography	<u>17</u> Words)
Total	512 Words

Signed _____ June 8, 1937

Signed _____ Supervisor

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

FOLK LORE * INTERVIEW WITH AGED NEGROJim Anderson---Age 77 Years, Alexandria

Jim says: "I sho' is been wantin' to know jest how old I is so I could tell folks my age when dey looks at me an' says dis an' dat about my age. I knows dat I wuz borned down in Texas a little while before de war when de pres'dent freed us niggers. Hit musta been around Galveston or Houston as well as I kin 'member. De plantation was owned by Dr. Means and dere wuz a many slave on dat place. My father wuz Jim Thomason. You see, dey changed his name to make it sound easier. Frances wuz my mother an' I had only two sisters and no brudders atall.

Jest right arter we wuz freed us come to Alexandria and stayed dere two yeres. Den my pa went to a cane plantation down in Mississippi where de wages wuz eighty cents a day. Den fer a while I went to school but purty soon I foun' out dat I could make as much as twenty cents a day an' wid such good wages I quit school and started to work on de cane farm. Uses come back to Governor Moore's plantation down 'tween here and Lecompte. Dey used me as dining room servant fer four or five yeres and I wuz one of de best dat dey eber had. Man, dey had sumpn plenty to eat of all kinds. Dere wuz chicken, fruits, vegetables, and flourbread. When dey finished at de table, dey would tell me to come an' get all of what wuz lef' dat I wanted. I drunk lots of wine an likker de same way.

Yassuh I got married once in my life. Dat wuz when I wuz about thutty yeres old. Course I'se had seval wifes but I'se jist been married only onct. Whilst I wuz at Miss Moore's she gimme plenty clothes. You see I had to have 'em to be able to serve de

quality. Evey month she gimme a new suit of cottonade. Arter dat I started to work in de fiels cause I wuz bigg enough to plow. I used to give a man five cents evey mornin' to put de collar on my mule fer me. You see I couldn't reach de top ob de mules neck. I farmed about twenty years in my life fum dat time on. Any time a man got sick on de Moore place dey give him a doctor and den tuck hit outen his wages.

I raised six chillun an' dey is all dead now. Hit ain't been but about tree yeres since a chip knocked my eye out whilst I wuz cuttin wood fer a feller. All dat I got wuz fifteen cents fer de wood and a lotta pain in my eye.

Shore I members de boats up an' down de river here. Dere wuz de Jessie K. Bell, de John T. Moore, and de Natchez, Mississippi, especially. But whut I'm most glad about is dat I'se found out how old I is.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Jim Anderson,

Alexandria, Louisiana.

Interview by Roucive Baham, College

student assigned to this project.

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Michinard 6/15/40

About Jesse James

Edward Ashley, now about eighty-three years of age, related the following story.

Robert Ashley, his wife, and son Edward, were slaves of Mr. Henry Goodrich. Mr. Goodrich's plantation was at Lake Providence. He was a very wealthy man and a very kind one. It seems that Mr. Goodrich weighed eight hundred pounds. It required four men to raise him from a chair.

On Christmas day, Mr. Goodrich would give money, turkeys and chickens, to all the colored families on his place. Should the house girl fail to obey an order, the Master gave her two or three licks with a strap, that was the extent of her punishment.

Mr. Goodrich had a big orchard. Should a slave desire an apple or a pear, he would have to say, "Marse, may I have a pear?" He gave nothing if you failed to call him "Marse."

Edward's father was the keeper of the toll gate at Goodrich landing. The gate was from the plantation to the levee. The fare was a dollar.

One night, when Robert and his family were assembled in his cabin, some one knocked at the door. On opening, they were confronted with two men, who asked to be sheltered for the night and to put their horses in the stable to be fed. Robert hesitated, then one of the men said, "I am Jesse James, you know what crimes I have committed, I need shelter for myself, brother and horses now if you refuse me will leave you here dead."

Jesse James claimed he had not slept in twenty nights, ducking here and there. He then asked, "How far a re the woods from here?" Edward, the son, answered, "One mile," Jesse looked at his brother and said, "That's the place, Frank!" Hearing Robert tell his wife, "That ain't Jesse James," he spoke up and said, "Just look at my hand, my thumb has been shot off." The brothers went to bed and slept. You could hear them snore clear across the road.

Next morning, after breakfasting, and after looking the horses over, they took their leave, warning Edward and his parents that if any one inquired about two men passing there to deny it.

After they had left, about 1 o'clock that day, two men came, so I'se said: "Pa two more men at gate, I'se going to hide me," so I went and hide. The men said, "Did you see two men pass here?" Pa answered "Yes". "Were they riding fast?" "Yes. Who are you after all?"

"We are detectives from New York. "Well if you catch up with them you will have to do some shooting." The detectives were told that the men had inquired the distance to the woods. Hearing this, the detectives said, "Do you know they are the worst desperadoes in the country?"

That wood was a hundred miles deep and full of wild animals. Robert heard two days after that the detectives had been killed in a cotton field on the other side of the wood.

About two weeks later, Jesse and his brother came back to get Edward the son. When they refused to give him up, James had the family lined up, and said, "All right, I am going," but when I come back you will have that boy here."

It seems that the boy had run away from home. It must have been the next day that Bob Ford, a friend of Jesse, had shot him for a ransom of \$50,000 dollars. Bob Ford put up a hotel with the money and he was later killed by Frank James, Jesse's brother.

William Banjo was sitting on the outer porch of the Thomy Lafon Old Folks Home for colored people, playing a battered accordion.

"I can't play much. I aint got no glue to fix it with," he explained. Louisiana tax tokens, in lieu of screws, held the bellows to the wooden ends of the instrument.

Asked for spirituals, he "studied", his thin face and sightless eyes turned toward the questioner.

"I might know some Indian songs."

"Indian songs?"

"Songs I learned in Oklahoma."

In a steady voice, Bill began:

I heard the voice of Jesus saying
 Come into me and rest.
 Lie, down, thy weary one, lie down
 Thy head upon my breast.

Chorus.

Feed my lamb
 Feed my lamb
 Feed my lamb
 If you love me
 Feed my lamb.
 I come to Jesus,
 I was wearied, wound, and sad.
 I found in him a resting place

And he has made me lgaad.

Bill said the chorus was to be repeated three times. "According to Scripture, he explained, "You can make the spirituals as long as you want to but I don't like to make them too long." He went on, "Singing is like nature – like an appetite. When a man is hungry he wants to eat and when he feels like singin' he wants to sing."

Inside, Catherine Corneliuos, 103 year old ex-slave, sang in a scarcely audible, husky voice. She understood our purpose, however, and chuckled when questioned for the words. The verses she sang were much confused, lines of spirituals she knew a long time ago kept coming back to her but upon question- ing she said, "I fegit so much," or, "I'm sick today."

In a spiritual she called "Oh, How I Love Jesus," the single verse she could remember as similar to "Whilce de Blood Runnin' Warm in Your Veins" (Page) Catherine's version:

On Jurdon's stormy bank I stand
 And cast a wishful eye to Canian land.
 Oh that transported word
 Rises to my sight
 Where God reigns
 And scatters night away.

A number of old people were sitting on a porch around an inner court of the Home and one of them said, "I can' sing. I aint got no gums."

We were told that prayer meeting was about to begin and walked into a dim, front room while the old people straggled in, dragging themselves along the walls, leaning on canes or crutches, and one or two blind men being led in.

Some one started to sing. "Down by the river side" followed by another line each time-- "I lay my burden down" or "I am gonna meet my Jesus, mother, father, there". Each stanza was concluded by "They gonna stay one hour more". This line was repeated three times, then five, and finally seven times.

After singing for some time, apparently sinlessly, without a leader, the song seemed to come to an end of its own accord and some one would begin praying.

"Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, The kingdom come, thy will be done, forgive us our trespasses and lead us into no temptation but deliver us from evil. Search my heart and if you find anything 'round there contrary to your commandments, let me be washed and forgive me. Lord, have mercy on us. Have mercy. Have mercy on the sisters and brothers in the Old Folk's Home this evening and the people giving us this good home. Heart to heart, breast to breast, mind to mind, time after time, You gave your blood for us to adore and for our sins, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on the men who gave us this home. Mercy, Mercy. Gwine to meet my Mamou and Papou in your kingdom sometime. Hallelujah! Will be at home at last. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy!

The next song was an old camp-meeting song, "Give me that Old-Time Religion". It was made up of bout four lines:

Give me that old time religion

Make me love everybody

It was good enough for my old mother

It was good for the prophet Daniel.

Each line was repeated three times followed by the single line, Lord, it's good enough for me."

Their singing had little in common with spirituals. The words themselves were apparently all taken from hymns and their quavering, aged voices, rose and fell in melodies and rhythms common to hymns.

A voice took up a prayer again. "Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy dingdom come, Thy will be done, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive our enemies, and lead us into no temptation but deliver us, O Lord, for Thine is the kingdom and the light. My work is done and I am going home. You said you can preach the love of Jesus. You can say he died for all. Blessed Lord: Have mercy on the poor little children, my King. My work is ended and I am going home to meet my mother."

After another hymn, this prayer followed.

"Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name, forgive us as we forgive our enemies and deliver us from evil, and heavenly Father, guide us this evening and have mercy on us. Go with us and stand by us. Oh, Lord, give us courage, have mercy on us. Oh Lord, I thank you that I am able to call on you. I think you have spared me to come here. Pray search my heart and if you find anything wrong, I am begging you to forgive me. I ask that your blood be mine. Give me a steady march up King's Highway. Oh Lord, you said that if I serve you, you would have mercy. I thank you that you are so good and generous. I thank you for your friendship. Please take charge of us and keep down near us. Keep our minds on our Saviour and the Divine Cause. When life's

journey is over and you see fit to call me, in that hour, do not leave me, Jesus, but keep near me and give me a resting place, for Christ's sake. Amen."

They sang again.

Oh, de blood down sign my name

Oh, de blood,

Oh, de blood down sign my name, name.

Oh, de blood done sign my name.

They sang two more verses, similar, except for a slight variation in the words; "Yes, de blood done sign my name" and "Aint ya glad de blood done sign ya name", followed by the last verse:

How y' know dat de blood done sign y' name

How y' know dat de blood done sign y' name

How y' know dat de blood done sign y' name.

A thin, old woman got down on her knees next to her chair, leaned over it and began her prayer:

"Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, please forgive us this day our daily read, who trespass against you, but lead us into no temptation and deliver us to Thee, for Thine is the kingdom and the light. Oh, heavenly Father, have mercy upon us. Bless the sick and 'flicted, bless the lame and the blind. Have mercy.

"When we travel through the dark valley of the shadow of death, we can depend on you and you will bring us through. Make us strong, make us love everybody. Help our children. Bless this home. Please give us more love and more peace and more

happiness. I ask you to come into this room. Help us to grow strong in love and peace and happiness. Please straighten out those who are crooked. Bring them to the straighter way. Teach them how to treat others like they want to be treated. Have mercy. Go with us and stand by us. You promised to shelter us. I ask you this evening to bless us and keep us. You know our troubles. Have mercy. I ask you to guide me in the straight way. Have mercy. Keep us all together, heavenly Father. Stand by us while we are such a long way from home for you said you would be with us. Please give us love and peace and happiness and health. Wherever Jesus leads, I promise to follow Him. Oh, Lord, bless each and every one of us; those that are gone astray, draw back into line.

Her voice began to waver; tears struggled in it.

“When I am done traveling, help me. Bless all my dear children, bless their homes, take care of them. Oh, heavenly Father, you know all about me. Take care of me. Bless us.”

She began weeping. Her voice choked.

“Wherever Jesus lands, I intend to follow and when the battle should be fought and the victory should be won, Jesus, will you receive my soul into your kingdom. Amen.”

As the prayer meeting came to an end they struggled to their feet. Shuffling, dragging, pulling themselves painfully from chair to chair or along the wall. Many made their way to the table in the center of the room, balanced a moment there, then struggled on toward the door, singing all the while:

When the saints go marchin' in

When the saints go marchin' in

When the saints go marchin' in

Oh, won't I want to be in that room

When the saints go marchin' in?

They turned off down the narrow corridor still singing, the last two blind men
feeling their way along.

I used to have some playmates

That walked and talked with me

But since I been connive

They turned their backs on me.

BURKE - 1

8/23/40

LIFE HISTORY

Peter Barber - 96

Lafon Old Folk Home of the Holy Family Convent

It is a reality and a fact is not to be denied. Peter Barber is an inmate of the Lafon Old Folks Home. He claims to be one hundred and six years old, but according to the dates which he remembers quite well he is only ninety-six. Peter Barber is about six feet tall and at this age weighs one hundred seventy pounds and is well-proportioned. His dark skin makes a distinct contrast with his gray hair, gray beard and with his bushy, beetle gray eye brows, under which deepset eyes require no glasses. He is well preserved and remarkably active; a fact in which he prides himself. He also prides himself in talking, giving a creditable demonstration as he sketched the highlights of a rather eventful life.

"Young man, I'm always glad to talk about the life that I've lived, and because of it I'm not ashamed. But the first thing I want to tell you is that I was a slave. And it is said that 'One brother shouldn't hold another one a slave.' Did you hear me? He said shouldn't but they did right on. And they musta thought they was right and if I hadn't been a slave up to the time I was a young man I might not be here today.

"I was born in Charlottesville, Virginia and I can remember from the time when I was eight years old. My first master was named William Granger. He was a farmer. He owned a large farm and he had a sawmill and a grist mill. My mistress was the one who

taught me how to write and every year she would make us, all the slaves, write our ages in a big Bible she had just for that purpose. 'Course you see that's the way she kep a record of all of us.

"My master was good too, but he didn't take no pains with us. As long as we worked he didn't bother. But he treated us well. Clo'es, food, and a place to stay in and no bad hard words.

"I grew to be a big, strong boy and I could do my work well. And I don't know why we was sold to our second master – Sam Austin. He was a tobacco man. They sold me for \$900 – half Confederate and half Union money. When I was with Austin I was the foreman up to the time Grant took Richmond. Then, he tried to fool us. He said, 'I'm gonner send y'all up to the Blueridge Mountains, on account of they's gonner wanner capture ya, them Yankees.' Well, I had been kinder looking inter the things all the while and I knowed jes what they had been fightin for. And for everyone that knowed therre was ten thousand that didn't know. But I kep my mouth and head and didn't say nuthin, but I went and my buddie, his name was Himme Harris and I told him I thought we should run away. So we did. We stored away on the Ohio and Chesapeake. I was twenty-two when we ran away. That's why I kin say I knowed what slavery was. Cause I was old enough to know what it was all about. I worked in the fields and in tobacco sheds. I got it first hand, not by somebody telling me. So when our master talked about sending us up in the mountains, I knew better.

"Well, anyway, we was headin for Cincinatti, Ohio but we didn't quite git there. So we stopped by a river and somebody told us that a boat was comin along. I had never seen a boat in my life and I got anxious to see it. So we waited. But she didn't come. It

got dark and the boys dug in at the landing and ate their supper, but shucks, I didn't want nuthin to eat. I had never seen a boat. A long time afterwards, I looked down the river and saw a red light and a green light. Then when she came closer I could see the black smoke jes purin outer her stacks. I jes stood there and looked. And when I Looked and saw the people on it and the mule teams and the wagons ans everything else, I hadter wonder 'cause here I was: If I'd jes so much as step in that river why I'd sink and here was something big as a house and it was floatin.

"While they was loadin up me and my partner got on and when she didn't tilt over when that big mule team left, I said I guessed it was all right. That boat was the C. P. Hannican and she was headed for Cincinatti jes where we was goin, but the next day somebody asked us if we was deck hands. Not thinkin we said no. Well, they knowed we wasn't passengers, so they said, 'We're gonner put you off at the nex landin.' And it was a tough lil town they put us off in, but we didn't stay there too long. After gittin a glimpse of it and seein what a tough place it was we kep on goin and we walked the rest of the way.

"We got in Cincinatti and you know we didn't know nuthin about fast life and dressin up like the other fellers we saw, so we kinder shied away from the other folks. On this account we saved our money. We had about two or three hundred dollars apiece and very little of it did we spend.

"After lookin around for a while me and Jimme, that's my buddie, we went to join up with the Army. So they examined Jimme first and he passed the test. An he was outfitted. Then the officer looker at me. Then he says, 'You wanter join the Army too?' I told him yes, sir, and he looked at me agin, sizing me up and he took so long until I

started to feelin funny. After a while he looked at the other officer an said, 'We'll take him in - about two more years.' I liketa cried. How in the world could they take Jimmie Harris and not take me? For the life of me I could never understand. But to this day I tell
 thing

ya it's the one that saved my life. I'll tell ya about that a little later. But ya know Jimmie was proud of his suit and everybody was hollering at him and wishin him good luck. 'Course you know how I felt an specially when they started ta askin me where was my suti.

"But I jes laughted kinder sickly like and said I wasn't ready to join up yit. So, I went ta work and got me a job on a boat. I don know but look like to me, ever since I seen the C. P. Hannican and rid on her, looks like to me I had a hankerin to travel on the water and I worked up an down on the Ohio River on the C. B. Church which was runnin
 in

outer Cincinatti at the time. I was gittin mostly broke but I was learnin fast and in two, three years I was a first class deck hand.

"Long about that time I heered they was hirin men to run the trip to Newer'Leans so I jumped the C. B. Church and went over to the C. B. Kilbur. That boat was named after John Kilbur, a rich shipping man from Kentucky. That was in the year '71 when I made my first trip to Newer'Leans. From then on I stayed on that run. We'd make the run in about every twenty or thirty days. As many years as I stayed on that run, I never had a fight in my life. Now you wanter know how come I was able to do that, don't you? In the first place I stayed outer argyments, cause I felt this way: at first I said to myself, 'I'm mongst Negroes who knows what it's all about cause they been free longer than I

was. Here I come from one of the worse slave states, Virginia, and these men from up above the line.' Well, I couldn't do nuthin argyin with them. They knowed more'n I did. That bein the case I could learn more by lis'ning, which I did. Then when I did ketch on I found out that argyin didn't git ya no where cause you wasn't gonner 'suade the other feller no how an he wasn't gonner git you to see like him. There you are. It's jes like eatin soup with a fork. So from one year to another I never got in a fuss and I never had a fight.

Now to come back to my buddie, Jimmie Harris. He was doin fine, yes, sir, he made a fine soldier but somehow I never did have the urge agin to go back to join the army – even after my two years was up. But I used to always hear from Jimmie. He would write from where ever he was and tell me how he was doin. Round about this time the war on the Indians had started and I got a letter from him sayin they had sent his comp'ny under General Custer and that they was gonner fight Sittin Bull and his devilish Indians. Man, they was raisin sand then. They had broke off the Reservations and was killin up every- thing in sight. So the Government sent troops under General Crook, General Gibbon, General Reno and General Custer to set Sittin Bull in his place. The las letter I got from Himmie said they was movin west to git out in the 'bad lands' and he wrote somthin that I'll remember til this day. There was in General Custer's army a Negro scout by the name of "Niggers Mose Tom'. He was one of the bes scouts that Custer had and after scoutin around up there in that Indian Country he come back and told Custer that he couldn't take Sittin Bull then cause he was too strong. He told him that the Sioux, that's Sittin Bull's tribe, had everything, includin rifles. They wasn't usin bows and arrows an spears any more, but they had been gittin guns from somewheres.

Then he told Custer that there was too many Indians for him to handle alone. He said it musta been nearly 15,700 Indians with Sittin Bull. But Custer didn't take his advice. No, from somewheres else a official report comes that Sittin Bull had divided up his Indians and he was in the neighborhood of the Little Big Horn River. Well, sir, that's the las I ever heard of Jimmie. He wrote and said, "Well, we're off. Wish me luck." I did, but it didn't do him any good. Cause nobody was left to tell the tale. Some say Custer thought he was creepin up on Sittin Bull's camp in the dark. An the men was comin through the woods when what they thought was logs was Indians wrapped up in blankets, 15,000 of
man

em an not a soul was left to tell the tale. That's how I say that the army saved my life when he turned me down 'cause I would've been with General Custer when he made his last stand. That muster been in '76 cause I went back to Cincinnati and that's where I heard the news. I was really hurt cause in all the years after I never had a friend like Jimmie. Most a the time I was a lone wolf. I traveled up and down that Mississippi River for well nigh fifty-six years. Well, you see, a Hillman is an ace deck hand. He gotter know how to load and how to unload, and how to handle freight. Young man, I usedter be able to handle a bale of cotton jes like you'd handle a pillow slip. I was fireman on the R. E. Lee. Yes, the same Robt. E. Lee what run the race with the Natchez. I remember all the people when we left Newer'Leans and they jes crowded the shore. Every place where we passed through there was people lined up to see us go by. Mr. Kilbur and those men had their money up too. No, sir, we never did git behind. After we left I don't remember nuthin much 'cause the cap'n was callin for steam and more steam.

An I was puttin it there, too, 'cause I could go with the best of em. Yes, sir, we got out in front and stayed there til we hit St. Louis.

"Well, now, that's a question which has got jes four answers to it 'cause I jes about come nigh losin my life four times that I well remember. The first time I was off the boat jes outer Vicksburg and I was waitin on the river bank for the foreman to come and git me so we could goto Vicksburg in a skiff. So while I was waitin I thought I'd take a nap under a tree. When all of a sudden I thought I had a creepy feelin and I woke up with a jump and looked right inter this big black panther's eyes. And when I jumped he sprang for me. Looker here, see those marks. They're all the way across from this arm across my chest to this arm. See where those big claws jes ripped me open. And til this day I don't know what saved my lfie. It was an act of providence, but that big black devil left me alone. The foreman found me and took me to the hospital.

"The next three times I nearly lost my life was on three boats. I had three of em to sink and I was on them. There was the C. B. Church, the Valley Queen and the West O'Ville and I couldn't swim a lick, but I managed to git in one of the boats.

"Long afterwards I started makin short runs up the Red River. Then I spent many years in the Marine Service and after I took sick I had to stay in the hospital for a long time. But when I got well they sent me here. Since I didn't have no kin people. Well, I did have a sister who was sixty-two years old when I went back to visit Charlottesville, but she was dribbling an talkin outer her head. She was old an feeble at sixty-two. Well, I don't have much now but I have a trunk, two good suits. I don't have no jewelry like I used to. I used to have a godl watch chain three and a half feet long and I always had

three or four hundred dollars in my pockets, but now I thank God I'm still alive and I know I'm gonner live a good while longer.

"The thing I'm most proud of? Well, it's not hard to tell but it's this: In my traveling sometimes I'd take a few weeks off and go to the east but I'd git homesick for the river and come back. But in my traveling up and down the river and in the east in Ohio and in Kentucky and in Illinois and Michigan I have come to see and know by sight thirteen presidents of the United States. I saw Grant right after Richmond. I saw Jeff Davis, McKinley, Filmore, Pierce, J. Buchanan, Johnson, Garfield, Old Teddy Roosevelt, then there was Taft, Wilson and Harding. I saw all of them. But ya know the strangest thing of all I never did see Abe Lincoln. Somehow I never did run across him. I don't know why. That's something to be proud of, ain't it? Yes, sir, thirteen Presidents of the United States and I've seen em all!

FOLK LORE

Civil War:

When the Civil war was going on I was staying in St. Francisville herre in La. My ma had 7 children. My daddy name was John Lee. Our massa was Mr. Walker. One day the rebels came to our plantation and ran massa and his three sons away. Massa came back but the three boys went off I believe they got killed. when the rebles came to our planation they made my ma cook some cush cush. You make dat outter corn meal and salt and water my ma made cush cush and give them milk and they liked that too they ate that and ask for more about dusk they left and that evening I wander away from home and the rebles like to got me the horses passed right over me but did not step on me buy my pa found me.

The rebles left us on the planation and we stayed there until Mr Walker came back and after peace declare we moved to the next planation. I had a Uncle who went away with the Yankees and massa caught him and beat him up arful but the Yankees made him come off with 'em and they carried 10 Uncles and 8 Aunts with em. Some died, some came back, some stayed in Donnasonville, we moved to S.S. Fort after the slaves was freedded; we raise crop and sold it for to live off we mostly didn' have to buy nothing to eat.

Du'in' that war one day me and my little sister was walking pass a dairy and we looked up and saw the dairy was coming down. We saw a big big old think look just like a elephant with one eye push it down and we run and my sister ran into a pet sheep and he but her on the head 3 times. That why she crazy now (poor thing). I ran home and call my father and he's got a picket and broke that sheep back.

