

Hobley, N. H. (Negro)

Posey – Jan. 1941.

288 Philip St.

Large of frame, swarthy looking, healthy, a term used by the dictionary, prominent features, close-cropped beard and head of white wool, eyes that beam with kindness – a genuine African, you look at him and recall those lines you heard in your childhood:

‘Aaron spake and said unto Moses,

Blessed be the niggers that have flat noses.’

“Eighty-three, my next birthday.” He will tell you, if you ask his age and “my memory goes back to when I was a little child. My father bought his freedom before I was born and this is how it happened: Mr. Cunningham was the owner of a plantation down the River. My father was one of his slaves. The overseer Henry Knight was a white man and the father of my mother, making him my grandfather. That was where he took advantage of his position and he tried to smuggle it down by allowing my father to clear the land by cutting timber on Sunday – lending him a wagon to haul it away and selling, the wood, to Old Marse. In this way, he saved enough to make a payment of \$300.00, then \$250.00, then \$150.00, \$700.00 in all. In those days if slaves worked on Sundays they were paid for it. This overseer was a northern man, they told me.

“My father continued work on the plantation as a hired man until freedom was declared, for two years, during which time I was born. So you see I grew up without knowing bondage.

"My parents told me that their master and missus treated them fine and were good to all their slaves, whom they always spoke of as 'my servants.'

"Once my father came pretty close to being sold. It was like this: Now in what they called Congo Square, slaves were brought to be sold, so it happened that ole Marse sent down a batch in which my father was included. Just before the sale ole Marse appeared and my father bowing before him said, 'Marse you ain' goin' sell me air you?'

"Sell you, the finest man I know. Of course not. How does it happen that you are here?'"

"The overseer put him along with the rest but ole Marse brought him home and said that as long as he lived he would never be sold."

Old Uncle Tom.

"Did you ever read 'Uncle Tom's Cabin?'" he asked.

"Weil, the Uncle Tom about which the book was writ lived up on Red River somewhere. I saw him and remember just how he looked although I was just a lil' fellow. He was free then and an old man, and had an easy life and ev'rybody was good to him."

"Yes, and do you know you look like the pictures we've seen of him?" we replied.

"Ain' that queer? People have said they noted the resemblance and as I get older maybe I do."

And then this boy grown up tells of working as a 'hand' on the Catherine Plantation belonging to Charles Matthews. Mr. Matthews did not understand the best way to manage and became poor.

“He sent his crop to an adjoining mill to be sold and a man by the name of R. F. Dixon or Dickinson, who had nothing, went along and picked up the cane that fell by the wayside. In this way he got a start and pretty soon was able to buy a mule and wagon, and just kept on increasing until finally he had a good head start. Then Mr. Matthews was in a tight place and wanted to dispose of his plantation. Mr. Dixon advised him to hold on, that sugar would soon bring a better price. Two months after, he made a net profit of \$2000.00 and one month later engaged Mr. Dixon as manager of the Catherine. Fortune began to smile and soon Mr. Matthews became rich. At that time farmers were only allowed to own a certain number of acres. Mr. Dixon had his allotment. He planted beans. This crop proved to be a pot of gold. Finally, Mr. Dixon got to be one of the richest men in the state. Mr. Matthews grew wealthy too. They were both fine men,” continues our narrator.

“And then I came to Algiers and New Orleans. That was January 30, 1880. I became acquainted with Jim Alexander who was an associate of Marie Laveau.

“She was smart but he was more clever and could do things that she couldn't – besides she needed him in the business. He was fine looking, very straight and about 3/4 Indian and the other colored. He was powerful in physique and would come in a room where a number of people were and go over to one who needed treatment and take him or her on his back and dance the bamboula and sing and finally put the person down – as they said – cured. I dunno.

“Lots of people at that time seemed to be afflicted with apoplexy and he was specially good in treating that. Those troubled in mind and body came to Marie.

They used all sorts of charms for the worried but had Alexander look after the physical

wants. Sometimes, she would send for him twice in a day. He made lots of money and often would give me as much as \$20.00, for he seemed to take a liking to me. But I never did anything except go with him.

"He had a nice home, well furnished, at the corner of Orleans and Johnson Streets, lake side. I can see it now, but another place is there. It had a long gallery, the two last rooms he called the church, the front room consulting, the two middle rooms were the living apartment, and an ell contained dining-room and kitchen. His wife was white and known as the white Voodoo Queen. He taught her to heal and she made money, but when Jim died she went to Chicago. I have never heard of her since.

"There was another in the clique known as papa Sol. He was colored and worked independently. He and Marie burlesqued each other, one was jealous of the other. He was a crystal gazer. You know what that is?" he continued. We did not, so he explained that you look hard at a crystal and if you understand how, you can see whatever your mind is on.

"I practised crystal gazing for a time as did Jim Alexander. He could tell you things about yourself that you hardly knew. It's a great thing when you understand it.

"John Bayou, colored, was the leader of the hoodoo band. He would take a cow's head after it was old and dry and put it on a barrel head covered with an ox-hide and beat with two horses legs, and he always led the singing. Then he would take a block of wood and shape it like a cone similar to a football and play it like a tambourine. St. John's Eve on Lake Pontchartrain were his great days when the clan met and a big 'powwow' was held.

"A man known as Eugene was always at Marie's house. They called him Judge. He too, was colored."

In the days of Marie – the Queen

"This woman, did not sit on a throne, nor wear royal robes. Indeed, she attired herself in the simple style of old Creole negroes. Generally a dress of ginea-blue calico, skirt made very full, a kerchief round her neck and a tignon or headdress. Large, hoop earrings of gold, some beads and a brooch. She went on the streets as unconcerned as any washerwoman, smiling and often speaking to those she met.

"Whenever she was seen, people would stand aside and whisper, 'Here comes Marie Laveau,' and wait until she passed. But her power! It seemed super-natural! She worked with charms and herbs and incense and snakes and skeletons, and invoked spirits.

"I always attended the Congo Square functions. I was too young to take any active part, but I learned everything. I do not practice voodooism. I never did but no one knows more about it than I do.

"Now that it's all over, here are some practices of Marie Laveau:

"She stood in with midwives and as there was no law then requiring birth records, she obtained the bodies of babies soon after they were born. They were then dried out by being treated in some way, left to hang up a chimney, and smoked until they was so black you couldn't tell whether they were born white or colored, and so shriveled as to be unrecognizable, you would not know they were human. These she used in her ceremonies. She had a cabinet maker make neat little boxes out of cedar and in each one

she put one of these mummies or skeletons. They were then bought by rich men who put them in their safes to ward off evil spirits.

“She made a lot of money in this way, each one brought about \$10.00, and you’d be surprised to know the names of some of these gentlemen whose families are to-day, many of them, among the most prominent in the city. I don’t want to in-cremate (?) their descendants. Some of the big ladies and men too, came to her for advice – others consulted her by mail.

“She had certain days to go to the home of a rich lady on Esplanade Avenue, who paid her well for her services. And she invoked the spirit of Black Hawk.

“At the time I was agent for Laurence D. Scott, the India spiritualist, for the sale of Black Hawk’s picture. I ordered a dozen and sold one to Marie Laveau, one to old Sol, one to Jim Alexander and I kept one which I still have.”

From the recess of somewhere he brought out a bundle and after unwrapping many newspapers a handworked portrait of the Indian appeared. It was on canvass, the feathers, varicolored were in silk and there were bright glass beads around his neck.

“I’ve kept this, put it away years ago.

We asked him if he knew where we could get one like it.

“I don’t suppose there is another one left anywhere. All the people who had them are dead and gone, but if you want one I will present it to you. I’ve kept it for old times sake, but no one will care for it when I am dead and gone.”

And so today this rare item of the days of Marie Laveau is ours:

And then this old man, perhaps the only one left so closely identified with the dark age when this Queen was a power, brought forth a piece of driftwood which was

taken from the Mississippi River. "This looks so much like a shark that I keep it just for that reason and this, "handling a crooked stick "is like a snake. Everything like this she (Marie Laveau) used as symbols.

"The public exercises used to be held out at the lake and there was much merry-making. There were refreshments aplenty, all donated by the clan. There was boiled ham, chicken, turkey, bread, cakes, candy and soda water, from a stand. This was made from seltzer and carbonated water.

"Marie was smart, the cleverest person I ever knew. People in trouble consulted her. She went to court for them and never was known to lose a case. She had a good lawyer (Lucien Adams and Judge Moise of Section B)*. She made a lot of money charging according to the nature of the case. Sometimes she got as much as \$1000.00, \$500.00, \$200.00, and \$100.00, where her popular prices.

"All along Rampart Street, they designate it as north, now, lived a lot of those superstitious, gullible people. Lor' I can remember when Rampart at Canal, was a dump!"

* To be censored.

A Divine Healer.

"I don't want to be considered a hoodoo. I never was. I was young and impressionable and these people with their doings impressed me and I liked to mingle with them. Now I am, by profession, a Divine Healer."

"A Divine Healer?" we ask, "Won't you tell us just what that embraces?"

"Well," and the old white-haired, bewhiskered man of 83 looks at you with his keen and penetrating eyes, as if in surprise that you do not know. "a Divine Healer, is

one who heals all bodily, temporal and spiritual ills by prayer, faith, the laying on of hands and the use of certain herbs and vegetation also Christian Science, ritualism of the Catholic Church and occult reasoning.

“Right now I have an interesting case in which a million or more is involved. It is the Josie Matthews suit in which the brothers and sisters of the woman are claiming inheritance rights. I remember the day she was born, in Algiers. This was in 1881. I was a friend of her family and the midwife saw me and ran out to tell me of the arrival.

“Well, Josie grew up around me. She was light complected and could pass for white. After she was grown she went to Chicago and married a white man, a millionaire, who at his death let her everything he had. When she died, her brothers and sisters became her heirs-at-law. Now the case is being contested and I have sent in my sworn statement which the lawyers say, is all that is needed, but I am also interested in the professional part which I am treating in order that it will be successful.”

Nature's Gifts.

“I use herbs. Certainly they are simple and harmless enough. Blood is divine because it comes from life.

“I take the warm blood of a fowl, chicken, goose or bird and burn it. Yes, mam, it burns. Well, when it makes white ashes – that’s how man’s power works – I take sweet basil and put it in a can with a lizard. You know how it is, you never see sweet basil without a lizard around.

“After you say certain prayers and make passes you seal it tight then bury it under a foot of earth and make a circle around it. Let it remain for three days. When you take it up, the sweet basil will all be gone and instead of one lizard there will be seven or

eight. Then you sprinkle ashes over the lizards and they die. After they shrivel up you take their dust and use it in your work. This I learned from Laurence D. Scott."

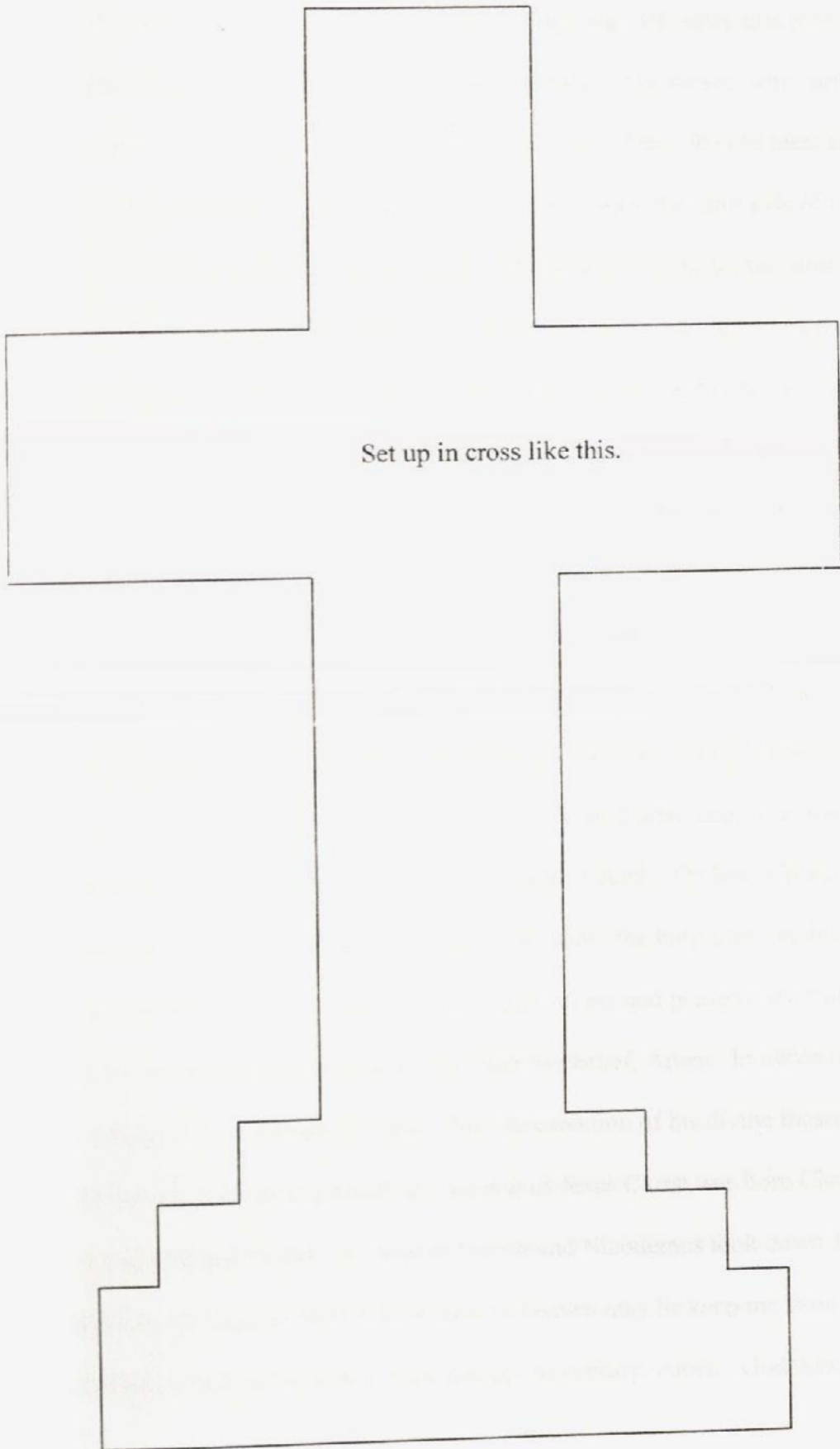
Noticing a roll of papers, we asked what it contained.

"I once sold this prayer when I went about and I still do if anyone asks for it.

We here let you read it:

'This prayer was found on the Sepulchre of Jesus Christ in 1709 and was sent by the Pope to the Emperor Charles when he went against the enemies of France at St. Mitchel in France. The person who reads this prayer or hears it read, or carries it on their body will not be poisoned, will not fall into the hands of their enemies, will not be vanquished in a battle. When a woman will be in confinement and she has this prayer, and she reads it or hears it read by any one or carries it on her person she will be promptly delivered.

*8A



Set up in cross like this.

She will be a good mother, and when the child is born, she will place this prayer on the child's right side, and it will protect it from 82 accidents. The person who carries this prayer on their body will not be taken with Epilepsy, and if they should meet any person attacked by this sickness by placing a copy of said prayer on the right side of the person attacked they will immediately rise up cured. The person who writes this prayer for their own benefit or for the benefit of others, "I will benefit" saith the Lord. The person who will despise this prayer will be punished. When this prayer is deposited in a house, that house will never meet any accident from lightning or thunder, and the person who will daily repeat this prayer will be warned by a holy sign three days before their death. "O, God Almighty, you having suffered death on the Cross for all our sins. Oh holy Cross of Jesus Christ be my light. Oh holy Cross of Jesus Christ have pity on me. Oh holy Cross of Jesus Christ be my hope. Oh holy Cross of Jesus Christ protect me from a deadly weapon. Oh holy Cross of Jesus turn everything good to me. O holy Cross of Jesus Christ may I never do any harm. Oh holy Cross of Jesus Christ lead me to the right path. Oh holy Cross of Jesus Christ keep me from all fear of death. Oh holy Cross of Jesus Christ keep me away from all accidents that I may adore the holy Cross of Jesus Christ forever. Oh Jesus of Nazareth crucified, have pity on me and preserve me from evil spirits for all centuries, that claim anything from my belief, Amen. In honor of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, in honor of his resurrection of his divine incarnation, wherewith he can lead us to eternal life. As true as Jesus Christ was born Christmas Day and crucified on Good Friday. As true as Joseph and Nicodemus took down Jesus Christ from the Cross. As true as Jesus Christ went to heaven may he keep me from my enemies, either visible or invisible, from century to century, Amen. God Almighty, in

your hands I place my soul. Jesus, Mary, Ann, Joachim, Lord Jesus, by all the bitterness you have suffered on earth, principally when your Holy Soul was separated from your body, have pity of my soul when it will be separated from the world. Oh Jesus give me courage to carry my cross in imitation of you. Teach me to suffer with patience and resignation, and may the Virgin of the Father bless me with wisdom and the Holy Ghost. Please O God, receive me and conduct me to eternal life. Amen.

For sale by N. H. Hobley, 2831 Philip St., New Orleans, La., 25¢ - By mail 30¢.

We ask about the 6th and 7th book of Moses, does he use it?

"That book is not authentic," he replies. "It was compiled from memory. The original was a small volume no larger than a Testament and bound in cloth. I had one and I'm going to see if I can find it for you. It was printed by De Earle Scott, in N. Y., and used in hoodoo.

"Well, it hadn't been out long when, in a fire destroyed all the books and the manuscript were consumed. The new edition was reproduced from memory and a few charred pages. It sold at 25¢ a copy - now it is scarce and brings in \$1.00.

"The 'Book of Moses' is not included in the Bible. The first edition was good and contained truths, but this - its a fake!

"Here's something that were in the original and which are absolutely true. I know for I've never seen them fail. One is:

If a man has committed murder and gets away, bury the dead party's face downward and the murderer will surely return and surrender - or be brought before the bar of justice.

"And this one is true, too, if a person has stolen something from you:

On a soft brick, inscribe a few words of prayer,

Tie with hair from a white horse's tail.

Tie to a _____ (I'll think of the

name presently) tree at sunrise; put on

tip end of limb that will bend; tell tree

to make party return theft, and you'll

surely get back what was stolen.

The Book of Magic.

And then he showed us a volume. It was so heavy it must have weighed at least two pounds. It was bound in heavy black Morocco and the title page read:

'The Great Book
of Magical Art, Hindu Magic
and Indian Occultism

L. W. de Laurence.

The Book of Secret Hindu Ceremonial
And Talismanic Magic.'

And it was priced at \$15.00.

While we are not quoting verbatim we take one excerpt which was on this wise:

That there could be no conversion of a man who had led a low immoral life and finally reached sainthood; that he retains his same nature just as it was a few moments before death.

At random we looked and noted a few passages:

No conversion of a man who has led a
low, ignoble, brutish life to a Saint
occurs; no, he retains his nature
exactly as it was a few moments before
death.

And another:

The liver and gall of an eel being
gradually dried and reduced to powder,
and taken in the quantity of a filbert
nut in a glass of warm wine causes a
speedy and safe delivery to women in
labor. The liver of a serpent likewise
effects the same.

Other passages:

Wisdom in man is nobody's servant.

p.494.

Witches and sorcerers are not made at once;

they are born with powers for evil, they

are born with the tendencies which they

acquired in former lives upon the earth, or

upon some other planet.

p. 508.

The purer and more noble the life lived here,
 the shorter the period spent on the astral
 plane because it is not man's final home,
 but only a temporary resting-place, where
 he outwears the lower desires he carries with
 him to death.

My dear Chela – (Disciple) (page 302)

It is necessary for me to inform thee that
 what thy desires are in the pursuit of
 Art which I call Magic so will thy connection
 and magic be.

If in the pursuit of revenge it is but proper
 thou should'st know that thou will in any of
 these experiments here laid down draw to thyself
 a revengeful demon; or an infernal furious
 spirit, serving in the principle of the wrath
 of God.

“As a Divine Healer,” says Hopley, “I am now using this book with all its
 teaching, and prayer and faith. And I have medicinal roots, and herbs and powders which
 I prepare myself.”

Our narrator insisted that he was never a disciple of Marie Laveau. But let him
 tell it:

"Shortly after I came to Algiers, I met up with Jim Alexander, whom Marie Laveau called in to work in a certain line. He took a liking to me and asked me to come with him to her house, which I did every day. I was young and impressionable and needed money. Marie wanted me to be with her, but Jim Alexander wouldn't let me to it, said he would keep me going, which he did. But I learned all the secrets of hoodooism.

Evil Spirits.

"I and Alexander broke up evil spirits in Algiers. At the corner of Valette and Evilina lived a man by the name of Hennessy who had an adopted daughter, a girl of about 12 who was possessed of a devil. A neighbor by the name of Leander Joseph witnessed the events.

"That night she was going from one room to another with a lamp in her hand, when all a sudden she went whirling about the room and was set on a table and then went whirling again.