The animal were so bad that that night we had keep big old iron bars across the doors and window at night we had to burn gun powder in the middle of the floor to keep the bears and things out and in the middle of the street they had to burn logs all night; they don't come by fire. You could hear the panthers hollowing for blocks and blocks.

I had a ant and her name was Julia. One day she told her husband to come meet her because she was going to be late. You know we took our babies to work; so that night coming home it was dark; on the way home a bear was standing by the fence and she thought it was her husband, so she gave the bear ----- the baby and went long just fussing; so when she got by the high hedge the bear went in the weeds and she screamed, ran home, and told the folks about it and they put the blood hound behind the bear. He would carr' the baby to his den but they got the blood hound too quick for him. If it had been a boy he would have ate him up; but they like girls. He gave the blood hounds a fight; he foughted them like a man, yes.

Yes, indeed, bears were terrible; they used to steal all of our corn. You see them pass with arms full of corn just like a person. The bear didn't hurt the baby, tho.

Mrs. Lillie Bell

2022 Deleachaise St.

Louisa Braxton (Negress)

328 Franklin Street

Flossie McElwee

McDonoghville, La. # 18

Int, 1940

Religion

"Who me? I's Christen now I don't tell stories. Oh Yas! I stayed around white peoples all my life, washing, cooking and ironing; was raised about eleven miles up the T.P. at Wagmen.

"Me, I am 76 yrs. old. My maw was a slave. She was allus telling us something about how she was treated, and how they rang the bell the day they wuz sat free.

"Oh yes; when we were growing up, we worked in the sugarcane and rice fields. I don't 'member the man's name we lived with, but he was a Frenchman.

"I's had all kinds of times during my life--before I was even converted, wuz I mean? Yas God, I was so wicked.

"Just to show you how bad I wuz, even went up to the levee and roped peoples' cows when I was small and tied them. Then, I wood get down and suck the cows, but, one day, de mans come along the cow belong to. He lashed me good. Then took me home to my maw, and told her what I had been doing. I'd been doing dat for about 6 months, then.

"One day a mule kicked me, and knocked the supreme devil out of me, and dat same day I wuz running my brother with snake eggs, and he tooken and cut my toe off.

"I would get drunk and stay out all nite--go to the dances. I wuz never married, but lived with about eight different mens. One of the mans I stayed with ripped my belly

open with a knife, 'cause I told about him stealing some chicken.

"No, I never had no chillens--don't know if it was me are the mens. If I'd ever had a real black chap, I would have smothered it to deth. God would just had to forgiven me.

"I got drunk one nite, was guine axed smart, went to the graveyard, and something tall and white smacked the hell out of me. If it was not a ghost I have no idea what it 'twas I never did go back.

"Mercy me, I've been here with Peg for ten long years. He is 62 yrs. old, his leg has been off for forty yrs. He works for de white folks in their yards and gardens. They won't give us no help on the Welfare. Went to Gretna about nine times and it don't do any good.

"As long as I've been with Peg, he never wuz in no trouble but one time, and dat is when he got in a crap game. A fellow taken seven bucks from him--he cut dat nigger with a razor everywhere, but on the bottom of his feet. The white man he wuz working fo' got him out.

"Me and him allus gets along good, when he makes anything he brings it home to me.

"But I am gwine spent the rest of my days serving God. About when I got 'ligin? Well, I first started going to the spiritual meetings. down in Algiers. One nite, they had what dey called the Holly Roll, dey put a man and 'omen in a sheet, and rolled them over and over, with all the lights out. How did dem people know what they were doing in there? I said, 'My God, if this is 'legin, I don't want done'.

"I soon found out different. A friend of mine told me to go down in the

wilderness and pray. So's I went way back on the Kanal. I jest knew that wuz the place to go. So's I prayed and prayed. The next night, I went to the Baptist Church. I got up and axed all the good brethern and sisters to pray for me that. I might get 'legin.

"When I got home dat nite, I got in the back yard and prayed and prayed, so I seened the spirit. It was Jesus on the cross. Oh yes! I see'd him right behind a cloud. I felt so good, you will know when you get it. I axed God to show me something so I would know that I wuz converted. You see, I did not want to tell the people I was converted unless I knew I was right.

"We makes our communion once a month, with white uniforms and white hankerchiefs around our head. We shore do have a nice time! There was a 138 baptised the same day I wuz.

"So I am old now my termenation is too spend the rest of my days serving Jesus.

"I believes in spooks for there has been something following me for a long time moaning and groaning, I never see'd what it 'twas but it shore does bother me."

POSEY

(11a)

February 20, 1941

ELLEN BROOMFIELD

(Negro)

Born 1853 – Aged 88

1326 Franklin

Hobbling along with her full old-fashioned calico dress, almost touching the ground, her arms and hands, filled with her morning's gleanings, we greeted this old Mammy of a by-gone day with:

“Well, Auntie, it's refreshing to see one like you, with your long skirt and bonnet.”

“Whut I want to wear short dresses for? I don' hav' to show 'em, besides the way some of these women's dresses is an insult to God who created them, an' that's why mens got so little respec' these days, un' it's all they own fault too.

“I was born way bac' yonder in 1853 in slavery time an' my Pa an' Ma had 19 chil'ren – all by the same Pa and Ma – an' we wus raised right, never went to any dances, but played 'Ring-round-rosey'an' things like that, an' I raised my chil'ren like that too.”

We sat on the steps of her lodging where she deposited her sack of coal which she had picked up across the R. R. tracks and her basket with several discarded tobacco boxes, which she could “fin' use for some pieces of kindlint” to “Start the fire with” an old bottle and other miscellany which she had picked up in her morning's meanderings.

"Aunt Ellen" is of the ante-bellum type and "we reckoned without our host" when we expected a good story from her.

"I jes' don' know anythin' – no signs, no songs, nothin' –

"Chillun in my day were never 'lowed round grown folks when they was talkin'. We played an' were happy. Seems like we didn't get sick much then. In Spring they giv' us sulphur an' molasses to purify our blood an' candy was made out Jimson weed an' sugar an' that was good for worms.

"When folks had too much blood they cupped them, Well, it was like this:

"You take a cup of water an' put in it a piece of cotton, put to temple and set cotton on fire, that draws blood. Saw my Ma do it many a time.

"There were 19 chil'ren in our family an' we had to work as soon as we were big enough. I use to plow, it was hard, but it may be that's what made me so so strong. We had plenty sweet 'taters. Seems like they don't have good ones now. Ali were red an' when roasted they dripped out a kinder syrup. Now they call 'em yams, but you don't often see them. We didn't eat those ol' 'nigger chokers'. If they were planted they were given to the swine.

"Maybe it was because we were more careful in tendin' then. After the diggin' an' the earth got nat'ral like, it was plowed over and after a few weeks it was plowed again; after a while the plantin' was made, an' we kep' all weeks out an' the 'taters were good.

"Sunday mornin' we got up early an' washed our feets, an' scrubbed up so's to get to Sunday school which was a long way off, an' we went barefoot."

"Annt Ellen", or as such she would have been called a few generations, has little history. Her life may be called a prosaic one, but she is happy. She says she is and her looks do not belie her words. Hers is the simple faith that could remove mountains. She sings:

"My Jesus is a rock in a weary lan'

A weary lan', a weary lan'

My Jesus is a rock in a weary

A shelter in the time of storm."

Michinard

Coz Bob Brown,

June, 1940

Pailetville

43

Coz Bob, as he is known in his neighborhood, is ninety-three years of age. He is a dark negro, still very active – a good conversationist. I am afraid that he was drawing on his imagination when he told me the following anecdote.

It all happened in Guenard wood, Guillot settlement, in the Parish of Plaquemines. Abraham Lincoln went in the woods, knelt down, and, in a loud voice, asked the Lord to give him a lending hand to free the poor slaves. While he was kneeling, he saw an ant, with food in its mouth, trying to go up the tree, but the ant failed to do so and fell back. Six times the poor insect tried to climb up the tree, finally, at the seventh time, she was successful and "reached up the tree."

Lincoln then exclaimed, "If you miss once, try a second time, for if an ant tried six times and was successful at the seventh time, just as the ant was successful, I will also be successful and win the war."

* * *

Posey

12/13/39

Marie Brown,

1012 St. Philip St.

Negro

(Marie Laveau)

"If its history you want 'Gran'ma' can tell you ev'rything. She's lived here all her life, an' what she don' know about this ol' part ain' worth knowin' ennyhow. I'll take you to her."

Eagerly we followed our guide who rang the bell at a side gate as well as putting out a loud call for 'Gran'ma.'

In response an old, wrinkled crone wobbled toward us and through the half-opened gate almost shrieked:

"What for you bring people here. No, I ain' tell my secrets to nobody."

Perhaps in response to our pleading as well as disappointed look, she continued:

"Besides, I'm sick and I'm tired too."

"Hit's always somebody a comin' an' botherin' me for what I know _____

Once, a lot of mens who were makin' a movin' picture of Lafitte, the Sea-robber wanted me to tell them ev'rythin' I knew an' they offered me money but I was skeert of them, they might get me in trouble an' I wouldn't do it" _____

Assuring her that she was perfectly safe in anything she might tell – the gate opened and we were almost pulled inside _____

In the rear of the place was her two-room apartment – kitchen and bedroom, immaculately kept.

"What you wan' to know? From the beginning? Hit's been a long time but I don' forget."

"My mother's mother she come from San Domingo but she was born in Montenegro an' was a f.w.c."

"None of her children ever lived to be born an' she wanted a child so she had a fren' who tol' her she could have one if she did like she say. My Gran'ma promised an' she bought her a ginger-cake an' tole her to eat it an' when the baby was born she mus' let her name hit."

"My Gran'ma was happy for her chile then, an' said for her to give name – "

"Three Cents," she said was name – because she paid three cents for ginger-cake – an' that was always my gran'ma's name – Three Cents!

An' my ma was called Queen Eliza (pronounced – E-lee-za) of the Dance' because she was a fine dancer. She would put a glass of water on her head an' it never spilled – no matter how long she kept it up.

She wrapped her legs with ribbons an' at knee had a big red bow. Madras han'kerchiefs were expensive because they were imported – They cos' Five Dollars apiece and were big and pretty, she wore ten of them for a skirt. One end of each was tucked over a girdle at her waist an' when she danced they flopped about.

The Firemens' always had her at their balls and once when she was sick and couldn't come they called it off – An' she made lots of money, because people said nobody could dance like her – and when big people came to the city she was brought to entertain them.* (Evidently our first entertainer)

But she didn't always dance like that. She had been christened Cath'lic, but when she'got religion' an' joined the Baptis' Church she gave it all up.

My Gran'ma came from San Domingo with the Duplantier's an' Mrs. Jule Deplantier was her Godmother – she was Cath'lic to the back-bone –

My Father was a slave an' my Gran'ma didn't wan' her to have Pa because he was a slave. But they jus' had they way ennyhow. He made money an' they lived high.

An' I had thirteen chil'ren – four are livin'. I never did 'sociate with trash, Bible say: 'Who you 'filiate with I tell you who you are',

(sister's child)

I got a niece/ in Carrollton, she's lak' white an' her family pass for white folks. She thinks I ain' good 'nuff for her – but I say she ain' good 'nuff for me for she's only white man's leavin's. I ain' shamed of my Pa. –

My mother's Gran'ma lived durin' the Revolution in San Domingo – She was 89 years ol' when she died –

When I was young I learned to sew, and when my husban' died I made a livin' by sewin'. I got 65¢ a dozen for makin' Firemen's pants – two bits a dozen for work-shirts – double-breasted jumpers – They were cut out an' they jus' had to be put together.

D. Mercier paid \$1.35 for pants. Cottonade with five pockets, one was a watch-pocket.

Looks lak' they didn't pay much then – but everybody was comfortable – besides things didn't cos' so much then. Why, you could get a quarter of this an' a quarter of that an' that was ernuf.

When Jackson came to lay down his laws my Gram'ma was sixteen years ol'.

She said he gave two pairs of shoes a year, two suits of clothes, five pounds of pickled pork, one peck of corn to evry'body, ef they wanted hit.

She was asked if she remembered Marie Laveau.

Ma-rie Laveau? Who? that she-devil, that hell-cat Ma-rie Laveau!

God came here on furlough, an' lef' Lucifer in charge but he corrupted heaven so that he disposs'ed him.

Like Marie Laveau, she corrupted New Orleans until God stopped her by death –

Marie Laveau? Of coure, I remember her, she walked lak' she owned the city an' ev'rythin'. She looked like a devil – She was always enticin' young girls to come to her house an' meet mens, What she look like? I can see her now. She was banana color an' wore always a madras han'kerchief tied aroun' her head. There were two curls, one on each side of her face.

That hell-cat! She mus' be a-burnin' for her sins! She said she could call sperets outer your house – She could make pictures come off wall – She could do ennythin' she wanted.

Once I went to her house with some people an' jus' when I got inside the door I saw the carcass of a chile a clingin' to an' armour an' she a-settin on the floor laughin' an' laughin'. I was so skart I don' know how I got away, but I foun' myself a-runnin' in my house – an' I never would go near her again. That woman would do anythin', Commit murder was nothin' –

Ma-rie Laveau – that hell-cat, that she-devil!

I never went with hoodoo peoples, but once I saw them dance at Congo Square. Look that's hit, at the corner an' you wouldn't believe the devilment, that went on there. For music they made drums outer pork barrels –an' knocked out both ends which they

kivered with deer skins an' took the jaw-bone of a mule, maybe a hoss, an' drew it across an' they danced until they dropt.

An' Marie Laveau was there jus' a takin' in money. Good people use to dance long at funerals – for the Holy Bible says there's a timer for every- thin', 'A time to dance and a time to refrain from dancin' – so when the procession went along followin' the hearse there was dancin' but it was difrent from the other.

Funerals were not the same as now either – They always had a wake an' there was music – an' plenty to eat – ev'rythin' good – there was chicken, gombo an' coffee an' ham an' may be cake an' ev'rybody walked to cemetery--

We asked for more about the voodoo queen –

“Well, she lived on St. Ann St.,jus' two blocks from here, but, the house tumbled down an' they built another where it was.

Somehow she disappeared an' people forgot her. The law put an end to the wild carryin's on – I never paid much attention to her after that experience in her house.

I heard that she was wrecked out at Lake Pontchartrain an' never got right again.

No, I don' know where she died, an' I never heard anythin' 'bout a funeral. I been livin' in this neighborhood 75 years an' it look like I would know somethin'. The earth look like it swallowed her.

But she buried out at Girod Cemetery. At first she was in St. Louis No. 2 – on the Claiborne Street side but when they wanted the space where she was for an office, they moved her bones to Girod Cemetery.

Asked if she was sure of this she drew herself up and emphatically asserted:

“Didn't I tole you where she was? Write like I say – She's in Girod Cemetery!

No, I don' 'sociate with trashy people, white or colored. I 'tend to my own bus'ness an' have a good name in my Church.

Lots of bad peoples lives down here – but there's good ones too, but it was worse than this – No, I never went in that Quarter - roon ball-room. You couldn't get in if you had a black face, but we colored people wouldn't a gone if we could, we had no use for that stripe.

And then she explained, "A quarteroon (quadroon) is the child of a white person of 1/4 negro blood –

An octoroon is the child of a white man an' a octoroon, a mulatto is from a white & negro parents –

The white person is of pure white blood.

The negro is a fallen race but that don' keep his from stayin' to his- self.

I reads my Bible fust thing in the mornin' an' las' thin' at night.

Hit's my guidin' star an' I tries to live by hit. I don' read much an' I began to study the pictures an' then the words so now I know it all."

While she was talking she was turning page after page of a well-worn Bible given her by her landlady.

"She's a Presbyteran an' a Christian. She lets me live in this place for \$4.00 a month an' she could get more.-

Now look at this, hit's all about the destruction of the worl' an' God told Noah to take male an' female of ev'ry kin' in the Ark – an' Noah did it an' saved generations for the new world –

Nex' time you come I'll tell you more about the Holy Bible an' I'll make you a lemon pie or some oyster patties if you let me know when you can come - But I want to forget about that hell-cat Ma-rie Laveau."

Flossie McElwee

(11-A)

5/29/40

Verial Brown,

Van Trump St.,

McDonoughville.

EX-SLAVE

Don't know how old I is. Was born befo' peace declared. Can't member any thing about slavery. Was born in St. James parish, later come to McDonoughville, been here every since. Has done all kind of hard work in my days. My wife was never able to help me much in her young days. She was always too busy having children, us ain't got but 15, so's you can see somebody had to work. I have been in cross-tie making all my life until I got disable. Part of de younger children went to school. It was all I could do to feed them much less for to send dem to school. About all the work the old 'oman every done was pick moss, but us both too old to do any kind of work now.

I don't belong to no church. It cost too much money. In my young days I never had time to go to church. Now I's too old. If you is dead you just dead for a long time.

Folk Medicine

I never did have a doctor with me or any of my chilluns. I allus used the things my ma told me about I still use dem now.

Just take Eldu bush and make a tea out of it, and bath with it. Dat's all we ever did use for fever.

The leaves are good to place on a sore or a swollen place.

Jack Vine tea is the best blood purify you can get. I have a piece dried. We allus made tea out of it and eat with our Bread when us would be in de swamps.

You can take Eldu bush with salt and vinegar, make a good polis for rheumatism, dat's what I use.

You can cure a old sore with gourd leaf and beef gauld.

Dem leafs is good to make you sweat a fever off.

I tell you Miss, another that will take all the rheumatism out and dat is to find you a old delapidated dog, almost dead, tie his feet and put a muzzle over his mouth, and lay you' feet across him. Course dat dog will soon die, and when he do, all your pains is gone, de dog draws dem out!

Omen

I have got a good luck bone I carry with me all time, it is out of a black cat.

You know how you git it? Well, just go to the Forks of the road and build your fire, put de pot on and put the Black cat in dare and bile him good. When all de meat comes off of de bones, the lucky bone will float, den take dat with you for your luck--it will charm off evil too.

McElwee

5/5/40

Henrietta Butler

511 Wager Street

Gretna

"Ise eighty some odd years ole, born at La Fouché, my Ma's name Easter – dat her picture over dare. I was born in slavery. Ise not ashamed' to tell it either, an' known somethin' about it.

"My den ol' Missus was mean as hell. You see dis finger here? – dare is where she bit it de day us was set free. Never will forgit how she said "Come here, you little black bitch you!" and grabbed my finger – almos' bit it off. Her ole name was Emily Heidee. When she found out we was goin' to be free she raised all kind of hell; de Boss could do nothin' at all with her. She had two big saddle horses – one name Canaan, the other name Bill. She got on ole Bill and come to New Orleans few days befo' us was sat free, an' when de Boss fetched her back she was in a black box. He buried her in de field – he didn' have no respec' for her she was too mean. I know ever' night I had to wash dat ole woman's fooks an' rub dem fo I could ever go home to bed.

I knows the day dem Sojer's came in, taken' all de meat out of de smoke house, got all de chickens an' turkeys. She raised hell with the Boss an' tol' him to run dem son of bitches away. He didn' say air thing to dem sojers 'cause he was too scared.

"She made me have a baby by one of dem mens on de plantation. De ole devil! I gets mad ever' time I think about it. Den dey took de man to war. De baby died, den I had

to let dat ol' devil's baby suck dese same tiddies hanging right here. She was allus knockin' me around. I worked in the house nursin'.

"We allus had plenty of vegetables, salt meat, corn bread, hominy grits. Us didn' know whut biscuit was. All de slaves on de plantation got vegetables from de Bosse's garden. We never went to church, or no place – didn' know it was such a thing. You know none of the white folks didn't want the niggers to get out, they was afraid they would learn somethin'. They made my Ma have babies all de time; she was sellin' the boys and keepin' the gals.

"Her old brother was a doctor. He would give us pills when we got sick. I remember one day one of the mens had lock-jaw. That ol' woman made a fly blister, and put on dat poor nigger and let it stay until it blistered. Then took a stiff brush and roughed over dat sore place an' when she did dat nigger hallowed and his jaws come unlocked.

"After I was free I picked shrimp, worked in the Dago gardens, washed an' ironed for de white folk. Ise too ol' to do any thing now – been lookin' for the Governor to give me some money, but he aint yet."

Maud Wallace

Harrison Camille (Colored)

Bayou St. John, Old Spanish Road

First road to the right, near black bridge.

Interviewed Jan. 9th. & 11th. 1940

Harrison Camille, and his wife, Harriet, live in a squalid shack on a side road off Bayou St. John. He is quite old, eye sight and hearing bad and cannot walk very far. Harriet, who has been nick-named "Wine", can no longer work, but every morning, rain or shine, she takes her little basket on her arm, and goes on down the Bayou Road on the Esplanade, selling a little parsley or onions, if she has them, and begging from everyone she meets, bringing home the cold food or pennies if she gets them, in this way they live.

"I was born in Batatia, Jefferson Parish. I made eighty years gone last May, twenty-seven.

I came here as a little boy, I lived with my uncle. I lived on the Bayou twenty years, Good God, I done all kinds work. I helped pull down the Maison Blanche Place, you know how long ago that is; I worked in the sugar factory, when it was by where the courthouse is now, that's a long time, but I'se got a good rememberers. Then I used to sell moss and made out well, but I ain't done anything for four years, they say I'm too old, but old people got to live, ain't they?

My wife Harriett, she used to make a day's work, but she had a bad spell seven years ago, so she can't work. We married in 1882, and she do all she can, but if it wan't for some of the good white folks we know we'd be dead, just starve to death, but there's some mighty fine white folks.

I been a Christian fifty years, a Baptist--Yes Ma'm, I was Baptized in the Lake; I like all kinds 'Ligion, though, but you got to know Christ, make friends with Him first.

I don't remember the war, but I can remember the soldiers, when they came back into the city, after it's over, and all the beautiful ladies throw flowers to them from their balcony.

Marie La Foe (Voe)--My God--Yes I know that woman. I don't mean I know her to talk to her, but I know her well enough to keep away from her. I don't want nothing to do with her, she's got a devil in her. I'se got a good rememberers and I know that woman.

What did she do? My God Almighty, she do everything--No, she don't kill nobody and she don't cure nobody--but she got a dozen devils in her.

I seen her, she a brown skin woman, weighed two hundred, three hundred pounds. I knew her brother in Bataria, when I come to New Orleans he say he want me to meet his sister--but I don't want nothing to do with her, not that woman.

She dress in fine clothes you know, dem rich white womens give her plenty money. I don't know for what, but I know she can do plenty things for them. She got a hundred devils in her. She got drowned maybe forty years ago, just the other side Spanish Fort, on St. John's Day, they burning fires and she giving one of her big dances, out there--My God, No, I don't go, but they tell me she danced till they kick up the sand.

She used to give dances at St. Bernard and Robertson, the Hoo-Doo Creole dance they called it and charge twenty five cents to all colored people. I never did go, but once I peep through a crack and see them. I say Good God-- Creole Dance--they beating on

barrels with sticks, yelling and singing, and the dancing--Good God--Good Luck they be dancing on somebody's head.

Now this was way before the Spanish American War. I lived at the corner of Columbus and *Perrier. There was a young man and girl going to marry, but he didn't love her and didn't want to marry her, but that Marie La Voe, she makes him marry her. I don't know how, but I keep away from that woman. You can't do bad and good too, can you?

I'll tell you one thing she do, she makes people fall in love, live together, marry-- then she separate them--that what she do—I tell you that woman got thousand devils in her. She a devil herself, and I've got a good rememberer.

* must be Columbus & Prieur

Lizzie Candler

Negro

2097 Conti -

Jan. 25, 1940

Lizzie – just one of the thousands of N.O. negroes declares she is happy because “I lives with God an’ I tries to be worthy of His love.”

“I’se here now settin’ in His bressed sunshine, jus a studyin’ ‘bout Him.”

Negroes had no use for pore white folks’ – Trash they called them. Pore white trash’ was the way in which they were always spoken of- An I uster get behin’ my husban’ at the plow-horse. An’ I worked in rice-field and cut cane – an’ planted it too.- In fall of the

“I believe country people have a broader vision than city folks. God can speak to them better, an’ they can hear His voice. An’ ev’rybody seems happier. Things uster be different too & people didn’t have so many worries in olden times.

“Me I’m jus’ a country – born “nigger.” In olden times they uster call us colored people – We didn’t mind that but we couldn’t stan’ nigger. -- Now every one says negro an’ that’s all right.”

Religion

Religion used to be difrent too. People were proud of it and always seekin’ to get more – Now they go to church mostly to criticize what each other wears – and to congregate and hear gossip. Of course not all, but some. We used to sing and moan.

Does moanin’ help you in your endeavor to follow Christ, we asked.

It surely does, she replied, it helps the spirit along.

When you are in pain it helps along lots jus’ to moan and groan lak’ I say –

When I was young I went to dances – not wicked dances like they have now but the kind that made you happy – the Firginny reel and things like that –

“I could dance with a glass of water on my head & cross my leg over a bottle at the same time – No mam’ ‘taint hard, no more’n balancin’ a heavy basket on your head” –

Here a neighbor came in and not to be outdone remarked:

“I could tote on my head one bucket of water & one in each han’ and walk miles & never spill a drop.

Year I put seed – cane in groun’ & in spring took it up & planted hit. When time, I cut hit & then I toted hit on my shoulders an’ put it on the carrier. –

They paid me 60¢ a watch – A watch was from 8 o’clock in the mornin’ until 12 o’clock dinner time – Then if we wanted more work -- hit was from 12 to 6 – supertime - 60¢ more – We could work as much as we wanted to.

“I went from that to be a chambermaid on steamboat. I worked on the “Trulo” which run from Newlleans to New Iberia – The ‘Little Gem’; the ‘St. Jaames’ running from N.O. to Natchez, ‘America’ from N.O. to Vicksburg an’ Greenville, Miss.”

I got \$3.00 wages for trips an the bes’ board an’ sleepin’ in the worl’ – I made between \$6.00, or \$7.00 in tips. Sometime ladies wanted me to do a little wishin’ and they paid me liberally.

The boat had hits own baker, & pastry-cook & the best cooks that could be found an’ Lor’ how people did eat! Ev’rybody was served separately in little dishes. They had chicken an’ roast, potato salad, lettuce salad, french-fried potatoes, cream-puffs, oysters every way you could call for Ev’rythin’ in eatin lives, stuff-peppers, egg-plants. After that I settled down to keepin house an’ raisin’ chickens an’ pigs.

had walls but that's the way they tell it:

Well, one day a 'darkey' was comin' along – he got caught in place an' looking up saw a big sign:

“Read & run & don't let sundown ketch you here.”

He was waitin' for train when he was caught & carried to the pen. They looked at him as a curiosity, some had never seen a negro – and found that he could talk, that he was a livin' person.

Some one said – He's a negro – He can call figures at dance tonight.

“Can you call figures,

'Yes,' he said.

'Cordeon & fiddler?

“Yes”

Well, you kin stay –

That night when he called figures, he said:

'Ev'rybody swing, swing to your right & swing to your lef' an' he kep' callin,' 'now you ketch your pardner, I ketch mine. Ev'rybody squat. Back to your right – git back to your lef' with that he got out – a free man – He wasn't goin' to take to chances,

But people don' moan & groan lak they once did – They gittin' too dignified – It's a bad sign when they let goes the spirit.

Here's a riddle they uster ask”

'Its on the earth, beneath the sky but not upon the tree?

Who can guess? Ev'rybody take a trial

Nobody can guess? Its simple. Here's the answer: A knot on the tree.

What's this?

'Not in heaven, nor in hell then its not where where human mortals dwell?

Ans: When Jonas was commanded to go to _____, Jonas went contrary way, & he was on the ship's bottom – a stumblin' block

The sailing of the ship couldn't run. All wanted to know why. What was the matter?

They looked for Jonas & found him fas' asleep. The sailors cast him overboard & the whale swallowed him whole.

The whale spewed Jonas on a bar of sand & then Jonas was still contrary.

There was a vine growin' over him while he was asleep – because he had never went to do what God commanded him to do

Ex-Slave

Manda Cooper Col,

Cut off Road Algiers

I was born in North Carlonia on Jessie Jinks plantation. I was in the field pulling the hoe when my young Master was sent to war. Mr. Jessie was my older Master young Jessie was one of my Bosses too. I am over a hundred yrs old. Miss Shad was my Mistress They were allus good to me I never did get a whipping but I have seen some the nigger beat until they would be bleeding I never did have no children I was sold from my maw all my brothers and sister was sold The man that bought me said he was going to bring us where the Money grew on trees and you no what that was? Picking Moss. That Man kept me until peace declared. Martha, Adline Annie, Carlina, and Tilda are all the sister I can remember I just sit here and wonder some times what become of them I have no kin no where here. We allus had plenty to eat during slavery time we sho' did work hard for what us got tho. I can remember my Mistress amking me a dress and it was yellow made the dye out of green pecans I worked in the wheat fields, Tobacco, Rye barley and oats, we raised all kinds of vegetables and fruit, we did not work so hard in the winter time for it was to cold the old Mistress would have the cellar stored with grub for the Winter, I seen times when you would wake up the snow would be up to the door. We did not have all that many clothes to wear so we had to stay in, after I come here and was sot free I got married just common law not like they marry now. I had to work in the rice fields cain plantation and done every thing a woman could do. But I never did have no children you can ask any of the white folks around here and they will tell you I have all ways been a good nigger I never went to school never did go to church until after peace

declared If the Mistress caught any of the Nigger thinking about calling on the Lord they were whipped. I live right here in this one room shack by my self I have one God child he is sixty yrs old he comes around and cooks for me he is all cripple up he useto be a cook on a boat, He ain't give me no breakfast are dinner yet he says it takes time to cook any thing right. The welfare is taking care of me God only noes what I would do if it was not for that. Hard as I have worked during my life was a slave and every thing looks like I could be some where that I could be taken care of but the peoples don't want to bother with old folks I carry a little Insurance to bury me with I no when I was young, People did not bury like they do now, all the slaves were buried on the plantation I remember going to one funeral during slavery days. The boss he got up and said a few words they throwed the dirt in and all of us went back to the fields hoeing My Maw never worked in the fields she had a baby every year she had twens one time, so the old Master taken care of her she bought him more Money having children than she could working in the field None of us had the same father they would pick out the biggest Nigger and tell her they wanted a kid by him She had to stay with him until she did get one When I got old enough to Breed and never could have no children I stayed in the field The old Mistress would all ways have two are three barrels of apple cider in the cellar made out of the peeling and cores. When the young boss come from war they would have a big party for him but us Nigger Never did no what they done we never did have no meat to eat only once a month they said, meat was not good for you. The first money I ever made I bought me a piece of Salt Meat and eat that with turnip greens and corn Bread. I have asthma now have to smoke fig leaves I am so poor until my bones are pushing threw the skin I gess they will push on threw befo I die.

Breux - McKinney

(11A)

EX-SLAVE INTERVIEW

Mrs. Catherine Cornelius, an ex-slave who is reputed to be 103 years old, "born in a log cabin" in Smithfield, a large plantation in west Louisiana. She said that the location of the plantation would now be about twelve miles above Baton Rouge.

Catherine is an inmate of the Lafon Old Folks' Home, (Protestant) 3501 S. Robertson St. She is comely and surprisingly energetic, dark complexioned, and weighs about ninety pounds. She wore a black dress with a blue and white dotted apron tied around her waist, black tignon with slippers to match. The only apparent infirmity from which she suffers is a slight deafness, this being due to her age. For a person so advanced in years, Mrs. Cornelius has an unusually keen mind. She has apparently led a quiet and sane life, and strange to say, not in the least superstitious, having no belief in voodoo, not even being familiar with the name of Marie Laveau.

The interview which, due to the cold weather, was held in the dining room is as follows:

"Ah was a slave an raised on de Smithfield plantation an came to N'Awlins in de surrender of Abe Lincoln an bin hyar ever since. Lawd, Ah was a grown woman when dat war broke out. Ah wurked in de field cuttin cane. Ma ma and pa an de whole family was dere too. Ma ma an pa came from Richmond, Virginia. Ma ma worked in de field an my ma was a lady's maid. Dere names was Frederick and Nancy Brown. Ah kin still remember mah ma's funeral. Dey sho gave her a nice funeral. All of de slaves on de

plantation had a nice funeral. De preacher on de place, Brudder Aaron, wurked on de plantation cuttin' cane whenever dey had any services fo him to make dey jus call him out of de field. De slaves burial grounds was a gud place back of de plantations. No, we no markers or head stones but we planted willow trees to knoe de place whar one of yo kins was buried. Dey jus used wooden boxes fo coffins an dey was made by de carpenters on de place. De bodies was carried in carts an de odders walked. Whenever anybody died dey all was let off from work to go to the funeral. De hymn dey sang fo mah mother's funeral went lak dis:

"Back from de doleful sound
 Mah ears intend to cry
 De livin' men come view de ground
 Prince say de clay must be ya bed
 Inspite of all ya toils
 De clay must be ya bed."

Reverend Heywood who is in charge of the home was in the room when Catherine sang the hymn. He very obligingly got an old hymn book which he said "is well over a hundred years old". The hymn she sang was in it. See copy attached to manuscript.

"De plantation sat on de ribber. Dere was mo den a hundred slaves on it. De cabins was white an dere was one family to a cabin. What did dey fo us when we was sick? Why, we had a nice hospital in de place with a Negro nurse an mid-wife. An not only Doctor Lyles but a doctor from town tended us. Doctor Lyles would call us an give us money on Christmas an holidays an when de showboats would cum to town.

He'd giv us fifty cents. Shucks, we didn't need no money in dem days. We got everything we wanted to eat. We had plenty of clothes to wear. We had everything de white folks had, all de meat an vegetables we wanted. Dey gav us de goods, cottonade, that was made on de place an we made our clothes. De shoes was heavy work shoes an dey was made on de place too. We had Saturday an Sunday off but we had to go to church. Saturday was de dqy we did our washing, sewin and cleaning up de house. Dat was de day fo ourselves. We all had certain tasks to do. If we finished dem ahead of time de rest of de day was ours. Christmas week we had a week's holiday. Sho, we had gud times. We had singin, dancin an visitin among ourselves an on udder plantations. We had big times. Ah was named after mah young Mistress, Miss Catherine. All of de slaves was christened in de church. We nebber had no ribber baptism on our place. De church in town dat we went to was called de Episcopalian church. We had no special days to git married. We jest said dat we wanted to git married an Doctor Lyles married us. Yeah, we had a little celebration among us. We had sweet cakes an a little frolic. No, de people from de big house didn't come down to our cabins an our celebrations. Dey would come down sometimes to see us but on no special day. No, we didn't have no schools on de plantation.

Doctor Lyles was de son-in-law of Mrs. Smith who had anudder plantation in Bayou Sara. She raised cotton. On our plantation we raised mostly cotton, sugar and corn. We had a sugar house right on de plantation. If we was bad dey would whip us an put us in stocks but we nebber had no trouble on our plantation. You know it was a big plantation cause Ah remember well dey Ah was standin on de levee when General Butler was on his way to the siege of Vicksburg. He said 'Girls, what town is dis?' Ah

said, 'Dis aint no town, dis a plantation.' Dey camped de furst night, de sold iers slept under de bell. De nex' day dey went up de ribber. Lawd, when dey came Ah didn't know what dat was comin up de ribber. Ah knew it wasn't no house or showboat but Ah didn't think it was a war boat, cos Ah had nebber seen one.

"Mah master put up a white flag but dem Yankees tore it down. De missus was in Turnbull an was askin dat dey send her niggers to her. Dey took us to Bayou Sara to hide us in tents on de plantation dere but de Yankees found us. Mah boss had horses as fast as lightnin. Dey would fly jus lik black buzzards. Ah remember well. Mah boss was in his buggy when de Yankees came. When he saw dem he started to run from his buggy but fell. De doctor went to him but he said, 'Dis man is dead.' De Yankees took laods of money dat mah missus an master had. It was carried in iron safes. De Yankees took all dere money to Port Hudson in som kind of wagon. Ah was right in de middle of de war. Ah hyar de guns and de bullets. Dey went lak dis 'pop, pop, pop, pop.' De Yankees gav us money. It was de first time dat Ah had seen Yankee money. Ah didn't know what to do with dat Yankee money. Ah lef mines in de stomp of a tree but Ah sho wish dat Ah had it now. De Yankees brought us hyar in a boat. We wus first to de old barracks, dats de furst place dey took us. Mah furst husband was Wylie Smith. He wurked in de field. Ah bin married agin a second time an got a daughter but Ah don know whar she is. Mah brother, Beverly Brown, died in de war. Ah nebber want to see anudder war."

Note: Because Mrs. Cornelius was becoming fatigued we ended the interview and promised to call again.

* * * * *

A VOICE FROM THE TOMBS

Hark! From the tombs a doleful sound;
My ears, attend the cry:
Ye living men, come view the ground where you must shortly lie.

“Princes, this clay must be your bed,
In spite of all your towers;
The tall, the wise, the reverend head, must be as low as ours.”

Great God! Is this our certain doom?
And are we still secure?
Still walking down to the tomb, and yet prepared no more?

Grant us the power of quickening grace,
To fit our souls to fly;
Then when we drop this dying flesh, we'll rise above the sky.

Isaac Watts.

(Typist: A. W. Phillips)

McElwee

6/10/40

Ed. De Buiew,

Saloan street,

Mc Donoghville.

"My pa told me about things dat happen in slavery days, I don' 'member nothin' 'bout et, my self. I was born at La Pourche in 1861. My ma died 'bout three hours after I was born.

"Pa allus said they made my ma work to hard. I was born in de fields. He said ma was hoein' - she tol' de ol' driver she was sick, he tol' her to jes' hoe right on.

Soon I was born, an' my ma die a few minutes after dey brung her to the house. Dey even dug holes and put her in dem to whip her befo' I was born, so my pa said. Pa said he tried to run away and dey caught him in de woods and almos' beat him to death.

"I had five brothers, to my knowin', and four sisters. Dey are all dead but one; God knows where he is at - I could not say.

"We raised cane on de plantation; cotton, 'taters and corn. 'Member the firs' work I ever is done was to carry water to de fields. An' set out in de corn patches, and mind de crows outten de corn - sat there all day, too, with no hat on my head an' farely no clothes on.

"Never went to school one day in my life - was to buisy working, an' besides dare was no schools like today.

"I jined de church 'fore I ever token and got married. We had a big church weddin', and had a big supper cake an' wine. Me an' de ole woman allus got along good.

"Oh no, I don' know but one bad luck - dats to Miss Hebben an' go to Hell.

"Oh yes, I believes in de spirits an' see dem very often. I knows one time when I firs' got married. I had been to de neighbors house. Was after dark when I come back - had to pass by de grave yard. 'Fore I got near de grave yard I heard somethin' dat went like a baby cryin',so I listen. I decide it was in dere so I broke loose and run. I had to run about two miles. I was so nervous I did not know what to do.

"When I gets to de house dey wanted to know whut was wrong. I told dem what I heard - dat baby in de grave yard on de hill. Dey all said, "you just thought that." An' you know, Miss, I could not sleep all night.

"You know whut it was? Well, dey had dug a grave dat eveing for a baby dat died an' was gwine be buried de next day, an' a little goat had fell in de grave an' could not get out, an' it was hollerin' jes' like a real chile. De folks tol' me about de baby goat fallin' in de grave or I would have allus believed I heard a baby.

"We useto would go an' dig for treasure an' de spirits would git after us. I know one night we were diggin' and' come to the top of de box. De spirit was so bad till us run dat one of de mens fell dead - us had to go back after him de next day. You know, Miss, de reason money is so hard to find, when dey bury it - dey allus take some body with dem an' ask if dey will mind de money. "Sho!" dey gwine - say, "Yas!" an' dey kill him an' put him in dare with de money.

"I knows one other time I had a good race - I was climbin" over a fence an' a board got hung in my belt. I was scared any how I had already heard a moan, so I started

runnin'. The faster I would run, of course, de board was beatin' mo faster. I was too scared to look back and jes' befo' I got to de house de board dropped, and an' I looked back an' seed whut it was. I was almos' dead, I had run so fast. After dat I made up my min' I was not gwine run any more.

"All of my chileun is dead, I guess I won' be here much longer, for I sho' is feeble now. But de Law'd has been mighty good to me, an' so is de Govenor. If dey cut out my little money I don' no what I will do.

"One time, durin' the night dare was a new-born baby put on my doorsteps in a box. It was freezin' col'. I heard de baby cryin' an' went to the door, got a light and saw whut it was. It was a white baby, too. Dey had it naval cord tied with a piece of red calico, an' it was wrap up in a olepiece of quilt.

"I knew I couldn' have the little thing on de poach, so us took care of it till daylight an' sent and got de shariff an' went in search fer de baby's mother. So dey got wind of a gal about four miles away det was gwine have a baby, so de shariff went down dare, an' of course dey lied about it. She was settin' on de bank of a pond, fishin'. Dey said nobody dare had had a baby, so de sheriff tol' dem he was gwine get a doctor to come out and fin' out if air one of dem had a baby, so dey got scared an' de gal dat was settin' out fishin' tol' dem she had de chile. So de sheriff made her keep dat baby - told her if anythin' should happen to it she would be sent to jail. So dat body lived to be about five years ol'. Dey would come out very often to see about de baby. It token sick an' died but it was not because it was not' tended to.

"My pa said one time wat one of de slaves tol' him dat he look under de Missus' dress. "I said, 'Well, what did she do?' He said 'Nothin,' so I decided I would try it

myself." So one day when she was out in de yard he snatched up her dress, and dey taken him out almos' beat him to death. So he said to de Nigger, after, 'Why is it you peeped under the Missus' dress an' she did not have you whipped, an' I did, an' dey almos killed me?' He said, 'Well, How did you do?' I tol' him I jes' reached down an' pulled her dress up. He said, 'Well, I did not do like that - I peeped under her dress on the clothes line. No wonder you got the Hell beat out of you" '."

11 A

Flossie McElwee

B. M. Dietz - White

Back Highway

6/5/40

Slavery Days

West Virginia was my birthplace. The year of 1853. Been here for forty years. I saw plenty of the Civil War. Was near seven different battles. When I left it, Virginia, I never did return. Married here and made it my home.

My father was once very wealthy, had plenty of slaves and made big money, but the Yankees made a couple of raids through and destroyed most everything.

I walked six miles to school, me and my sister. I remember one day how I picked her up, and carried her over a cliff, and stayed there until the Yankees passed by.

About three weeks before peace was declared, my father bought 35 slaves mostly for pity's sake. The man that owned them was so mean, he would beat them until they were bleeding, and then wash them off with salt water. The oldest slaves stayed with my father, he buried all of them. He give each one ten acres of land - he told them they could go or stay but the most of the oldest ones stayed. They always worked for my father, he never did pay them, only the land he gave when they finished their work. They would come and work for my father.

Niggers of them days are not like today, it was 'Yes, sir! No sir! If you met one, he would give you the road, but now they think they are as good as the white.

Sometimes, during the war, we would have plenty to eat; sometimes, eating was very short. I have seen my Ma have the dirt dug out of the smoke house and boiled to get salt to cook with. They would parch corn and grind up for coffee. My pa would give big

log rollings after the war was over, and get 75 acres of land cleared in one day, have a big dinner, barbecued beef or mutton, and a big barn dance, that night. Sometimes, they would dance all night until ten o'clock the next day. The dance would be in the hay loft. They would dance the peavine, Virginia Reel, and other square dances. You don't see many to-day.

People them days enjoyed themselves. They were in no hurry to get to a place and after they arrived they were in no hurry to leave. I have been ten miles in ox wagon visiting neighbors, spend the nite or several days. Nowadays you don't know the people that live on the other side of the house from you, must less spend a few days.

The nigger was not allowed no pleasure as long as slavery lasted. The old man I was telling you about, beating the niggers so, he was a infidel. He had one old nigger that he whipped all the time for praying. After he would have the driver to whip him, then he would be given a bath in salty water, but after all that did not stop the old nigger from praying. He had been praying for his Master all the time. So one nite, the old man took sick with the cramp colic. He almost died. He was so bad off he told his wife to get some one quick to do something for him. She called the old nigger and when he come in he got down and prayed for his Master. The next morning, the old boss was better, so that very old nigger changed his master.

He never did make the old nigger work anymore and he stayed there with his Master as long as he lived. He was buried in the family graveyard.

When I was a young boy, I wore long shirts until I started to school. The first dressed up clothes I had was Jean pants, a pleated shirt and a high hat.

Arguedas-McKinney

December 6th - '38

Francis Doby-

1817 St. Ann St.

Francis Doby is one hundred years old, she remembers coming over on a boat and standing on a block with her ma and her Grandma. Her Grandma was sold to city folks while her and her Ma were taken to de Opelousas, sold to Massa Degruy, he sho was a hard Massa, an use to beat his colored people wid a whip. Francis was a lixxx lil bit a girl den an when her own Ma was whip (cause her Ma was sassy an hard_heded) she use to git plenty beating and de Massa ,he use to stan right near an cry : "25 lashes to Tinette," an den Tinette would be jist thrown on de groun, an lashed, and Francis use to hide back of a tree and ever time, de whip fall on her ma, she use to jump high, most as high as de tree and hollow : Oh Mommon.... Mommon.... den sometimes de Massa would be hearin her an he says like dat to Francis : You lil devil you... go in de camp.... go back wid de oder lil niggahs... but no... Francis run to hide back of anodder tree and she heah de whip agin... Whew.... an hollow : Oh Mommon.... Mommon.... 'cause she use to feel all dem blows heself, a-fallin on her back. Her Ma had plenty chilens, Oh... may be 20 or 25 chilens... so dey don make her work in de field... no she work in de house 'caue she always eder was nursing a nigger baby or carryin one. De Massa he had two kind of niggahs, one for de breedin and de oder for de workin in de fields. Well Francis Ma was de kind dey keeps for makin chilens an used to stay an do house work or somfin easy in de house wid de white folks. Out in de camp, (de place where de niggah live) out yondah in de Camp

near de cane fields, de ole ole women too old to work and too old to make de babies ,dey stay an mind de young chilens so dat de ma kin all work in de xxxxx fields and dey feed dem an all so when de Ma come back all dey got to do is to push 'em in de bed, all of dem in de same bed. An dey use to eat good to , grits, an cornbread, an xxxxxxxx pork meat, big big pieces Of pork meat wid sweet potatoes, a an corn, an turnips, carrots, cabbage all a comin from de patch. Syrup an molasses...an good coffee too better coffee dan you kin git to day

An den when Francis wa bigger she wanted to dance Oh....how she could beat dem fxxxx footes on de flooh....Bommm Boom Bomm doun doun doun.....

But dey ain't got no music...so one day de old man dey call Antoine, he was so ole dat dey keep 'eem in de Camp to amuse de chilens.. well he says like dat one day, he says Watch you all...wait till de Massa kill one old cow, I make you all a drum an beat on dat same drum like dat...Bou domm doum doum doum ...boum doun doundoun....So one day ,he come in de Camp wid de hide ans says to us : I got de hide..an watch me make dat drum. .So he take a big barrel, empty barrel an tack dar skin right xxx tight ,tight, tight. Den he don straddle dat drum an beat on it.. and fist ting you know we was a dancin, a beatin de flooh wid de footes....Boum Boumboum Bomb and de drum keep on a beetin.. Chile we dance till midnight. To finish de ball we say : XxxxxBalancez Calinda ..an den twist an turn an say agin :

Balancez Calinda... and jist turn around den de ball was over.

(Turn around Calinda)

Den old Granma come along an sing dis for us to go to sleep :

Sizette, te ein bell femme

/ Sizette is a beautiful woman

Mo chere Amie-Aie.. .

Ah dear one..Aie Aie....

Mo achete ban-ban

I buy pretty things

Ce pou nou marie.

For us to get married.

Den we use to play :Ti Balai (Little broom)

We use to pick an ole broom dat lay around in de Camp,an all de chilens sit on de grass in a circle, one of dem take de lil broom an sing ,going around outside de circle of de chilens.

Tringue,Tringue ti balai

I drag,I drag a small broom

Ti mouton la queu coupe

Lil lam wid its tail cut off

Cha po ti Bam bail

Lookin for its tail all around

Cha po ti Bam bail..

Lookin for its tail all around.

Den, dey drop dat piece of ole broom jis back of some one, an keep on agoin saying :
Cha po ti Bam bail... Cha po ti Bam Bail. When one of dem chilen notice like dat ,dat de gal goin around had done los de broom,ali de chilen begun to look around in de bac an de one who find de broom got to git up quick, and take de broom an chase de gal doin de runnin an hit her wid it. Den every body sits on de groun agan and de one what find de broom den its her turn to be goin aroun an aroun.