"The next day when she was in the kitchen at 12 o'clock, every piece of stove wood broke through a window and fell in the yard. This was in 1882 and Algiers was excited. Hennessy moved the girl from his house nine blocks away to Cash Street, to Leander's house. That night the piano suddenly began to play. No one was near it. It played all night and finally moved itself to the middle of the floor. The third night the spirit visited other places on Valette Street.

"Then they sent for Alexander. He got me. We went there together. He lit three candles, got a brand new dinner bucket. Bought a quart of beer and sent everybody from room. He then threw the beer all over the room, into the corners everywhere. We then went to the other house and did the same thing. Then Alexander was called to corner

Claiborne and Hospital Streets, and a dozen or more other places. In one of these an evil spirit threw pillows out the windows. The beer treatment put an end to this racket, as it did to the other places. Why? Well, simple enough. The evil spirit drank the beer and was satisfied and went away. New Orleans and Algiers was 'fested at that time with evil spirits, but I and Alexander drove them away.

"I married a Spanish woman, the niece of the President of the Government. He led an insurrection in Spain. His name was Sagasta and he was very prominent in his country. His brother Tony, was my wife's father, who came to Mobile, Ala., when he was a young man and soon was the owner of a fleet of fishing smacks. A storm destroyed all his possessions. He and his wife died leaving Mary penniless. She lived with her godmother. A man in Whittler, Ala., by the name of Reese Hunter engaged her as a nurse in his family. She was only 15. When she was put to picking cotton, she found the work too hard and decided to go back to Mobile. Footing it, she was overtaken by some men in a wagon, who on questioning her as to her destination, etc., gave her a life. Eventually she came to this city. To make a long story short we were married. She was a fine woman and we were very happy.

At the first mention of his wife's uncle he called him "the Pope of Spain."

"Was he a Catholic?" we asked.

He insisted that such was the case, but finally decided it might be minister. He had heard something of this, but anyhow he was a leader.

We looked it up and in the Century Dictionary of names found:

Sagasta - Praxedes Mateo. Born at Torrecillo,

July 21, 1827. A Spanish liberal statesman.

He took part in the unsuccessful insurrections of 1856 and 1866; was minister of the interior in the provisional government of 1868. and president of the Cortes in 1871; and was premier in 1872, 1874, 1881-83, 1885-90, 1893-95, 1897-99, and March 1901.

"The Spanish Consul here has a detailed sketch of her life including her ancestry and it's nothing to be ashamed of: Her death about 10 years ago* was the greatest blow of my life. I was stunned and I miss her every day. She was my help mate, my soul mate!"

From the mantle he handed us a framed photograph.

"This is my wife, and while it is faded you can see that she was a fine looking woman. When I married her, she was such a little thing, I called her a 'splinter' but, she soon grew heavier until she weighed nearly 175 lbs. She was dark complexioned and often taken for a colored woman. And she was a most striking appearance, with hair arranged modishly enough for present day fashion.

"I taught her to cook, for if I do say it, few people can beat me. She took pride in seeing what dishes she could invent and as we were able to gratify our tastes we lived like princes.

*See Death records of Mary Hobley #13 - Newspaper files.

Died March 26, 1931 - Times Picayune - 3/28/31 - B. of H. Book 202..

3/27/31.

"I had money, but when I went out, as I did every day, I took very little with me, not over two-bits. She did the buying and if I needed anything I could always get it. When I got home she would show me \$25.00 or \$50.00 she had made.

"Had you trained her in your line?" we asked.

"O yes, she soon learned my ways and if she wasn't sure just what to do she told the party to come back nex' day or some specified time and that night she consulted me and I told her what to do. In this way she achieved quite a reputation and we made lots of money.

"You are versatile," we replied.

"O yes, I have done many things. I sold an instrument that could locate buried treasure. It was a silver red. I ran a Ghost Show. I sold Dragoon Blood (evidently dragon). This is a dark red substance derived from a variety of trees. It's like resin and when pounded up fine into a powder and dropped in something they eat – gravy with tomatoes, soup, meat, cannot be detected and is supposed to carry out your wishes towards certain persons."

Leaving the room, he shortly returned with a cardboard box from which he drew out package after package.

"This," he said, showing a pinkish or flesh colored powder, "is what is known as Fascinating Powder and is very expensive. This amount", pouring about a small teaspoonful, "sells for \$1.50, a pound, for \$15.00. Only small quantities are wanted however, as it is too strong to use, so it must be mixed with your favorite face powder. You'd be surprised to know how many ladies use it." Then he explained that true to the name, it fascinated men towards you. We felt it – it looked smooth enough, but it was

grainy. He had already said it was too strong to use in itself. Acting on his suggestion that we might have some, we brought away a portion as well as some Dragoon Blood.

Charms and more Charms.

If you believe in fate to your harm,

Believe in it also to your good.

Mrs. Hemans.

"I also make a parchment for my Mystic Seal as given in the Book of Magic. I buy the skin of goats and sheep and deers. There are regular men who furnish me with them. The goatskin is inferior to that of the sheep, but I use it, also the skin of cats.

"You recall when the three wise men spoken of in the Bible as the Magis, visited the newborn Christ, they brought with them charms, to keep away evil spirits, well, those men were magicians or enchanters and from that time on magic has been used. Black Magic was practiced by Marie Laveau and is still in use.

"This key, stamping a spot on the outstretched parchment, is intended to ward off evil spirits and must be worn to insure success. (See sketch attached)

"Huey Long would probably be alive today had he not left off his key. I made it specially for him and it was inserted in a specially improvised vest or bib he generally wore. You know a bib like babies wear and goes over the head with a flap. Well, it was like that only it covered almost his entire front and back.

"I prepare these emblems myself and with my agents sell them for \$10.00 each. Huey Long paid \$17.50 for his.

"My eyes are not strong so if you will cut this out I will give it to you. You can carry it in your purse, if you'd rather. The above is a reproduction.

Ham and Eggs.

"Then there is a flower which resembles a dish of fried ham and eggs that we give it this name. After drying, it must be pulverized and the leaves mixed with pine resin. Put in paper or cloth bag, it is used as a charm.

"Marie Laveau would take vinegar and egg and write the name of the person she wished to be voodooed, put in a bottle or jar, seal it with wax and bury around the house. Take same mixture, put in bottle and throw against door, the bottle should break in the middle. Marie employed men to go around, principally at night, to fill the orders of people she wanted victimized. Many bottles or broken parts could be found today around the old French Quarter if any one did a little digging or even raking."

To the question: "What Marie Laveau did with her money?" Our narrator said that she was a great gambler and not only indulged in every scheme of chance but that she financed several gambling places. In these she lost heavily and it is not believed that she left much money.

We asked about these Spiritual Churches which are springing up like mushrooms. Everyone it seems must have a church, white and colored. "Well, there is nothing to them. The white people furnish their rooms better and call themselves pastors, the colored are known as Father or Mother. They claim to heal and in this way make a living, some a handsome one.

"There's an Italian, a Mrs. Scolota (Scovotto), who calls me her Spiritual Father. I have a long-time engagement to make. A talk to her congregation, when the weather is better I will fill it. Another woman, a German with quite a following, I started off too."

Typed by - Rose St. Angelo

Simon Houston - Negro

Posey

4110 Thalia St.

1/17/1940

"You can jus' pass over my history, it ain' worth nothin'. I was born and here I is."

"Yes Mam, there sholy is witches, at leas' they used to be when I was a shaver, a witch got on my Pa's back and rid him. He was carryin' a bag of san' an' when the witch lef' him at daylight, he wasn't no higher than a four year ol' chile.

It was in St. Helena Parish. Out from Lake St. Joe and in 1870, when I was about ten years old, when an ole woman turned to a witch. She looked like she was about a hunrin and fifty years old. We boys wus' scared to death. I run away but watched and I saw her pick up some boys and I heard her say I'll come back tonight. An' she did. She come to our hammocks. We used to call her granny, but that before she turned into a witch.

A witch? Why the jus' look like a scare-crow. They're tall and ugly with a long nose and fingers. Ooh! But they'd scare you to look at 'em. Some folks say they ain' no such things. Then how cum' I saw one and my Pa saw one. An' that night shure enuff along came witch. She was ridin' a horse and holdin' on by his mane. I squalled and ran, with her after me, but managed to get out her way. An' I used to know where some hidden treasure was. It was about 70 miles from here.

Major Harrod, the Judge and my Pa, after the war Major Harrod's nephew dug for it. The spot had been marked by the side of a sweet gum tree and he found it, but didn't take it because he was afeared Major Harrod's ghost was hot after it.

Fifteen years ago I saw the place where it was hidden. He had married a second wife and some people say he didn't want her to get it and throwed it in a well. It was near Arcola and Roseland in Tangipahoa Parish.

I saw a ghost too, it looked like a lion and roared like one, but he didn't scare me like the ol' witch.

I'm 80 years old now. I used to work on the Robert E. Lee, the New Natchez and 7 boats. If we gets the name of all. I worked on the Henry Frank from New Orleans to Memphis, the largest boat in the haulin' trade. It held 9,262 bales of cotton, besides other cargoes.

The Ed. Richardson, brot big loads out of Greenville -- 7084 bales -- it was a side-wheel. The Carona brought in anything it could get. Once it exploded and the Captain and two pilots were lost.

i ain't seen a alligator in a coon's age, but there was a plenty of them once. We killed 'em and eat the tail and they were tender like chicken. Once I tried to step over a big black log and first thing I know it was a big old alligator right at my feet. I had a pistol and I shot it.

They used to tell about a man named John O'Neill and he beat him so hard that he died and then he had his skin made into a pair of boots.

Note: John O'Neill owned a negro whom he whipped so hard that when the slave died O'Neil made leather out of his skin.

Song.

(Song sung on battle field by a dying soldier.)

My mamma was a slave & she use to sing this song she say a dead
soldier used to sing it on de battle field.

O Brother dream do come to me for I am shot & bleeding

O I must die

No more to see my wife and little children

The Southern fore head had me low

On this cold ground to suffer

O Brother stay & lay me away

& write my wife a letter

tell her I am prepared to die

& I hope well meet in heaven

my poor little babe I love them well.

Mrs. Hunter

Old Folks Home

Amelia & Robertson

Flossie McElwee

6/6/40

17

Emma Jackson - Colored

1111 Vallette St.

Algiers

Voodoo

I,s been here every since I was a child, right here in Algiers. I lives here by myself. I,s 78 years old, I don't remember anything about slavery. Been married three times. I allus lived with de man I marrie d several months befo I married dem to see ef dey was any good, but I had bad luck with all my husbands.

It's too many winches here in Algiers, to try to live with a man, for they takem all my husbands away from me now dis last man I married was a Mexican. He had been married befo to a colored 'omen. De white lady I was working for recommended him to me, said he was a good worker, and allus made good. So I fooled around with him for about six months fo' us got married. We lived happy together for a long time, den one nite while I was at church, he went out on me. I know there had been a 'omen in de picture for quite a while. I heard a noise on the outside and got up and come to the window. I did not see anything, that maybe it was him coming in. Den de spirit told me to look and see if his clothes were in his closet. I looked and there was no clothes and if someone had of told me my husband was gone, I would not have believed them.

He is living right down there now with that winch, when we could be here happy together.

I tell you Miss de womens here in Algiers will sho' hodoos your man and take him away! If dey can't get him one way, they will another. I knows all my husbands was

hoodooed. They will fix up all kind of nasty things for de mens to drink and once they do, you can't keeps them away from dem.

If dey use the red flannel and the hair from one another, you can't get them apart, but one way, that is to be over a running stream and throw it over your left shoulder and as the flannel drifts on down the river they will drift apart.

I sees the spirit of my first two husbands all de time. It has not been long ago since they both were standing over me. I am always seeing things in de spirit. I never get frighten for I know they can't do you no harm.

I went down one day with a Mexican knife to kill that winch that is with my husband now. When I got to the gate I could not move, she was standing on the front porch. I found out later she had throwed dust from a grave on me, and using her hodoow powders. I told him one day when he come back to my house. I did not want him hanging around if he loved that 'omen to stay with her. He said, dat 'omen had him under her power and he could not get loose.

But I thank God I don't worry about him any more. I goes to Church and am spending the rest of my days with my Lord and Master. It don't make any difference how mean and wicked we live. You gonna have to face it all soon or later. I allis told my husband if I died first to never let none of women stand over me and look at my dead body for if he did I would turn over in my grave. I been lucky tho. I have never had to get out and labor like some people. I am thankful for that.

I never did anybody a wrong as I know of, never stole but one thing it my life. That was a steak from the lady I was working with. That was to take some warts off of my hands and face.

You just rub the wart with the meat and bury it as the meat decays the warts will go away.

Flossie McElwee

5/31/40

(11-A)

Odel Jackson, (col.)

1233 Nunez St., Algiers

EX-SLAVE

I's been here in Algiers for 51 years, was born in La Fuche parish December 17, 1858. Mother of 16 children, ten dead and six a-living. My ma and her older child was brought from Virginia and sold at the French market, and taken to La Fouché parish, and dat's where I come into de world. I don't have no good remembrance, very few things dat I can think of. I do knows when I was small my ma had a hard time working. De ole Missus was mean, would tie her and beat her most to death. After us was sat free we most stavved to death. I would slip around and eat out of people's slop cans. I would be so hungry. My pa cooked for some of de sojers. My oldest brother would take something to eat to de mens at Fort Hudson. One day de Yankee sojers captured him, us never did see him any more. After us was free Pa and Ma only got 30c and 15¢ a day for a long time for dare work. I never is went to school, was chris-ten Catholic, but I's Baptist now. We never was allowed any time off for any- thing, us hit the Ball.

I got married when I was fifteen years old. Me and my ole man never did git along together. We was always fiting and fiting. He would jump on me in de cain fields and beat me up or cut me with de cain knives.

He was a no good man, I run away and married him, so I decided to stay with him, if we were fiting all time. He got to running around with a ole 'oman. She got all his money. All I ever got was a beating and babies. Stayed with him until I got through breeding. I know one time I was in de bed with one of de babies, and his 'oman come in

and hoodooed me. I heard her when she was opening the door. I calls my ma and she did not answer me, she had done gone to sleep --De lamp was burning low, I was under a bar, Dat ole 'oman come in, I screamed and tried to wake my Ma, she had a little lamp in her hand, she grabbed my knee.

It hurt me so until I couldn't move it. I screamed again and my Ma woke. I asked her did she see dat 'oman in there, she says "No-- you are just dreaming." De door was open, the ole hussie did not take time to close it. You know, Miss, dat 'oman put a snake in my leg. I's still cripple yet. You know my leg was so bad until I could not walk for a long time, finally I got a root Dr. to do something for my leg. But it still bothers me yet. Dat been 40 years ago dat snake would just crawl and knot up in my leg, so's finally he got it kilt.

After that she come back to beg apoligese, but it was too late then, I was already cripple den.

Worked around white folks all my life, cooking, sewing, and washing. I did ever' thing I could to make a living for my chaps. I's too ole to work now. But de Lords has been good to me. I thank him for my bread now, you know miss, I never did smoke or dance, drink, go to the shows or nothing like dat. I seed a little boy past yesterday smoking. It make me think of a little verse I usto say all time.

Robert Reed was only ten years old

And he never smoked or chewed.

'It's a filthy weed,' says Robert Reed,

And hurts the health and makes bad breath.

There is idle Jerry Jones, He smokes

And him only ten years old, and that

It made him big,

And set behind the cabin door.

Joseph Jeffry (Negro)

Posey

Friscoville

2/24/41

17

Jim Alexander

Folkmedicine

Frogs

"Gumbo" -- voodoo man

House fixing -- Insurance again

Indians

Marie Laveau

Mattress trick

Old Sol -- Voodoo man

Red Church

Songs

Fiqane from flowers

Voodoo trickery

Joseph Jeffry (Negro)

Friscoville (St. Bernard)

Posey 2/24/41

Voodoo

"I'm 77 goin' on 78 years old. I was born in N.O.- an' lived there mos' of my life. My Ma believed in hoodooism and was a friend of Marie Laveau but I never did believe a thing about it.

" When I bought a house and furnished it - my Ma told me I must insure it, but I thought it was not necessary, so she sent a hoodoo man to me to tell me my house was marked an evil would come if I did not heed the warning.

He said he could break the spell if I gave him \$25.00.

" I said 'nothing doing.' Then he said 'Did you look inside your mattress? The hoodoos are tricky. Maybe they are trying to put a spell on you. Let's look.

" I was not afraid but to gratify him I lifted up the cover and he ripped a place with his knife. 'Look! Just like I said! Here's the evidence' and he took out two little frogs. 'Your place is crossed by hoodoo.'

" And then I showed him the door. He had slipped those varmints in from up his sleeve.

He knew I saw through his scheme and he was mad.

"There was a man called "Old Sol" who was always doing some devilment. After a while people decided to get rid of him, so they bodied together and bought a ticket and put him on a steamboat to get him out the state. They didn't succeed for he walked out at Red Church and I never heard of him after that."

Old Sol was bright – he had long hair – not cut. Jim Alexander was not old.

There was another voodoo man named Gumbo.

“I never heard of any children of Marie Laveau. She drifted out in the water.

McElwee

6-6-40

Mary Ann John

Back highway

Mc Donoghville

"I was ten years old when peace declared – on the 14th of February, I was eighty-five yearsold.

I still get around good, though – lives right here by myself.

"Yaas mam! I'member a few things about slave times –

Mr. Lizi, he was a Creole, dats who us belonged to. He stayed in Opelousas durin' slavery. Dis man sho did have some slaves! He raised cotton, corn, tatus. "My ma useto work in de fields; she got, kind of sickly, so dey took her out and made a house servant of her.

"We eats on de house with our Boss – We allus had good grub. I had two sisters an' one brother – don't' know if dey is still livin' or not.

"Ise been here in Mc Donoghville for fifty years.

O yaas! I owns mah little place here.

My pa's name was Alfred, Ma's name was Maria.

"What I knows, I was borned with, for I never went to school a day in my whole life, I don't know "A," from "B." "No, we never knowed whut church was until I was almos' growed.

"You see whut caused my ma to be sickly, I was de oldes' chile an' dey made her work too hard with de other children. One of my sisters was born right in de fields, dey jost dug tuo holes, one in de front and one in the back, she gets down in dat hole and

gives birth to de baby, de baby jest rolls out in de hole. Den de boss has some one to take de baby to de house, an' makes my ma get up and keep right on hoeing –

I never will forgit.

“I felt so sorry for dem poor people. I was not big enough to do much; you see I never was ‘lloed in de fields. After that, they taken my ma out an’ put her sewin’ and doin’ house work. “You know my ma allus told me if we had not of been set free when us was, in about two years, they would of made me have a baby. They had a big ole husky man on de place dey waiold send all de gals to. If dey didn’ want to go, dey give dem a lashin’ an’ made dem go; if dey did not git pregnant de first time dey was forced to go back. You see dat nigger didn’ do a thing but got babies – you see dey allus sold dem. I was glad I was never forced to do any thing like that.

“I seed de Yankee sojers comin’ down de road with dem swords a flashin’, and de folks would run and cry. It sho was tryin’ days den. Dat’s about all I ‘member.

“I peddles vegetables on de street here for forty years. My husband was a moss picker; never did have no trouble with no one but him, he was allus jealous of me, and dat is all de trouble I ever had.

“I never is been sick in my life; don drink, smoke or use glasses.

“I, can eat anything I want, I got ligion too – Baptist.

“I do ‘member about pickin’ fruit in dem days; it sho was plentiful.

“I can’t ‘member nothin’ ‘bout de clothes we wore, or nothin’ dat been so long until its all done lef’ me.

“I don’ know nothin’ about ghosts, witches or nothin’ and no kinds of medicine.

“I quit singin’ when I got ligion, all I ever sing is our church songs.

7/16/40 (col)

Daffney Johnson

Robinson Ave, 518

Marrco -

I's around 90 yrs old don't no zackly, dey got my age down dare in Gretna, Don't remember very much. Done got to old to think. Was borned on Miller Don plantation.

Wuz a slave during my childhood Maw's name Dianna, pa's name wuz Isaac Johnson, I had five sisters and four brothers.

When I was young I had to mind de chillin, jest as soon as I got big enough de Boss put me in de cain fields My old Missus just died a few years ago, she stayed over in de city. We had a colored driver, he sho did push us out in dem sugar cain fields. I never did get a beating dey had a hole bunch of cats and when dey punished us dey would have our back stripped and make de cat mad and let em' scratch de blood out of our backs. Dat was the way us was beat.

We all'us had plenty to eat sich as it was Grits Cornmeal & Meat it was all raised on de plantation I's Baptist. My pa and maw never did marry like de people do now daze,

I is de mother of eight children my self all of dim is dead but one, my misses name was Miss Taylor I worked around de house a long time fo de boss put me in de Sugar cain fields I noes one time when I was small us all had what dey called the seven year itch, de ole Miss'us made my maw dig a pot of poke root and bile et and put us chaps in it ef us had been put in de fire we would not have burned any worse but it sho did cure dat itch.