Grandma use to make us scare wid de story of de "Gros LouLou " (Bxxxx Big Loulou,or Big Wolf)

De Lou-lou was a big wolfe, wid big shiny eyes, dat roam arou de Camp at night. For to eat all dem chilens dat bes bad durin de day. An Grandma says : What for you got big eyes Lou-Lou ? He syas :Because I won to look at you. Den agin : What for you got big feet ? He says Because I wan to ketch you ? Wat for you got big nose ? Because I

want to smell you .What for you got big mouth ? Because I want to EAT YOU UP...
an when Grandma says like dat :EAT YOU UP ..we all scram undah de bed, undah de
chair under de tables an unde de rockin chair...Den Grandma says : Getting cold in heah..
Chile run git me some wood down younday by de shed...but dey ain t no one want to go
out after hearin about dat wolfe. .no ..not me..we says to Grandma den she gits mad an
stamp her foot on de groun an says : Go out I says. 'Cause I show whip you wid dat
same strap hagin on dis yeah wall ,neah dat dooh...Chile,,we run out,lookin in de dark for
to see if dat Lou-Lou was aroun us.

But all de tales was not scary like dat one, dere was de one 'bout de rabbit an de Coon.
Dis sho make you laugh Chile, 'cause dat rabbit is sho smart. .an de Coon he so foolish.
Well one day de rabbit found a mud hole,full of water. When no one fool 'roun de hole
,well de watah was jis as cleah as crystal, but when some one done fool wid de water it
was muddy an black. Dere was an ole crawfish livin in dat hole,an de Coon he eats
crawfish, but de rabbit he don eat no kina meat,he jist want to drink cleah watah.For
some time he seen dat when he come early in de mornin dat watah was all muddy an he
stops an says like dat,jist a thinkin : Some one been foolin wid my hole an done made it
all muddy. Now who dat a foolin wid my mud hole.....

One day, he made watch. .right by de hole..gettin up soon in de mornin and hide heself
under tick bushes, and wait. What he sees hein ? He sees Massa Coon comin down de
road all spry an happy. What he done Massa Coon ? He jist sits by de hole, watching for
de crasfish to come out. Den he puts his paw in de hole..and de crawfish who bes hungry
for a good breakfast, come out. .an sees dat paw, an when it come out, de paw moves
further an f urde..and when de crawfish is most out. Hop...de coon jist swallows de

crasfish..den de water in de mud hole is all muddy...De rabbit says like dat : Ah ha
 Massa Coon ,I ketch you foolin wid my mud hole...I knows now, you de one foolin wid
 dat same hole out heah. So...de next mornin, he come befoh sunrise...hippity hop..a
 skippin and a jumpin...a skippin an a jumpin...an shure enough,he sees Massa coon at his
 same old tricks. He jumps on de Coon..but de Coon is slick too..he run away an hide in a
 small hole in a big oak tree an hollow : Mistah rabbit can't catch me.. Mister Rabbit can't
 git in dat hole...Miste Rabbit is too fat...an de rabbit ,he show is mad.... he turn aroun to
 go home..a walking slowly..not spry like he was in de mornin a jumpin an a skipp in. (3).
 Now I got to git to de grocery.. to make stew for my lunch..I show hate to buy stuff dese
 days wid all dat boderation of tokeens...every time you turn aroun you got to geeve
 tokeen...if you ain't got no tokeen what dey do hein ? Dey take a cent..an what dey give
 yo for dat cent ? ...four tokeens... dat's all.

“ You get ten tokens for one cent. “

Ah now..not aroun heah in dis neighborhood. everyting high aroun heah. Dey even raise
 de price on pork meat..what you git for tenx cents pork Hein ? A lil small piece like my
 two fingers. ...Ah ..on de plantation...we got all de pork meat we want...an de old folks
 used to cook dat wid sweet potatoes.. an coffee.. nowadays de coffe you buy is jist
 water..dat's all. But....dey use to cook on big stoves wid plenty wood an coal nobody
 fool wid dem oxxx cail stove...dem ting dangerous..You tink I would cook wid dem oil
 stoves for dem to pop open ,in front of my stomick. ...No sir...dem ting too dangerous...I
 rader chop wood wid de ax..Thank God I still am spry for my age...an still ken swing de
 ax. I got all dat wood from a white man what broke down an old rotten house on
 Claiborne. I used to wash an iron for 'eem an he says “ Grandma..I don forgit you.I send

you wood for to cook wid. You see every one like me for I nevah sass nobody. You see me sittin on dat chair in front of you....well I nevah sass no one white or colored old or young. You see I was born wid a veil...so I see ghosts.es Dey come in an dey go out....in de house an in de yard....dey jist pound on de wall like dat .. tree times...Boum.Boum,Boum..but me I nevah bodder 'em. Dey got der worrie and I got mine..t'aint no use to boddrer em.

De white folks raise me..I nevah was raise by no niggahs... I knows what I knows... when I was a chile I nevah used to sit aroun de grown people an heah what dey had to say :.... Dey tell me : Gowan away chile...yo got no business to hear all dat... an I goes away. But to day...you see chilens, jist a listening to de conversation of de grown folks and what de grown folks talk to day...All de words you heah is : Pendick,wouns.voraies...bonsils...all about de insides. Chile what de doctor can't take out of you to day...dey scrape it wid a rake. Dat's all you heah dem women speakin 'bout. Cut dis an scrape dat.... an dem young chilnens standin taking all in. It show makes me made,I could ring their necks you see me here .I says to dem I says : Gowan away from you Ma..you got no business to know about your insides at your age...what is inside of you is God's business..we got notin to do wid dat."

An de way de young girls is carryin wid de young boys. I seen 'em ,coming out of church dey stays close togedder 'against the wall of de church or de school a talkin ..low shoo. .shoo... shoo. ... What dey is saying..Notin good... Dey don pray God to day .. all dy got in der heads is love..dem young people..dat's all. I ain't been raised like dat..no suh.... Befoh de soldiers come down heah wid de red white an blue...we used to belong to de Massa... of course some white folks were kine to dere niggahs an some were bad..always

whippin...whiipn When dey gives de whip . all de lil coons in de camps used to hide
 an see de whippin... an I remember, dat when de moders carried a baby..dey used to whip
 'em too, but dey use to dig a hole in de groun..so dere stomach could jist fit in dat hole,
 an dey lay flat on dere belly. De Mass a don went to whip de pooh lil niggah baby , dat
 ain't born yet ? He can do no harm ? So de women used to lay flat on de groun, wid dere
 stomach fittin in de big hole an dey gits de whip on der back an on dere behinds. On
 New Years day, de Massa,he xxxx stand on his gallery and wid a big trumpet he make
 noise : Ta ratata. .Ta ratata. .an all de lil coons from de Camp come down to git de
 "picayons " ..what we know 'bout picayons.. all we used to do is to turn it aroun in our
 hands an say : Look what de Massa give us a picayon... to buy what ? Nottin to buy on a
 plantation, no candy, no cakes no notin. But some time de banana wagon come or de
 white dago man sellin pom cake. We run to de wagon to buy wid de picayons.. an I
 remember ,I give my picayon for bananas and when I don ate de bananas, I seen de
 picayon was gone, an I started to cry, I cry to my Grandma : My picayon is gone, I got no
 moh picayon ...

" Don be crazy chile, ain't you done give dat picayon for de bananas ?"

Yes but I done ate de bananas an now I ain't got no picayons an no bananas.

" Well what you tink. . .de bananas bees in your xxx stomach. .you don ate it. You sho
 is crazy chile. "

Michinard - July, 1940

11A

Slave Tale

I interviewed a colored woman named Frances Doby. Frances was born in Opelousas in 1845, of parents from the Congo. Like people of Guinea, she is very tiny, the reason for her being known as Guinea.

Frances had sixteen children, all dead. When she came to New Orleans with her parents, she was put in an asylum in Carrollton. She said they had followed the Yankee soldiers. Her mother died on her arrival here, from the result of drinking water from canteens. Frances' mother, named Henriette Alexander, was a slave of Lusius Dupré. Mr. Dupré was a good "mars", but sometimes he had to whip the slaves for disobedience. When a pregnant woman was to be punished, a hole was dug in the ground, her abdomen placed in the hole and her back exposed, she was given 25 lashes. She then said in Creole:

"Quand les Yankee rentre daus les quarters, mo tande le cor, tout mounne suivi yé, yé di si vous ante oli, vini c'est comme ca; Daus la campagne ye te tout frere soeur cousin cousinne chacun te gagnain so l'habitation." (When the Yankees entered the quarters, we heard the bugle, we all followed they said if you all want to follow come on. It's that way; in the country they were all brothers, sisters and cousins each one had his plantation).

Frances is a wonderful person so lively, so pleasant; when I entered her kitchen, which was immaculately clean, I found this wonderful person cooking red beans and rice, on a wood stove. She claimed wood-stoves were the best of all for fine cooking, and

right then and there as she conversed with me she made some banana fritters, which were delicious. She insisted on my eating one, I accepted, not to hurt her feelings. The whole neighborhood talks about her marvelous disposition and her indefatigable energy.

Frances told me the secret of her long life was that she was always cheerful always in an amiable mood.

Posey

Martin Dragney (Negro)

1408 Dumaine St.

Interviewed 2/25/39

Submitted 2/27/39.

A BIOGRAPHYAS TOLD BY HIMSELF

"I was born May 11th 1860, at 11 o'clock in the morning. That's what my Grandma told me and I never forgot it – for she told it so often and she lived to be 114 years old. – and she was a midwife."

"My Pa's Pa was named Martin Dragney and he was never a slave. They used to call him a free-man-of color, and he had lots of money."

"He was born in Little Chiapas in Mexico where his people were living. And he went around the country building gin-houses and upright mills for turning out rollers to grind sugar-cane and he made lots of money, for they needed those things in that day. And He learned all these things in Mexico where he was born and raised."

"And one time when he was in New York a vessel landed somewhere on the Hudson River. And the Holland Dutch had brought over a lot of negroes from Cape Town, Africa, which they had stolen. They seized them when they were totin water from the river and these Dutch people put them on a sailing vessel."

"In that time it took about six months to sail to this country, for they had to go round the Isthmus.

"And, these Dutch people sold their cargo to the Indians for 100 pounds of Tobacco each one – and my Grandpa bought my Grandma for \$100.00 and she was only

fourteen years old – and he brought her to New Orleans – and he told me that was the year after the Stars fell – and he said that people were running around crying and begging people to pray for them. White and colored, all alike – They thought it was Judgment Day.

THREE WIVES

“And my Grandpa put my Grandma with his other two wives in his house which he owned at No. 40 Roman St., the other side Girod Graveyard near the Basin.”

“And during the War my Pa and my Ma were separated and I remained with my Grandpa” –

BETRAYED BY SON

“And when the War came on the Yankees use to give us hard-tack – and we run to get it. We thought they was giving us cake.”

“And one time my Pa was hiding up a chimney and they called me and asked me where he was. I was only a little fellow and I didn't know any better so I told them. And they captured him and put him in battle at Mansfield, La.”

A SAILOR HE WAS

“And after I grew up I was in the sailor-life. I went on an iron-clad Brigatine where I stayed for 1 year and 18 months. It was a trading-vessel to East India, Bombay and Calcutta. It was hauling tea, hides and pearl rocks like they make teeth, buttons and such things out of.”

“Nineteen of us enlisted here in New Orleans and when time was up they didn't bring us back like they said, but left us in Philadelphia and we got the Chief of Police and

the Mayor to see if they couldn't make them pay our way back home. – They did too.

And we came in over the Chatanooga R. R. and we sure was glad to get back.”

“As a roustabout and common laborer – I used to make \$1.50 a day.”

“I married a silly young girl – and we had one child. And then she left me, said I was too old for her. And I was 31 years old – I never married again but I had three more children.”

“I ain't a member of any church but I like the Baptist best of all and maybe I'll get converted and join it. I don't know.”

“I never went to school so I have no education. But I used to count stock and keep a record, and I can count money without any mistake.”

“I never could sing so I don't know any songs. I was never a hand to go around much.”

“I used to go out fishing in Lake Pontchartrain, opposite Spanish Fort, and I would see those voodoo people dance for the white people – They paid them money to dance – the konk konk dance. They were only half dressed. They wore the britch-cloth and hollered and jumped about like they was crazy – and they had tambourines and drums and jawbones of jackasses.” –

“Now I'm on Relief and I pay rent for my room and live out the rest.”

---ooOoo---

Rebecca Fletcher, Negro – Aged 98

Posey,

1837 Iberville St.

8/21/40

11 A

Ex-Slave Interview.

Ninety-eight years, we tell Rebecca is a good age, more than the Biblical one.

“Yes’m hit is,” she replies. “I’ve been through a whole lot an’ I’m still livin’.

You don’ fin’ many people bo’n befo’ freedom.

“I wuz jus’ this mornin’ tellin’ my son’s wife how we made gravy without flour durin’ the War, it’s good for these young folks to know what we went through.”

“Well, we would like to know too, won’t you tell us?”

“Jus’ take yo’ meat an’ fry it, po’ water in it, cook grits to eat with water gravy an’ co’n bread. The reason they didn’t thicken it with flour is bekase there wasn’t any, an’ we had no bakin’ powder either, so we took co’n cobs an’ burn ‘em, an’ put the ashes in a jar an’ put water on top an’ put that in co’n bread, stid of bakin’-powder.

“Slaves had to go to fiel’ befo’ daybre’k and didn’t come home till after dark. Then they cooked dinner and lunch to take with ‘em nex’ day.

“The chil’ren were lef’ behin’, an’ ole woman had the care of ‘em and it was in a big kitchen, where she cooked and fed ‘em. That was in slavery times. After freedom, when the mothers worked for theyselves, they took the babies along to the fiel’s and put a piece of fat meat in a cloth and tied it roun’ like a tit. They put string to it an’ fas’ened it to the big toe, so’s if they tried to swaller it, their toe would jerk it out.

War.

“When the war came on they conscripted men to go fight, white men. Some didn’t want to go and they had they wives to hide ‘em under a bed or in a chim’ley or some place to keep from gwine to war.

“They didn’t have any automobiles then, they had a slave to drive ‘em in a kerrige. Long ‘bout that time, I heard people say dey wuz goin’ to have kerriges go without horses. I couldn’t on’erstant that, so I thought they meant that mules would take their places. But hit’s come to pass – an’ when I saw the fus’ one I got on my knees an’ said, ‘Lor’, Lor’, Thy ways are pas’ findin’ out.”

We told her that hundreds of years before even she was born, there was an old woman who made prophesies – and was known as “Mother Shipton.” Strange to say nearly every prediction had come to pass including this.

‘Carriages without horses will go,

In eighteen hundred and ninety-four.’

“Yes’m, that’s whut I heered talk of ‘kerriges would go without hosses.

“Like what I wuz sayin’. The ole slave woman in the kitchen used to sing hymns, you call ‘em spirituals, now – but ennyhow, she would sing and soon even the littlest one learned from her and joined in. One of these was:

‘Dark was the night an’ col’ the groun’

On which our Lord was laid.

Great drops of sweat like blood poured down,

An’ anchored kneeled (?) he prayed!

“An’ she sang another like this:

'Min' my sister how you step on the cross,
 Yo foot might slip an' yo' soul ud be los'.'

"In slavery days, we were not allowed to visit other plantations. The onliest way was to go to ol' marster an' gitten him to write a paper with his name signed to hit sayin' we could pass. Those paddy-rollers wuz mighty bad about pickin' you up. They used to be a song:

'Run nigger run, the paddy rollers ketch you.'

"When the las' gun wuz shot, a man came through the quarters where we were, an' when we saw him we wonnered who he wuz. He wuz dressed in blue suit trimmed with brass buttons. He come up to a woman sittin' on the grass eatin' her dinner, an' he axed her for some of hit an' she tol' him:

'I ain' got no dinner for you, you ol' loafer, marster giv' me this dinner an' i'm hungry. Go 'long.'

"He didn't want her dinner, he wuz jes' talking. So then he went to where the big crows wuz an' said: 'You'all are free. Pick up the hoe an' the plows, take 'em to right places. Feed the mules an' go away like I say, 'cause you's free an' can do as you please, now an' forever, and forever.'

"Some went right away, or as soon as they git their things together, others didn't want to leave an' staid straight on. But marster tol' us to go. He said he couldn't take keer of us, that times had changed an' he had no money lef'.

"I never wuz whipped in my life by anyone. I wuz always good an' did like they tol' me.

"Some of those overseers were mean men. They wanted slaves to have babies bekase they wuz valuable, so when a slave wuz erbout to produce a baby, an he wanted her whupped, he had a hole dug in the groun' an' made her lay acrost it an' her han's and foots were tied, so she had to submit quiet like to the beatin' with a strop.

"I hearn tell that when a 'omon was a bornin' a chile, that death wen' roun' her bed seven times, a studyin' whether he'd take her or not. I got three chillun livin' an' I don' know how many dead, so I reckun he had pleny chances at me.

"After freedom, when we were on our own account we had a hard time. We made our own soap by savin' bones an' greasy stuff to make soap. We put oak an' hickry ashes in a bar'l an' made holes in it an' poured rain water on top an' let hit drop through ashes. This made lye. We cooked the fats in this lye slowly, an' it wuz so strong it would eat yo' han' ef you used much of it. After cooking enough we put this mixture in molds and when it wuz col' we cut it in cakes.

"We made lye hominy erbout the same way. We took corn, not the kind you eat, but lak' you feed hosses an' cook it in lye made out of hic'ry or oak ashes an' when the hulls peel off an' you can wash it in col' water hit's ready to eat, an' hits good, too.

Witches.

"I ain' never seen a witch, but my gran'ma tol' me erbout a man who wuz courtin' a woman. He wuz a rich man an' had men workin' for him, they wuz slaves, I reckon. Ennyhow at night she would go and kill a man. Next mornin' when he went back he found him dead an' he wanted to know how cum him to die. This went on an' one night the man heseft stayed. He had giver her a ring, an' that night when she cum there she thought he wuz another man an' she was erbout to kill him when he ris up an'

cut off one of her fingers, the one that had the ring on hit. An' nex' night when he went to see her she wuz in bed. He axed her whut made her stay in bed, whut ailed her. An' she sed: 'Nothin', jus' lyin' down cus I feel sorter worryin' like,' an' he taken the finger outen he's pocket, which he had wrapped up an' ast her whose finger it wuz. She sed she didn't know. 'Well, hit's mighty funny thet you don' know yo' own finger.' With that he pulled her han' out from under the kiver and saw her finger missin' jus' lak' he knowed it wuz. An' she wuz a witch, but he wuz a match for her. The onliest way to get even with a witch is to do them injury.

"An' my gran'ma said a witch went in a woman's house an' she wuz in bed. Ol' witch looked at her an' woman knew she wuz a witch, so she sent her outer room to git somethin' an' the witch had jumped outen her skin an' lef' it there. So the woman sprinkled it with lots of salt an' pepper. When witch got ready to go she jumped back in skin an' kep' hollerin', 'Somethin's bitin' me! I can't stan' it!' Hit wuz the salt an' pepper stingin' her. Ol' witch say: 'Skin don' you know me?' She sed this three times but the bitin' kep up, an' the woman took broomstick an' shewed her out an' ol' witch disappeared in air.

"No ma'm', I ain' never seen a witch. Some folks say they ain' enny, but my ole gran'ma said they wuz such people bekase she had seen 'em.

"Another time my gran'ma tole me some people come to her house an' axed to stay all night. She hated to drive 'em away, so she let 'em stay. Each one had a bun'le. That night when ev'ry body wuz 'sleep gran'ma heered queer noises an' smelt somethin' lak sulphur a burnin' – so she riz up an' looked in an' they had opened their bun'les an' tooken out a pot an' started to boil som'thin' an' they wuz jes' a jumpin' on the flo'

sayin' sumthin' an' er hollerin'. When they saw my gran'ma, they jumped un'er bed an' tried to pull pots with them. Then they jumped into air an' were gone. They wuz witches.

Blue-Mass Pills.*

"Ole Missis useter give us blue mass pills when we needed medicine. It sho did make us sick. We had to get sick to get well, ole Missis said.

"Dat possum it am good to eat, karve it to de heart. Hit's dif'rent – a coon an' a 'possum – bekase a coon has musk in it an' ef yo' don' tak' hit out hit's bitter an' not fitten to eat. The musk is in a lil' sack un'er front fore-feet an' hin' leg.

"'Possum ain' thet way, so you wet a cloth an' wrap 'possum in hot ashes so's to tak' skin off, an' when skin comes off the meat will be jes' as white an' nice lookin'. Then you wash him in strong salt water, so's totake away wil' taste. After a day or night (ef yo' ken wait thet long) yo' kin parboil him in, then bake him. Have'taters roasted along to eat.

"When I wuz lil' I heard 'em sing:

'Sit down chile, sit down,

Sit down chile, sit down,

Sit down chile, sit down,

O, Lord, I can't sit down!

'O, Lord, I fol' up my arms an' I wonder,

An' I wonder Lord, I wonder,

I fol' up my arms an' wonder to see,

How far I am away from my home.'

"Another wuz lak this:

'I saw the light comin' down,

I saw the light comin' down,

Hit's a mighty pretty light comin' down,

Way up in the heavens comin' down.'

"They don' have singin' thet way enymo'. There's another verse erbout 'I can't sit down, I want my starry crown'

"Friday is the day the jay-bird carries a grain of san' to the bad man to torment you, if you died bad. If you lived without thinkin' about God, those sands will help to worry you, for they are hot and will burn your feet.

"If you ask for a cool drink of water, they give you brimstone an' hot lead. Old bad man's a person who wuz quarrelsome in heaven an' God throwed him out because he wanted to be another God. He wuz jealous. He couldn't be punished eternally so he was made a king over the bad place. I know what he looks like 'cause I've seen pictures of him, an' he shows two horns, an' a tail, an' a suit in red, an' he has big eyes an' uses a pitchfork to keep folks from gettin' across the river."

Them Golden Slippers.

"Rebecca tell me just what you expect to see when you enter the pearly gates?"

"That's right, the pearly gates. I expect to see my Saviour with my long white robe ready to throw hit aroun' me an' a crown in His han' to put on my head, it'll be full of stars, too. Slippers? Yes'm golden slippers, an' I'll walk the golden streets too. No'm, the slippers won' hurt my feet at all, bekase the Bible says there'll be no pain or

suf'rin' in heaven." With that she looked down at her worn pieces of leather held together with strings and which flapped at every step. No more pain or suffering. No, not even the tired, aching feet that had walked the stony paths when even Sunday shoes were unknown. "No mo' pain or suf'rin' – for all God's chilluns got shoes." We reminded her. "Yes'm mebbe, so, but He said slippers."

Rebecca is 98 and "disremembers", but when you tell her that you will be back and that you want her to think over old times, she generally has something new to unfold, and so while her story must come in fragments – it is as she tells it.

"Want me tell 'bout Brer' Rabbit an' Brer Fox?"

"Once there wuz a rabbit, a b'ar, an' a fox an' they collected a lot of butter an' cheese an' were goin' to eat hit for dinner. When they got hongry an' ready to eat hit wuz all gone. Br'er Rabbit hed eat hit all up, so they fixed a plan to fin' out who ate it. They put a board under each one. Brer Rabbit woke up befo' day an' slipt his board from under him an' put under Brer Fox an' sed: 'Brer Fox, eat up all the butter an' cheese n'ev'rythin' we had for dinner.' Brer Fox sed, 'No, I didn't.'

"Well, after eatin' Brer' Rabbit wuz fust one to melt an' wipe all on Brer' Fox, so Brer' Fox tol' Brer' Rabbit to watch another fox until he could go home an' get his gun. He wuz the one doin' all the stealin', so when the bear got back the fox wuz gone, so Brer' Bear tol' Brer Rabbit, 'You left him go an' I will kill you.' So the rabbit say, 'Please don' kill me,' so he say, 'I will throw you in the brier patch,' so when Mr. Bear throw him there, ennyhow, Brer' Rabbit wuz smart an' called, 'Thet's whar I wuz raised an' born in the brier-patch an' he runned after him an' he clum up a tree an' seen a frog. He tol' the frog to watch for him so the frog sed, 'All right,' an' when he clum up in the

tree, he throw some dirt in the frog's eyes an' the frog say, 'Cum down Brer' Rabbit an' help me get this outen my eye', so when he cum down he runned an' lef' the frog there.

"Once an' ole lady had a spring, an' ev'ry time she went to hit, hit wuz muddy. Brer Rabbit did hit. She said, 'I goin' to fix him, I goin' fin' who muddies my spring.' She taken a tar baby an' set hit beside spring an' when Brer Rabbit went there agin' he sed: 'Who is this here?' An' hit tar baby. When he did so his foot stuck. He sed: 'Turn me loose, you holdin' my foot!' So he hit him with t'hoother so now he had two feet stuck. He kep' a'tryin' an' then all his foots was stickin'. The lady came an' sed: 'Oh, I know now who's been muddyin' my spring an' she taken rabbit an' sed she wuz goin' kill him, an' rabbit say: 'Please ma'm don' let me die like my father died.' An' lady sed: 'How wuz that?' An' rabbit say: 'He wuz in a brier patch an' hit killed him.' Lady say: 'That's a good way to kill you an' thet's the way you goin' die.' So she throwed him in brier patch, an' he laffed back at her an' sed: 'Thet's jes' whut I wanted you to do to me, fur I wuz born an' bred in a brier patch.'

"I remember when the soljers passed on the big road in Centreville, Miss. They marched with guns over their shoulders, a blanket an' a canteen, with water in hit. You could hear 'em comin' miles away. It sounded lak a storm. They were Confidrate soljers an' there wuz two riders, one behin', an' one in front. It took em' a whole day to pass, mos' they wuz so many. No ma'm, we wa'n't scared of them, for they look kind!"

Rebecca lives with a daughter-in-law, and her wants are provided for by her son who sends her money, she says. She does all her own washing and is immaculately clean.

Her chief sorrow is in being away from her church – her church way back in the country where her membership is. She attends one near her, but it's entirely too fashionable. The preacher too, doesn't preach like old times and the congregation don't have a chance to sing. The choir does that "and it's high-filutin'."

They have a fine organ, a "pipe-organ they calls hit an' they wear night gowns."

But as she says she wants "watch-care" – so she 'filiates with this church, but she wants her own pastor to preach her funeral sermon which he has promised to do.

She tells you of present day conditions which she thinks are shocking – in that preachers charge for "buryin' you."

"They surely do, whatever they think you can pay – five or ten dollars. An' they didn't uster do that. An' in ole times people called theyse'ves Christians, now they say they are church members."

* A drug made by rubbing up metallic mercury with confection of roses until all the globules disappear. Of this blue-pills are made. Century Dict.

Annie Flowers (Negro)

Theaid Street

McDonoghville, La.

Flossie McElwee

5/1/40 # 11 a

Ex-slave Story

"I'se been living here for about twelve yrs. Don't know jest how old I'es, but shore is been here a long time tho'.

All I'se ever knowed was to work. Was borned on Mr. Gain's plantation.

Was raised in the sugarcane fields. Was jest a small child when my mother was set free. Don't remember much about it. The day my maw was set free, another Negro shoved her in the Futch canal. Dat's about all I can think off.

"I'se got two chellum. My son Lu went to war, and died after coming home. This two chaps that is with me now is my great-grand children. Their maw got burned up over town.

Worked in the sugarcane fields all my life, bare-footed and half naked. I didn't work for a salary, it was something to eat and a few rags to wear. We allus had Sunday off to play tho'. I married a good man and when he works, he always fetch the money home to me. He ain't worked in a long time. He got cut off of the W.P.A. Ain't never went back on yet.

"I takes in a few washing, but times shore is tough with us and these little children. You see, we have not got much of a shack to live in and so jambed up.

"I believes in the Lawd tho, I'se a member of the Saint Paul Babt Church, but ain't been there in three long years--no clothes and shoes to wear.

"The white people sho' good to me tho', they give me old clothes for theses chillum. You see, I'se done got too old to work much, but that man I married sho' has been good and he worked hard too. My maw died soon after I married, I thank the Lawd, that I was not left a orphan, like theses chillum.

"We jest sats down some times and talks about how we use to cut dat cane in them fields, in de heat and cold. I knows it was happier times than now, hearing all them Negro singing them old corn songs.

They kindly went like this:

'Rains comes wit me.

Sun comes dry me.

Stand back boss man,

Don't come nigh me.

"I'es forgot jest how it did go, we use to sang dat song about, 'Plow Gang, Plow in the Low Land!

But so much trouble has done went over dis head, I jest can' t think.

"My son was allus good to me. When he died, the Government gave me his bonus--that was spent long time ago.

"Never went to school a day in my life, never had time, Work was all I knew to do. And I'es still trying to work."

Burke

(11CC)

Octavia Fontenette

4615 Camp Street, City

3/11/40

MARIE LAVEAU

Memory – that elusive thing which sometimes we have and sometime we have not – seems to be vividly alive and fresh in the mind of Octavia Fontenette, who lives to talk of the days through which she had watched six generations of her family pass. She is proud of her age and the heritage which seems to have been handed down from her mother's mother.

"I am the youngest one living of thirty-three children. Yes, suh, thirty- three children my mother had by three different husbands – eleven for each one. We were all born in New Iberia Parish and today I'm the youngest one living. I be eighty- seven years come next birthday. I got a sister living in New Iberia who's one hundred and eleven years old. My mother herself died when she was one hundred and eighteen. My husband died when he was seventy-seven. But, he didn't die a natural death. He was poisoned. I've got one sone living here in the City. His name is Walter Fontenette. He's working at the mattress factory. Walter is fifty-seven years old.

"Why I remember when I was a little girl back in New Iberia Parish. I was born right in the middle of slavery. But it was a funny thing. Our master was named Dr. Hatcher and he was one of the kindest men I know. He bought my mother and I was born on his plantation. Then five years before the war he set us free – signed papers and everything. But my mother and my father stayed on the next year to help with the crop.

Then they stayed on the next year and the next until after the war. But they didn't want me to stay out there so they sent me to New Orleans. As a girl we used to have some good times because we were free and could do almost anything we wanted to. But the slaves on the other plantations didn't have it so easy. I know 'cause I used to sneak off and play in the fields. They didn't make us children work and we used to see the white master on the other farms beatin' their poor slaves. One day we saw them dig a big hold and make a poor woman get in it face down with her clo'es off and they beat her 'til she bled. We snuk off home and told the others about it what we had seen. But they fussed at us and told us we better not never go over there again. And you know it was years after I found out why they made those women do that. They was pregnant.

"My folks didn't want me to be brought up out there so they sent me here when I was eighteen years old. Did I tell you ten or eighteen years before? Well, I remembers clearly - I kin remember too when the Yankees was here. All the gunboats was on the river and the soldiers was marching in and out but nobody was harmed, not that I know of.

"We moved down on St. Ann Street - Where? Between Rampart and Burgundy. That was when I was a big girl. Did I remember the Voodoo Queen? You's talkin' about that woman Marie Laveau ain't you? Why sure. We lived right across the street from her. Here's her house and here's our house. She was a fine Indian-looking woman and she would go about with her head up not meddling in anybody's business. Everybody used to talk and say things about her but we never used to pay any attention to see if it was true or not. We used to play with her children - Meme, Fidelia and Joe.

“We was all about the same ages. Maybe they was a little younger, but not much. We was big children but we didn’t have anything else to do but play. But, I remember when Marie Laveau died. It musta been four years after we moved on St. Ann Street. I was about twenty-two years old. But I don’t know nothing about how she died because we didn’t have sense enough to notice nothing.

“But we lived downtown for thirty-three years and then moved uptown where I been livin’ for forty-five years.”

* * * * *

(Typist: A. W. Phillips)

Breaux.

Anita Fonvergne, Negress

1612 St. Philip St.

Interviewed: 4/13-17/39

Submitted: 4/21/39

LIFE HISTORY

Anita has a small room in an old house which has a courtyard. Her room opening on the court, is airy and pleasant. The room is over-crowded with belongings, but is fairly neat, and clean. There is an iron bed, a large armoire, a plain straight chair, and a rocking chair, an old wooden table, dishes and other articles. In a large pan are kitchen utensils, covered with a cloth. Anita is 79. Her memory is excellent, her health good. She is on relief, receives \$12 a month, seems to manage. She seems more than thankful for what she gets. Anita speaks English with a strong French accent. She speaks a pure French, not the patois.

"Come on in darlin' and sit down. Wait, let me get these thin's off the chair and wife it off for you," she welcomes. It's clean, but maybe a little dust got on it.

"I'm 79 years old; you listen to me. I have one child, that's a daughter, and I got eleven grandchildren, and fourteen great-grandchildren. My daughter has sixteen children, but she's only got eleven livin'. That's somethin', hugh? Well, I'm tellin' you, why I only had one child. I'm talking to you because I can see that you're good and that you ain't no spy. Darlin' you know there's so many bad people going around now, you got to be careful who you talk to. I'm poor, but I'm proud, and I'm glad to talk about my family and myself, because I want people to know what I come from. The reason so many people don't want to talk is because they ashamed of their people.

"I wasn't married to the man that I had my daughter from. I was 18 years old, and I guess I was old enough to know better, but I didn't, and he, he fooled me, just like he fooled three other girls in New Orleans. I didn't do anything not to have my daughter, because I had too much pride and it was my own fault. And as poor as I am today I wouldn't take a million dollars for her. And when it happened it near killed my mother, and it near killed me, but we lived through it, and I just spent the rest of my life carin' for my daughter and raisin' her, and she's sure been good to me. She's not able to do much for me now, but she's sure been good to me. After that happened I never was married. I just lived a quiet life. I didn't go out much, but I used to go to soirees, and I would go to the dances at the Francs-Amis Hall. I never like goin' out much.

"My mother and father were legally married. I got my mother's wedding invitation. I don't have it here but it's at my daughter's house. And I want you to come over to her house with me sometime and see all our family papers and pictures. And on my brith certificate, they have "the legal child of Henrietta Rey and Arnold Fonvergne." My sister is 82 years old, and she has all her faculties. Her name's Marie Decou, and she lives with my daughter. We live to be old, and my grandmother on my mother's side, that was Mis' Rey, lived to be 105. So I guess I'll be here many years to come.

"My grandfather, Bartholomew Rey, he was from Cuba, and when he first came over he was a tailor. But he had asthma and the dust from the cloth didn't agree with him. My grandfather was very friendly with Mr. Prados. You've heard of the Prados family down here? And Mr. Prados would buy slaves and my grandfather used to go up to the slave market with him, and that's how he became interested in slave dealing and later

became a dealer himself. My grandfather had plenty of money, but the war ruined him, because when Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, that's when he lost all of his money.

"No, darlin', none of my family were ever slaves, we were free people. On the license my mother got for her marriage, they had her name, and they got 'free' by it. My mother used to tell me that my grandfather would come home from the slave market up on Chartres and St. Louis with his clothes all torn from him. He was so good to the slaves that they would beg him to buy them. And that's where his clothes would get torn.

"When we were little children my mother used to always tell us all about who we came from so that in case anything came up, that we could always defend ourselves and get what was ours.

"My grandmother was Sylpid Sacriste and she was from Santo Domingo. She came over to Louisiana during the Revolution. When the Revolution broke out she was separated from her mother and never saw her again. You see, her mother went one way with the little baby and her grandmother took her (Sylpid). My grandmother never found her mother, and they never heard from her. They don't know if she was drowned or killed, they know she must have died someplace because she was to come to Louisiana with them.

"When my mother wanted to get married, she was just 18, and her father said that she was too young, and asked her to wait until she was 22 before she married. In those days children listened to their parents. And she often told me that it was hard on her and hard on my father, to have to wait four years, but my grandfather rewarded her. He gave her a nice house down on Annette street, and he gave her servants of her own. In those days you weren't considered grown until you were 22, and you didn't have to go to

church to be married. The priest from the Annunciation church came to my grandfather's house and married my mother. She had a large wedding, and she had a reception afterwards, and she was dressed like a bride.

"My father's father was named Pierre Arnold Fonvergne and he was a runner for Napoleon. We had his boots and his epaulets but I don't know what we done with them now because I let my grandchildren play with them. His father was a merchant and he came over to Louisiana when my father was only three months old, and it took them six moths to make the trip. He went back to France and then they came and settled in Louisiana. My grandfather Pierre Arnold Fonvergne was e ducated in France and that's where he met Napoleon. He was sent by Napoleon as a messenger to Switzerland, and that's where he met and married my mother Johanna Haugman. Sure she was white, she was a Swiss woman. She had light hair and blue eyes. My grandfather was white too. We don't know how or where we got negro blood. My grandmother and my grandfather on my mother's side were Spanish, because one came from Cuba and the other from Santo Domingo. And on my father's side they were French and Swiss, and they were white too. We don't class ourselves as negroes, and we don't class ourselves as white. We never mix with people very much we just stay to ourselves. But with our connections and what we know there is no house in New Orleans that could close their door on us if we wanted to go in.

"I want you to come over to my daughter's house with me sometime and meet my sister. You see, our family papers and pictures of my grandmother and grandfather Fonvergne, they're in a little gold frame, and we're thinkin' of givin' them to the

Cabildo. My sister had a book with over a hundred French songs in it. I don't know whether she still has it or not. No, the songs are not Creole, they're French.

"Well, darlin' I've had a hard time all my life. And my daughter seems to have the same thing. She had a good husband and he died two years ago. When Anita started to speak about her son-in-law she cried.

I tell you my son-in-law was surely a good man, and I can't talk about him without cryin'. He was a cab driver for 35 years for Laudmicy, the undertaker. He was named Joseph Egano, and he came from a nice family. One day he went to work and in less than an hour my daughter got a message to come over to Laudumiey right away and when she got there her husband was dead -- he had dropped dead. They said it was from heart trouble, he had never complained of being sick before. They called the priest from St. Augustine's right away, and although he was dead, they gave him the last sacraments.

"I been getting' relief about three years, and people always complain about relief not doin' right by them, and the visitors being ugly, but I tell you I have no complaint to make. They see that I get food when they give it out, and they give me clothes, and a visitor got this place for me. I was livin' in another room further down the block but it was so dark and damp and I was paying five dollars a month. And that was too much because when you're only getting' \$12, and you take \$5 out, you don't have much left. So I moved here and this is a better place and it's cheaper. You see the bottle of medicine on the mantelpiece, well, the doctor came and he said that I should take a little toddy or some wine to make me stronger, but I've never taken a drink in my life and I've never smoked, so I told him that and he gave me that prescription.

"You see my shoes and hat over there, well, I keep my good shoes to go to church and when I want to go out.

"I worked for Mrs. Cavaroc Lanuse for 17 years, and I just stopped working about 3 years ago. But I go back to see the people all the time, and they help me out. They give me some clothes, and sometimes I go there and I wash Mrs. Lanuse's silk stocking for her, and underwear. I'll telling you, they sure are good people. You must know Mrs. Cavaroc Lanuse, she has a daughter that's married to Mr. Villere, and he got his arm off. Her name is Lola. Mis' Villere, I call her Mis' Lola, has two nice boys. One of them used to come around and get information about people's families just like you're doin'. She is surely good to her mother, and she's her mother's favorite child. Mis' Lola is good to me too. I go over and pay her a visit and whenever she can, she helps me out. I tell you how I come to work for them. I was working at the convent at Ursuline street, right across from the Church, and I took sick and I'm tellin' you those nuns were surely nice to me. I worked there for over five years, and they always used to tell me, "'Nita, I think the work's too hard for you.' And I always told them, "'No, the work's not too hard and I like it.'

"Well, when I was sick in bed, the nuns came over to see me and they brought a young nun with them and she said, "'Nita, my brother just lost his wife and they have a little baby, and we want somebody to stay with the baby and nurse him, and we know you from the convent, and if you'd like to go over I'll send you to my mother.' Well, she was such a nice nun, that I knew her people would be good, so I went over there. And I raised that little boy from a small baby 'cause his mother had died at childbirth, and now he's a grown man. I forgot to tell you, that that nun was Mrs. Lanuse's daughter. And

that's how I come to work for that family. You see, this fascinator (kerchief), well Mis' Lanuse gave it to me this winter. It's old and torn now but it was nice and new then when she gave it to me.

"I peddled vegetables too. And I'm telling you that's hard work. And that's no work for a woman to do. And I think that's why my legs are so bad now. Because you have to carry those two baskets that are filled with vegetables, and you know how heavy they are, and carry one on your head. I had regular customers. When the people started to move uptown I would take the Ferret street car and get out on Audubon street, and then I'd walk on to all my customers. They would tell me what they wanted for the next day, and then I'd go to the French market and buy my vegetables. I brought them meat too. They would tell me what kind of meat they wanted and I'd get their meat at Tremé's Market, and from there I would walk to the French market and get the vegetables. I'd make a little profit on the meat, 'cause I brought them what they wanted and I saved them the trouble of getting it. The heaviest baskets were the cabbages, and when four or five of my customers wanted cabbage in one day, it made it pretty hard. You know how heavy one cabbage is. It's been over twenty years since I sold vegetables.. I gave that up because I couldn't make enough money.

"I used to make pants for Mercier's store that's on Dauphine and Bienville. Talk about work, that's work, makin' pants. You would have to go get the pants, and bring them back, and they didn't pay your carfare, they paid you \$1.25 a dozen. You didn't have to cut the pants, they'd give them to you all cut, and all the little pieces that went with them. But it was mighty heavy to have to carry them to and from the store. And believe me, they had to be made just so. When my daughter was young she used to help

me sew on the pants. There was many a night when we stayed up pretty late tryin' to get them finished so we could get the money. We couldn't make more than five or six dozen a week. You see, that was a slong time ago when they didn't have all these machines and pants factories, and it meant that you did the work at home, and it meant that you had to do a lot of hand sewing on them. My sister made pants too. They were lots of people downtown that used to do that kind of work for the stores.

"I went to a private school on Barracks street. I don't know what grade I finishe d because in those days they didn't have grades. You just studied and learned what they gave you, but they sure taught you well, and you learned more than you do in school now. I guess I must have finished about what they'd say is the eighth grade now. By the time I was grown up, we had lost our money and it was kind of hard to keep us in school. Mr father, Arnold Fonvergne, he used to shape hats for a man by the name of Raoul Chauver . He made fairly good livin' but he didn't make enough to keep us in school very long. My brother went to that college back of St. Augustine's church. The place is torn down now and my sister she went to a private school too. I'll show you all those things when I take you to my daughter's.

"When we were little children I remember my mother taking us to the cemetery, the old cemetery on Basin street. And when we went there we saw an old shriveled up lady. She had a rag fascinator tied around her head, and she was sittin' by a tomb. And my mamma says 'That's Marie Leveau, the voodoo woman'. They say that she was pretty when she was young, but because of the work she did when she got old she was dried up and looked like a witch. Her tomb was right in the same alley as ours. That's the only thing I know about her. We never fooled with anything like that, and that kind of

work is the devil's work. They say that she gave up that work before she died and went back to the church. But I think that anybody that does that, works for the devil and I don't see how they can be a good christian.

"Some people say that Marie Leveau is buried in the St. Louis cemetery on Claiborne street. But that's wrong. Her tomb is right in the old cemetery on Basin. I've heard that Marie Leveau used to go to this tomb in St. Louis No. 2 to do her private or her bad works. They say after she left the square she used to go there by herself, and that's where people got the idea that she's buried in St. Louis and Claiborne, but that's wrong. I don't know who's tomb that was where Marie Leveau worked, but I guess it was some woman like herself. I never heard of any of her daughters doing any kind of work, and that's the only Marie Leveau I ever saw.

"They say while she was living they wanted to expose her, but it is said that if anything was said about Marie Leveau that she would publish a list of names of everybody who went to her. Of course she had the nicest people in the city to go down to her, because she charged so much that the colored people couldn't afford to go to her, so nothing was said about her when she was living. That's why after she died they put her picture in Holmes window, and now it's in the Cabildo.

"I remember Marie Leveau's house, and my daughter does too. She made her communion with one of Marie Leveau's grandsons. It was a little low house that set way back in the yard. There was a high wooden fence in the front. It was a quaint lookin' house. It looked like it had two entrances, like a double house, but I don't think it was a double. The roof came way down on the side, and there was no roof in the front, and it looked like the entrance was on the side. It was low on the ground, and I don't remember

whether there was a little gallery or not. Sometimes Marie Leveau would sit in the yard with the gate open, or she'd sit out by the gate. She was so old then that she could hardly walk. I never heard anything about her funeral and I don't remember when she died. She must be dead a long long time, because I was just a little girl when I saw her.

"Zozo la Brique used to live right across from us. People say she was a nigger, but she wasn't any nigger, 'cause she had brown hair and blue eyes, and was fair. She used to get the bricks and pound them and make her dust, and then she'd carry it in two pails and a pail on her head. Her name was Menard and she's related to some of the nicest families here. Zozo means 'bird' and that was just a nickname they gave her. She was good to us, we were children, then, and in the evening she would buy peppermint sticks and give us all a piece. She wouldn't bother anybody and she never talked to anybody much.

"She had a room in the yard of a house with black niggers, and I don't know why she did that. Some people say that they were her relatives, they were bad people but she didn't fool with them. She just had her room in the yard and went about her business. We used to tease her – and whenever we'd see a bird, we'd tell her in French, 'Zozo' look at the bird' and the only thing she would say was 'tsh' and turn her head. She never cursed anybody, or sassed them, she just minded her business. She lived on Hospital between Claiborne and Derbigny, on the downtown side of the street. The house is torn down now. Our house was right straight across from hers."

Anita nodded, then, rousing:

"Chiem-dent (dog-teeth) is wonderful for babies that are teething. It's a grass with a little wheat, and grows wild in the yards. You take a piece of that, the stem and all,

and you put it in a bottle of water, and as the grass grows the child's teeth will grow. You make a poultice of potato rind for fever and cold. No, it's not a sweet potato or an Irish potato, it's an old vine. There's a lady that lives on St. Philip between Derbigny and Roman, it's the house next to the corner, of Roman, going back of town. She said that she wouldn't take a hundred dollars for this vine. I can't think of her name, but you go there, and she'll show it to you.

"If you have any old clothes, or torn stockings, I would be glad if you would give them to me, 'cause all my clothes are torn, and I can make them over. I don't have a machine now, but I can sew it by hand.

"You see, how dark I am, face and arms. That's because I'm not well, and then I done such hard work, being out in the sun sellin' vegetables for five years, is bound to make your skin dark. But look at my legs and see how white they are. She lifted up her dress, and showed legs many shades whiter. She has pretty white hair, combed straight back, and long. Anita is proud of her hair. She said, "You think I have nice hair, now, but you should have seen it a few years ago. It's fallin' out so much that I don't have much left. Let me show you how long it is." She undid her hair and it fell to her waist. She went on:

"When you comin' back and go to my daughter's with me? Friday will be all right, but don't come until after one o'clock because I go up to the Jesuit's in the morning to get my bread and I don't get back until eleven o'clock. They surely are nice to me up there. I walk up, it's not far from here up to Canal and Baronne, and they sure got a nice brother up there. I don't know what his name is but I call him 'the good brother.' You see these beads hangin' on the door. Well, that's St. Anthony's beads and somebody gave it

to me and told me that if I put it on my door I'll never be without bread, and that's true, because I always manage to get somethin' to eat. Well, I tell you I've never bothered about politics in my life, and I've never voted, and now I'm too old, but I think Roosevelt has done a lot for the poor people.

"I don't have no electricity here, and the bathroom is out in the yard, but it's all right. I don't need no electricity, because I use my lamp, and I go to bed early, and sometimes I just stay here in the dark and say my beads. Every day when I come back from the Jesuits I stop at the chapel on Rampart street to say a prayer. We all been good Catholics all our lives.

"I'm goin' to tell my daughter to expect you on Friday. And you come here and get me and we'll go there together. It's not far, she lives right on Dumaine and Prieur.

Henrietta Egano lives in a very nice single house at 2120 Dumaine street. She had been told by Anita to expect visitors Friday, so she was not surprised. Anita appeared to enjoy the visit. There was much talk of old times. Anita's, Henrietta is fifty-seven, but she is pock-marked and looks as old as her mother. Courteous and affable, she passed coffee and crackers and cheese. She said one of her sons had brought her some shrimp the day before and she wished she could have given us some nice, fried.

Henrietta's is a nice old house. There is an entrance, to the right of which is a parlour, double parlours, dining room, kitchen. The front room has a dining room set in it, and one of the double parlours is now used as a bed room. The ceilings are high. The walls are painted strawberry pink. The rent is \$20 a month.

Anita's sister, Marie Decou, is active for 82 but not talkative. She does fine embroidery and "bobinette work" (Tatting) She showed some she had just finished, one a

baby cap and another a yoke. She says that people buy it and sometimes the stores buy it. Marie said that she would have to give up that fine work because her eyesight is not so good now, and she doesn't have money to buy glasses. She's married but never had any children. She lives with the niece.

One of Henrietta's daughters, Lumina Marine, who lives at 1404 St. Bernard, was spending the day with one of her babies. She has been married twice, divorced from her first husband, and has six children. She and her children look more negroid than either the mother or grandmother. She is a big talker, can tell quite a bit of scandal. She said "I guess I know enough and I got to be careful how I talk because I could tear the City Hall down with all I know, and cause a lot of trouble."