Us never did no what it was to play going fishing are any thing like that.

Sometimes dey would let us go to church never could read nor write de white folks did not allow dat.

Never will for get de day us was sat free. How dey fired de big gun. Us stayed right on with de ole Boss & Missus for a long time after us was sat free He paid us off ever Saturday. For our work if a woman made two bits a day dat was good money us never did no what money was for until us was sat free din us did not no how to spend it.

I sho is glad dat dim daze is over now

My maw and pa did not no where to go so de boss said dey could stay dare you and he would feed us on and pay us wages for working.

You jest have to call another day den maybe I can get my mind to gether.

Negro Ghost Story

Wright

"Gawd knows, Ise only saw a ghost but onct in ma life. Ise felt dem plenty a times, but onney onct did I see 'em, an' Ise here to tell ya dat onct wuz enuf fer me. I wen't even let people talk tu me about ghosts, cuz Ise afraid dat I might see one again. Ya know, I wuz born on a plantashun an' it wuz a big one. De white boss had hiz own graveyard whare dey usta burry de white boy's fambly an' in de back of dis part wuz de place whare dey usta berry de plantashun niggers. Ma mammy an' ma paw wuz berred back dere, an' I wuz livin' wid ma ant. Dis graveyard wuz in de back of de canefiel' an' none ob us niggers would go back in dat direckehun 'cept when we hadda cut cane back dere, an' den when we wuz cuttin' cane we usta sing songs ob de Lawd, so if dere wuz any spiruts back dere dat would scaire dem away.

"Dis one day I wuz cuttin' in de back wid de rest ob dem an' I wazn't feelin' pert atall, so ma ant says tu me yo goes a coupla roads doan, an' lay doan fer awhile, an' if de white boss kum an' ast whare yu at we'll tell im dat yo' went back to git somethin'. Dis wuz sort ob late in de evin' but Ise wuz ver' tired, so I went. To dis day, nobody knows jest whut happen'. Buts dey quits dey wuck an' goes off an' leave me layin' dere in de canefiel'. As I tol' yu befo' I wuz ver' tired an' I slept until it wuz dawk. Finally I wakes up an' de furst ting I saw wuz dat ol moon chasin' in an' out dem clouds. Yu know, dis kin' ob a moon wuz a ebil moon. It wuz jest lik' a piece ob silva up dere in de sky, jest lik' white fir'. Its de kin' ob moon dat de spiruts lik'. Lawd today but I wuz scaired. I wuz scaired, facts I wuz so scaired dat I wuz stiff. De win' wuz blowin'. Yu see, it wuz in de grindin' season, dat is in de fall, an' de nights wuz cool an' plenty times dere wuz a kin' ob strong breeze ablowin'. Dat ol tall cane wuz arustlin' above ma haid,

an' it seem' to say tu me, 'Lillie, yu' betta git out dis cane fiel' befo' it's too late, so I tells yu I jumps up, an' jest as I did one big ol cloud goes an' covahs de moon. Dere I wuz in de back ob de canefiel' an' it wuz so black dat yu couldn't even see yu han' befo' yu face. Nachully, tinkin' about all de tings I wuz I couldn't 'membah de direckshun tu go tu git out ob de canefiel' an' I starts tu run. I ran tu de back ob de canefiel', rathern than gettin' out, an' I runs smack up into de graveyard. Dis kin' ob graveyard wuz a ver' ol' one, an' de white boss' grandpappy wuz borred in de groun', an' de onney place dat markt hiz grave wuz a big piece of white wood stickin' up in de groun' an' Jesus I ran smack inta dat! When I saw dat I got col' an' hot all ovah, an' I starts tu shake, an' I starts tu run agin. But instead ob runnin' out de graveyard I runs way back in.

"Jest den de moon kums out, an' dere I wuz in de middle ob de graveyard, wid all dem white pieces ob wood stickin' up, an' de win' whistlin' troo de trees. I tells yu' I didn't know whut to do. I tried to tink, but it jest wouldn't kum. De moon went in agin, an' den it wuz dark agin an' I didn't want tu move becuz I thought dat maybe I might git further back intu de graveyard. I know I hadda stay dere until de moon kum out agin, to see ma way out.

"I happens tu turn my haid, an' I looks up an' dere comin' out frum de back part ob de graveyard, wuz a white ting. Dere it is floatin' roun' an' comin' straight tu me. Lookt jest lik' a scarecrow wid a sheet thrown ovah it, an' it wuz flappin' its arms up an' doan lik' a burd. It wuz comin' closa an' closa an' I says tu maself, 'Jesus Lillie, whut is yu' gonna do naow!' De ghost kums almos' up tu me, an' it stops, an' den it says in a verse dat sounds lik' a rumblin' ob de grinda, it says, 'Lillie do yu knows who I am?'

An' I says, 'Nossir, I don't know whos yo' is.' I don't know how I evah cum to say dis becuz my tung felt lik' it wa' glued to de top ob my mouf. De ghost says, 'Lillie, whut yo' doin' in dis yere graveyard?' An' dis yere time I couldn't ansuh, an' so de ghost say agin, 'Lillie, whut is yo' doin' in dis yere graveyard?' At las' I says, 'Mista, Ise losted.' He juest looks, an' he floats all aroun' me, an' I ken onney follow him wid my ize cuz I wuz so scaired dat I wuz stiff. I had my han' on de white piece ob wood, an' somethin' crawled ovah it an' it wuz an' ol' graveyard lizzard.

"Jest den de moon kums out, an' de win' starts tu blow an' de ghost goes away. I don't know to dis day whut made him go away. Maybe de win' blew him away, or maybe becuz ma mammy wuz berred dere she wuz sorta pertectin' me, but de hole fiel' wuz lit up by de moon an' I could see ma way out. I started tu run an' I kep' on runnin' till I get tu my ant's cabun. When I got tu my ant's cabun, dat dey had tu hold me in bed an' for two hole days I couldn't talk.

May ant goes an' telle de white boss, an' he cume on ovah, an' he laughs an says, 'Lillie, yo' jest had a bad nightmare, an' dis is goint be a gud lesson tu learn yo' not tu sleep when yo' is spose to be wurkin'.'

"I tells yo' I believes in de Lawd, an' Ise been baptiz' in de rivah, an' Ise done seen de Lawd. But ennybody who says dat yo' don't believe in de Lawd when yu' sees a ghost is tellin' a durty black lie. I knows dis wasn't no nightmare, an' I knows I spoke to dat ghost an' dat ghost spoke tu me.

"Dis is de onney thost story I know cuz it happen tu me an' I don't let people aroun' here talk about ghosts but if yu' wants tu know a gud luv story I knows dat too."

Lillie Johnson, Thibodaux, La.

(11-A)

Maud H. Wallace

Rev. Tennessee Johnson (col.)

2028 Valmont St,

May 13th, 1940

EX-SLAVE

In the back yard at 2028 Valmont St., there are two very small rooms and it is here the Rev. Tennessee has made his home the past twelve years. The rooms are cluttered. He lives alone, keeps his own house, so everything is out of order.

The Rev. Tennessee is old, his eyes are blurred, he is a little deaf, and his hands tremble. He is seventy nine years of age.

"Things is go to be scheduable, dat's de onliest thing,--sheduable.

"Look at God. His golden rule, it's scheduable, ain't it? It say de winter will be like de summer, an' de summer like de winter an' ain't it? Here it is summer in de day time,--an' de mornin' an' night like winter, ain't it? I believe it already here. De trouble wid de peoples today, dey ain't scheduable.

"I was borned in de east part o' Louisiana, Onsboro (Orangeboro) on de Golden Grove Plantation. Dere was about fifty slaves dere, I don' remembers so much o' de war days, de days right after, yes; Doctor Fall owned de plantation, an' I tended his horse. I drove him everywhere to de sick or de dying, to all de tenants. After he die, I come to New Orleans, an' work on another planta- tion,-- it was all sugarcane. I stay dere till I got to be head man fo' Mr. W. G. Weber. Back when I was a boy, we didn't have schools. I know what little I know jes' from de night schools. We'd have churches in de house, no public churches. We'd all gather like in one big room, an' one o' de ole folks

he be de Shepherd, but dey very restrict in those days. We used to have dances under de oak trees-great big trees, dem branches like umbrella, almost stretchin down to de ground.

"De ole folks was always right dere, if a boy want to court a girl, he gotta go to her paw an' axe him first, an' de paw, he say 'What occupation yo' does.' he say. 'plow.' Den dat's alright, but when he court de girl de ole paw right dere. He sit right dere, de boy in one corner, an' de girl she sit in dis corner, for' de paw don' want her thrown back on de fambly (family).

"Dey do all dey can to keep de young people out o' trouble, but if dey get into trouble, dere's a place in de quarter dey meet an' dey talk it over, one say 'Yo' boy do dis.' or 'yo' girl do dat,' an' dey help to get dem out o' trouble fo' dey is a grievable famblies (agreeable families) an' dey is restrict an' would be jinters. (joiners).

"Dey would whip each other's children too. I sure wished I was a man, when old Aunt Jane, she ketch (catch) me doin' wrong! Would she whip me,--- she put my head, dis head right here, between her legs like dis, an' my God, would she whip de end o' my back!

"I started preachin' when I hear de call in de field, I was about eighteen. I rejected over the ole folks, an' I didn't follow dem at all. I never was a night-stroller, that not my speed, so I fell under de conviction of Jimmie Keys.

"Every man have somethin' to do. Create idlin' --an' suffer their lies. A hongry (hungry) person do most anything. Sometimes jes' appearances can be uplift.

"I always try to never let my peoples confuse. Dey come to me, say 'My husban' he do so an' so,' I say, 'Come talk to me together.' When dey come together, she say,

'He slap me.' I say, 'What yo' do to make him slap yo'?' She say, 'Nothin'.' I axe him, he say 'She don' move fast enough.' I say to her, 'De next time he tell yo' to move, jes' move, then there be no confuse.'

"But I has had some very hard yars. Some de people had mother's wit, some had cellar wit. Here dey come to me fo' satisfaction of their husbands, so I do what I can, an' de husbands git mad--gonna run me off de plantation, but Doctor Fall, he know what I do, he say 'Anybody bother the Rev. Tennessee, I lay a rope around him,' en' dey let me alone.

"Dis change has been pitiable,-- de peoples is different. Look at dis war: before we jes' had war on de land, now it's on de water too,--an' den de airplanes.--- Now when we gits in. how Uncle Sam, he gonna tell his planes from all de rest, up there in de sky.

"Dey jes' doin' everything on a schedule."

Flossie McElwee

Lindy Joseph (Colored)

1702 Franklin

Mc Donoghville

#11

Dey says I's 74 years old, was borned in Baton Rouge, been here for 34 years, lived a long time in Donaldsonville. Was de Ma of 5 babies, but dey all died at birth. My husband has been dead for about 25 yrs, so's you can see I's had a hard time.

I never did know any thing about de war--'member hearing my Pa tell about him being in service and seeing his blue suit.

You know Miss, I liked to went crazy worrying about de old age pension--dat dollar a day pension, but I's done stopped all dat worrying now, you know I prayed all day for dat new Gov.--believes he gwine do something for de people--sho' do hope so any way. All I's got to live on is dat little Welfare I gets. I don't know where none of my peoples is. You know Miss, I'm too old to do like these yonger womens--dey get in tough luck, they gets dim a man-- me I's done got too old for all dat stuff.

I taken care of one no good man as long as I wuz able to work. Dun he jest hall off and left. I tell you, de mens now day don't pay. I cooked, washed and ironed, waited on womens when dey be confined, done most of my work at Harvey, bring pots and pans clear from dare fo' dat no good thing! So's you see what he done, when I gets too old for to do dat, he is gone, and, you know dey tells me, he is out in the country with a young 'omen now.

I feels like some times getting my stick, and go find dat black nigger, and brain him with it. Fo' dat sho' do go hard--I has to stay by myself all time.

Reason I don't like to stay by myself perhaps, I'd die right here wouldn't nobody ever know it, and besides de spirits worry me so much, I has to sleep with de Bible under my head. Sho' dare is spirits, dey sho' is bad when dey gets started worrying you! When de weather is bad dey is worse. I gets holy water and sprinkle around, dat helps some.

Yes, I know that little song, I can even tell you where it started from--

'Rain come wet me

Sun come dy me

Stand back nigger man

Don't come negh me.'

Dat's all I ever did hear of it. You see, when I wuz young we would be out in de canefields. It would come up a shower of rain, you would see the buzzard sailing around. Den dey would light in some dead tree. Us jest made de song, we would cail him nigger man!

(Dog's name)

Shove a de may. She mo she mingo. Ti totter ginger blue. I can heave and whip you too. I am a man as well as you.

Flossie McElwee

(11-A)

5/27/40

Hannah Kelly, (col.)

503 Wyer St. Gretna.

EX-SLAVE

I was born in Louisville, Kentucky. During the war I was refugee to Texas. Our Missus brung us to Texas. I was ten years ole when peace declared.

My Missus was Lou Downward. I never did do any work, only nurse the children during slavery.

I had six brothers and one sister. My ma worked in the spinning and weaving, and making dyes. She would take shu-make berries and make red, Black Jack made a brown dye & etc. De boys dey worked in fields, after us was brung to Texas. The boys worked in de fields raised cotton, corn, 'taters.

We had meat, bread, vegetables, sometimes on Sunday or a holiday we would have biscuit.

I can't say dat de old Madam was not good to us, for she always was, can't even remember her having us whipped, you see my Ma worked all time making cloth. She was real good at that, we allus had good clothes and shoes, I can't say any thing about my owner.

My Ma was borned in Virgina. My Pa in Kentucky. Hannah Weather was my Ma, my pa's name Reuben. Us lived in log cabins. We allus had good beds and enough quilts in winter time to be warm.

She even raised my Ma and den us. I knows when it useto rain she would put all de mens in the crib shucking corn; too wet to plow. She had dem cutting wood. She never did have any trouble with her niggers. I knows they useto whip dem awful at the next plantation. We come thru here when us was on our way to Texas. When us stopped it was at Madisonville. Never did learn to read nor write, didn't know what church was until peace. My Missus brother was a Doctor. He always give us medecine when us was sick.

Oh yes! We didn't do like dis young generation. We had certain times to go to bed and three o'clock to be up. The boys sometimes would get to go to parties, but we never did. They checked dem out and when dey come in.

We never did work on Sunday like some people say dey did. Our Missus knew we were gwine be free, she told my Ma we could go or stay, so we left soon after peace declared. Us was sat free the 19th of June. Dat day useto be celebrated in Texas. She went to Mulgan, Texas. Taken in washing and ironing, did all kinds of house work for a very little pay. So when de yellow fever broke out, my Ma and all de rest died with it. I married in Texas befo' I come to Louisiana, had a church wedding. I's Methodist. I's de Mother of de church here in Gretna. I's de oldest one in de church. Tell you Miss, people nowadays didn't have to do like I did. I have worked all my life. I prays every nite that our people will stay out of the War. I lived to see three wars already. I never believed in spirits or things like that.

FOLKLORE

RELIGION

How us Baptist folks is converted by our Hebenlef Father de almighty god. Now chile I wuz born rat after slavery on a little farm at a place known now as St. Francesville, Louisiana. My mammy wuz a good christian, but my father wuz de greatest sinner dat eber lived on dis earph. My chile some times I would see him, stand out and cuss de mighty god, for not sending de rain when he thought dat his crop wuz burning up fom de need of rain, and cuss de lord de same way for sending to much rain when he wanted to work his crop, and it wuz growing up wid grass and me and mammy would tremble and she would axk god not to destroy him because he did not know what he wuz doing, but to please save him and let him know dat dare wuz a God some Wha.

So it happened dat a good white man fom de norf comed down hur and started a church, and he built a church and preached to de colored as well as de white folk and wuz very anxious to teach us people de love of God, and he said dat he thought dat he could not preach de love of God into dare hearts dat he could born it in dare, so he put right over de pulpit in oil lamps dese words —“God is love” and my pa going along de street one night glanced into de window and sawed de text. He wuz a poor prodigal, and as he went on to him- self he thought God is Love, and he dont love me cause I am poor and a mis- able sinner, and pa comed home and he looked so diffent dat ma axed him what wuz de matter and he said dat nothen wuz de matter dat he felt bad, and we thought dat he wuz gwana die so ma went in secret prayer for him axking de lord to let him live to help take care of me.

So pa went on lack dis fur bout four days and den he told me what wuz his troubles. He said dat he saw in de church wha God wuz love and dat, he knowed dat God did not love him cause he wuz a poor wicked sinner.

It seemed to us dat he tried to get rid of de text but it stayed wid him and dese words God is love. He later told us dat it stood out in de front of him in letters of fire. When he wuz awake and asleep. "God is Love."

He went to church de fifth night, he wuz to late for de sermon but dese words he told de people wuz standing out in his mind lack letters of burning red hot fire, "God is Love". Pa stayed after most of de people wuz gone and dare in his seat ma found him weeping lack a little chile, and de preacher comed to his aid and unfolded de scriptures and told pa how God had loved him all de time although he had wondered so far away and had done so many wrong things, and how de almighty God our loving hebenly father wuz now waiting to receive him, and also forgive him for all of his sins. De light of de Gospel broke his heart and he went away rejocing, and dare wuz a shout in de camp and all of us went home rejocing in de power of de almighty God.

And de next time ma prayed she did not have to axk de lord to convert pa cause he had answered dat prayer but she axed him to, stranken pa and give him ten thousand minds to go forward and not one to go back.

And dis is how pa wuz converted by these three words: "GOD IS LOVE". and he wuz de rankest sinner dat ever lived. Com agin and I will tell you my conversion, May God bless you.

Rosie King

432 Saporu St.

Posey

9/30/40

The Quality Born Negro.

White and colored is the designation applied to the two races in the United States of America.

Of the former, as is well known, there are many stratas of society. The aristocrat or those to the manor house born; the new rich, or parvenu as was formerly called; the middle class; those between the two; the common people; "po' white trash and those of the slums.

The negro or colored race is not so divided, but between those "raised in the Big House" on the ole plantation and their descendants there is an impenetrable gulf.

True, the educated negro has achieved a culture in education and wealth that is far above his raising but nothing perhaps can give the refinement, the spiritual touch, as was bestowed on the old aunties and uncles of another day.

And as expressed by Frances, who does not care to be called Mrs. Lewis - they have "Mother wit." Their expressions are unique.

John Sharp Williams, eminent thinker and statesman, understood the negro race and had a deep affection for its people. He knew they were happy because they had a sense of humor and could laugh in the face of adversity. As he said: "They are the only masters of English. They alone can use the wrong word in the wrong place to convey the right thought."

A negro preacher announced to his flock that he was going to "explain the unexplainable and unscrew the unscrewable."

An old hen-pecked negro turned on his nagging wife:

"The absence of your presence is my desire."

Few of these old slaves are left to us, and the remnant will soon be gone.

Frances Lewis is not embittered or prejudiced. She speaks with love and affection of ole Mis' and ole Massa and old slavery days. She admits that life was harder than it is now but that it made better men and women.

Truly, we will not see her like again!

Frances is on the dole. She tells you that she married early in life but never had any children. She adopted one, and when she died leaving an infant, she (Frances) took her in and now this girl of eleven is being taught "good breedin'" just as she was.

"Run on now, Frances," she says, "you know better than to stay aroun' grown people when they are talkin'. That's the way we were taught. Chil'ren know too much now. They ought to be playin'."

She gets \$14.00 a month relief and pays \$8.00 a month for a two room apartment and is allowed \$6.00 for the child. She is enabled to buy 5¢ of ice a day which is her greatest luxury.

And a lady gave her a wardrobe with glass doors - true one is cracked - and a bureau. Such palatial furnishings!

Best of all Frances is happy. She says she is and her looks do not belie her words.

Another visit to Frances found her in bed suffering from an old wound in her leg.

We had given her a colored picture-book depicting Bible stories. It would have delighted anyone to have witnessed her joy at the gift. She was looking at it when we

came, and it was only a moment or two when she pointed to the picture of The Last Supper.

"Jus' look at that! When our Lord was on earth He passed aroun' a cup for His disciples to drink out, an' now see, they has a tray in the church, full of little cups, two or three dozen which they passes 'roun'. That hain't lak He tol' 'em."

We explained that the law had prohibited the general drinking cup in such places as schools and in public places claiming that it was unsanitary. In some churches the minister wipes with a napkin, the cup each time a communicant sips, and this covers the requirements. In other churches they have individual cups. But Frances refused to be reconciled.

"Yes, but that ain' whut He sed. He sed 'this cup' an' the pictur' shows hit. I'll bet these politicians did hit to please the merchants so's they could sell a lot of cups, besides, they ain' cups, theys glasses an' it ain' doin' His will."