With all these French people in a room together, and a crying baby, it was scarcely restful. They all talk at once. One would start and another would correct and then come in with another story. This family has most of its friends among negroes; they have married into blacker families. Henrietta has a son in California and one in St. Louis, and one in Mississippi. Their pictures and those of their wives indicate that they married people with negro blood. The picture of the Fonvergnes from their pictures, were white. The two, man and wife are shown in a small round gold leaf frame. They are done in pastel or oil; they hang high on the wall, in a dim place. A picture was shown of Henrietta while at school, Arthur's Graded Institute. The date was March 9, 1892. The teacher was Miss Lena Berhel. Both negroes and whites attended this school, Henrietta said.

Marie did not know where her song book was, but she sang a few of the French songs from memory.

Henrietta said, "You see, I'm not as nice looking as my mother, when you raise eleven children and you're poor, you have to a lot of hard work. Well, my children can help me some, but those that are married have families of their own and they can just about support them. And you see how marked my face is, well, when I was two years old I had small-pox and I was so small that the doctor couldn't put a mask over my face because he was afraid I might pull it and smother. They had to keep a fire burning in my room for three months. They tied my hands so I couldn't scratch my face. One day they came to my bed and they found it all full of blood, and they thought I was dead. So they called the doctor and he said that during the night I had scratched my face, and that's why I am so marked.

"I sure miss my husband, and it's mighty hard to do without a good man. He came from a nice family too. His great grandfather's picture is in the Cabildo. It's right upstairs. He was Juan Egano, and was a merchant, marine, in New Orleans. You see in later years they dropped the 'de' from the name and just called themselves Egano. You know where Bartholomew street is, well, that's named for my great grandfather, Bartholomew Rey. These are the titles to the property he owned there in the neighborhood. And you can see from that they was legally married because here is the name 'Mr. And Mrs.'

"You know, we have some money comin' to us from my great-grandmother, Johanna Haugman in Switzerland. They say it's about \$30,000. About six years ago there was a lawyer by the name of Littlejohn from the firm of Lehman and Lehman, came to see us and before he came he had gone to St. Augustine's church and got our records. The money is from Stockholm. He said we couldn't get anything because we're not

white, and we didn't have any money to fight the case, so we let it go and maybe some day we'll do something about it. And anyway, if we did we would bring in so many people who have colored blood in them that it would be embarrassing for them, and cause a lot of trouble, cause people don't know about it, and probably they don't know it themselves. And we don't want to hurt anybody.

"You see, our family is written up in this book. (The book is *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoires* by Desdunes). You'll see in there that Octave Rey and Hippolyte Rey went to Chalmette to meet Jackson and they fought in the Battle of New Orleans. My grandmother had this book and she made us promise never to let it leave the house or to show it to anybody because it has too much about the early family. Mr. Desdunes had the book published in Canada because they refused to publish it here, and they put him out of New Orleans so that's why he went to California, where he died.

Then the talk turned to voodoo, and Henrietta went on: "Yes, I made my communion with Marie Leveau's grandson. His name was Alec Lejeune. No, it was not Legendre, it was Lejeune. Well, I'm fifty-seven and in those days we didn't make our communion until we were 12 years, so you can figure how long that was. His grandmother was dead then, and he said that she was a very old woman when she died. Alec is still living but he's not in New Orleans. I think he is in Texax. I don't remember whether he lived in his grandmother's house or not, but I remember the house well. It was on St. Ann, between Bergundy and Rampart. It had a high wooden fence, and it was flat on the ground, and no gallery, and the doors were to the side.

"I believe my uncle has some of the papers of my great-grandfather, who was a slave dealer. And I'm also going to ask him for them. And I also let him have my grandmother's wedding invitation.

"I do my work and my aunt helps me. You'd be surprised how she can get around for her age. If anything happens to my aunt I will surely miss her, and I'm sorry that I can't do more for my mother, because she has certainly been good to me all my life. My father, was a white man by the name of Moro. They had a cigar factory and he never did anything for me. I don't even remember seeing him.

"I'm sorry that I can't offer you more than coffee. You're mighty welcome.

Breaux.

Anita Fonvergne, Negress

1612 St. Philip St.

Interviewed: 4/13-17/39

Submitted: 4/21/39

LIFE HISTORY

Anita has a small room in an old house which has a courtyard and her room gives into it, which makes the room airy and pleasant. The room is overcrowded with her belongings, but is fairly neat and clean. There is an iron bed in the room, an large armoire, a plain straight chair, and a rocking chair, an old wooden table, dishes and other articles. She has a large pan in which are kitchen utensils, covered with a cloth. Although Anita is 70 her memory is good and her health is also good. She is on relief and receives \$12 a month, but seems to manage on this, and is more than thankful for what she gets. Anita speaks English with a strong French accent. She speaks a pure French, and not the Creole or Gumbo patois.

"Come on in darlin' and sit down. Wait, let me get these thin's off the chair and wife it off for you." It's clean, but maybe a little dust got on it.

"I'm 79 years old, and I want you to listen to this. I have one child, that's a daughter, and I got eleven grandchildren, and fourteen great-grandchildren. My daughter has sixteen children, but she's only got eleven livin'. That's somethin', hugh? Well, I'm tellin' you, why I only had one child. I'm talking to you because I can see that you're good and that you ain't no spy. Darlin' you know there's so many bad people going around now, you got to be careful who you talk to. I'm poor, but I'm proud, and I'm glad to talk about my family and myself, because I want people to know what I come from

became a dealer himself. My grandfather had plenty of money, but the war ruined him, because when Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, that's when he lost all of his money. No, darlin', none of my family were ever slaves, we were free people. On the license my mother got for her marriage, they had her name, and they got 'free' by it. My mother used to tell me that my grand- father would come home from the slave market up on Chartres and St. Louis with his clothes all torn from him. He was so good to the slaves that they would beg him to buy them. And that's where his clothes would get torn.

"When we were little children my mother used to always tell us all about who we came from so that in case anything came up, that we could always defend our- selves and get what was ours.

My grandmother was Sylpid Sacriste and she was from Santo Domingo. She came over to Louisiana during the Revolution. When the Revolution broke out she was separated from her mother and never saw her again. You see, her mother went one way with the little baby and her grandmother took her (Sylpid). My grandmother never found her mother, and they never heard from her. They don't know if she was drowned or killed, they know she must have died someplace because she was to come to Louisiana with them.

"When my mother wanted to get married, she was just 18, and her father said that she was too young, and asked her to wait until she was 22 before she married. In those days children listened to their parents. And she often told me that it was hard on her and hard on my father, to have to wait four years, but my grandfather rewarded her. He gave her a nice house down on Annette street, and he gave her servants of her own. In those days you weren't considered grown until you were 22, and you didn't have to go to

church to be married. The priest from the Annunciation church came to my grandfather's house and married my mother. She had a large wedding, and she had a reception afterwards, and she was dressed like a bride.

"My father's father was named Pierre Arnold Fonvergne and he was a runner for Napoleon. We had his boots and his epaulets but I don't know what we done with them now because I let my grandchildren play with them. His father was a merchant and he came over to Louisiana when my father was only 3 months old, and it took them 6 months to make the trip. He went back to France and then they came and settled in Louisiana. My grandfather Pierre Arnold Fonvergne was educated in France and that's where he met Napoleon. He was sent by Napoleon as a messenger to Switzerland, and that's where he met and married my mother Johanna Haugman. Sure she was white, she was a Swiss woman. She had light hair and blue eyes. My grandfather was white too. We don't know how or where we got negro blood. My grandmother and my grandfather on my mother's side were Spanish, because one came from Cuba and the other from San Domingo. And on my father's side they were French and Swiss, and they were white too. We don't class ourselves as negroes, and we don't class ourselves as white. We never mix with people very much we just stay to ourselves. But with our connections and what we know there is no house in New Orleans that could close their door on us if we wanted to go in.

"I want you to come over to my daughter's house with me sometime and meet my sister. You see, our family papers and pictures of my grandmother and grandfather Fonvergne, they're in a little gold frame, and we're thinkin' of givin' them to the

Cabildo. My sister had a book with over a hundred French songs in it. I don't know whether she still has it or not. No, the songs are not Creole, they're French.

"Well, darlin' I've had a hard time all my life. And my daughter seems to have the same thing. She had a good husband and he died two years ago. When Anita started to speak about her son-in-law she cried. I tell you my son-in-law was surely a good man, and I can't talk about him without cryin'. He was a cab driver for 35 years for Laudumiey, the undertaker. He was named Joseph Egano, and he came from a nice family. One day he went to work and in less than an hour my daughter got a message to come over to Laudemiey right away and when she got there her husband was dead -- he had dropped dead. They said it was from heart trouble, he had never complained of being sick before. They called the priest from St. Augustine's right away, and although he was dead, they gave him the last sacraments.

"I been getting' relief about 3 years, and people always complain about relief not doin' right by them, and the visitors being ugly, but I tell you I have no complaint to make. They see that I get food when they give it out, and they give me clothes, and a visitor got this place for me. I was livin' in another room further down the block but it was so dark and damp and I was paying five dollars a month. And that was too much because when you're only getting' \$12, and you take \$5 out, you don't have much left. So I moved here and this is a better place and it's cheaper. You see the bottle of medicine on the mantelpiece, well, the doctor came and he said that I should take a little toddy or some wine to make me stronger, but I've never taken a drink in my life and I've never smoked, so I told him that and he gave me that prescription. You see, my shoes and hat

over there, well, I keep my good shoes to go to church and when I want to go out. (The shoes are just cheap sort of mother-comfort shoes with straps).

"I worked for Mrs. Cavaroc Lanuse for 17 years, and I just stopped working about 3 years ago. But I go back to see the people all the time, and they help me out. They give me some clothes, and sometimes I go there and I was Mrs. Lanuse's silk stockings for her, and underwear. I'm telling you, they sure are good people. You must know Mrs. Cavaroc Lanuse, she has a daughter that's married to Mr. Villere, and he got his arm off. Her name is Lola. Mis' Villere, I call her Mis' Lola, has two nice boys. One of them used to come around and get information about people's families just like you're doin'. She is surely good to her mother, and she's her mother's favorite child. Mis' Lola is good to me too. I go over and pay her a visit and whenever she can, she helps me out. I tell you how I come to work for them. I was working at the convent at Ursuline street, right across from the Church, and I took sick and I'm tellin' you those nuns were surely nice to me. I worked there for over five years, and they always used to tell me, "'Nita, I think the work's too hard for you.' And I always told them, "'No, the work's not too hard and I like it.' Well, when I was sick in bed, the nuns came over to see me and they brought a young nun with them and she said, "'Nita, my brother just lost his wife and they have a little baby, and we want somebody to stay with the baby and nurse him, and we know you from the convent, and if you'd like to go over I'll send you to my mother.' Well, she was such a nice nun, that I knew her people would be good, so I went over there. And I raised that little boy from a small baby 'cause his mother had died at childbirth, and now he's a grown man. I forgot to tell you, that that nun was Mrs. Lanuse's daughter. And that's how I come to work for that family. You see, this fascinator (kerchief), well Mis' Lanuse

gave it to me this winter. It's old and torn now but it was nice and new then when she gave it to me.

"I peddled vegetable too. And I'm telling you that's hard work. And that's no work for a woman to do. And I think that's why my legs are so bad now. Because you have to carry those two baskets that are filled with vegetables, and you know how heavy they are, and carry one on your head. I had regular customers. When the people started to move uptown I would take the Ferret street car and get out on Audubon street, and then I'd walk on to all my customers. They would tell me what they wanted for the next day, and then I'd go to the French market and buy my vegetables. I brought them meat too. They would tell me what kind of meat they wanted and I'd get their meat at Treme's Market, and from there I would walk to the French market and get the vegetables. I'd make a little profit on the mean, 'cause I brought them what they wanted and I saved them the trouble of getting it. The heaviest baskets were the cabbages, and when four or five of my customers wanted cabbage in one day, it made it pretty hard. You know how heavy one cabbage is. It's been over twenty years since I sold vegetables.. I gave that up because I couldn't make enough money.

"I used to make pants for Mercier's store that's on Dauphine and Bienville. Talk about work, that's work, makin' pants. You would have to go get the pants, and bring them back, and they didn't pay your carfare, they paid you \$1.25 a dozen. You didn't have to cut the pants, they'd give them to you all cut, and all the little pieces that went with them. But it was mighty heavy to have to carry them to and from the store. And believe me, they had to be made just so. When my daughter was young she used to help me sew on the pants. There was many a night when we stayed up pretty late tryin' to get

them finished so we could get so money. We couldn't make more than five or six dozen a week. You see, that was a slong time ago when they didn't have all these machines and pants factories, and it meant that you did the work at home, and it meant that you had to do a lot of hand sewing on them. My sister made pants too. They were lots of people downtown that used to do that kind of work for the stores.

"I went to a private school on Barracks street. I don't know what grade I finishe d because in those days they didn't have grades. You just studied and learned what they gave you, but they sure taught you well, and you learned more than you do in school now. I guess I must have finished about what they'd say is the eighth grade now. By the time I was grown up, we had lost our money and it was kind of hard to keep us in school. My father, Arnold Fonvergne, he used to shape hats for a man by the name Raoul Chauver . He made fairly good livin' but he didn't make enough to keep us in school very long. My brother went to that college back of St. Augustine's church. The place is torn down now and my sister she went to a private school too. I'll show you all those things when I take you to my daughter's.

"Did I know Marie Laveau? When we were little children I remember my mother taking us to the cemetery, the old cemetery on Basin street. And when we went there we saw an old shriveled up lady. She had a rag fascinator tied around her head, and she was sittin' by a tomb. And my mamma says 'That's Marie Leveau, the voodoo woman'. They say that she was pretty when she was young, but because of the work she did when she got old she was dried up and looked like a witch. Her tomb was right in the same alley as ours. That's the only thing I know about her. We never fooled with anything like that, and that kind of work is the devil's work. They say that she gave up that work before she

died and went back to the church. But I think that anybody that does that, works for the devil and I don't see how they can be a good Christian. Some people say that Marie Leveau is buried in the St. Louis cemetery on Claiborne street. But that's wrong. Her tomb is right in the old cemetery on Basin. I've heard that Marie Leveau used to go to this tomb in St. Louis No. 2 to do her private or her bad works. They say after she left the square she used to go there by herself, and that's where people get the idea that's she's buried in St. Louis and Claiborne, but that's wrong. I don't know who's tomb that was where Marie Leveau worked, but I guess it was some woman like herself. I never heard of any of her daughters doing any kind of work, and that's the only Marie Leveau I ever saw. They say while she was living they wanted to expose her, but it is said that if anything was said about Marie Leveau that she would publish a list of names of everybody who went to her. Of course she had the nicest people in the city to go down to her, because she charged so much that the colored people couldn't afford to go to her, so nothing was said about her when she was living. And after she died they put her picture in Holmes window, and not it's in the Cabildo. Sure, I remember Marie Leveau's house, and my daughter does too. She made her communion with one of Marie Leveau's grandsons and you ask her about that. It was a little low house that set way back in the yard. There was a high wooden fence in the front. It was a quaint lookin' house. It looked like it had two entrances, like a double house, but I don't think it was a double. The roof came way down on the side, and there was no roof in the front, and it looked like the entrance was on the side. It was low on the ground, and I don't remember whether there was a little gallery or not. Sometimes Marie Leveau would sit in the yard with the gate open, or she'd sit out by the gate. She was so old then that she could hardly walk. I never

heard anything about her funeral and I don't remember when she died. She must be dead a long long time, because I was just a little girl when I saw her.

"Zozo la Brique used to live right across from us. People say she was a nigger, but she wasn't any nigger, 'cause she had brown hair and blue eyes, and was fair. She used to get the bricks and pound them and make her dust, and then she'd carry it in two pails and a pail on her head. Her name was Manard and she's related to some of the nicest families here. Zozo means 'bird' and that was just a nickname they gave her. She was good to us, we were children, then, and in the evening she would buy peppermint sticks and give us all a piece. She wouldn't bother anybody and she never talked to anybody much. She had a room in the yard of a house with black niggers, and I don't know why she did that. Some people say that they were her relatives, they were bad people but she didn't fool with them. She just had her room in the yard and went about her business. We used to tease her about – and whenever we'd see a bird, we'd tell her in French, 'Zozo' look at the bird' and the only thing she would say was 'tsh' and turn her head. She never cursed anybody, or sassed them, she just minded her business. She lived on Hospital between Claiborne and Derbigny, on the downtown side of the street, The house is town down now. Our house was right straight across from hers.

"Chiem-dent (dog-teeth) is wonderful for babies that are teething. It's a grass with a little wheat, and grows wild in the yards. You take a piece of that, the stem and all, and you put it in a bottle of water, and as the grass grows the child's teeth will grow. And you give them a little to drink every day. As the grass grows the child's teeth will grow. You keep adding more water so that the grass will continue to grow. You make a poultice of potator rind for fever and cold. No, it's not a sweet potato or an Irish potato, it's an old

vine. There's a lady that lives on St. Philip between Derbigny and Roman, it's the house next to the corner, of Roman, going back of town. She said that she wouldn't take a hundred dollars for this vine. I can't think of her name, and but you go there, and she'll show it to you.

"If you have any old clothes, or torn stockings, I would be glad if you would give them to me, 'cause all my clothes are torn, and I can make them over. I don't have a machine now, but I can dew it by hand.

"You see, how dark I am. My face and arms are. That's because I'm not well, and then I done such hard work, being out in the sun sellin' vegetables for 5 years, is bound to make your skin dark. But look at my legs and see how white they are. (she lifted up her dress, and her legs are many shades whiter). She also has pretty white hair, combed straight back, and long. Anita is proud of her hair and said, "You think I have nice hair, now, but you should have seen it a few years ago. It's fallin' out so much that i don't have much left. Let me show you how long it is." (She undid her hair and showed her hair, about to her waist.)

"When you comin' back and go to my daughter's with me? Friday will be all right, but don't come until after one o'clock because I go up to the Jesuit's in the morning to get my bread and I don't get back until eleven o'clock. They surely are nice to me up there. I walk up, it's not far from here up to Canal and Baronne, and they sure got a nice brother up there. I don't know what his name is but I call him 'the good brother.' You see these beads hangin' on the door (a long rope wrapped around the door) Well, that's St. Anthony's beads and somebody gave it to me and told me that if I put it on my door I'll never be without bread, and that's true, because I always manage to get somethin' to eat.

Well, I tell you I've never bothered about politics in my life, and I've never voted, and now I'm too old. But I think Roosevelt has done a lot for the poor people.

"I don't have no electricity here, and the bathroom is out in theyard, but it's all right. I don't need no electricity, because I use my lamp, and I go to bed early, and sometimes I just stay here in the dark and say my beads. Every day when I come back from the Jesuits I stop at the chapel on Rampart street to say a prayer. We all been good Catholics all our lives.

"I'm goin' to tell my daughter to expect you on Friday. And you come here and get me and we'll go there together. It's not far, she lives right on Dumaine and Prier.

On Friday we took Anita to her daughter's house. Henrietta Egano lives in a very nice single house an 2120 Dumaine street. Of course, she had been told by Anita to expect our visit. Although several hours were spent thec, there was no worthwhile information obtained because it was still the same re-hashing of the family, and who they are related to, and explaining the pictures. Anita's daughter, Henrietta Egan, is only 57. She is all pock-marked and looks as old as her mother. She was very courteous and affable, and passed us coffee and crackers and cheese and said that she was only sorry we hadn't come the day before, because one of her sons had brought her some shrimp and she could have given us some nice, friend shrimp.

Henrietta's house is a nice old house, flanking the ground, and the then there is an entrance, to the right of which is a parlous, double parlours, dining room,kichen. The front room has a dining room set in it, and one of the double parlours is now used as a bed room. The ceilings are high, and the walls are painted a vile shade of strawberry pink. The rent is comparatively cheap, only \$20 a month.

Anita's sister, Marie Decou, is very active for 82 but did not have much to say. She does fine embroidery and "bobinette work" (Tatting) She showed some tatting she had just finished, one a baby cap and another a yoke. She says that people buy it and sometimes the stores buy it. Marie said that she would have to give up that fine work because her eyesight is not so good now, and she doesn't have money to buy glasses. It is remarkable that a person of her age can do such fine work and do it so well. She's married but never had any children, and lives with her niece because "I'm so much older than my sister and I always stayed with her, and Henrietta can't take care of two of us together. So that's why I stay here.

One of Henrietta's daughters, Lumina Marine, who lives at 1404 St. Bernard, was spending the day there with one of her babies. She has been married twice and divorced from her first husband, and has six children. It's strange she and her children look more negroid than either the mother or grandmother. It seems that the generations that have come down have resorted more to the negro type. She is a big talker and can tell you quite a bit of scandal about all the prominent people and she said "I guess I know enough and I got to be careful how I talk because I could tair the City Hall down with all I know, and cause a lot of trouble.

With all these French people in a room together, and a crying baby, it was quite a mad house. When French families get together they all talk at one time, and to try and listen and get everything straight is worse than a three-ring circus. One would start and another would correct and then come in with another story. It seems that this family had most of their friends among negroes, and that they have married into negro families. Henrietta has a son in California and one in St. Louis, and one in Mississippi, but their

pictures and those of their wives show that they married people with negro blood. The picture of the Fonvergnes (man and wife) show definitely that they were white. They are in a small, round, gold leaf frame, and the light was so bad and they were hanging so high on the wall, that you couldn't tell whether they were pastels or oils. A picture was shown of Henrietta while at school, and she attended Arthur's Graded Institute, the date was March 9, 1892. The teacher was Miss Lena Berhel, "she passed for white". Both negroes and whites attended this school. Marie did not know where her song book was, but she sang a few of the French songs for us.

Henrietta said, "You see, I'm not as nice looking as my mother, when you raise eleven children and you're poor, you have to do a lot of hard work. Well, my children can help me some, but those that are married have families of their own and they can just about support them. And you see how marked my face is, well, when I was 2 years old I had small-pox and I was so small that the doctor couldn't put a mask over my face because he was afraid I might pull it and smother. They had to keep a fire burning in my room for three months. They tied my hands so I couldn't scratch my face. One day they came to my bed and they found it all full of blood, and they thought I was dead. So they called the doctor and he said that during the night I had scratched my face, and that's why I am so marked.

"I sure miss my husband, and it's mighty hard to do without a good man. He came from a nice family too. His great grandfather's picture is in the Cabildo. It's right upstairs. He was Juan Egano, and was a merchant marine in New Orleans. You see in later years they dropped the 'de' from the name and just called themselves Egano. You know where Bartholomew street is, well, that's named for my great grandfather,

Bartholomew Rey. These are the titles to the property he owned there in the neighborhood. And you can see from that they was legally married because here is the name 'Mr. And Mrs.

"You know, we have some money comin' to use from my great-grandmother, Johanna Haugman in Switzerland. They say its about \$30,000. And about 6 years ago there was a lwyer by the name of Littlejohn from the firm of Lehman and Lehman, came to see us and before he came he had gone to St. Augustine's church and got our records. The money is from Stockholm. He said we couldn't get anything because we're not white, and we didn't have any money to fight the case, so we let it go and maybe some day we'll do something about it. And anyway, if we did we would bring in so many people who have colored blood in them that it would be embarrassing for them, and cause a lot of trouble, cause people don't know about it, and probably they don't know it themselves. And we don't want to hurt anybody.

"You see, our family is written up in this book. (The book is Nos Homes et Notre Historie by Desdunes). You'll see in there that Octave Rey and Hippolyte Rey went to Chalmette to meet Jackson and they fought in the Battle of New Orleans. My grandmother had this book and she made us promise never to let it leave the house or to show it to anybody because it has too much about the early family. Mr. Desdunes had the book published in Canada because they refused to publish it here, and they put him out of New Orleans so that's why he went to California, where he died.

"Yes, I made my communion with Marie Leveau's grandson. His name was Alec Le jeune, No, it was not Legendre, it was Le jeune. Well, I'm fifty-seven and in those days we didn't make our communion until we were 12 years, so you can figure how long

that was. His grandmother was dead then, and he said that she was a very old woman when she died. Alec is still living but he's not in New Orleans. I think he is in Texas, but I can find out and let you know. I don't remember whether he lived in his grandmother's house or not, but I remember the house well, It was on St. Anne, between Bergundy and Rampart. It had a high wooden fence, and it was flat on the ground, and no gallery, and the doors were to the side.

"I believe my uncle has some of the papers of my great-grandfather, who was a slave dealer. And I'm also going to ask him for them. And I also let him have my grandmother's wedding invitation.