Interrupting her dissertation, Cecilia Hall, an old friend, came in, and when we (including ourselves) got on the subject of witches, the visitor admitted that she believed in witches and that one in particular had ridden her, but that she had put a stop to such visits by placing a sifter before her door every night.

"You know when you do that, when ole witch comes an' finds she has to count ev'ry hole in it, she gits mad an' goes away. But you have to be careful an' never slip up 'cause ef she once gets it she'll git even by ridin' you harder than ever."

We told her that was a new one. We had heard of scattering cornmeal over the steps, each particle having to be counted before gaining entrance, and of placing a broom

before the door, for no witch would cross a broomstick - were there any other ways to keep them out?

"I 'spec' they is," she replied, "but I don' bother with other ways, this one is good enuf fer me."

Typed by - Rose St. Angelo

Frances Lewis (Negro)

1042 Gen. Taylor Ave.

Born a slave, in Georgia, 86 hears ago, Frances' wooly head, broad features and coal-black skin tell you that she is proud of the fact that she is a genuine old-fashioned "cullud woman with good raisin'."

This is what she tells:

"I was just about eleven years of age, when Sherman's Brigade went marchin' through Georgia. It looked like a million men an' maybe there was that many, I don't know.

"The sojers wore blue jackets with brass buttons, an' there was dead an' dyin' men all over the roads and the fiels', ev'rywhere you went you saw them an' blood was jes' a runnin'.

"The sojers sang 'Yankee Doodle Dander' but I don' see how they could sing or have music when dead was all aroun'. Hunbans' an' fathers an' sons gone from they loved ones. Maybe they were jes' tryin' to keep up courage.

"Ole Mis' knew them Yankees would steal her silver so she trusted my ma with it, an' my ma hid it good, but when them Yankees came to our house an' axed my ma ef she had anythin' hid my ma tole a story an' sed 'No,' she didn't have ennythin', but they didn't believe her an' they searched the house an' foun' it. But because she wus a slave they didn't do nothin' to her, jes' took the silver.

"An' once I wus sont with Massa's son, a boy 'bout my age to gather ches'nuts, an' when one nice big one fell to the groun' we both run to get it. But I got it fust an' he

hit me for it, an' I picked up a stone an' throwed it at him an' it cut a deep hole in his head an' I was scared. My ma whipped me hard, but ole Massa said I'd been punished enough – but I've always been sorry I done it.

“Yes'm I remember old religious himes they used to sing but they don't sing 'em anymo'. They'd think you were crazy if you did. Did you ever hear this un?

'O Sister Mary, who's on the Lord's side?

Mary wept an' Martha mourned:

Who's on the Lord's side?

I let you know befo' I go who's on the Lord's side.'

Almost There.

I'm almos' over an' I soon will be there,

I'm climin' up Zion's hill,

I'm almos' there,

I'm goin' up Calvary an' soon will be there,

I'm climin' up Zion's hill.

Ef you git there befo' I do,

Tell Jesus I'll soon be there,

An' tell Him that I'm comin' too,

I'm climin' up Zion's hill.

'One day when I wus walkin' roun',

I heard a reason from on high,

It spoke an' it made me happy an' cry,
 It said my sins are forgiven an' my soul set free.

'Jesus is my Capt'n an' He gone on befo',
 An' He giv' me His orders,
 An' He tol' me not to fear,
 I'm on my journey an' I'll soon be there.

"There's another one lik' this:

'Roll, Jordan roll,
 Wish I had been there to hear sweet Jordan roll.
 Look over yonder, see what I see,
 A band of Angels comin' after me.

'Roll, Jordan roll, you oughter been there
 To see sweet Jordan roll.
 Roll Jordan roll, you oughter been sittin' in the kingdom
 To hear sweet Jordan roll.'

'Jesus I'm troubled troubled 'bout my soul,
 Ride on Jesus, come this way I troubled 'bout my soul.
 Old Satan is mad an' I am glad,
 He missed one soul that he thought he had.'

'I met old Satan the other day,
An' what you reckon he say,
'Jesus is dead an' God's gone away''
I made him out a liar an' I kep' on my way.'

'The sun goin' rise to set no mo',
King Jesus is my Cap'tin –
He giv' me His orders an' He tole me not to fail.
The sun goin' to rise to set no mo.'

'The sun goin' rise to set no mo',
The sun goin' rise to set no mo',
The sun goin rise to set no mo.'

'I know I've been converted,
God knows I ain' ashamed –
The Holy Ghost is my witness,
An' the angels done sign my name.

'The sun goin rise to set no mo',
The sun goin' rise to set no mo'
The sun goin' rise to set no mo' on that Resurrection Day.

'I went to the Valley an' I didn't go to stay,
My soul got happy an' I stayed all day ,
The sun goin' rise to set no mo',
The sun goin' rise to set no mo',
The sun goin' rise to set no mo '.

'I tell you sister whut's a nat'ral fac',
Hit's a mighty bad thing to ever look back.'

'Don' you hear Jesus call?
Don' you hear Jesus call?
Don' you hear Jesus call?
Yes, I hear Jesus call in my soul.

'Don' you hear the turtle-dove?
Don' you hear the turtle-dove?
Don' you hear the turtle-dove?
Yes, I hear the turtle-dove in my soul.

'Don' you hear the angel call?
Yes, I hear the angel call,
I got the witness in my heart,
An' the glory in my soul.'

'I'll go, I'll go ef hit's rainin',
I'll go, I'll go et hit's stormy,
I'll go King Jesus is my Captin,
An' He's gone on befo'.'

'The Lord called Adam, an' Adam 'fused to answer.
The second time he answered, "Hear me Lord,
I mos' done waggin' with crosses,
My knee-bone is akin,
My body racked with pain ,
I call mysef a chile of God,
An' heaven is my aim."'

'I wish I wus in heaven
To see my mother whenshe entered,
To see her try on her long white robe an' starry crown,
I wish I wus in heaven to see my mother
In her long white robe an' starry crown.'

'A sister on the road she mos' done trav'lin'
Hit's a rough an' rocky way,
But I mos' done trav'lin'
Heaven is so high an' I is so low,

I fear I'll never get there.

'I mos' done trav'lin', I boun'to carry my soul to the Lord.

I mos' done trav'lin', hit's a rough an' rocky way.

I mos' done trav'lin', my soul to the Lord ,

I mos' done trav'lin', moanin' on the road,

I mos' done trav'lin', I mos' done trav'lin'.'

'An' when a sinner got converted,

She useter sing while about to shout:

"You may hol' my hat

You may hol' my shawl,

But pray don' tech my waterfall."

'John saw the number in the middle of the air ,

The number counted 144,000 an' then it couldn't be counted.

'Come ol' sheep, ol' sheep you kno' the way,

Ol' sheep know the way – young mus' learn the way.

'Who built the Ark?

Norah built the Ark.

He built it on a sandy lan' ,

Norah Built the Ark.

Some call Norah a foolish man

To build the Ark on sandy lan'.

“Ef people would worship the Lord more the world would be better. Lots of em, white folks too, don’ even say grace but jus’ gobble they food. On New Year’s eve, the horses an’ cows an’ sheep an’ all animals ben’ they knees ----- an’ lie down in rev’rence to they Creator. Look at the horse when he drinks water, he lifts’ up he’s head as in gratitude. An’ the chickens, too.”

An’ then Frances explained that when she was young, negroes wore what was known as a waterfall. They were made of real hair and had a thin wire to hold them on the head. They were expensive, too, she said and that is why negroes were very careful of them. When they got religion, they shouted, and swooned and fainted and had to be revived. Sometimes it took several persons to hold them. They actually sang the “Waterfall” song given above.

We looked it up in the dictionary and this is how Mr. Webster defines it: “A chignon likened to a waterfall.”

“Ole Miss was good to us. She taught us our A B C’s – an’ we studied the Blueback Webster an’ the McGuffey readin’ book – an’ to count up to a hundred. That’s all the learnin’ I ever had. An’ she taught us outen a kitycasm, it was a Sunday-school book, an’ I remember some of the questions were:

‘Who made you?’

An’ we had to say,

'God made me an' all mankin'.' And there was lots more questions like that, but I forgot what they were. It was on Sunday that we learned this and after that we went to Church.

"We ate in the kitchen at the Big House – all the chil'ren from the quarters – not the big kitchen, but one for us. An' sometimes ole Miss would come in to see that we were properly fed. We had hominy small, they call it grits, now, an' plenty milk to eat on it an' coh'n bread. That was our breakfus'. At 12 o'clock we had lye or big hominy an' coh'n bread an' pot licker an' collard greens. At night hoe-cake an' buttermilk. On Sunday we had flour bread.

"An' whenever we came in Ole Miss' presence, we curtsied low an' the boys bowed their heads an' bended one knee. Ef a chile saw this done now they'd think he was crazy.

"I got Mother wit* - instead of an edycation. Lots of colored people in offices an' school don' seem to know what Mother wit is. As we did not know either, we asked her to tell us just what it was:

"Well, it's lik' this: I got a wit to teach me what's wrong.

I got a wit to not make me a mischief-maker.

I got a wit to keep people's trusts. No one has to tell me not to tell what they say to me in confidence, for I respect what they say, an' I never tell.

"I'm glad I had good raisin'. When chil'ren used to get a whipping they was taught to turn 'roun' an' say 'Thank you ma'm for whipping me' an' bow. That was

*Mother-wit: Native wit; common sense – Cent. Dict.

mighty hard to do, but we were never allowed to pout – if we did we got another. An' if we just needed being punished we were put behin' a door an' had to stan' on one foot until we were ready to say we were sorry an' promis' not to do it agin'. If we tol' a story our mouths were washed out with a soaped rag.

“At Christmus we hung up our stockings in the big house on nails in the mantelpiece, an' each of us got a stick of candy an' some kisses, two little white flat candies with red printin' on them an' made like a heart. An' a blue-back spellin'-book, Webster. We greeted every one in the big house with 'Chris'mus gif', Chris'mus gif'-an' we were all happy.

“Befo' dinner there was a big egnog, an' we all had a glassful. It had whiskey in it, but not enough to make you drunk, an' they sung:

'Chris'mus comes but once a year
An' everyone mus' have his sheer.' (share)

“We sed our prayers at night. The fust one I ever knew, I say it still it wus: ‘Now I lay me.’”

Yes, we replied that was the prayer we were taught and it has stood through the ages. Bishop Green of the Episcopal Church, in Mississippi lived to be nearly 90 and he told us that he said this little prayer which his mother had taught him, every night since he was able to talk. When he died it was the last thing he was heard to say:

'Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray thee Lord, my soul to keep
If I should die before I wake
I pray thee Lord my soul to take

And this I ask for Jesus' sake'

Amen.

We repeated. – “An’ you sed it too. Now ain’ that nice. Some mothers say they ain’ got time to bother with they children’s prayers. What are they a coming too?” She sighed.

“We learned to count by taking kernels of corn an’ puttin’ em’ separately an’ sayin’ –

‘William a Trimmeltoe, he’s a good fisherman

He has hens, puts ‘em in pens

Wire, brier, limber-lock

How many geese are in a flock?

One flew east, one flew west

An’ one flew over the cuckoo’s nes’.

‘An’ then we counted the dif’rent pens – 1 – 2 – 3.

“We used to play – ‘Ring-round the rosy,’ an’ ‘Light my canel,’ an’ games lik’ that but I didn’t have much time to play ‘cause I wus too busy ev’ry day but Sat’day – then I didn’t have to work. Well, I used to rub ole Mis’ an’ ol’ Mas’ feet ev’ry night.

“I never had a doll until after I wus married. Then I bought one. It wus the pruttiest thing you ever did see. I put it in a chair an’ looked at it. I wus mos’ ‘fraid to tetch it.

“An’ I had to dry the dishes too – an’ bring in kinlin’ wood, an’ anythin’ else they tol’ me.

"We got two pairs of shoes a year – a pair of brogans an' a Sunday pair. But the brogans hurt our feet, an' we'd rather go barefooted.

"We did'nt get sick much, but when we did Ole Mis' giv' us blue mass pills, an' hippocac,* an' sassypariller. She took bark an' made a tea outer it, an' for flux she giv' us sage tea.

"When I was a girl in the country we didn't have church houses, like they got now. The men took some pos'es stuck in the groun' an' overhead was a lot of saplin's,* you know what they are? Little trees, -well, they were put with one end with branches one way an' the end the other, an' covered enough to keep out the sun, but it wouldn't keep out the rain. An' they made seats outer rough planks. They had no backs lik' now, but we didn't min', an' church lasted all day – an' the groun' was covered with sawdus'. That's why now, at revival meetin's, they say when you go up for prayers that you 'hit the sawdust trail.'

"Befo' I got converted I went to dances, an' we danced by a fiddle, an' the fiddler kep' time with a song:

'Hop light ladies, the cake's all dough

Don' min' the weather, so the win' don' blow.'

"An' they had log-rollin's an' quiltin' bees after the surrender.

"When the logs were cut an' ready for buildin' a cabin, all the frens' pitched in an' helped roll the logs to where the hut was to be put up – an' they had all the hog-meat

*Ipecac –

*Called "Brush Harvest" by negroes.

an' bread an' molasses they could eat. After that they put the hut together an' took dirt
an' made a sort of plaster outen hit to fill up the chinks.

“In those days people uster help each other in sickness, in trouble an' ev'ryway,
now they too busy with theyselves.

POSEY

January 8, 1941

HUNTON LOVE

(Negro)

2111 PHILIP

EX-SLAVE

When a child, we once asked our Father why it was that nearly all negroes lived to such an old age.

His reply was that while many did, few knew how old they really were and that they just guessed or some one assumed they were such and such an age at some particular time.

This is, no doubt, the case, but as often as it may be overrated, just as often it comes under the stated years.

The subject of our sketch, simply states that he is "somewhere over a hundred"—that he has no birthday and can't keep up with the time.

There can be no doubt as to this statement, you are assured when you look at him. While his sight is failing and his steps falter, he goes about independently.

He tells you that he was born at Bayou Lafourche on the plantation of John Viguerie and that he was 21 when his people mustered arms.

"When ole Marse went to war, he left me overseer of the plantation. Yes'm I did — some of the slaves wouldn't mind and I had to whip 'em," in reply to our question —

"Besides I had to show 'em I was boss, or the plantation would be wrecked.

"O, yes, I was whipped once. It wuz my business to keep all the horses slick and clean. Once when Ole Marse was going to ride his horse he took his han'chief and rubbed it down Brutus' back, an' 'kase it comed out dirty, I got a lidking, but that was the onliest time.

"Once when some slaves were sold they were han'cuffed an' tied behin' an' ol' oak tree. Susan was bought an tol' to follow her new Marster. She wuz jus' about in chile-birth and wouldn't move and when urged, said: "I won't go! I won't go! I won't!" For that she wuz given 150 lashes.

"Another woman was throwed in a big bed of ants which they had caused to 'semble. She was tied down with heavy weights, so she couldn't budge; she was tortured awfully.

"Sometimes I cried after I went to bed, because of these whippin's. Of course, it wuz neces'ry sometimes, but these overseers, gin'rilly men from the North, wuz brutal.

"We didn't leave the place often. When day's work wuz over, we wuz too tired to do ennythin' but go to sleep – an' besides, we didnt know any outsiders. But if we did go, we had to have a pass or we'd be taken up. They wuz strick in those days.

"I worked in the cane juice place. Big boats stopped at our landin' an' they'd take on maybe a 150 barrels of sugar, 400 bbls. molasses at a time, sugar wuz king in those days.

"Injuns? I rem'ber them too. After slavery, I went to their tents. They wuz good and kind unless you treated 'em bad, then they'd turn on you and nothin' wuz too hard for them to do to you. Some people used to say 'a good Injun is a dead Injun' but they didn't deserve that.

“Yes’m, I went to some of their buryin’s. They dug a hole big ernuff an’ put him in an’ throwed dirt over him. They didn’t have no coffin. Then they took han’s and marched ‘roun’ singin’ an’ hollerin’ – Nobody cried.”

DANCED WITH A GLASS OF WATER ON HIS HEAD.

“When I wuz young, before I wuz converted I loved to dance all night. I could dance with a glass full of water on my head, an’ make bows to my lady pardner an’ never let a drop out.

“White folks used to get me to do it and they’d give me \$5.00 sometimes more.

“Culled people don’ seem to be able to hol’ ennythin’ on they heads enny mo’- not even a basket of clothes. I wonder if they heads is changed! If I was more stiddy on my feet I could do it now.

“We had nice times frolicing. – We sang and danced and drank anisette.

“Ten years after peace, I went to Slidell, La., and worked on the farm of Mme. George Benoit. She raised chickens and turkeys to sell and I was good help.

“O, Lordy, Lordy! how we uster sing:

‘We’ll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree

Hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree

“ “ “ “ “ “ “ “

As we go marchin’ on.’ “

“Would you really have done it?” we asked.

“O, Lordy, no man, we wouldn’t a harmed him, but he was a tiger, he was bad ‘cause he wanted to keep us in slavery an’ that was mean in him.”

We asked if he had ever seen a coachwhip snake.

"I've seen lots of 'em. They kin whip you to death. They run up trees so they kin spring down on you an' 'less you kill them they'll beat you to deth. That's why they name 'coachwhip', they resembles a whip. O, Lordy, I alwus had my knife with me an' when I saw one, I cut hit in two.

"Once I heard some men talkin' an' one sed: 'You think money grows on trees;' an' the other one say: 'Hit do, git down that moss an' convert it in to money,' an' I got to thinkin' an' sho' 'nuff, it do grow on trees."

Interview – John McDonald (negro)

Tatum.

Essan Lane Road, Baton Rough, La.

No suh, boss I can't read and write. When I were brung up ef'n my boss man kotch me wit a pencil or paper it was 25 lashes.

Yes, suh, we had plenty dem old time cures. You know de doctor give us quinine and bitters, but we used plenty "assfetida" and rabbit foots to hope out. We'd tie a bit of "assfetida" up in a rag and put it round the babies neck to keep colds away and to hope it when dey cuts teeth. Then a bone from a possun's tail makes em break the tooth fru the gum on time. I always keep a rabbit foot and a buckeye in my pocket to keep rumatizm off. Never plant peas, beans, etc., in the full moon. Plant taters and goobers then.

Have your cows come fresh in the spring and they'll give more milk. If you want to keep a cow milking a long time never let the calf touch her bag, just keep it milked out for several days and as soon as the milk gets strong enough start milking every morning and night reglar. Never milk a cow's milk on the ground, as it will make her go dry.

Witches? No suh I aint never had no truck wid none, but I'se seed sperits.

We had a old sow what had a sperit in her. She'd take de sperit every time she had a litter er' pirs, and wont nobody go near her den. I member de time she put me atop a stump in de barn yard and mind me dere all night. Just de sperit o'de devil in her, that's what. Soon as day break came she goes on about her business peaceful like as could be. Folks say when a body dies wid things on dere mind dere sperit goes in a dog, or hog or any animal near by. The sperit in this animal then acts on the thing in folks mind when they die. If you don't hab no worries on you mind when you dies the sperit rests. I'se

seen rabbits with sperits what ain't act no way natchrel. Neber seed no ghosts, but I aint
zactly look for none.

Cure for measles? Well, now, dere aint none. Just keep your hands off dem pison
bushes and be careful to stay in doors. They ain't gonna hurt you none if'n you keep a
rabbit foot handy bout your person.

BURKE - 1

9/6/40

LIFE HISTORY

Frank Moss - 80

Lafon Old Folks Home

N. Tonti Street

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. Longshoremen, stevedores, boatmen, truckers - all of them strong of arm and of back; all willing to subject their bodies to endure a great amount of physical punishment through work. When it was necessary they would go on working day and night with only a few minutes' rest. And why not? They were being well-paid then, whereas during the days of slavery they had to work just as hard for mere board and lodge. And to be able to spend this money as they wanted to: clothes, jewelry, drinking, women and good times. All these were their rewards. These, coupled with their natural ability to do hard work, formed an incentive that aided in the full expression and expansion of the South. Commerce and transportation by rail increased; products of this nation and of other nations were exchanged upon the backs of these stalward Negroes, without whose help during the days before modern machinery it is doubtful if this country would have advanced so rapidly. Especially the South. These sons of toil helped in the reconstruction of the land that once held them in bondage. But like the simple souls they were, all was forgiven and forgotten and upon receiving xxxxx fair payments

for their services gave their very best in tests of loyalty, steadiness and of physical endurance, which often resulted in the loss of life. Extended over a period of many years the lives of Negro laborers represent the true backbone of a great nation.

Frank Moss was one of these knights of manual labor, and he is yet alive and able to recount the eventful days of his youth and young manhood while engaging in such strenuous work.

These men seem to run true to type in their old age. They are tall with large frames that have lost their huskiness through age. Gray hair, black complexion, dark steady eyes that often seem to dwell in thoughtful reflection of days gone by, long arms, powerful hands and large feet are the chief characteristics of their physical anatomy.

"Son, my life began eighty years ago June 17, 1860. I was born during slavery, but you kin see I was just a lil tot and I didn't know what 'twas all about til I was a big boy and my folks told me about it.

"It shouldn't be hard for a person with any common sense or knowledge at all to know how old they are, but moster our old folks can't tell you excatly how old they are to save their lives. Their folks tell em when they was born, but they forgets the dates and then when they get old they don't know more know how old they are than a new born babe. Well, I'm eighty years old and I've got my good remembrance.

"Son, I'm shore glad to see the younger generation using their heads in order to make a living instead of their hands and their backs like we usedter do. I was born in Choctaw County in Alabama, right on the river. That's where all the family was: two girls - Annie and Mary - and four boys - Dave, Disney, Steve and me. My father was killed on the river. I don't even remember him. You see, he was killed while I was still a

little boy. He was steamboating when he got killed. After that when we was all big enough to remember we moved to Mobile, but I was about nineteen or twenty years old before I had my first public job. That was in Scranton, Mississippi, where I got a job as bayman, loading ships.

"I didn't stay there long on account Gulfport started to boom and we all went there. You see, most of the fellers stuck together when we went form job to job and from town to town. Well, we did all right in Gulfport, cause the pay was good and twasn't as far from Mobile. I stayed there for aobut seven years. Then we heard they needed men in Port Arthur, Texas. That was a good big jump, but by now I knew the work and I was big and strong. You wouldn't think it to look at me now, would you? Port Arthur was a good lil but town and I liked/ it on ^account of a woman there I thought it best to move on. It was like this:

"I had been going with this woman for a long time and all the while she hadn't told me she had a husband in NewerLeans. Til one day he pops up. That night I goes there as usual and sees this man there and her looking all funny. Then she says, 'This is my husband.' He looked at me kinder suspicious like so I hightailed it away from there. But the next evening she comes up to my room. She said she didn't know he was comin home. Well, we kep on meetin on the sly til her husband found out and he swore he was gonner cut my goozle pipe. The other fellers said he was bad medicine, and I wasn't sick and didn't want no kinda medicine so I hightailed it outer town this time.

"I had been hearing about Sabine Pass, so I went there and stayed well nigh on to two years. From there we went to Galveston; two years we spent there. Houston, all those towns – feeding and ravaging the women of Texas. And they didn't seem to mind,

and like the fools we were we'd make our money and look for some woman to spend it on.

"In Houston we left the docks and the boats for a while. There was two or three cotton compresses going full blast and wantin good men. So we gangs up and goes on to one of em. We finds out that we can make as much time as we kin. All we had to do was to truck that cotton. Son, those niggers – me too – would work three days and three nights on a stretch without sleeping. Sometimes we'd sit down to rest and fall asleep. It got so bad til the fore-man had to stop us and make us take some time off. We made sacks o' money. We got seventy-five cents an hour in the day and a dollar and a quarter or Sunday and at night. Somehow or other I can't quite remember, but I think it was on account of one er the boys of our gang – we generally went around to- gether from place to place and from town to town. Well, this feller says there's good money in the sugar cane belt so we went out there and for those three, four months we cut cane. After grinding was over we'd hightail it back to Texas or we'd hightail it here to NewerLeans to knock em up and out and have a good time.

"I remember the best place we worked at during grinding was at the old McGinnis Foundry. That was in Terrebonne Parish and he used to grind cane for everybody for eight and ten miles around. You know they'd haul the cane in those flat cars to the foundry.

"You know that kind a work was hard – trucking cotton, loading boats, cutting cane, but our backs was strong and our heads hard so we didn't mind. Then we was gittin paid good for it. And the more money we got the better times we could have afterwards. We all looked forward to when our job would end cause then we knowed we was gonner

have a good time. With all our money moster the time we'd high tail it to NewerLeans. It's a funny thing and I jes thought about it. I've worked all through on the coast of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas and d'ya know I never did work in NewerLeans? Not once! But I tell ya what I did do. Wherever we was if we was close enough to here, we'd come right here to have a good time cause we knowed what was waitin for us every day and every night in the week til we got broke. Sometimes we didn't hit a lick of work in three or four weeks, sometimes longer, all depending on how much money we had and how fast we spent it.

"Yes, sir, the boys would git together and say, 'We's heading for 'leven light city.'

"Huh? 'Leven light city? You never heard er that? Well that's what they used ter call NewerLeans. It was like this: They had 'lectric lights in Mobile long time before they got em in NewerLeans, so all the boys was used to the light cause we'd go home every now'n then to see the folks back home. Well, finally when NewerLeans got 'lectric lights there was leven of em strung up from a tower on Canal Street an when we was a good little distance from town we could see them lights afore we saw anything else. So the boys would sing out, 'We's comin inter leven light City, boys, so git ready!' When we'd hit town almost the first place we went ter was Sam Bonart's. We'd go there and git fixed up with Manhattan shirts, box-backed coats and pinch bottom pants. Then we'd spread out an we might not see each other for days at a time unless we'd meet down in the district. You talking about tough? It was tough then. Xxxx There wasn't a night in the week that you couldn't find some place to go.

“Right there twas on Iberville and Franklin on one corner was the Twenty-five on the other the Twenty-eight and on the other side was the Pig Ankle. The Pig Ankle was the place. Seven nights out the week niggers and white folks usedter crowd in there. There’s where the Dirty Dozen Gals usedter hang out and the High Kickers. Yes, suh, they’d have a big ham and a bell hanging up from the ceiling, an these gals and the High Kickers would come out in the middle of the floor, raise their dresses and kick for all they was worth. It they’d kick that ham the bell would ring and the house would come down. Sometimes some o’ the fellers would have em fix the ham so’s it could be pulled up and when the gals would kick they pul the ham up. Did we have fun with them women. One old gal kicked so hard til she lost her drawers, but that didn’t worry her. She jus pulled em right back and fixed em right there on the floor. The white folks liketer died laughin. They’d come there jes ter throw nickels and dimes.

“During them times the district where all the whores was ran from Franklin up Saratoga, Rampart and Dryades. They didn’t have as many stores on Rampart Street. They had these houses and alleys and if you was green and jus come to town they’d take you in. There you’d be walking down Rampart and walk too close to one er them alleys and them whores’d pull you in and the niggers in there’d rob you. Sometimes when a feller’d git broke he’d have ter sit up in one of the joints all night and sleep in a chair by the stove. They always keep the stove cherry red in the winter times. Then sometimes he’d git ter drinkin and gambling an git so drunk he’d be put in the back room along with a lotter other fellers all of em knocked out. There’s where these pimps who wouldn’t an never did work made their livin. While those men were sleepin they’d ease in between em an feel their pockets for money and jewelry an out it would come. They’d have a

sharp knife jus for that purpose. They'd steal shoes, hats, coats anything they could git hold of an next morning they'd xxxxx pawn em at the pawn shop. That'd be enough for breakfast and their meal for the day an a nickel or a dime to gamble with. That's how they lived.

"You know that reminds me. They was some er those folks who lived in the city for well nigh ten years and never slept in a room. They'd sit up all night rough a stove or sleep on a bench in the summer. Cause you know in them times if you didn't pay your rent they'd put you out on the sidewalk. Furniture an all. It was a common sight to see folks stacked up in the street with no wheres to go. But they put a stop to that after a while an I think it was on account of a colored woman who was put out an she gave birth to a baby right there in the street. After that they wasn't so bad on putting folks out for not payin their rent.

"But one day I married an kinder settled down. I had one son, but he died from lung trouble he got when he went to the war. He was exposed in the trenches. A year later my wife died an I was left alone agin, but I didn care about knockin around. Even though I kep doin that hard work up til five years ago. That about how long I bin here in the Home an all I kin do is watch, pray an wait."

11 A

Michinard - 6/15/40

Charles Parcanses, 130 years old

5901 Marais St.

(Ex-Slave)

Charles Parcanses was born in Selma, Alabama, in the year 1810. He came to live in New Orleans in 1872.

When the war broke out between the States, Charlie was very anxious to join the army, but was rejected owing to his age.

Parcanses' father was a Cherokee Indian, who died at the age of 150 years.

Parcanses helped to build the tracks at Manchac.

Parcanses related the following tale:

When a slave, his boss had made a wager with him that he had another slave who could out-eat Parcanses. The wager was accepted and on a certain day, the two Gargantuas met and began the meal. Parcanses ate one yearling, one shoat, one skillet full of birds, and one pan of corn-bread. The other slave ate two yearlings, two shoats, and a bushel of sweet potatoes, and after all had been consumed, said: "Marse, I'se could eat more, but I'se will do with this!"

The master had won the wager.

Thirteen years ago, old man Parcanses became very ill. He was taken to the Charity Hospital. The doctors there said he would not live through the day. The old man rallied, remained at the hospital three weeks and returned home perfectly well. His only infirmity now is rheumatism in one knee.

Parcanses admitted he had been a terror in his youth, liking to drink, smoke, and best of all, the girls.

"You see," he said to me, with a twinkle of the eyes, "You see, I've come from a woman so I've had to go back to them. It's been eight years since I've gone out with a girl." As he said that the old man chuckled.

Folklore

Slaves

(Dillon)

Notes Only

Slave Memoirs(con.)

Charity Parker – notes attached

Special Collections

Sometimes I still wish I was Cath'lic.xxxlIf ya pure to de Lord, yer pure to everythin'
When you go to confession you gotta have in yo' mind dat ya ain't gonna do anythin'
ya tell de priest ya ain't gonna do, an' yo' gonna say ' Lord ,when I go befo' de priest,
don' let me do no more behind his back den I confess to his face.' Charity Parker

A nickel ain't worth nothin' today and you gotta buy everythin' you wants.

Times ain't what they uster be – people don' have nothin' an' dey not as good to one
annuder as dey were, an' dey gotta hav nxxxxxx all kinda things to git along. Charity
Parker

"I like de radio ' cause I kin git church music on it, but I wouldn' ride in no
automobile, No. ma'am, dem things are de devil's wagons
and no good kin come outta dem. I ain't nebber xxxxxxxx bin to a xxx picture show
'cause dem things are idols, an' God says don't worship no idols. Charity Parker

Looks to me like de judgment ain't far off an' de only thing to do is to pary to de Lord
to,open yah mind to stop what's comin'. Charity Parker

an L.&N. Freight handler,

xx Charity, whose son-in-law/provided
well for her was neatly dressed in black and white voile and wore a blue tignon.

“ I was married to my husbon, Isaac Parker, in 1867. He was from de place next to us. I always wanted to come to de city, so after we was married, we met one of his brudders an’ we come here together. Me an’ my husbon went to work for Mr. & Mrs. McCray (McDay) we stayed dere forty years – Dey lived on Esplanade street.. I cooked an’ my husbon was houseman an’ butler. We got fifteen or sixteen dollars a month but we had a place to stay right in de yard. It had two rooms an’ a kitchen. None of my children were born on de place ‘ cause xx sometimes we would stay an’ den sometime, we would rent a house fo’ awhile. ‘Course in dem days, times were not like dey is now an’ \$15 or \$16 a month was a good salary. Charity Parker

Lord, we had everythin’ we wanted to eat. Eevrythin’ dey had, we had right from de table and all of my mistress’ clothes dat would git too small for her, she would give us an’ my children were raised right in dat yard, jes’ like one of her children. She loved dem an’ saw dat dey went to school. While I was dere, Mr. McCray’s wife died an’ after awhile he married xxx agin an’ his second wife was jes’ as good to us as de furst. Charity Parker

Mr. McCray was a Scotchman, but he had lived here so long he was jes’ as hard to please as de French people. When dem French people tell ya to make ménage , dey don’t mean jes’ to dust ‘roun’ a little bit, dey means ya gotta take xxx de mattressxxx off de baid an’ clean de spring and clean de walls, clean de pictures, an’ den spread paper on de baid an’ take everythin’ outta de drawers an’ clean dat too. Charity’s daughter who

became a teacher had a job in the country, so she left the McCrays who were very much upset and she "sho hated to leave dem too." Charity Parker

"When I got to de city, I backslided a little. 'Cause I wanted to go out an' dance an' have a good time an' see all de things I ain't never seen in de country. So I gave up mah religion fo' awhile, an' den I went back to it. An' now I sits down wid my pipe an' me an' De Lawd talk tothet jes' lak I'um talkin' to ya now.

Yes, De Lawd has come to me many times an' I sees Him many times jes8 like I sees

Maud Wallace

Marie Le Veau

Slave Days

Spirits

(11-A)

Albert Patterson (col.)

2224 Freret St.

May 22, 1940

EX-SLAVE

2224 Freret St. is one of those typical New Orleans double houses. From the front door with green blinds, the shutters closed, there are three steps down to the sidewalk, scoured immaculately clean, and here, on the top step, in the shade of a chinaball tree growing at the edge of the sidewalk, is seated an old, thin, light-tan negro. He is Albert Patterson. Dressed in dark trousers, a white shirt, open at the neck, a dark straw hat and holding a cane. He is leaning against the door, and looks as clean as the steps, and as cool as the shade of the china-ball tree. He lives in one room in the back of the house.

"An' I gits along fine. The Welfare give me five-fifty every two weeks. That takes care o' me. I got two children livin' but I never hear from them. My boy's in Texas, my girl's in Chicago. A lady here in de block had a daughter what go to Chicago jes' a few weeks ago, an' when she come back she say my daughter's livin' in de same address what I write to her, but she won' answer my letters, because she don' want the niggers up there to know she was born in de South.

"I was borned in eighteen-fifty, on a place called Lasco Plantation, Plaequimine Parish. It was afterwards called Junior Plantation, an' I lived in de South all my life.

"We raised sugar cane an' made sugar, no refinery, we'd boil it in big kittles an' there was a colored man from Mississippi that know when the sugar grain. We'd work in de fields in de day an' make sugar at night.

"We had no schools, they wouldn't let a nigger look at a school.

"Colonel White built us a church, a Baptist Church, an' we had it way after de war. e had no pleasures, jes' work, only on the fourth o' July, they kill a beef an' have a big barbecue.

"There was regular quarters fo' de colored people an' a big cook house, a woman cooked fo' dem while dey worked.

"I remember our plantation was sold twice befo' de war. It was sheriff's sale, de white peoples dey stand up on de porch. an' de black men an' women an' children stand on de ground an' de man he shout, 'How much am I offered fo' plantation an' fine men an' women'? Somebody would say so many thousand an' de man would yeli 'Look at dem little niggers, dey's worth so many thousand a year' An' after while, one man buy it all. If a nigger come from de north with a trade, he sold for six thousand dollars, but de man that buys him gets ten dollars a day fo' his work. It's jes' like pullin' a leaf out o' that tree.

"My father was sold up in Ascension Parish to a bad man, but he wouldn't work. So de man learned him a trade, an' then he ran away to come back an' see his family, he ran away seventy-five miles. He got on a flat boat in Natchez, an' was three months driftin' down to the coast, but he wouldn't plow or hoe, an' de overseer couldn't hit him 'cause Col. White wouldn't allow that, he was a good man.

"De Frenchmen an' de Dutchmen were mean, but the Irishmen was good. I seen de blood cut out o' niggers dat deep, seen it wid my own eyes, but not Col. White. He not cruel, he wouldn't whip, he'd punish. He had a iron band, he'd rivet to go around the ankle, an' he had a iron band to go around the neck, with a piece o' iron standin' up in de front, de back an' each side, yo' had to hold yo' head jes' so, an' yo' couldn't lay down, an' you' had to pad that iron band, 'cause it was so heavy it would cut yo' neck, but he never kept no nigger dogs, an' he had a great big woods in de back where de niggers would hide when they run away, but he wouldn't let nobody bring nigger dogs to find them. If a nigger hide in de woods, he'd come in at night, an' to get meal. They bore a little hole in the floor an' they break into de meat house too. De dogs couldn't catch dem nohow, 'cause they put Bay Leaves on de bottom o' their feet an' shoes, then they go an' walk in fresh manure an' a dog can't track them. That way a man could come an' see his family, an' when it's time to get busy to gather crops, they'd come out o' the woods, walk up to Col. White, an' say 'I'll take de crops off if'n yo'll let me.'

"I remember when de gunboats come up de river an' took Jackson an' St. Phillips Fort, an' General Butler took New Orleans. I seen some bad things. I seen de Rebel soldiers run, wid their leg most cut off to de knee, or de arm hangin', de blood pourin'. De Colonel, he make me carry dem in de buggy, so they could come here to de hospital, an' then some o' them start cussin', an' insist they goin' right back to de battlefield even with their arm cut off so they can't carry a gun.

"I remember there was one man, a big hard man, a overseer--he was a great speech maker. He used to make speeches to make the men go an' fight an' if they didn't go, he'd jump on them an' beat them, even his own brother an' his own son. -- an' he lost

them, he made every man go fight what he could, but he never did go. One boy, he say he walk five miles through a battlefield lookin' fo' his father. He never find him, but say men there full o' blood, hundreds o' them on de ground an' beggin' him to kill them; but the war today more crueller than it was then. 'Course through de war then, we couldn't buy salt, but back in those days we had more food than we got now, always plenty pickled beef an' molasses. When de government took de plantations, they started paying wages. The Yankees didn't bother Col. White. He put up a big United States Flag right in front of his house an' he used to make a lot o' wine, so the yankees thought that fine.

"There was a white man, a overseer, Joe Bates an' his driver Edward Jackson, he was on de Oak Point Plantation. Since freedom, he was havin' trouble wid de bank, so he drive all night an' cometo de city to Marie Leveau's because he use to pay her to keep his job fo' him, but when he get here to her, she say, 'Yo' one hour too late yo' belongin's is already on de river front'. An' when he git back to Oak Point, there was all his things on de river front. I didn't never see her, but this white man Joe Bates, he tell it hisself that he jes' a hour too late getting' to Marie Leveau*.

"I never know much about de hoodoo, but de spirits yes! I seen dem an' they don' do no harm. God is spirit ain't He?

"Years ago I got into my bed one night an' de cover it pull off. I didn't think much about it, an' pulled it up again, but the third time it pulled off, I got on my knees an' say my prayers an' de covers don' pull off no more. Then about twenty years ago, I went to de Charity Hospital with de pneumonia an' I was already seventy, but de first time I ever sick. There was a little short yellow in de bed next to me an' I don't know him at all, but he died. Well that night he come to my bed, an' he try to put his hands on

me, he laugh an' say, I'm goin' with him, but I slip out o' de bed on de other side an' I git on my knees an' I pray, an' I'm still here. Yo' see my mother she had six children, I'm de first an' de others are all gone, so I'm de first an' de last."

* Extract made for Marie Laveau

Special Collection

Posey

Marthy Ann Prim-

1207 Howard Ave.(in Rear)

Interviewed 3/2/39

Submitted 3/6/39

"I was born in good old Mississippi. It was in Summit but I lived in McComb City too. It was an adjoining town."

"My Father and my Mother and my Grandparents too belonged to Mr. Brumfield. He was a rich man and after the surrender he opened a big store."

"I don't know exactly how old I am but I was born during slavery times and was raised by the Brumby family. And they sure was fine people and everybody loved them.

"I went to school and I am educated and now I can read the papers and keep up with the times. I get \$12.00 a month from the Government and that pays my rent which is \$5.00 and I subscribe to the Times-Picayune by the month and that's \$1.10 and the rest I use for eating and other expenses"-

"I was married but my husband is dead. I never had any children."

"I came to New Orleans and worked in the family of Mr. Fitzwilliam. He married the daughter of Mr. T.P. Leathers. Mr. Fitzwilliam used to print letter-heads and invitations and notices and things like that."

"Well, Mrs. Fitzwilliam was a strict Catholic, and she told me I ought to join that church. I was a Baptist and didn't know a thing about it. I had never ever been in a Catholic Church - But she said she would instruct me, and I liked her so much I consented to her wish."

“So I prayed for a vision and it came to me like this:”

“I was coming from St. Rochs Church where I had been praying. I was in a Magazine St. car all alone except some white folks who were in the front. And I was praying. Suddenly I heard singing in my ears and it sounded like ‘There’s no friend like the Child Jesus and He’s in the Catholic Church, and you should be a Catholic.’ And then the Blessed Virgin surrounded by Angels on both sides appeared and She spoke to me and told me to get off the car at St. Mary’s Church. I had never been there but I did as She said and then She showed me a yellow candle and told me to buy one – and I paid five cents for it – and I prayed and went back and set down in a seat and I had another vision: ‘a white boy with a big St. Bernard dog – appeared and he had a loaf of bread in his hand and he knelt and prayed. – “

“And I was coming out and I told a lady about my vision and she told me to get a candle and have “Priest bless et and to pray to the Blessed Virgin and my prayers would be granted.”

“And I did and my prayers were granted”.

“An’ I have had several visions since then. Once I saw Jesus and He was riding a white hourse. I was scared and fell on my knees and He said: ‘Be not afraid. You have kep’ my commandments and I will carry you through.”

Here a visitor intercepted the portrayal. She called herself a dyed – in-the-wool Baptist”. Immediately the subject of religion was taken up.