"I do my work and my aunt helps me. You'd be surprised how she can get around for her age. If anything happens to my aunt I will surely miss her, and I'm sorry that I can't do more for my mother, because she has certainly been good to me all my life. My father. was a white man by the name of Moro. They had a cigar factory and he never did anything for me. I don't even remember seeing him.

"I'm sorry that I can't offer you more than coffee. But anytime you're in the neighborhood and want something to eat, come in and I'll give you a good Creole dinner."

11 A

Maude Wallace

Ceceil George – Negress

1521 Columbus St.

Feb. 15, 1940.

Life in Slavery Days

Sister George, who lives with her daughter Rebecca Coleman, is quite aged. As near as they can figure out she has already "made ninety-four."

She was seated on a low stool, when I entered her room – a room that is plainly furnished, with an iron bed, a homemade dresser, a table, two straight chairs and a large rocking chair that sits by the one small window, where she evidently spends most of her time.

She is very dark and wrinkled, her eyes are blurred and her hands are old. She is quite stout, uses a cane, and due to trouble with her feet and old age, needed my assistance to "get to her rocking chair," which was only three or four steps.

She was dressed in cotton, an old jacket, and a dark kerchief on her head.

When she speaks, there is not a trace of bitterness in her voice and always reverence for "De Lawd" (Lord).

"I'se lived in dis country mos' a my life, but I was borned an' raised in de ole country, at the Great Swamp Plantation, in Charleston County, South Carolina.

"It was a beautiful place – great big. In de ole country (South Carolina) we raised cotton most, an' rice, an' corn.

"Our folks, in de Big House were fine people, all born with de gold spoon in dere mouth. Dere we had a church right on de plantation, - go dere all de time, but twice a month, dey'd take us to town to de Big Church, - all de blacks an' de whites together.

"We'd sing an' go at our work in de fields real happy. We had our own little gardens, an' we had all we wanted, but de Master he died, an' de young son, he wanted his share o' de plantation, so dey had to sell half o' everything.

"De Missus an' her daughter, dey kept de big house an' some o' de slaves, but some o' us had to go, - dey sold us like a gang o' chickens - My whole family, an' plenty more. I remember well, we all cried to leave de ole country, but we had more tears dan dat to shed.

"Well dey paid de young Massa his half o' de money, dat is part o' it - an' was to pay de rest, every year, so much every year, - but freedom come, an' he was shut out.

"Dey sold us to Dick Proctor, his plantation down here named de Florizone, in St. Bernard Parish.

We come here on de ship, dis was before de War an' I remembers it well. I was about twelve (?) years ole den. I can see us now, riding on de water. One morning, we come out lookin' an' see nothin', but sky an' water, an' we had been used to pine trees everywhere, an', yo' listen, when we look, a person was sittin' in de water, on a rock, combing her hair an' singin'. - I called my father quick, I was afraid she'd get drowned, - but yo' know, who she is? A Maremaid (Mermaid) what lives in de water, half fish an' half woman. I get so scart (scared) - dey drag us in quick.

Yes, I remember de water, dey made us go by de sea, because den we can't go back, God help us!

We come to de mos' wicked country dat our God's son ever died for! De ole people used to cry - dear Lawd, (Lord) how dey grieved! Dey never thought dey'd have to live in a heathern country - dey all dead now.

"Florizone (?) was a big plantation, dey raise most sugar cane, dere was a big sugar house on de plantation, an' a great big house for de white people. It's good to have a fine house to live in, but if dey don' have de Christ, where de soul goin' to go? Dis is de dressing room, dere's no repentance in de grave.

"It was a big place, twenty houses in de quarters; all de houses packed wid people. Oh Lawd, (Lord) I come up in hard times, - slavery times.

"Everybody worked, - young an' ole, if yo' could only carry two or three sugar cane yo' worked. No school, no church - yo' couldn't sing, an' Saturday night dey always have a dance, but yo' worked. Sunday, Monday, it all de same, an' if yo' say "Lawd a' mercy" - de Overseer whip yo'. De ole people, dey jes' set down an' cry - it like a heathern part o' de country.

"Yo' has to put yo' candle out early an' shut yo' self up. Den get up while it's still dark an' start to work.

"In de ole country (South Carolina), yo' never have a scratch. Dey never whips dere slaves. Lock dem up - yes - but don' whip dem. Down here, dey strip yo' down naked, an' two men hold yo' down an' whip yo' till de blood come - Crouel (cruel) Oh, Lawd (Lord).

"So mind I tell yo' what I seed wid my own eyes. De people take sick an' dey die, dey ain't no coffin for dem, dey take planks an' nail dem together like a chicken coop - yo' can see through it, an' it's too short, de neck's too long. So a man stand up on him an' jump on him - here - he broke his neck, an' it fall on his chest like dis. Den dey nail de top on an' one nail go in de brain. I see dat wid my own eyes. Den dey put dem

in de wagon what deyhaul de manure in nobody wid dem – de people have to go to work – wicked part o’ de country – wicked! wicked! wicked!

“A woman named Thomas, he r father die, but she couldn’t stay with him, dey make her go to de field an’ dey tole a man to go dig a hole. She cried, but it don’ do no good. Pore (poor) Christian got a hard road, but dey got de sparit (spirit) o’ Jesus on dere side.

In de ole country (S. C.), dey had spinning wheels made dere own cloth – made gloves, caps for de head, sho’ (sure) sho’ me. In dis country, dey give yo’ de ole clothes, one pair shoes a year, no stockin’s an’ in de winter, sometimes yo’ so cold – Lawd (Lord) have mercy! But dey make every chiile on de plantation, tote sugar cane jes de same.

“When a woman has a baby, if she can’t go to de field, when de baby is nine days ole, she has to sit an’ sew. My mother died blind, jes from dat.

I tell yo’ something, we were children, an’ we didn’t know we was play- ing, an’ we seen a man coming up de road. He was walkin’ an’ he had a wide, wide hat on, an’ a carpet sack on his shoulder. In de field de people was workin’ an’ my Uncle was de driver. We was in de road playin’, an’ de man got to like de corner, we say ‘Who dat comin’?’ When he got close, we break an’ run to the quarters. He say, ‘Don’ run, come back, I am yo’ friend. How yo’ all do?’ But we ready to run, an’ he reached in his sack, break up some hard tack, dey call it an’ give us all a piece, when he done, he wrote on a piece apaper an’ give it to my Uncle, de driver. Den he say to us, ‘Can yo’ keep a secret, an’ don’ repeat?’ We say ‘Yes, sah’. He say, ‘I come from yo’ friend Abraham Lincoln, he say, “Hold yo’ peace.”’ He took de map of de parish, an’ I don’ know when he walked back, maybe at night, but we don’ see him no more.

"Den my Father, run off de plantation to de Barracks to go to de war. He was killed three months before we knew it, an' was buried in Chalmette. After that a Uncle, brought us up an' we had to stay in that heathen place till freedom come.

"I married down there, an' we lived in a place called Berried (?) Village. My husban' made his own crop, an' all my children were born in de country. I had fourteen children, an' never made a miss wid one. Nine is dead, five girls is livin! I worked hard, an' seny my children to school. I never got no school. We all Baptist. I was Baptized in de ole country (S. C.).

"When we was in Berried Village, dere was a ole Democrat didn't like a bone in colored people, he wouldn't look at us. When he spoke to us. Said 'a Nigger, dog, an' Alligator all looked alike.' His name was William Green an' his wife was named Jerry. De yaller (yellow) fever came along, an' he sweat. He used to keep his money in a iron chest, an' ease out jes' enough money to run de house on to Mrs. Jerry, dat was his wife an' a good woman, den she get sick.

"De yaller fever was ragin'; every day coffins goin' to de graveyard, so he sent fo' a special doctor fo' Mrs. Jerry - his name was Dr. Levere, an' he had a crippled foot. Well de doctor, he took sick. Mrs. Jerry, she call me to her bed, she say: "Oh Ceceil, I'm sick, I'm scart (scared) de doctor, sick an' de medicine don' do no good. My husban' must not know, but can't yo' make me some tea? Do something." But I was scart a Mr. Green, so I jes' prayed over her an' something said, "Trust God, make dat tea." I went out got de grass, got some Indian Root, put it on to boil an' I got some whiskey. I say "Fo' God's sake, I don' wanna be killed." But I give her de tea, an' she don' sweat, so I cover her up an' I go git de guts out of a pumkin, an' boil it with whiskey an' give it to

her, an' she sweat de fever out. Her clothes were yaller (yellow), but wid God's help I got her on her feet.

Dr. Levere, he went crazy. Mr. Green tried to get some other doctor to come to him, but de doctor he laughed, said he was dying, an' wid all his chest a money, he couldn't help dat, he was goin' to Hell. No money could help him, dey couldn't pay his way out a Hell! Dat man died an' his Sparit (spirit) hant (haunt) dat house. He come back like bulldogs, in de day time.

When my husban' died, we came here to live, that's thirty-eight years ago. My five children all live here in de city, but I'd fly back to de ole country if I could, - but all de ole folks is gone. I know.

"Hear dat radio music? I like dem songs, - church songs - but yo' know dere's more untrue in dat, that what dey used to sing 'Take Jesus, for our Council.' We need it right now, but some throw it away.

"Wait, I'll sing yo' a song from de ole country (S. C.) but I have to study - I'm getting' ole. Wait.

Inching Along

Chorus

I'm inchin' along, inchin' along,
 Jesus is comin, bye an' bye!
 Like de pore lowly worm,
 I'm inchin' along,
 Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!
 When I was a sinner, jes' like yo',

Jesus is comin', bye an' bye!

I did not know, what I could do 'cause

Jesus is comin' bye an' bye.

With worry I was like some one dead,

Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!

An ache in my heart, an ache in my head.

Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!

(Repeat Chorus)

I prayed over her, an' I prayed over there

Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!

I prayed over yonder, then I stopped to ponder

Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!

I went on de wall to repent an' pray

Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!

An' I know my sin must be washed away.

Jesus is comin' bye an' bye.

(Repeat Chorus)

When I got dere, ole Satan dere, but

Jesus, is comin' bye an' bye!

He say to me, 'yo' too young for prayer'

Jesus, is comin' bye an' bye!

Den I heard a voice I could not see,
Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!
My sin's forgiven, my soul's set free;
Jesus is comin' bye an' bye.

So I made ole Satan out a liar
Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!
I kept on prayin', my way up higher
Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!

Oh, bye an' bye, on dat Sunny Day
Jesus is comin' bye an' bye!
All my troubles be done away,
Jesus, is comin' bye an' bye.

Inchin' along, Inchin' along,
Jesus, is comin' bye an' bye!
Like de pore lowly worm, I'm inchin' along
Jesus, is comin' bye an' bye!

11 A

Flossie McElwee

Rebecca Gordon – Colored

Milton St.,

McDonoghville

Ex-Slave

I don't know anything about slavery. I was too young. Been right here all of my life, working around de white folks. I allus listen to my pa tales tho, I was a baby when peace declared, so he say.

Member one tale he told me about when he run away from his missus. He said she was allus mean and was forever having him beat. So he run off one day, stayed in de woods for about 6 weeks before he come out. He said he sho' did have some fun dat day. He had been killing snakes and dyeing their hides and heads when he come back, he had 'em strung around his neck, his wrist and waist, so when he walked up, they were afraid of him. The Missus tried to get the niggers to catch him for her, but they were afraid, so he got him some meat and meal and went back to the swamps and stayed there until peace declared. He said if dey had of caught him dey would have kilt him.

I,s worked around de white folk all of my life. You see, I had a no good man. He went crazy on me and den I had a worser time. He would get after me with de chopping ax and run me half way to Gretna, but us stayed together till he died. We sho' did have some ups and down. I know one time, he beat me all most to death for nothing, when I got able you knows what I did? Well, I goes down to Gretna, gets me two new sheets. I sews him up indem sheets, after he went to sleep I mean. I beat him until he yelled so it woke up all de people in that block. After dat, he never did beat me any more. I just put up with him 'cause I felt sorry for him.

He's been dead quite a while. He was plumb stone crazy when he died with fits. I worked at the Jungle (Jung) hotel a long time, scrubbing, den I went to work for Mrs. Pat, she run a boarding house and fed all de railroad mens. People had told dat she would not pay dem off, but she allus paid me, I told her I would have to be paid every day. Us never did have any trouble, but let me tell you dat was de higest tempered 'omen God every made. She hated for dem men to come in drunk, and if dey did she would hang every thing from a pot over their heads. Dey was allus playing pranks on her. Dey knew she would raise hell, and cuss. No man ever wore pants could beat dat white 'omen cussing.

She allus give me the left over to bring home. It was good grub too. After I got disable to work, she would send her boys around to my house with soups for me. See, she was a widow woman and had five boys and dey kept her worried to deith. But you know all of her boys is grown men now and she died about two years ago. I don't believe in spirits. I,s never seen nothing like that and I stays right by myself. I belongs to the Baptist Church down in Gretna. I got saved when i was a young 'omen.

Harris - Mary, Colored

Posey

4609 Camp St.

10/28/40

11 A

Mary doesn't know her age, she will tell you to find it by adding that she was 11 years old when surrender came.

Her hair, which is "wrapped with cotton string" as was the custom in old days, is white and she is without a wrinkle (why can't they put on the market their recipe?).

She was patching an old dress, or what remained of it. As she scrutinized her handiwork, she remarked: "My old ma used to say:

'A patch by patch is friendly, but a patch on patch is 'bomination.'" But now that she's old and has no one able to help her she must resort to this "'bomination," and she's proud to wear garments patched in the "friendly style."

She has no revenue, she tells you. She can't get "relief" because she has a son who is supposed to take care of her.

"He does the bes' he kin, but they won't give him any work. I don' know how he manages to pay the rent."

She runs the house for him and when there is cooking to be done she is there to do it.

"In the first place I was raised to not run around, and when I was ol' enough to do as I please I never had the desire."

The house of two rooms and a kitchen is immaculately clean. On the beds are quilts which she has made of no particular design the scraps just "fittin in."

"Sure I remember slavery times. I was a big girl, turned eleven. I used to pull the fan that kep' off the flies while the white folks was eatin'. It wasn't hard work but my arms used to get tired – 'specially at dinner when they set so long at the table. I made the fires and brought in kindlin-wood and carried out the hashes.

"I never got a whippin' either, because I was good an' did my work an' never talked back. My ma tol' me she was brutally beaten an' she was bitter all her life."

We admitted that slavery was a mos t unfortunate thing – but that all masters were not cruel. Old slaves still tell of their love for "ole Miss" and old Marse," and the loyalty and love existing between them could never have been created in rancous hearts.

"The plantation was owned by Mr. Gaudet* – and I've hearn tell that Frenchmen were the hardest people an' almos' squee'd blood outen their slaves. With Americans, it was different so jes' set it down when you hear of brutal treatment that it was foreigners."

The day was growing to a close. We told her that we would come again and listen to her memories.

But we had reckoned without our host for when we returned, as if standing guard, was the son.

"You wish to see my mother? I'm sorry but I cannot permit her to be interviewed.

"Slavery! Why are you concerned about such stuff? It's bad enough for it to have existed and when we can't forget it there is no need of rehashing it."

We explained that his mother's pastor had given us her name because of her marvelous memory of other days. That we were only trying to preserve, from the reminiscences of old people, white and colored what they remembered or had heard from

their parents, old songs work and spirituals, customs, fables and things on that order. If they cared to talk about slavery, which most of them did, we were interested in hearing about it, but if they chose to steer clear of it that was all right.

"Bitter? Yes, I'm bitter – I have a right to be. My mother tells me about the brutality of those days, how they whipped unmercifully their slaves."

"But every slave-holder was not like that," we ventured.

"Yes'm, I'm bitter and the more I think about it the madder I get. Look at me they say I could pass for white. My mother is bright too. And why? Because the man who owned and sold my mother was her father. But that's not all. That man I hate with every fibre of my body and why? A brute like that who could sell his own child into unprincipled hands is a beast – The power, just because he had the power, and thirst for money."

He calmed down. "Lady you mean all right and if you want you can see my mother." But after such a tirade we were afraid deciding that "discretion was the better part of valor." It was our first experience with a madman!

*- Adam Gaudet, Sugar Plantation, St. James Parish

Typed – Rose St. Angelo

McKinney

EX-SLAVE INTERVIEW

MRS. ELIZABETH ROSS HITE

Mrs. Elizabeth Ross Hite is an inmate of the Louisiana Freedmen Asylum, 3100 Audubon St.; thinks she is over eighty years old and contends that the government ought to take care of her. Mrs. Hite's mother, Artemise Rose was receiving a pension for the war services of her husband, Brooks Ross, but it was discontinued after her death. Mrs. Hite said that three government representatives had been to see her but to no avail. She was more anxious to talk about this than anything else, citing examples of why she should get some kind of a pension throughout the interview.

Mrs. Elizabeth Ross Hite is a square faced, dark complexioned person, weighing about one hundred pounds; stands approximately five feet four inches. She was gaudily attired in a pink gingham dress, black shoes with a white piece of cloth tied around her head. Her hair is gray and is falling out by the handful. Mrs. Hite is a very nervous type but was quite cooperative on this visit which was the third. She attributed her nervous condition to worry and contends that it prevents her from recalling every thing that she knows happened during slavery. She was made very comfortable sitting in one of the reception rooms' rocking chairs.

"I was born on de Trinity Plantation dat Godchaux has bought since de war. Pierre Landro was de master. He came from France and was very rich. Mah mudder and father came from Richmond, Virginia. Dere name is Artemise and Brooks Ross. I had two brudders and one sister but dey is all dead now. Mah brudders' name was David Ross and Brook Ross. David was de oldest. Mah sister's name was Annette Ross. Mah

mudder died in N'Awlins wid de small pox. She took sick comin' after de gov'ment's money. Mah father was burried in de Fort Hutson graveyard in Baton Rouge whar he died. He asked de captain to put a tree on his grave so his children could find it but we nebber did bother."

"All mah kin people was house servants during slavery. Mah grandmudder, Mariah Lewis died since peace declared. I ro'member how mah grandmudder used to tell bout de hard times dey had but not us. We had a gud master. Dere was over one hundred head of hands on de place. Mah master was gud to all of dem. He nebber did whip dem but his overseers would. He was too rich and too busy making money and had no time to fool wid us darkies. He even told us so. Yas sir, he sold ev'rything dat was pro'duced on de plantation. Mah master christened all of his children in de Catholic church and bought clothes by de carloads. He had thirty-five plantations but sold ev'ryone of dem when he heard dat de Yankees was comin'. One day I heahed mah master say, 'You darkies is gwine to hav a hell of a time getting along wid dem Yankees. Dey is de meanest people on earth. Dey wont be as kind to ya as I is. I um not gwine to let dem kill me so I um gwine to get away from heah'. He saved his money and put it in big boxes."

"We slept on wooden beds wid fresh moss mattress. Our bed was kep clean. Much cleaner den de beds of today. Dey was scrubbed ev'ry Saturday. Dere wasn't a chince on a one of 'em. "Better not see a chince on a bed. De master would sur fuss er bout it. I rem'member one day another master brought one of his slaves over wid him when he came to see mah master's daughter. And de fust thing mah master wanted to know was did dat darky have any fleas, bugs or chinces on him. All de beds was made

by carpenters on de plantation. Dere was fo rows of houses for de quarters. Dere was no paint on dem, also had a house fo children and hospital. Grandma Delaite had charge of de hospital. No in deed mah master didn't want no children to wurk. He used to say all de time, don't let dem little darkies wurk. It might hurt dem and dere is enough of dem older darkies on dis farm fo wurk. An listen dere was two nurses in de hospital to tak care of de children. Dere mudders did not have time to tak care of dem. All de master wanted was fo dem wimmen to have children. Dey re'ceive de best of fud an at'tention. A hog was killed everyday fo dem children. Ise knows case I was dere. Old man Ben did de carving. Ev'rybody salted dere own meat. Thousands of cattle was raised on de plantation."

"I re'member eating out of a pan when two drivers came up an told me to stop dat I had enough. Well sir, I told mah mudder and she told mah master and aid he raise hell! Dere was two drivers, cose dere was pimps too, just tak today. De pimps told de drivers ev'rything dat happened. De drivers' name was Elliot Saunders and Simon. Both was darkies. Elliot was a bright darky and Simon was black. Dey wasn't zactly mean but dey would whip ya when ya did something bad. Ise dont know whar dem darkies com from but dey must er been free darkies case de master took dem to France one time."

"One day Simon went looking fo a darky name Jim who had run away. Old Jim used to run away all de time. He got his whipping too. De drivers would tak turns on him, even tied him to a tree and hand up his legs but dat didn't do so gud. Dey jest got tired whipping Jim. Anyhow, Simon went lookin' fo Jim. He looked an looked and all of a sudden he came upon Jim hiding behind a tree. Jim squatted when he saw Simon an Simon pulled a gun when he saw Jim but dat didn't do any gud case Jim hid and couldn't

be seen. Simon looked agin but couldn't find Jim. He looked all over de woods den he saw Jim agin. He fired "bang". He fired "bang". Well sir, he went whar Jim was but Jim was not dere. He looked on agin but could not find Jim. Simon got tired looking, he didn't know what to do. He thought dat he had killed Jim and came on back home. He told ev'rybody, "Well, I got runaway Jim at last. De old darky is dead, yeah, he is dead". Ev'rybody felt sorry fo Jim. He was a gud fellow. Only tried to git freedom. Ya can't blame a man case he trys to git freedom. Can ya? Dere was er moanin' an er cryin' all over de plantation an finally master headed er bout it. He says, "What is all dis cryin' bout Jim. You darkies act lak Jim is im'portant. He aint de only big and gud man on dis farm. Now git back to wurk an fo'git about Jim. But de darkies prayed at night tryin' ta keep Jim's soul out of hell. We jest knew dat he was foolin' wid de debbil. Old Jim would fool wid anybody. After all de fuss, prayers and ev'rything was over up popped Jim to git something to eat. He posed as a preacher off a nearby farm. A feller name Jack was de fust one to see him. Jack ran hollerin' all over de place dat Jim had com back to life. People was nearly crazy. Nebber headed of a man, cep Gawd, comin back ta life. Well sir, heheheh, Jim had done com back ta life. De darkies nearly had a holiday. Mah master wasn't dere. He had gone away wid his family. De two drivers headed er bout it but was fraid to com near Jim. Dey was scared stiff. All de darkies went runnin' to Jim askin him er bout hebbin. Jim tol 'em dat hebbin was a gud place. Dat St. Peter was glad to see him tol him to walk straight to de master an say to let all of his people free. Jim says too, "St. Peter says welcome, Jim. Howya." Ise says "Hello St. Peter, I um a gud man livin on Master Landro's farm." He was surprised, sayin a gud man lak yu a slave. Boy, go down on earth an tell dat master if he don't let yu an all

dem darkies go I um comin down mah self. No, I didn't see Gawd. He was too busy. Nebber seen a man so busy. Guess its caise dere is too many people lak Elliot, Simon, and de master on earth. Whar is Simon?" Well sir, de darkies had Jim b'leivin dat he was really dead an had com back to earth. Old Jim braced up an got big, stuck his shoulders out and pouted, "Ise gwine to start a mess round heah." He looked fo Simon. He looked fo Elliot. Nobody could be found. All de darkies was reddy to go wid Jim. Dey re'fuse to wurk fo anybody caise Jim had tol dem not to wurk. An den de master came back. He says send me dat man dat jest came from hebbin. Old Jim took one of de master's tux'edo suit. He was a dressed up daky. Ev'rybody went looking ta see what was gwine to happen, if St. Peter was gwine to help Jim. Dere was a holiday. Nobody wurked. Mah master's family sat on de front porch waiting fo Jim. After er while Jim stepped on de front porch an mah master says, "Jim, dey tell me dat ya went to hebbin." Jim he answered, "Yas master Ise did an St. Peter tol me to tell ya to let ail de people go free". "Now Jim, don't tell me what St. Peter said caise I aint thinkin er bout him." Old Jim's eyes got as big as an apple. He rolled dem eyes er round at de people an looked scared stiff, "Master, ya mean ya aint er fraid of St. Peter?" "No, not at all Jim. I aint got no love in mah heart fo St. Peter an I nebber will hav any. Did ya see anybody else? Dey tell me dat ya was far away from Gawd. Infact, he was too busy ta see ya. Well Jim if ya didn't see Gawd ya didn't see anybody as far as I um concerned." Jin started to run. Old master grabbed his shot gun an says dis is one time ya will either go to hell or hebbin Jim if ya run." De people looked at Jim an dey looked at de master. Jim was foolin but de master wasn't foolin. Jim had ta con'fess. He says, "Old master got me at last". Master was mean ta him. He tol Jim to go back ta wurk an nebber run away agin."