“You ain’ no pure Cathlic, for you belong to the Missionary Baptis’ Society and you go to the Church sometimes. You jus’ call yo’sef Cath’lic but yo’ ain’ no true, pure Cath’lic even ef yo’ do go in that confessional box and kiss the Pries’ diamon’ ring.”

“I have never kissed any body’s ring – I don’t have to. I just kiss my Jesus feet by being humble like.”

Here the argument, which was becoming heated, was interrupted and turned to lighter subjects.

Isn’t is the most unsatisfactory thing in the world to discuss creeds?

George Eastman

Eva Reed (Negro)
 308 Monroe Street (Aged 76)
 McDonoghville
 Flossie McElwee 5/6/40 # 18

Religion

"I don't 'member nothing about the wars—only the late ones. I was borned in La Fourche parish in 1863, that now makes me, 76 years old.

"When I wuz a young 'omen, I worked in the fields with my father and mother. Her name wuz Letia Eliss. My pa's name wuz Perry. There wuz five sisters and six brothers, we farmed, as sharecroppers.

"Well I can't remember much. I did not marry when I wuz young and foolish, like some of the 'omens. It wuz in 1892, dat I married. I didn't just take up with a man. We had marriage certisicate, got married by the pastor of our church. I was raised up ruff in the 'tater, corn and rice patches, helping to feed the younger chillums.

"I never worked around the white folks, until I moved here in McDonoghville, that is house work. It was allus outside work I done, till I come here. I started washing, scrubbing, ironing and cooking—I got pretty good reasenable price, some give me \$5.00 a wk—some places, \$3.50. They were allus pleased with my work. Would give me their pots and pans to bring home with me, sometimes chicken and all kinds of good grub.

"I worked for the big dogs over on St. Charles Street. They tried me every kind of way to see if I wuz honest. They would even put money in shoes and den tel me to dust them, they just done that to see if I would take their money.

"My Ma use to tell me never to take anything. If I see'd something I wanted to axed for it, she would always say, 'You got a mouth and to axe for what you want.'

"I never did do anything to have the law after me. I thank God for that! You see, I's old and one-legged now, and am trying to spend the balance of my days serving my master, know Jesus.

I don't remember but a few names of the white folks I worked for. I had my leg taken off with dibeatus, and since then I have lost about all my 'memberance, but I keeps my own house and does my cooking on theses crutches.

"I shore did suffer with this leg. I stayed in the horsepital for three long months. I wuz so sick when they taken me over there, I did not know anything about it. My leg was done off, and there wuz three doctors, and two nuns over me, wuz the first thing I knew. They taken some more off a month after that.

"When dey comes after me that time I knowed it. I wuz scared to death, when they took me in that room with all them knives hanging from the wall. I did not know what they were guine do, I said, 'My Jesus are they gonna take off dis only leg I got left?'

"But did Man you call Jesus was over me, and He said, 'Little one, don't be afraid, I'se with you'. Den the nurses puts me to sleep, but I am thanking God today I am still here looking at this sinful world.

"The last white 'omen I worked for was Miss Cushing (Cushman), I cooked for her seven long years. She had a boarding-house for the railroad men. Me and her wuz always big dubs, but she is done daid now, and, you knows, her children still come to see me yet. They allus been nice to me. They still like 'Old Reese', that is what they all call me.

"When dem boys use to come in I would be jest fixing to go home and I had to build coffee for them and den have all them cups to wash again, but, I was allus good to them, that is why they like me yet.

"I had 'legin so long, I don't 'member just when I got it. But, I do know, I went down in the valley in the woods and me and God had it all to our self.

"I prayed and prayed and den the Lawd heard me, but, you know, I see'd a vision. The Lawd told me He could not set me free, He had a task for me. I said, 'Lawd, what is it?' He said, 'Reece, there a big field of gold 'taters for you to pick up.' I said, 'all right Lawd.' I picked all of dem 'taters up, den He 'peared again. I told Him I had the 'taters picked. He said 'did you get the one that rolled in the well?' I said, 'No Lawd, I couldn't reach it.' Dat's the main 'tater, so I went about my task to get the 'tater out of the well. When I got down in that well after dat 'tater, I heard moaning and groaning. I said, 'My Jesus!' I peeped around and saw dat wuz Hell. The people were being creeshed and mashed to deth, but I grabbed the 'tater and den I saw the blue sky in Heaven. I've been walking with my Jesus ever since.

"You see I can't go to church, but my pastor is coming tonight to give us the Sacred Passover. We guine take the Lawd's broken body and shed blood tonight. I got that good old Batist 'legin.

"I would not have no other kind, all these people you see says they got 'legion ain't got it, but, you know, the Lawd said not to judge. I would not take nothing for my 'legion, but I liked to lost it last week. I was about to commit a big sin, but I anchored and rung up Jesus.

"You know, a big young man come by. I was sitting down papering my cabinet. He came by and said things to me I never is heard before. Me a old cripple. He was looking me straight in the eyes.

"He must having been smoking them cigarettes. He come back the next day and made 'pollygise.

"All the white folks are good to me.

"You know, Miss, I like Dr. Warts' Songs. We allus have to get up and sing a song, and tell the pastor our 'termination, you know little short songs like this.

'Jesus Christ I longed to see,
 I wander where is He
 Go down and search amongst the flock
 Perhaps you will find Him there.
 Laws, if I find Him how, I know Him
 from any other man
 He wore salvation on His brow, and wounded
 side.'

When I start dis in church, the sisters catches it and carry it on. Den I gets up and tells my 'termination

"Now tonight, when the pastor comes to my home, he will bless the bread and wine. Just like they did at the Lawd's Supper.

We eat it with clean hands and clean hearts, and whoever eats and drinks of this Cup unworthy, you eats damnation, when not deserving the Lord. Then the pastor preaches.

'I got 'legin

Oh I got 'legin

It's all in my sole (soul)

Oh it makes me happy

Oh it makes me happy

Lawd it's all in my sole

Oh I'm dertimined

Oh I'm dertimined

It's all in my sole.'"

Henry Reed (Negro)

304 Monroe Street

Flossie McElwee

McDonoghville, La. # 11 a

Ex-Slave Story

"I was borned in 1853, Saint Landry Parish, Opelousas. My maw's name was Margaret, Paw's name Lewis Rud. He got kilt during the war. We belonged to Governor Mouton.

"I had two brothers. Nat was the oldest, I wuz the second child. My third brother had my father's name Lewis.

"After the sojers taken my pa to war, and we wuz sat free, my maw brung us to Morgan City. I never is seen my father any more. He died while in the service.

"I was a house servant and yard boy. Waited on the Marse and Missus. My Missus christen me in Saint Landry parish, Yes Mam, she allus fed me when I was hungry, we had milk, 'taters, possums. Wild duck and all kinds of good grub. In dem days you did not have to pay to hunt them.

Us got our vegetables out of the Marse's garden, you see, us had worked and made dem.

"Dey give the older people shoes us, yonger folks went bare feeted.

Dey use to make uses clothes, we allus had good clothes 'cause our Marse was the Governor.

"He had a big fine house. I think there was five in the family as well as I 'member. Oh Yes! it was a large cotton plantation! They never did learn me to read and write.

The white folks and Negro all went to the same church, we allus had holidays off. I was the yard boy and they did not allow me to go out. I never did 'member playing anything but marble. When we got sick, dey allus had the family doctor with us.

"When the niggers wanted to have a little fun, dey would go to the back of the field and shoot craps. No indeed, dey did not have any money! They allus got under a big magnolia tree, but the old morse caught up with 'em--he had a spy glass. My maw saw it one day while she was making the beds. You see he would go up stairs, and look out de window, and when dem niggers comes in, he would give them all a good lashing. So my maw posted them and dey soon stopped all that foolishness.

" Was raised up with Creoles until 1865. When I got with the real American, I learned how to talk. You see, I was a Catholic then, but am a converted man now. I belong to the Baptist church. I had a good maw, she was the cause of me being converted. It is the faith you has got in the Lord dat gets you through. this world.

"After being reborned again I believed in the Heavenly Father. What makes it bad today, people don't believe in the hereafter, you see God completed the world before he stopped.

You know we got some where to spend eternity, it is a Heaven and Hell.

I don't believe in lying, stealing--God ain't got no room for them.

"Oh yes, I'se a preacher, talk about when I was converted, De Lawd called me. There was no bigger sinner no where than me. I went around cussing all time. So the people got to telling me what a good Lawd we had, how good you felt, when you got 'legion, so I said I wanted some of it too. So I found out you had to seek for life and salvation. De preacher axed me if I wanted 'legion. I told him 'Yes'. So I went down in

the woods and got down on my knees. I axed the Lawd of there was such a think ax a God, but He did not seem to hear me, so I just kept on praying, got to where I could not eat or sleep, finally I see'd the sp'rit, and I'se had 'legion every since. Oh Yes! I preached to thousand of people at the Industrial Canal during the World War, stood in mud knee deep. All I know comes from God, for I can't read nor write, when I was converted people were scared of me. You know there was lots of 'omens left their chellums, when the sojers come, I remember when some was throwed in the canal. I thank God my maw never left me. I was 40 yrs. old, when I married. The Welfare is helping us now. We should thank God for that!

"Well dis is my favorite song:

Glory, Glory Hallelujah

When I lay my burdens down

When I lay my burdens down

No more Monday, No more Tuesday

Glory Glory Hallelujah, Howdy Jesus Howdy

No more sorrows, No more weeping when

I lay my burdens down."

Posey

Hennie Ross (Negro),

914 N. Robertson,

2/16/39

Submitted 2/17/39

Hennie would have attracted attention anywhere. She was just one of those ante-bellum aunties that one seldom sees nowadays. Attired in a stiffly-starched calico dress, an amply made gingham apron and a bandana handkerchief, she was wending her way in the big bank building to the elevator where she was going to pay her buryin' insurance of 15¢ a week. A grandson of about 14 years accompanied her. But we captured her and before she realized what it all meant she found herself in the office of the "big-boss man" who so heartily approved our capture that he offered space for the interview.

Poor Hennie! She was bewildered. What did it all mean? What did it matter about herself and who cared? But she was obliging and this is her story:

"My ma was named Rachel Ross and my pa was named David Ross and my name is Hennie. I was born a slave, 'cause my people were slaves. An' I was born January 7, an' I'm 87 years old. It was on a plantation an' it belonged to Mars' David Urquhart. An' after surrender, I use to cut cane in the fiel' an' I was converted. The Lord appeared to me in a vision an' said: 'Go, in My name an' tell the world that I have sont you to tell the people to be converted from their sins an' sin no more.' An' He took my feet outen the miry clay an' I told everybody an' I shouted. An' the sperit had on flowin' garments, all trailin' 'round Him an' He talked in a human voice. An' He say: 'You will be happy

in Heaven.' An' when I come outen the water, I shouted an' sung: 'On Jordan's stormy banks I stan'!' I'm happy in my religion an' sometimes I have a hard time gettin' along for my daughter died an' lef' me three children to raise. I try to encourage everyone to be good.

"I don't go to no movies, but I go to church on Wednesday and Sunday.

"I had 6 children but only one is livin' – a daughter.

"An' that's all I know."

With a low curtsy to the "big boss man," who tendered her several pieces of coin, she said: "I don't say thankee sir, I say thankee Mars'. We niggers didn't say 'Sir' when I was comin' on, we always said 'Mars' an' 'Missis'."

McElwee

6/4/40

Hayette Smith

House 100

Back Highway

"Ise been right here in Jefferson (parish) for forty years. I don' know how ole I is. I was to young to 'member slavery days, I knows my father was in de Civil War for he used to show us how dey would have to March an' do.

"When I was young, us lived on a cane farm. Dare was eleven of us in de family; don' know where none of my people is at.

"When I was very young I had a baby by a man I was in love with.

It weren't a full-developed chile. I noticed my ma she jes' keep on watchin' me. So one day she say, "You little, black bitch, what is wrong with you?" So I tol' her an' she almost beat me to death. So when I had dat chile it was in de ole toilet hole. I beg my sister to help me cover it up and not tell ma. Den after dat I lef' home an' come to New Orleans an' went to work washin' and ironin' for de white folks.

"Den I lived with a nigger about ten years, and jes' as soon as us tooken an' got married one of my bes' friends taken him away from me. He was no good, nohow.

"I worked for some rich folks for a long time. Dey was allus good to me – would give me the left-over grub to brung home with me.

"So, I had allus wanted to work in a Laundry, so after de man I married lef' me, I got in with a Chinaman dat was runnin' a little laundry. I went to work for him. I have

been livin' here with him for thirty years. His back in dare, sick. Ise done got too ole to work and he has, too. But if he dies firs' I will not have anything to worry about for I sho is got dat little Chinaman heavy insured.

"Sometimes us has somethin' to eat, sometimes us don'; all of our clothes is worn and torn – no good beds to sleep on, either. But you know we got a good God, He will allus take care of us if we jes' do right.

"I takes in a few little wash now. It takes us both all day to finish. De woman dat taken my husband away from me, she went crazy and jumped in de river. All de niggers said I done somethin' to her, but God knows, I didn't.

"I don't believe in Voodoo."

"Me and de boss never do have no trouble, we never disagree. He need to go to de hospital and have his head operated on, but he is afraid. I won' tell him to go 'cause he might die, den de people would say I was de cause.

"Ise had 'ligion for a long long time. Oh yes! I see de spirits walkin' around all de time right out dare by dat pole. I can see a man standin' – Some times he walks around de house; a policeman shot him out dare. I was born with a coil (veil) on my face, if ma had not torn it guess I could see lots more things dan whut I do. You know dey is very valuable. But way back in dem days people didn't know like dey do now. I knows iffen my ma had of kep' it I would have got plenty of money. But just as sho as de worl', effen dis Chinaman dies firs' I won' have to worry no more."

Flossie McElwee

Silas Spotfore (Colored)

1804 Franklin St.

McDonoghville, La.

#11a

Ex-Slave

I wuz born in Mississippi, at Fort Adams, de yr. of 1855. I's been here 40 yrs. My master name wuz Johnson de ole madam name Miss Betsy Johnson. He owned a big plantation--he had a heap of slaves. Us raised cotton, corn, 'taters--de most work I ever done wuz to tend the hogs, sheeps, shuck corn, and things around the yard. We never did have very much to eat. It wuz a big family of us. I think dare is 11 chillums. I don't know wherenone of them are at, if dey is living are dead.

Oh yes, we had a certain time to go to bed and to get up. Before I wuz big enough to do anything, dare wuz a old nigger 'omen who was not able to do anything else, and she minded all the chaps while the older folks worked.

Dey ring the bell fo' day dot meant for everybody to be up. We had 'lasses and hoe cake for breakfast, sometimes meat.

We allus cooked on de fireplace in black pots and skilets.

The carpenter made de beds we slept on, de mattresses were made out of corn shucks--looked something like bunks.

Never did know what it wuz to wear pants. I wore long shirts until I was all most grown. We only had two of them a year, and dey had to last.

I know for Christmas de ole messus allus give us a biscuit and a apple. We tho't dat wuz something.

De older people wore red russet shoes dey were made on de plantation. (For Sunday) I use to have mocassins to wear in winter time. I know I've been out minding the sheep and hogs, it would be so cold until the ice cycle would be breaking the trees down, and I would have to be out in de weather.

Oh! when dey went to get married, dey would not asks de pa and ma, dey would ask de 'Boss and de ole missus about it. If dey said it wuz all right, dey read some kind of writing on a paper and dey wuz married. Den, if one of de other wuz daid dey got another husband. I never member seeing any slaves sold.

I saw de Yankee soldiers, dey come in to my misses' houses, sat de bed on fire. Gess de house would have fumed up if my missus had not come threw and put de fire out behind dem.

I knows dey went to de dairy, drink all de milk dey could hold, den poured out what wuz left. I never will forget how skeared I felt. Dey took all de mules dat could be any use to dem--that when de battle at Port Hudson wuz fought.

My missus and boss both were cruel for I know how dey had dem poor nigger beat. I seed my grandma whipped until she had scars on her dat wuz dare when I got grown. My other grandma got branded with hot irons.

When dey would be in de fields, the driver wuz allus over dem with a bull whip and he sho' didn't mind using it.

My ma allus go up, cooked breakfast, fixed de dinner, and carried it to de fields in tin buckets. One of de old driver name was Noel Cristin--he sho' was cruel. Dey didn't work on Sunday. If they went of de plantation, they was checked out and on Sunday night, oversees would come through the quarter and see if dey wuz all in. If dare was any

missing, it was just too bad, dey was whipped with bull whips—from 150 to 250 licks at one time. Den had to go to work. I tells the young nigger now about, it, dey don't seem to believe me. Never knew what school was, no church or nothing like that. Once in a while, dey would have a little singing in the quatus, but you musn't call on the Law'd too much. I sho' is glad all dem days are over! Some of the 'omens sewed, some worked around the field, some at the house. My pa was a bootblack, he made de moccasins out of cowhide. When they got wet, dey was so hard you could hardly get your foot in dum. Oh, about de day we got sat free, us did not know what to do. Our missus said we could stay but my pa didn't want to. We hung around for a few days, den pa went to work for something to eat. You see, we didn't have a thing left empty handed with nothing and, besides people was ignorant. Dey didn't have no sense like dey do now, I know.

I knows my ma worked plenty weeks just for a peck of meal, and four lbs. of meat. Peoples would not do that now. Dis younger generation better be thankful dey got good government now and a good President.

Gracie Stafford, Negro
4613 Camp St.

Posey,

10/23/40 - 11A

Ex-slave.

In the next house but one from Mary Harris, lives another ex-slave Gracie Stafford. Their experiences in life are similar and they are devoted and congenial friends.

Our subject, as she tells it was born on the Myrtle Grove Plantation, in St. James Parish, La. It was owned by White and Trufant and they raised sugarcane to make sugar.

"And then they parted an' my pa an' ma took us chil'ren to Gran' Prairie an' that's whar I growed up.

"The ol' folks used to say that the master was hard on slaves and had 'em whipped until the blood sometimes stained the groun'.

"My parents say they ne ver was treated cruel like that 'cause they always wuz good, but my ont (aunt) said she was put in stocks 'cause she wouldn't give in.

"When we was little we never heard much talk 'cause chil'ren were never 'lowed to stay 'roun' grown folks when they wuz talkin', so I never heered much.

"They was a big pas'ly (parsley) bed on the place - and once I went to it an' dug up a whole lot an' laid down with my ear to the groun' a-lisnin' for a baby's cry. I staid there a long time but I never did hear anythin', an' then when they wanted to fin' out who did all that destruction, I up and owned that I wanted to fin' a baby. They knowed that they had tol' me that war whar babies come from an' so they didn't whip me, but jes' laffed an' planted it all back again.

"I wuz raised right an' never did 'sociate with common niggers, like what they call the hoodoo kin'. In fac' I never heered of such things until I came to the city an'

then I didn't until my husban' got pizened. A woman did it 'cause she wuz j'alous of me. He all swolled up and got to he-coughin an' I sont to the drug-store fo r some medicin'. When it didn't cure him arter eight days the drug-store man said nothin' would do him any good – that he wuz pizened by hoodoo.

“Now I believe in it, an' I never eat anythin' outside my house, not even in my own church.”

“Your own church?”

“Yes'm these people are ev'rywhere, and Friday nights there is a supper, a fish fry to raise funds, but I never eat anythin'. I holp 'em to serve, ef they want me, but they never ask me.

“My ma useter say:

“‘Take keer, Marster’ is better than ‘O Lord, Marster.’”

“Lor' a mussy, Lor' a mussy!” cried Gracie. Looking across the street we saw the object of her supplication. A young negro woman was walking across the street in an abbreviated garb of short shorts.

“What are we a comin' to – when wimmen dress lik' that? It's the white folks set the style, an' niggers follow but more extreme.

“When I wus a growin' up, we wus taught jus' lak' white folks to keep our knees together an' our dresses down an' never to cross our legs. An' we wore long dresses too, but folks had raisin's then, an' the way they are carryin' on now, you don' know what will happen.

“They don't talk niggerism any mo' either, an' they ain't got Mother Wit. They don' play lik' we did. We uster sing:

'Shoo chicken, shoo,

You feed my chicken?

Yes, mam!

You brown my biscuit?

Yes, mam!'

"Then the leader would raise his hands an' say:

'Shoo chickens, shoo' –

And every one would run jus' lak chickens do when they are bein' shooed. But I .
never hear things lak that now.

"Chil'ren mus' have money to go to picture shows. I never went to one in my life,
'cause they're ongodly. I'm told some churches have them with scenes from the Bible an'
that's all right. My church aint got money enough for that.

"No'm, I ain' never been real sick in my life. If I look lak' I goin' to have
headache I take Indian hand leaf an' steep it in vinegar, an' bin' it on my head. St.
Jacob's quinine grows mos' ev'rywhere an' that's good for fevers.

"You see I was good to my parents an' minded them an' God's fulfilling His
Comman'ment: "That thy days may be long in the lan'." That's the only Comman'ment
that was given with a promis'. You know it says 'Honor thy Father an' thy Mother – that
thy days may be long in the lan' which the Lord thy God giveth thee.'"

Typed by – Rose St. Angelo

James St. Ann,

Posey,

Seabrook, Peoples Ave.

11/6/40

Choctaw Indians.

"I belonged to the Choctaw tribe of Indians – but I was so little I don't remember much about them. over there," pointing in the direction of Lake Pontchartrain "were lots of shells, heaps and heaps of them. The Indians got from the water clams and oysters and opened them and threw the shells high like mountain and when the Government wanted the shells for the roads they found these people buried there. Their bodies were cemented like and had to be chiseled out. O, but there were bones, skulls, tomahaws, arrows, everything from the life they lived.

"They didn't plant gardens, but killed deer and bear and had oysters, clams and fish which they cooked over a fire made out of a hole in the ground and burned wood. They tied up a deer and it cooked like that. Sometimes, they laid it over the coals, and they didn't have matches either. They took a piece of glass-fiint and held it up to the sun.

"They never stole and treated everybody right, but if you stole from then, they'd kill you with an arrow.

"When I came out here, as a squatter in 1867, it was a swamp full of snakes and alligators. We killed the alligators and sold their hides and ate their tails. Snakes never troubled me.

"Yes, I've heard that a coachwhip would kill you by getting on your shoulder and wrapping his tail round your neck and sucking your blood, but they never harmed me.

"If you are good to an Indian, he will die for you and can locate you if you try to hide from people. He's smart but don't troat him bad, he'll never forget – nor forgive.

“We raised our own tobacco. I don’t know where they got the start, but they knew how to prepare it, and they made pipes out of cypress and ash.

“Indians were happy, but they had no money – they made hats and baskets, out of latanier and swapped ‘em for food.”

Our old friend is nearing his end, as you bid him good-bye, he tells you to come again “soon” or he’ll be “covered up in the ground.”

“In old times out here in Plaquemine Parish, there was no C. H. and they used the richest man’s house to hold Court in. When a big crime had been committed all the farmers came and had a jury among them to see if they would hand the criminal or not. If they concluded ‘yes’, they went to a tall and strong tree, and put a rope around the accused’s neck until they choaked him to death.”

Typed by – Rose St. Angelo August

Maud Wallace

Robert St. Ann (Negro)

3521 Gibson Street

Slave Days

Marie Leveau

"Cousin Bob," as he is known to everyone in Paillet Lane, was seated in the rocking chair on the front porch. He is a black Negro with white hair, looks strong and healthy, although he is quite old.

"I was borned August tenth, eighteen forty-four, in Plaquimine, called Gueno Settlement. It was a fine place, ten acres front on de river, back to de swamp.

"Dey was jes' five slaves; it was a rice farm an' orange grove; course dey raised everything we eat too; dey was jes' de two families, each had dey own single house; dere was no school an' de church must a been forty or fifty miles away.

"We had a good master, he never beat any o' us, he say 'my slave's human, like me.'

De chillun use to play an' yo' do de work yo' ole enough to do.

"De rice fields sho' is pretty, first dey is all green, den all white blossoms, den when dey fall it starts bendin' over an' it gets yaller; if it gets too tall a strong wind blow it down. In de ole slave days, we use to cut wid sickle an' cradle, den tie it in bundles to dry, dat was de best rice too, we'd cut like Thursday an' hull it Saturday. Yo' works den on a plantation, dat's work dat has to be done right now! We starts cuttin' first o' August. To thrash it, we used to put a post in de ground about four feet deep, den we'd pack it an' stomp it 'cause it had to be hard ground. Den we'd hitch de horses two a- bref.

(breast) to de post; we puts de rice on de ground, de horses keep circlin' as fast as dey can. Yo' put a fast one on de outside an' de ole one next do de post, an' yo' keeps turnin' de rice an' de horse keeps trompin' on it; den yo' cleans all de dirt out, keep fanin' de rice till its clean, den yo' puts it in bags, we gets fifty to seventy-five barrels in a day. Yo' up befo' daybreak an' yo' work hard wid de crop till yo' gits through, 'cause de crop won't wait on yo'.

"Some o' de pore black people though dey had it hard. Yo'll excuse me fo' tellin' yo' dis, but I seen 'em take a woman what was prejudice (pregnant) an' dey make a hole big enough fo' her to put her stomache in, dey raise her clothes, an' beat her wid a strap till de blood come, den dey pour brine over her.

"I remembers once a youngster run away an' dey put de blood hounds be- hind him, when dey caught him, dey put a horse to him an' drag him through de woods, drag him to de house, de bref, (breath) plum out o' him. Dey dig a hole an' throw him in it an' after, yo' hear dat boy grown under de ground, he ain't daid. (dead)

"Ole man Grun (?) he put a woman's eye out wid a fork, jes' stuck it in her eye like dat an' pull it. An' he takes men hitch dem to de plows, make dem pull like de mules.

"If de patrols catch a slave in de road, he beat them, 'cause he ain't supposed to be out at night.

"Dere was Thompson West, what never worked a day from de time dey took him from de trades' yard, dat's de place in de city where dey sell de slaves an' de people come from de country, buy dem an' take dem back. Thompson, he hide in de woods, I dunno how he live, but when de Yankees come, he walk out an' say 'I'm a free man.'

"De Yankees start to bombard through Jackson an' Ft. St. Phillip: De Confederates was lookin' fo' dem to come up de river an' dey put up chains, but back o' de place dey call de Jump (?) dey started throwin' bullets like rain, at night it looked like hundreds o' fire crackers all lit up, dey started at Thursday evein' an' Friday at five a. m. de fort was empty, an' here come de Yankees, some blacks wid 'em, right on through.

"Dey knew the good masters an' never hurt dem, but ask me what dey treat those mean ones?

"There was one man what called all his slaves to him an' asked the Yankees not to hurt dem, but de slaves say dey not goin' nowhere, dey gonna stay right there with their master an' de Yankees couldn't make dem move.

Then ole man Poilet, he had a man named Jim. His overseer whip him in de field, an' Jim take his cane knife an' cut him. That night the men come an' say 'Jim gotta be whipped by de law.' But ole man Poilet he say 'anybody whip dis ole nigger's—excuse me de way I tell it, but he slap right here, where yo' set--it's gonna be me. I bought him an' paid fo' him an' I don' believe in beatin'. An' Jim, stand right there by his master an' nobody touch him.

"Some had it hard an' some had it easy. I worked on different farms about sixteen years, till de rice got so low.

"When I come here, I work in de sugar refinery, in de sewerage, an' on de water front. I work till nineteen thirty-one, den dey say I'm too ole an' dey won't let me work, but dey won't give me nothin' to do. The society let me sleep here an' my friends, they feed me when they can.

"I work a long time on a boat called the F. and J. fo' Captain Freddy Vanderbrooke. He use to carry freight an' oysters. We carry nine hundred sacks oysters. In the storm, September nineteen fifteen we were out, an' I never forget, that boat sink in shallow water an' we all go upstairs, all at once de Captain Freddy, he call 'look out, cabin goin' off!' an' it did, into de water we went, we fit (fight) the water an' fit it an' when we was picked up, we had gone seventeen miles. They bring us back by train; the news had got out we drowned, but Captain Freddy, he tell dem 'the boat, he drown but no lives.'

"I come on hom an' my wife an' chillun cry; she say, 'Papa, how yo' make out?' but I cain't tell her.

"Then Captain Freddy make up his mind to get the Hull; a lot o' his white friends, an' he take me, go with him, but she was thirteen hundred feet out in de prairie--no water, hard dry land, so he comes, gets a cable, we pull, but it breaks. His friends, one by one leave him, an' jes' me an' Captain Freddy left. I spliced that cable an' we made a pull, she made her nose to the water. I tole him if I get that wench out, I'm gonna get drunk. Sho' enough when we got her out, he get whiskey an' beer. Mamma had food, so I set down to it.

"After the boat rebuilt, Captain Freddy he say 'de law on dis boat is, yo' vacant place shall never be filled,' an' I stay there till Captain Freddy died. When I got too old he made me watchman, he could trust me, I never touch his money or whiskey, but I sure did like his candy.

"Oh yes, Marie Leveau, I never see her, but I hear people say terrible things about her. When she die she tell them to look under a doorstep an' they find a little baby she

kilt. (killed) Then dey put two horses to her hearse, an' dey pull but dey cain't move her, dey put two more horses an dey pull an' dey strain, dey rared upon their hind laigs (legs) but dey couldn't move her.

"I don't know how dey got that woman buried, but I know one thing-- I sure hope they did.

Michinard - August 1940

(43)

Robert St. Anne.

Coz. Bob, as he is known, was born on August 10, 1848, he was a slave of Mr. Guillot Chartier, in Plaquemines.

"My master was good at times, for he drank hard," he says.

"My Mars had four sons and three daughters, one of them was my god-mother. I was christened in St. Thomas' Catholic Church in Point-a-la Hache, by Father Savilie, who was killed by 18 men who came together, each one in turn stabbed him."

The Church was built on a hill, in the valley was a large settlement of Indians. I asked Bob if he mingled with the Indians. He said,

"No sar, I was too scared of them. When they come to talking their language and begin making their motions I'se was terrified. My ma she used to say:

"Cha pas besoin avoir peur ca c'est du monde comme toi. Meaning: You need not be scared them are peoples like you.

Coz. Bob is very proud to say that he was never arrested in his life.

Bob remembers when the Yankees bombarded Fort St. Philip and Fort Jackson. He says it was on a Thursday and on Friday, about four A. M., the Confederates ran away. Bob says it was a pitiful sight to see the poor Confederate soldiers, as they passed his master's place. They were with-out shirts, without shoes, and bare headed.

Typed-R.St.Angelo

Flossie McElwee
 Carlyle Stewart (?) (Colored)
 622 Columbus Street
 McDonoghville, La. #11 a
 5/3/40

Ex-Slave Story

"My master name wuz Octave De la Houssaye. I wuz borned in 1853, the third day of January, at Jeanerette. I was seven years old but didn't do my master much good when we wuz sat free. My maw brung us here in a flat car, and went to the Touro building, my mother was a seamster.

"When the Yankees came they put her in the fields and she left home after the freedom came. They came on horses (The Calavary on horses you know), and they liked to have scared me to deth with their swords slanking. The boss (My Marse) was good to us, but when we was freed, one of the bosses kicked my ma in the face. I was only seven but I 'member when Mr. Alfred kicked my maw and make a big lump on her face. I worked, carr'ing sugarcane, I could only tote five stalks at a time.

The old slave driver uncle Ned dey axed him where was the Rebs and he pointed and said that way--and the bosses grabbed him and threw him in the river. They were the Rebs, themselves. He shouda stayed in and left his mouf shut, my old God-mother and God-father, we wuz all posted to stay in and be quite, and he was so smart, he went out and they fixed him.

"We had no pleasure at all and when they went to beat us women, they dug a hole and put the women's stom'ch in the hole, when she was pregnant, so they could whip them without having the child hurt, cause the children were worth money.

"After I come here, I worked for Mrs. Julia Behrman, Mr. Stanley's mother. I stayed 9 yrs. I worked for Deckers 20 yrs. and raised their children, and for Mrs. Lohman, I worked 40 yrs. for her. Her sons are all old and grey headed like me.

"Oh Yes! They had straps and a whip and they'd botter not catch you praying to God. When you prayed you had to hide in the woods.

We had grits and cornmeal and sometimes side meat and 'lasses. Not often we had meat, tho, we raised it on the place.

"My mother's name was Jane Geambo and father's surname was Johnson Jean Pierre Geambo, a Guinea Nigger. They brought my grandpa from Afficay. He was an Afficun Nigger. They stole him from there and my mother was born in New Iberia.

"We didn't have no shoes and I wore a cottenade gown made of this blue denim. We didn't know what "draws" wuz. You couldn't say your prayer let 'lone read and write, I knowed my prayers. My mother teached me behind the Marse's back in her old dark house. She made candle with beef tallow. And we didn't suffer from cold when we got in our bed with my maw and her five chellin--then we wuz warm.

When we came here on flat cars and they fed us, the Governor. The Governor did in the warehouse in N.O.

When I married down the coast, dey just take a piece of paper and read the matrimony to us.

But all my papers and my aunt's wedding ring floated off in a truck. When the high waters came, the first high water--we were in three high waters down the coast.

"They christened me in Catholic church at St. Patout. The church is still there and my age too. I had seven chillums. Thank God they never had slaves when dey were brung up!

My step-pa was sold when he wuz 12 yrs. old. He ain't never seed his maw again.

"I was just Catholic and pray in my house at nite. I never got that 'legion that makes you shout and carry on.

#11A

Michinard - July, 1940

Slave Tale

Mr. Reau owned a plantation at Point Baker, in St. Bernard Parish. It seems that he was very cruel to his slaves. It was said that he had hanged several of them in the woods. The narrator of this story worked for Mr. Reau in later years. She assured that several of Mr. Reau's children had protruding eyes, like the eyes of one who is hanged.

Mr. Reau died on Elysian Fields and Marais Street. The servant said he wasn't sick. He died "jest like he done the slaves." One morning he got up, walked to his washstand and suddenly began jumping. His little daughter hearing the thumping on the floor said: "Qui ca ye di bruit la en haute! Vini voir grand'pere a pe sauté la pe touffe!" (What is that noise? Come see grandfather jumping and choking!) The man kept on jumping for twenty-four hours. His tongue came out, his mouth wide open. When the end came, the colored woman, Clorie closed his eyes. At night after that she imagined seeing Mr. Reau's bulging eyes.

It had been his custom to walk with a stick, so his daughter claimed that every night on the stroke of twelve you could hear the knock of his stick all along the side porch. The family thinking the house was haunted moved to another one on Royal and Barracks. His own girls said he had died the way he had lived. "So bad was he that he went to hell!"

[This story told by Clorie Turner, 1467 Sere St. Could not say if it was Rau or Reau not knowing how to read.]

Arguedas.

UNCLE BILL.

Uncle Bill he was , to every one, old and bent having done his share in this world, he rightly deserved the privilege to "Jes sit and res and watch de cane groin".

His little shack by the railroad all patched up with pieces of tin of all sizes and color, was half hidden by a thick growth of sunflowers. A pink Rambler covered the narrow gallery with shade in summer and the glory of delicate pale roses in the spring. Three half starved, miserable looking yellow cayoudles kept watch by sleeping near the door steps, while two mocking birds, imprisoned since early youth, chirped merrily in a hand-made wooden cage.

One could not imagine Uncle Bill sitting with a pipe in his mouth idling his time away, as for years he was a familiar figure in the cane fields, handling "de shovel and de hoe", either following a narrow line made by an endless piece of white cord or else half buried in a deep "gutter" trimming its sides. When he was tired and felt he needed a "blow", he would stick his shovel in the ground, push back his colorless felt hat from his forehead, revealing then some faded elder leaves, or else a moist red bandanna handkerchief, then taking a bite on a black piece of "chaw" he would lift his gaze to the level ground on the endless line that stretched before him that meant work, work and more work. To prove to the world that in the long run it is endurance that counts, he would spit on his rough hands, rub them together, and return to his task singing:

"Oh, de shovel and de hoe, de hoe and de shovel,

OOOOOOOOOOoooooOOOOOOOOOOooooo

When I come down de road, when I come down de road,

OOOOOOOOOOooooooOOOOOOOOOOoooooo

I seen a toad a hoppin, I seen a toad a hoppin

OOOOOOOOOOooooooOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

De shovel and de hoe, Aye...de shovel and de hoe.

Uncle Bill liked to talk about "De time befo de wah, when de Massa and de Missus was revelin wid de high filutin company from de City", but he was always ready to relate his experience "wid dem Union Soldiers".

"When de wah done broke out, and de Massa lef and de Missus she started a-cryin, I jes lef to fetch de Massa back in dis heah place. I nevah tole no one, t'was no concern of no one, no how. De fers time I met dem Union Soldiers, dey caught me right in de middle of de stomich and layed me down stiff on de groun. Well...dey took me in de horspital and dem Union doctors, jes as hard headed as dey can be, kept a-pokin in my stomic, diggin in jes de same mannah dat I used to dig out yonder in dem cane fields. I ax 'em: "What for is you all causin me such misery?" Lookin fo de bullet", dey sez, and I sez to 'em, I sez: "You all better quit pokin me like dat, if its dat bullet you all is searchin for, heah t'is, right heah...in my pocket....An sure enough, chile, as soon as dey find dat dere bullet, dey jes bandage me and lef me alone from dat day on"....

Jerden Waters (aged 80)

Posey

2821 Jackson Ave.

4/24/41

SLAVE TALE

11a

After "freedom"

Dancing

Fiddler songs

Religion

Weather rhyme

-- * --

"Yes'm ,I is that old", this in response to our surprise that he could be so well preserved at the age he gave.

" No, we are not doubting it in the least, for your hair and eyes and wrinkles indicate a good age, but what we marvel at is that you are so well-preserved."

He was threading a needle,not a large one either, without the aid of glasses,

on

preparatory to sewing/buttons. His hearing, walking, etc., were of a much younger man. " I never wore glasses in my life and I was never sick in my life, not even when epidemics were goin' round. Dance ? I could dance right now but I gave up worldliness when I jined the church.

After much persuasion he xxxx finally gave us some old fiddler songs by which he danced:

"Put on the skillet ,never min' the lid,

Mammy's goin' make some short'nin'bread.

Ol' hen cackle, rooster lay the egg,(patting all the

Ol' mule couldn't git saddle on - time)

Two lil' niggers layin' in the bed,

Feet crack open like shortnin' bread.

I'll remember some more for the next time you come. It ain't holy to keep those ol' songs in yo' head, for dancin' is worldly, and worldly is sinful.

" I was born in 1861, the year the war to fight for freedom begun. After we wuz freed, we had to shift for ourself and put our trainin' to use/, so as to live. Some of the ol' marsters were good and would have taken keer of us if they had been able, but the Yankees had ruined everythin' and they wuz po'. We had to use Mother Wit in order to git erlong, but we learned an' if I wusn't so ol' I could git erlong fine.

" Mos' of us knew how to till the land and we raised veg'tables for a livin' an' 'hired out. We had no edicashun, but we observed. We knew when hit wuz goin' to rain an' say:

' When the grass is dry at mornin' light,

Look for rain befo' the night;

But when the dew is on the grass,

The rain will never come to pass - '

that is for a while ."

Typed C.B. Dillon

Michinard - 8/17/40

Mrs. Webb,

11 A (Translation)

St. Philip Street.

"Slavery Time."

The most cruel master in St. John Baptist, during slavery time was a Mr. Valsin Mermillion.

his

One of/cruelties was to place a disobedient slave, standing, in a box, in which there were nails placed in such a manner that the poor creature was unable to move. He was powerless even to chase the flies, or sometimes ants crawling on some parts of his body.

A young slave who had been raised with the children of his master, had been very much spoiled and accustomed to all the good things on the plantation, at the death of his master was put on the block to be sold. Mr. Mermillion, who prided himself in having only handsome slaves, hearing of the fine physique of that young man, decided to have that slave at any price. He thereby bought him. The next day Mr. Mermillion, gave the order to put the young man to the plough. The man not accustomed to such rough work, refused to take the plough. The one giving the order said, "Were I in your place I would try it for you have no idea how mean is your Master." But the young man would not relent and refused to do such hard work. Mr. Mermillion hearing of this, went to the slave and told him, "I give you until to-morrow, if then you still refuse you will dig your grave."

The next day the boy had not yielded. He was then made to dig an immense hole in which they made him stand and bandaging his eyes he was shot, falling in the hole he had dug.

Typed-R.St.Angelo

BY THE NAME OF

(11)

PAP BURNET

Some facts about a ho-do

As told to me by.

Mrs. Equella Wheeler,

439 Religious Street

Age 76 years.

Dis man what I'm gwine tell you about is one of the best kind of two headed
 somewhere in or around Zachary, La. A few years
 person I ever knowed. He was born/before Peace wuz declared an we wuz free, of course
 he wuz born of slave parents, and when da was freed he wuz freed wid dem. And I might
 say dat we wuz all born on the same plantation, and dis plantation wuz owned by a man
 by the name of Mr. Ed Young. Who wuz very good to us at all times.

Now pap even when we wuz commin up wuz very different from de rest of us
 chulen, and always said dat he could see things of de other world and talk to dem jest as
 dat he could talk to us. and he got so dat he could tell us things about our selves dat
 happened at our homes at night when he wuz no whar around. When he wuz about de
 age of twelve yurs, and explained to us dat dis wuz brought to him by a spiret.

Now as time went on day after day dis boy dat I have been speaking about got
 wiser and wiser and grew in the favor of God and man each day of his life.