"Mah mudder was a house maid. She got no money. No, I was old enough ta work. Dont know how old I was. I was er bout to pick peas in de pea patch right in front of de house when de war came. See did mark, (a scar on her left arm) Jim Patrick did it. Yeah de sam Jim dat tried to run away."

"Mah mudder planted corn but de master bought it from her. He paid fifty cents per barrel for corn. Mah mudder bought good clothes wid de money, nothing but silk dresses. Mah children went ta school in dem dresses. Nebber did sav money. We use to play wid it."

"Sure we ate gud food. Drank plenty of milk, clabber, andate gud bread. Ev'ry thing was made on de plantation by plantation people. Mah father caught possum. He went out at night trapping but de drivers didn't know it. No sir, he wasn't allowed to go out at night but would steal out. De quarters had cat holes to keep de scent from leakin' out. Ya got a whippin' if de scent got out. We ate plenty of rabbits, ate fish an ev'rything the master ate. De master would ask, "Did dem darkies git gud fud?" Ise laked gud meat best, especially spare ribs an chicken. Talkin er bout garden. Shucks yu aint seen no garden. We had a garden right in front of our quarter. We planted ev'rything in it. Had watermelon, mushmelon and a flower garden."

"De slaves wore plain ruf lined dresses, yellow cotton dresses in hot weather. Old lady Betsy Adams was de seamstress. I use to liv wid her. She died since de war. De slaves had de best of shoes too. De master brought his house people shoes from France. Dey had to look gud, caise de master had plenty of company. Dere was a big brick house fo de shoemaker shop. De shoemaker was cullored. He was free. His name was Beverly. He tanned the hides and did ev'rything. Even teached de darkies, dat is, de

young ones. De slaves wore thick yarn clothes in winter. Winter clothes was made in summer an summer clothes was made in winter. We sold old clothes to darkies who had mean masters. Dey had to hide 'em though. De slaves dressed up on Sunday. Yeah, de Landro darkies had ev'rything,"

"Dere was three cooks fo master Landro. One to boil only. De cooks use to mak all kinds of fancy fud. Miss Zabel, de master's furst cousin who looked white use to teach de cooks all de fancy dishes dat she knew er bout in France. Now dis was a stylish lady an had plenty of money. Another darky dat was kin to master Landro is Joe Brown. Dis was a gud lookin' darky. He had money too but Ise dont know what came of it when de Yankees came. Master had two beautiful daughters. One's name was Marie. I fo' got de other one's name. Mistress Elizabeth, master's wife, was beautiful too. Dey didn't hav to use no paint on dere face lak de people do today. Dey was nut'yu'rally beautiful. I re'member one day de mistress came down to our quarter. She didn't com much but when she came she was lookin prutty. She had black hair an wore a silk red, white an blue waist. All de children ran to see her. Nebber did dey see a pusson dressed up lak dat. De mistress jest looked er round."

"Rogers an Abraham Rugless, po white trash, would wait at night to catch de darkies an bring 'em to dey masters. Some of de masters would pay dem fo dis but not mah master. He would run 'em away when dey came ta him wid his people. He would examine dem, too, and tol dem if anybody would scare or hurt his people dey was in a big humbug wid him. Child, dem po white trash did not fool wid master Landro's people. No sir! Yeahed, we called 'em po white trash. Dats all dey was. All dey could do was catch slaves fa money. Dey would whip em fo money, too. Dey hated mah

master's darkies. Says dey was treated too gud fo niggers. We tol 'em we would rather be a nigger den a po white trash. Dat used to mak 'em mad. Mr. Barrow was one gud po' white trash who didn't catch slaves at night. He lived in Lafourche Parish."

"De slaves went in a cot to de field to pick cotton, corn, potatoes and sugar cane. Dey didn't com back fo lunch. It was brought to dem. Dey came home fo' dinner dough. Dem fools would eat too. Ev'rybody ate in his own quarters."

"Dey slaves was punished fo' fights, being late fo wurk, lying, runnin away and stealin'. Dey would put ya in a stark. Yo hands an foots was buckled up an ya stayed dere fo months. No, dey did not hang ya. Nebber heahed of hangin' until taday iak people do. Ya jest got a whippin. Dey gav ya fud when ya was punished. Yas, some of de master was mean but dey did not hang anybody. De mean master would tie de slaves to a tree and beat dem to death."

"Old lady Cater ran away and built a home in de ground. She had six children. De driver caught her one day an whipped her to death. He beat her until her skin fell off an she died. Den he unloosened her from de tree an buried her in de ground in front of de quarters. De drivers used a platted rawhide whip. If he didn't want to hurt ya he would pop de whip and let some of delicks go by. Dis was done to fool de master who headed de licks inside of de house. I re'member one day a gud friend of one of de drivers did something wrong. De driver brought him an tied him to a tree and jest popped de whip. De darky hollered and hollered. He hollered an cried so much dat de master says to let dat darky alone. An de whip ain't nebberteched him."

"No, I ain't nebberteched an auction block but Ise seen slaves when dey jest com off de auction block, Dey would be sweatin' and lookin' sick. Some of 'em looked all

right but most of 'em was tired lookin'. Dey traveled on ships. Slaves was sold on Napoleon Avenue. Yeahed dere was a special quarter on de ship fo slaves. Yeah, Ise saw slaves in chains. Ise seen 'em wurk in chains. Dey pinned chains er round ya ankle when ya tried ta run away."

"Mah master brought er cullored man, John Adams, from France to teach us how to pray, read and write. We went to his house. He lived in a big house lak de houses on St. Charles Avenue. Yeahed he lived on de plantation. But we had our own chirch in de brick yard way out on de field. We hid behind de brick an had chirch ev'rynight. We was only supposed to have chirch on Sunday but we wanted ta pray all of de time. Old man Mingo preached an dere was Bible lessons. Mingo's famous text was, "Pure gold tried by de fire." He gav sacraments in a cup. Mah master didn't want us to hav too much religion cause de darkies would giv him all religion an' no wurk. Den, too, he says dat we stayed up too late singing and so could not do a gud day's work de next day; but we hid an prayed jest de same. No sir, nothing could stop us from prayin to Gawd. We didn't use light. We prayed in de dark, children an all. Sometimes we would put grease in a can an burn it. De preacher had to sit over de can to read his Bible. One time de preacher caught on fire. Dere was screaming. One of the drivers caught us an de master whipped all dem dat was late fo wurk de next day. Yeah, we sang spirituals. Mah favorite one was "Better Mind You Walk On De Cross". Yeah, we shouted all night. Chirch lasted all night an way into de mornin'. Dis is de way "Better Mind How You Walk On De Cross" goes:

"Better mind how you talk on de cross

Better mind how you talk on de cross

Ya foot might slip an ya soul get lost
 Better mind how you walk on de cross
 Better mind how you walk on de cross
 How ya walk an talk er bout Jesus
 How ya lean, walk on, talk er bout de cross
 Better mind how ya walk on de cross
 How ya walk on de cross, walk on de cross
 I um leanin on Jesus, leanin on Jesus
 Better mind how ya walk on de cross."

"We got happy when dat hymn was sung. De darkies would sing an ya ought er
 head dem. De old preacher would stomp his foots an all de people would pray an shout.
 Yeah, we had those good baptisms sometime in a pond whar dey drew water for the sugar
 house. Dere was baptisms sometime once, twice an three per year as de situation called
 for. Yeah, ev'body was anxious to git baptized.. to sav dere soul. It was a deep pond
 whar dey would git baptize, too. De preacher would say: "Halleluah, Halleluah! We
 sang dis hymn:

I baptize yo in de ribber Jordan
 I baptize yo in de ribber Jordan
 Halleluah, Halleluah, Halleluah, Lord.
 Children, com er runnin' com er runnin'
 I baptize yo in de ribber Jordan
 I baptize yo in de ribber Jordan
 Children, com er runnin', com er runnin'.

"De preacher would say, "I baptize yo in de name of de Father, Son an de Holy Ghost." I re'member one day an old lady wanted religion so bad dat she tol de preacher dat she was anxious to git to hebbin and was cryin' "Lord, sav me." De preacher went er runnin' an hollerin'. He said, "Sister, I um gonna sav yo but ya got to prove it to de Lord! Prove dat ya is in a position to be saved." Well sir, ev'rybody checked dis old gal an found her ta be one of the biggest rascals on de plantation. Sich a big rascal dat de men didn't want her. She was too big a jackass an' too big a witch. No, I dunno nothin er bout hoodoo. Nebber heahed er bout dat stuff until I came heah. Dere was mo religious wimmen den men. De preacher didn't re'ceive no money. He wurked on de plantation lak ev'rybody else. Dat went fo all preachers, unless it was somebody dat master brought from France. We didn't lak to go to anybody brought from France cause ya could not do lak ya wanted to do. Ya could not be free to shout. Gawd says dat ya must shout if ya want to be saved. Dats in de Bible. Don't, ya know it?

"Funerals? All of de slaves was buried in swell, looking coffins, well made, too. Dey was covered with white cotton. No children would play er round de place whar de coffin was made. Yeah, all de coffins was made on de plantation by hand. Yeah, free men made dem. De dead folks had de best preacher on de plantation. His name was Reverend Jacob Nelson. He spoke French, English, Latin, Greek, and Spanish. He was a slave jest cause he was too smart. Mah master was er fraid dat he would teach de slaves something he didn't want dem ta know, dats why he was a slave. He was brought heah a free man but made a slave when he refused to obey de master. Master Landro would not let him go back to France. De edumonated white folks came to heah dis man preach. Oh! dat man could preach! He went er growlin', cryin' from de heart an talkin' in all

dose many languages dat de people didn't know anything er bout an de crowd went wild, most of dem fainted. De slaves went to de funeral in carriages. De white folks went in dere large wagons with slave drivers. It was lak a picnic when a slave would die an Reverend Nelson would preach de funeral. De funeral son dat I lak best was:

“Out from de tomb a doanful sound
 Out from de tomb a doanful sound
 And I heahed a tender cry
 Out from de tomb a doanful sound
 A livin man came viewed de ground
 Of every sinful heart, of every sinful heart.”

“Dat is de only one dat Ise re'member. No, we did not sing “Nearer Mah Gawd To Thee”. Heah is another hymn we sang in slavery:

“Oh whar is He, Oh whar is He
 Born de King of Jews?
 Oh whar is He wid dat gud news?
 May Jesus wash mah sins er way.
 Born de king of Jews?
 Oh whar is He wid dat gud news?
 Oh whar is He born de king of Jews?
 I um standin on de ladder washing mah sins er way
 I um standin heah wid a heart dat will stay
 Waitin' fo mah Lord, oh whar is He born de king of Jews?
 Oh whar is He wid dat gud news an born de king of Jews?”

"Mah master went to France ev'ry summer, bringin' little houses of money. De houses was lak little doll houses an made by carpenters on de farm. No, de Yankees didn't git any of his money. He use to tell us dat de Yankees was er comin someday but would not kill him. I saw him tak his money away with him. Yeah, slaves ran away up north, sayin dat de people up dere was treatin people lak dey was human beings an not lak den was dogs. Yeah, some of de masters was very mean an whipped an did not feed dey slaves. I know a woman who was a slave. She said dat her master was so mean dat he died wid his eyes wide open. Whenever ya see a man die wid his eyes wide open he is a dirty rascal an mean to people. Many slaves stold away an went up north. Dey was stealin an runnin away ev'ryday. Dey would hide on de ships, swim and do ev'rything to git er way."

"All masters had differ'rent laws. I nebber heahed nuthin er bout patrollers an rollers. News? We carried news by stealin off. Shucks, we knew ev'rything de master talked er bout. De house girl would tell us an we would pass it er round. Dats how we knew dat master was afraid of de yankees. Mah mudder says dat one day she heahed master say dat de yankees would kill dem an tak all de slaves an free dem. How did we steal off? Through chicken holes. De slaves had balls in de sugar house. Dey would start late an was way out in de field whar de master could not heah dem. Not a bit of noise could be heahed. No sir, de slaves had some swell times. In case ya was caught, ya was whipped. Dey danced by candle light. Deg got back in dere quarters fo daylight. Ya could not look to tired de next day, neither. If ya did de furst thing de driver would say was dat ya was out last night en den de whippin would follow. Dese songs was sung:

"Whip er wop, whip er wop youee

We gonna sing and dance an sing
Whip er wop, whip er wop youee
Singin, singin an dancin' youee
Dancin, singin' an dancin' youee
Whip er wop, whip er wop youee.

"De slaves could dance too. Dey did de buck dance and de shimmie. Dey would dance lak dis. (Two steps to the right and two to the left). Den dey would shake dere skirts an de men would dance er round dem; we would do dis (the dance that Mrs. Hite demonstrated is very much like the Scottische). When master's daughter had company of white folks from France or up north he would git his darkies an giv 'em liquor to dance. De darkies would git in front of de house an dance down to de bricks. Master an his white folks friends would jest laugh an giv de darkies liquor. Dey would mak music wid pans, beat on pots wid sticks an sing. Whenever dere was a contest a man named Jolly would win all of 'em. Dis darky sur could dance. Boy, when he started twirling his legs an stickin out his back old master would holler. Wouldn't let Jolly wurk hard either. Caise he was de best dat master Landro had. He won plenty of money dancin fo master. Master says he was gwine to tak Jolly to France but de mistress wouldn't let him. She use to always say dat Jolly was her fav'err'ite joy. Jolly was a tall fellow, skinny, wid long legs an a peanut lookin' head. He was black wid pearly white teeth. He had big feet too. Yeah, Jolly was a disfigured man. But master would fight for him. I'll nebber fo'git all de humbug dat he cause one day when he took a stroll from de place dat he an Master Landro went to. Ya see, master took Jolly to a plantation to dance against a slave of one of his friends. Jolly beat de man dancin'. Fo ya know it he had done been in de

man's house makin lov to de man's wife in de man's bed. Dere was a big fight. Jolly knocked de man out cold. Bein' by himself all de slaves jumped on Jolly an beat him up. Master heahed er bout it an brought Jolly back an made him fight al de slaves one by one. Jolly beat dem all up an master Landro helped him while his friend jest sat dere. He had batter jest sat dere cause master Landro was a gud man. Dat was de time dat he wanted to carry Jolly t o France but Mistress says no indeed, dis Jolly is ma pride an joy."

"Some of de slaves was bad. Dey would beat up de master an his family. Some of dem would kill dere master but not on our plantation..oh yeah, jest once. A man name John beat up master one day but master got de best of him when he rested. Dis day master went on de field to in'spect things. John was er foolin er round. He was lazy anyhow. Ya know one of dese smart fellows who tries to put all de wurk on de other fellow. Master caught John in de act an popped him on de eye. All of a sudden John cracked master side de head, an fo ya know it he was down on de ground. Mah mudder was right dere. She says dat master got up an John popped him agin. Dis time master stayed down. De drivers rushed to kill John but master says no, I will tak care of him after dinner. Master went in an had a good rest. After dinner he came back lookin fo John. John saw him comin an ran. Master says dat he was gwine to giv him a chance to do dat agin. He squared off at John an wid one blow John was on de ground an stayed dere. Dey had to git de doctor fo John. We use to heah er bout de slaves dat beat up dere masters an runnin er way. Wished I had de dollars fo de slaves dat beat up dere masters I would be rich. Mah grandfather Edmond Louis beat up his master something terrible. De master laked him so much dat he wouldn't whip him. Mah grandfather was de coachman but after he whipped de master dey put him in de corn field. He says dat he

had nebber seen a corn field. But when dey put him in line an tol him he better be de first one finish ev'rytime mah grandfather says he would. I um telling ya dat he was de first one to finish an asked fo mo."

"De slaves had a gud time in dere quarters. Dey played guitar, danced fo de light went out. Doy put skin over a barrel fo a drum. Dey talked er bout de master's business in dere quarters too."

"De slave wurked on Sunday and Saturday sometimes. Most of de time dey didn't. De Sunday wurk was light. Dey would only pull shucks of corn de corn shucks was given to de cows. On big holidays de slaves didn't wurk. On Christmas master would giv his slaves presents. Dey would be clothes most of de time. I don't remember wurkin on New Years Day."

"De children shot marbles an played games. All wimmen gambled in de woods, playin cards an dice. All children were christened at eight yars old in de Catholic church. Yeah, de children played games, dey played Yankee Doodle Dandy."

"Yeah, Ise seen a witch. Dey is lak a big turkey wid no eyes. Sometimes dey look lak de debbil wid horns an everything. Ise seen 'em comin in de house over de sill of de door. We use to hollow when we seen 'em but mah mudder says dat dey don't harm gud children. Yeah a story? No, dis is de truth. One day a witch picked up a woman an carried her off an nobody knows whar she is at. De master an all de drivers looked fo de woman but nobody could find her. De witch took er away. People use to tell her dat was gwine to happen caise she was a bad woman who 'fuse to go to chirch. I had dat heartfelt religion an prayed to Gawd to hold ma mind in his hand."

"Sometime de slaves would hav marriages lak de people do today wid all de same trimmings. De veil, gown an ev'rything. Dey married fo de preacher an had big af'airs in dere quarters. Den sometime dey would go to de master to git his permission an blessings an he would say, "C'mon darky jump over dis brum an call yo'self man an wife." Master might er gav some of dem darkies present or sumpin caise dere was er lot of darkies gwine to master. Shucks some of dem darkies didn't care er bout master, preacher or nobody dey jest went an got married, married demselves. Don't know how dey did it but dey did it dough!"

"Tell a story dat I heahed? Well, mah nervous condition kind er keep me from re'memberin' ev'rything dat I heahed or know er bout but I do know dis an its de truth....dey tell me:

Dere was a rabbit an a bear who was in a grocery business. De rabbit was tryin to cheat de bear an de bear was tryin to cheat de rabbit. Dey got er long fib' unil one day de rabbit's friend tol him dat de bear was crooked an de bera's friendss tol him dat de rabbit was crooked. De only way to tell if someone is crooked is to try ya wife on 'em both of dem thought. Well, sir, de bear sent his wife in en de rabbit sent his wife in de grocery store. De bear made lov to de rabbit's wife and de rabbit made lov to de bear's wife. Neither one knew er bout. One day de bear's wife tol him what a nice man de rabbit was. De bear says, well, well I caught him at last. Any time a man will make lov to ya wife he will steal ya groceries. Mrs. bear says yeah ya caught him at last. He made lov ta me. De bear went runnin out of de house lookin fo de rabbit. Well sir, de rabbit was talkin to his wife. He saya what a nice man de bear was an his wife says he fooled you caise he made lov ta me. So, he figured anytime a man will mak lov to ya wife he will steal ya

groceries. So, de rabbit left his house lookin fo de bear. And lo it all! Dey met in de center of de road. Both hollered out loud dat his wife an groceries had been molested. Upon learnin dat both wives had been made lov to and dat an equal number of groceries was stolen by each dey shook hands and says dat it is gud ta know dat dere is mo den one thief in de world."

"Did ya heah er bout de smart darcy dat a master had? Dis darcy could guess anything in de world. So, his master figured dat he could make money off of him. He took dis old darcy er round his friends an bet dat he could guess anything dat dey was thinking er bout. De old darcy won all de bets from his master's friends an made his master rich. So, one day a man came down from de north wid plenty of money lookin fo dis darcy who was so smart an could guess ev'rything people was thinkin er bout or could wurk out problems. He bet the master one thousand dollars dat he would get something dat de darcy couldn't guess and giv him three times to guess it. De man from de north came up wid something in a box. He says guess darcy Ise gwin to giv three guesses. De darcy's master an mistress was jest er pullin fo him sayin comon guesses an we is all rich. De old darcy took one guess. He says ya got a rabbit in dat box. De man from de north laughed and says I got dis darcy now. De darcy looked at his boss an winked, foolin his boss. De master really thought dat de old darcy was knowin what he was doin. De darcy took another guess. Dis time he says ya got a shot gun in dat box. De man from de north shook his head an laughed out loud, no indeed, you is wrong. De old darcy took a look at his boss an shook his head...he shook his head agin. His master an mistress commence gettin worried. Dey looked at him while he was wonderin'. Den finally, de old darcy looked at his boss and said, "DEY CAUGHT DE OLD COON AT

LAST." De man from de north says I'll be damn! Dat's what it is a coon. Tak de money. Ev'rybody hugged de old darky."

"De slaves might er did hoodoo but I nebber heahed nuthin er bout it until I cam heah. Ise knows de people heah do hoodoo wurk caise some of dem com to me caise dey know I um old an figure dat Ise know something er boutit, but I don't know er thing."

"De slaves got de best of attention. Two white doctors, Stone an Baillet served dem. No sir, master Landro was makin too much money off of his darkies to let 'em die lak mules. Dey was gud workers."

"Freedom had been given long fo we knew anything er bout it. Master Landro and de driver would tell us. Dey tried an tried to keep us as slaves. Mah mudder say dat Elliot and Simon was beat up. A fellow name Benjamin came on our plantation an hung up de American flag on a freedom poll. Ev'rybody ran into de streets hollorin' we is free at last. De yankees shook our hands, dere was singin, prayin an ev'rythin. De yankees beat up all dose masters who refused to let de slaves go when dey was supposed to. Our master ran away to France. Abraham Lincoln came and tol ev'rybody dat dey was gwinn to git free schools. He talked to us from a gun boat on de ribber. He says dat he was cmmmin back but nebber did. All de big folks had gone; dere was nothing heah but de little folks. Dey gav us land but some of de po white trash took it away from de slaves. Dere was killin an fightin after de yankees left. De slaves lost most of de battles caise some of de men had big guns. A lot of dem came from Texas an other hiding places after de yankees left. Dey was scared stiff of de yankees."

"De slaves went to farmin after freedom. Dey sold dere crops to de white men an went to school. White people teached de school. Dere was religious people tryin to git

de slaves to go to chirch but some kind of riders came along an tol dem dat dey must not teach niggers. I heahed of de Ku Klux Klans in Texas. Dey didn't com whar I lived. Dese riders didn't wear anything over dere faces or heads. Dey was jest lak ev'ryday people. Dey was nothin but de po' white trash. Dese was de people who had nothin."

"I heahed er bout Booker T. Washington. I b'lieve dat all cullored people must be edumoncated an lov one another an be religious. Taday if a man got plenty of money he is looked upon. Ise prayin fo de world to be saved. I use ta wurk fo A.C. Littlejohn who is kin to Jefferson Davis."

"Mah mudder was robbed by po' white trash in Napoleonville. She had \$1200.00 worth of property taken away from her dere. De government men tol her she would git it back but she nebber did. Mah mudder died on a Saturday night. \$1000.00 had jest com from Washington fo her but we had to send it back."

"Mah husband made gud money farmin. We bought furniture for \$300.00. Did not live lak rats. We lived gud. I made gud money wurkin for Mrs. Littlejohn. She put me heah but she is dead now, I guess an I um all alone. I wish de government would do somethin fo me. Can't ya help me to git somethin."

N. H. Hobley, Negro

Posey – Jan. 1941

288 Philip St.

#17

Voodoo

Jim Alexander

-description

-home

-methods

-wife

Algiers quadroon who married white Chicagoan
(Matthews).

John Bayou (Montane)

Beer drinking spirits.

Beer treatment for spirits.

Black Hawk – Picture.

Black Magic.

Blood sacrifice.

Book of magic.

Buying Freedom.

Catherine Plantation.

Charms.

Congo Square.

Crystal gazing.

Divine Healing.

Dickinson or Dixon.

Dragon's Blood.

Eugene, "Judge" (Staes?)

Evil spirits.

Fascinating powder.

Great book of magic art,

**excepts from.

Ham & Eggs (Lautans)

Haunted Piano (Algiers)

Hennessy's "Possessed" Adopted daughter (Algiers)

Incantations.

Marie Laveau

-dress of

-gambling habits

-mummified babies.

Maria (?) Lateur

Lake Pontchartrain

- Ceremonies at.

Lizards.

Josie Matthews case.

Montano - John Bayou

Mixed Blood.

Overseers

Sagasta (Anthony) Tony (Mobile, Ala.)

Sagasta Spanish Statesman and Insurrectionist.

Be Laurance Scott.

Lana Scovette.

Sepulchre prayer.

Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses.

Spiritualist Churches.

Staes (Judge Eugene).

Sweet Basil.

Uncle Tom.

Voodoo.

White Voodoo Queen –(Mrs. Jim Alexander)