Now you know at dees times some of de white folks wuz very good to us and
 some of dem wuzn't, but de most of dem wuz, so it happened dat a white man wuz tryin
 to catch a nigger who wuz stealing his chickens, and, whiles tippong around his hen
 house one night he stuck a nail in his foot and liked to get blood pizen, so dere flesh is so

tender and dat ant used to hardship, as we is, and dis very man wuz nice to every body and of de people wuz, against dis nigger fo stealing his chickens and causing him to stick dis nail in his foot and make him sicj da all went to Pap and axed him to do sompen about dis, so he said dat he had seen in de spiret dat dis wuz wrong and to go home and dont worry and dis nigger would stop stealin dis good mans chickens, and any bodies else.

So in a next few days de news was circled about dat Pap had been to his house and shook hands wid him and dat, his right han dat he picked de chickens off de roos wid was as dead as a door nob.

Now de name of dis man spread far and near, and people comed from far and near to get work done, he waited on white as well as colored, and rich as well as poor/. He worked on and en and about de year of 1888 he moved right to Newlans, and money up on top of money. His place was not right up in de city but was in de lower part now known as Palat Land.

I could tell you more of dis stuff but I dont bleve in it and dont think God would be pleased wid me but you kin come again.

* * * *

(Typist: A. W. Phillips)

POSEY

February 27, 1941

VICTORIA WILLIAMS

1810 Lowerline

RELIGION

CRUEL OVERSEERS

DISCRIMINATING SISTERS

GETTING RELIGION

SAM McGEHEE - (LIBERTY, MISS.)

PRAYERS OF SLAVES

SHOUTING

SLAVERY DAYS

SLAVE'S FAITH IN GOD

SONGS - OLD TIME

WATERFALL (HAIRPIECE)

WHIPPING

POSEY

February 27, 1941

VICTORIA WILLIAMS

1810 Lowerline

(Negro)

RELIGION

"I was born in slavery time but I was too little to remember much. We belonged to Marse Sam McGehee in Liberty, Miss.

"I heard my parents say he had a mean overseer who didn't like Pa and was brutal to him, when Marse heard it he turned him off.

"Once when he was whipping him I heard my Pa say, 'Pray Marster oh, oh, oh!' and I was a-crying, everytime he said this, it looked like the licks came a-faster and like they would never stop. He had a trough made and had the victuals put in it, and all had to eat together down the line.

"But God was in the plan just as He said He would be and out of tribulations He brought us out of the dark valley and made us all free, and equal human beings. Now we have the chance, and education is a grand thing, if the Negro can take it without its turning his head.

"You see even when slaves were tortured they never forgot to pray. You know He said: 'He that believeth in me, I shall in no wise cast out' and God never made a promise that He did not keep.

"I got converted when I was young and I've never backslided.

"We useter sing from our hearts and not from books like they do now. La! if they heard us sing like that now they'd think we were crazy.

"I remember when one got religion we'd clap our hands and sing: 'Shout Sister Phreeny, shout, shout sister Phreeny, shout!' and then she sang:

'It'll take more'n two to hol' me!

And even that can't hold me

I'll shout and shout

O! Sis' Phreeny'll shout!

"Then everybody took hands with her in the lead and shouted. O, them was the days!

"And it generally took more than one man to hold a sister when she got converted and maybe she didn't want a certain one to do it, so she would sing:

"I don't want Brer' Jim to hold me. I want Brer' Dick to hold me!"

"In old times women wore waterfalls. They don't do it now and sometimes they'd sing:

'You may tetch my hat

You may tetch my shawl

But don't you tetch my waterfall.'

"This is a great day and I'm glad I lived to be in it. From the darkness into the light I can see the wisdom of it all – we were prepared through trials and tribulations to stand alone, but we should never forget that fiery path our parents trod.

"Lord God of Hosts be with us yet, Lest we forget, lest we forget."

Warner Willis,

Ex-Slave Story

Michinard, 1940

Filed 2/24/41

19

LAMPLIGHTER

Warner Willis born in 1865 on the plantation of Felix Gardere in Iberville parish. At that time, Canal street was a wilderness.* Willis used to light the old street lamps. This was done by climbing up a small ladder. His route included twenty-five lights. Before going up to light the lamps, he would go on the levee and pick iron cotton bands. These were taken off the cotton bales and made into bundles of about twelve, and sold to junk dealers at the rate of two bands for a nickel. The bands were straightened out and re-sold to the cotton farmers.

Willis' father was a slave of the Gardere family. After his father's death, his mother's being very sick, the son, then very young, told his mother, "Ma, don't worry, I'll work for you!"

When the boss was asked to give the boy a job, he answered, " _____, No!" and drove off, but he had not gone one block when he returned and said, "Get that boy ready to work tomorrow!"

The next day the young boy was given a long red cane with which he kept the cattle from the field. Every evening as the last load of canes passed, the boy was picked up and brought home. Willis did this for years, then he came down to New Orleans to live.

" Big foot"Willis was so strong that if a dray became dogged and the team was unable to move it, Willis would pick it up"right out of the hole."

Typed by C.B.Dillon

Posey

(11A)

SHACK WILSON

(Negro)

29261/2 First St.

Ex-Slave

"We're marching home day by day, marching to the beautiful lan' of God."

In response to our request for some 'way-back-yonder' songs, this old Negro who says he is trying to forget all those horrible days of slavery, sings these lines which were used in the field while coaxing the mules along and adds:

"Way back yonder I was born in Clinton, La., and belonged to Marse B. Robbins. Lor' I remember when I had a pair of pants made out of Lowell cloth and I felt so dressed up and proud. That was after slavery and we didn't have much money.

"Lowell cloth? Why, it's a heavy cotton stuff and it's white and it's most everlasting. My Pa was a slave ox-driver and once when he went to head off some oxen he shagged his leg and he died of it.

"They used to whip slaves if they didn't pick enough cotton. They put four pegs in the ground and tied one leg to one peg, the other to the other and the arms were tied together. They were stripped of all clothing and whipped with a raw hide.

"Do pray, Marster, Do pray, Marster, Hi-yi-Hi-yi" until their cries almost died away. They they'd put to picking cotton with all that suffering, and, if a slave run away,

they'd put a pack of 'nigger dogs' on their trail. Some people call them bloodhounds, but they uster to be called nigger dogs.

"Niggers always loved to sing, but it wasn't in slavery that we did much of it. One thing was we didn't have a mind on it, even if we had been 'lowed, an' it night when we went to our house, we was too tired an' sleepy, but after freedom, Lor' how we did sing! We sang when we went to Church and when we were at work and all the time it seems like. We worked 'taters, sweet 'taters," an' then he broke out with:

"Grasshopper settin' on sweet 'tater vine, Ole turkey-gobbler come struttin up behin, Snipped Grasshopper off sweet 'tater vine."

"We were called lazy an' it seem lak' we never could get enuf sleep. So lots o' times 'specially in warm weather, we jes' natchuly dozed, an' then we'd hear mebbe, that ol' fiel' lark a singin':

"Laziness 'll kill you,

Laziness 'll kill you."

"'Twas all right for that ol' bird to repriman' us if he hadn't been havin' the easiest life of anythin'.

"Birds got lots of sense – more'n some people. That ol' 'Shiverin' owl, sometimes called the death-bird, knows just when somebody will die and where.

"We uster sing:

'Of all the varmints in the woods,

I'd rather be a coon,

An' carry my tail curled up my bac',

An' get up in the mornin' soon!"

"It's gettin' pretty close to the time when all the cows fall on their knees in reverence to God who was born at 12 o'clock on Christmas. At this time they all do it, jus' watch 'em an' see.

"An' they say chickens crow more near Christmas than any other time, it's because they're rejoicin'.

"If you want to know what the weather is going to be, watch the moon. If both the horns or points are upwards, the weather will be dry, if sideways or down- it will be rainy. If it's round-like it could hold water the weather will be dry but if it's downward, like it can't hold water, look out for rain or wet weather.

"In old times we took May pops, they grow on a vine an' are a pretty red, they are nice and juicy to suck and when they yellow an' dry, we put 'em in our pockets for scent when we went to Church an' parties.

"Simmon (persimmon) bread we made an' it was good an' 'tater bread, too."

At this moment our narrators daughter came in and he asked her to tell how her mother used to make it. This is her recipe:

"It should be known as Potato pome (pone), and the way to make it is to grate the sweet potatoes as you would cocoanut. It's going to be good, so make enough, say a half dozen large potatoes, more if smaller, six eggs, if you can spare them; about two cups sugar, cup butter, season with cinnamon and nutmeg, if you like it. Beat as you would cake, and add enough cream, milk will do, to make a mixture, soft enough to bake. Grate some dried orange peel and cook in slow oven till it begins to leave the pan, and have a sorter crust on top. It's better cold than hot, but it's good any way."

Corn "pome" 'simmon bread, 'tater "pome" epicureans take notice!

"I never went in for conjure. It's the work of Ol' Satan. Way back yonder, some of these people took cat an' possum tails an' tied 'em with a string of red flannel an' carried them in their pockets to do somethin' – I forgotten what.

"My ma used to sing:

'Got my 'ligion in hard time,
 Jesus giv' her a legal ring,
 O, may we go, I'm on the way,
 Stay, Marster, stay an' tell my Jesus.
 I'm on the way.'

"In the old times, we were our own druggis' an' doctor an' cured ourself with roots an' herbs an' home-made remedies.

"Collard leaves we put on head for misery, an' again we made a poultice with them for biles. Once, when I had a carbuckle on the back of my neck an' they said I was goin' to die, I cured myself with it.

"When we wanted to stop bleedin' we got a han'ful of soot outer the chim'ly an' it would quit. Cobwebs did the same thin'. If you got a sprain take clay mix it with vinegar, bind it on the wrench an' it goes out.

"When chil'ren had worms their mammy made a tea of Jerusaley weed an' it was a wormifuge that cured 'em.

"When palate was down all you had to do was to lif' up a tuff of hair from top of head an' tie it with a cord an' in three days it was all right.

"They didn't bleed much in my time, but when I heered say when they thought a person had too much blood an' it was dangerous, they sent for a doctor an' he would

come an' bleed them but they don't do that anymo' now it seems lak they mus' put blood in you.

"My Pa an' Ma used to tell of the brutal treatment of their ol' Marster. T'want he that was so mean, but that ol' overseer. No wonder she used to sing:

'Before' I'd be a slave,

I'd be ded in my grave,

An' go home to my Father,

An' be saved.'

"Nigger had no use for white folks that had riz or were common. We uster say:

'I'D rather be a nigger than pore white trash.' But everybody wasn't hard -

Some were good an' kind; in my town, Clinton, where I wuz born an' raised, there was a lady named Silliman an' ev'rybody liked her. Once she fell down an' broke her collar-bone an' died. In her will she left ground to some ol' servants, some had been slaves. Jim Monroe got 200 acres, Dorothy Speer, 75, Borey Hare an' Willie Hare. 75 each, Dee Matthews, 75, Chester Cannon, 75, an' to another, 75. She wanted to give them a start in life."

"Was Silliman College named for this lady? we asked.

"Yes'm, it wuz, for her an' her husban' an' it's one of the prettiest places you ever did see. Nice ol' live oaks all 'round. It shO' am fine.

"An' you've heered of Mrs. Silliman? I'm glad because you know that what I say is true. Some folks say niggeris all imagination. Ain't it funny how things turn round? When I wuz little, we liked peanuts, only we didn't give that name. We called 'em "hog-peas" and nobody hardly but niggers ate them, now they're considered good

and sell on the streets, jas' a little bag for a nickel. People useter get 'em in a gunny-sack for feed, that is those that didn't raide 'em."

And then we expatriated upon their qualities, medicinally, gastronomically, commercially. How physicians were prescribing them for their nervous patients. But they must be eaten raw – another instance of going back to nature. Even the hulls are not wasted for they are used as a fertilizer. But peanuts, goobers, ground-peas or fainders, just whichever state dubs them, they are good to eat!

"And we uster hair all the 'coons an' 'possums us could eat. 'Possums are the bes! Beavers are bes' of any but they were not so easy to ketch, besides they were so sly; now I jes' don' believe, they is ennyno'. But the beaver sho' is fine tender meat. Did you ever see 'em at work? Well, I reckon not – 'cause they scampede when anyone comes near, but you can look at the wreck they made!

"They eat the bark off treas an' the leaves on' the roots an' berries. They mos'ly live about the river an' bayous where they have lots of trees an' plants. My, how they can destroy trees, big ones, sometimes. Two or three work to cut the bark all 'roun' and they keep at it ontill the tree topples over. This makes a sort of bridge to cross to other side, then they pile up mud an' it dries with the tree, then they pound it down with their tails, they got power in those tails!

They build houses out of mud to stay in when it's too col' to be out. We sol' the skins to make hats for men outen. Tall, shiny hats."

"Yes, and you used 'coon skins, too, did you not?"

"Yes, man, we sho' did. We made 'em outselves, an' we let the tail hang down in the bac'."

Coon skin and beaver skins both used as a covering for the bead, one for the lowly son of toil, the other as a hall-mark of gentility!

In Louisiana, where embankments were weak, beavers were of inestimable value in preparing marsh drainage.

But negroes would kill and eat them.

The story is told of a planter who, on discovering this slaughter harshly threatens his negroes. Instead of being struck dumb with shame one of them replied:

"We poor fellows spend all our time in praying for others and have no one to pray for ourselves, no wonder we fall into temptation."

We repeated this story to the old negro, who seemed much impressed with it. "That's a fac'. It sholy is, but we can always pray: 'Lead us not into tem'tation,' an' if we follow He's Will, an' Commandments it an't so hard.'

On the wall of the general room in which Shack Wilson lives, hangs a framed, marriage license. As you look at it you are impressed that in this man is a man of honor and integrity who follows as best he can, the footsteps of His meek and lowly Master.

"Yes'm, come lak that paper say, April 25 nex' I was married years ago, an' when she died I been true to her mem'ry."

Miss Z. Posey.

McElwee

5/13/40

Julia Woodrich

415 Ocean Ave.

Mc Donoghville

"Dey say, I was twelve years ol' when de battle was fought at Vicksburgh, so you can figger up jes' how old I is. I was born at La Fouche Crossing. I don' know who my pa was. I think Ise de onliest one livin.

"Us first belong to Baugolis, a creole.(?) He sho was a mean man. After he died us was auctioned off. My older brothers an' sisters was sold by deyselves but me, I was too young, I was sold along with my ma. We belonged to Guitlet. He was a Creole too - dats who we was sold to.

"My sisters, Mary an' Jane, an' Paul and Adam, was all sold an' sent off. we never is knowed where dey went.

"Dey put dem up on a big stump an' de Boss would walk around with a big bull-whip on his shoulders. and see dat it was done right.

"My Ma had fifteen chillun, an' none of us had de same pa - ever time she was sold she would git another man. Dey didn' sell de man dat she would be with.

"Dey didn't marry befo' de war; de Missus taken an alphabet, or some book, an' read somethin' out of it, and den put a broom down and dey jump over it - den dey was married. Sometimes dey would give dem a chicken supper.

"My Missus was good to us, but some of the other Massas was mean. Dey taken dem niggers on the levee an' whip dem with a bull whip. Dey useto holler "Pray, Massa!" Dey would say, "Dam you, pray yo'self!"

"Me, I wore little nightgowns, an my brothers wore long shirts. We only had two suits a year. The missus wove the cloth. My job I done was to pick up de shuttle when it would fall and to water de chickens, but I done det every day. I slep in de house with my Missus on a pallet at de foot of de bed so's iffen she need anythin' I could brung it to her. One night de ole Boss wanted to ship mah with me. I screamed and woke the Missus up - she sho did raise hell with him.

"My maw had one boy by her Boss, that was my Missus' brother's chile. You see ever' time she was sold she had to take another man. Her had fifteen chilluns after she was sold de las' time; she was a good breeder. After the old folk die de young Massa and Missus d'vide every thing up, some taken land or money, but my Missus she taken the niggers she was a Cajun.

"Dey was not mean to me or my Ma either. I knows de only slapping ise ever got, my Missus slapped me for stealing a biscuit. I jus' eased my hand threw her arm when she was making dem. We only had biscuit once a month.

"Ma an' my older sister would have to go across the bayou in the winter time to make grinding at the cane mills. Dey didn' get the pay, the Boss got it.

"Who? us read! If you would have picked up a piece of paper they would have slapped your dam head off. I usto to deliver notes to the neighbor. Dey knew we couldn' read an' dey didn' want us to learn how, either. My Ma useto jump up and down and

say, "We gwine be free!" but iffen de Boss had of heard her she would have been put in de stocks – her hands, feet an' head. Dat would have been her punishment.

"De drivers would stand over de slaves with bull whips to see dat dey worked' de boss would come out on his big horse and give order. I seed de Missus tie up de women's coat-tails around dare waists for de driver to beat.

"But you know de poor white people did not have as much a show as us niggers. Dey treated dem awful.

"After us was sat free we stayed in a shack in de pasture. Our Messus told us she could not take care of us any longer. We lived off of berries and fish, crawfish and ever' thin' like that, for a long time after us was free. I got 'legion few years after I was free. I am the Mother of my church now.

"We usto have church in the ol' mill house. De Boss would stand in de door an' watch an' laugh at the womens shout – dey didn' do dat often, though.

"I 'member how my massa useto would come an' get my sister, make her take a bath an' comb her hair an' take her down in the quarter (?) all night – den have de nerve to come aroun' de nex' day an' ax her how she feel. He useto wear a big straw hat an' cottoneyed pants, - an red shoes. Dats de reason dare is so many mulatto nigger chillinns now."

Folk lore – Central Louisiana

FOLK LORE

MANDY ROLLINS AND PATIENCE SCOTT

(CONTINUITY

516 Words)

(Notes and Bibliography

16 Words)

Total

532 Words

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Federal Writers' Project

Alexandria-Lake Charles Districts

VJ:ed

Alexandria-Baham

FOLK LORE

MANDY ROLLINS----AGED 110----SONIA QUARTERS, ALEXANDRIA

"My missus wuz Miss Delia Casson, whut wuz de dauter uv Marse Gen'al Thomas. Lawdy, all dese houses stands now on de land whar I usta wuk like a mule. I 'se plowed, hoed, stripped cane, pulled con, an' mos' erething dat a man eber did. An' 'fo we wurked dis lan', I hepped annuder 'oman cut down de trees right whar dese cabins is now. My man uster go to de sugar mill ever Sunday and sell sirup on Gen'al Thomas place. At night time he carried a waterbucket ub money to de house to Miss Delia. "Lawsy, she'd say, "Its jes' a drap in de bucket along wid what you done brought." Uses wore ole couse lowell dresses and rawhide shoes. Uses had plenty to eat like conbread, meat, 'lasses, etc. Arter I wuz freed I moved off and wurked by de day and Lawdy, I got as much as five dollars a day sometimes.

Sho, uses had a church on de plan'ation! Uses couldn't do lak us wanted to whilst us wuz dar. Us allus had to hab a pass whn us wanted to visit usses frens on annuder place. An' whn us wrot or had a letter wrot hit had to be sant by de fust passin' pusson dat come by. Fudermore dar wuz tree plan'ations, de "Big", de "Little", and de "Scott Bottom". Dar wuz a sick-house on de place and us had a cullud doctor. Dar wuz annuder oberseer named, "Crookshank". One wuz named "Waters" and dey killed him. Mist Huff had six mens hanged fur hit 'fo Gen'al Thomas foun hit out. He claimed he could've sabed de mens ef he had knowed hit. I sho' wuz glad whn de day come dat I wuz free!"

According to family records, the family sought Presidential assistance to stay the execution of these slaves.

PAT IENCE SCOTT

(AGE 90, BORN SEPTEMBER 24, 1846)

Patience Scott, who was Patience Smith before she married Benjamin Scott, now lives in the Sonia Quarters, Alexandria. She gave the following information.

"I neber stayed on de plan'ations much. When I wuz a lit'l gurl my foks had me go wid ma missus to New Orleans. Dat wuz Missus Kit Randall, whut married de brudder of Mist Joe Ransdell. Dat prop'ty whar de post office is now in Alexandria wuz de prop'ty of Missus Randal 'fo she wuz marrid. Finally when her mudder died, she put a house dar. When she died she made a will leavin de Oak Hall place up de riber to her husban' and de town place to Mist John Ransdal.

All dem years I wuz de house survant and hep raise Mist John. Mist John think a lot of me too. Jest 'fo he went to Washington, he moved me here an pays ma' rent all de time an sends me 'nuf to lib on 'till I dies."

NOTE: Patience Scott refers to the former Senator Ransdell.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interview by Rouceive Baham, Louisiana College Student, who is assigned to the project.

Folk lore - Central Louisiana

FOLKLORE

INTERVIEWED AGED NIGGERS

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F O L K L O R E

INTERVIEWED AGED NIGGERS

CHARLOTTE LANG, colored, in Adams quarters---just off Bogan Street, Alexandria, was born across the river from Marksville on the Holston Plantation in March, 1849 and is 87 years old. Her master was Steve Holston and her mistress was Hannah Holston. Steve Holston owned about twenty slaves. Charlotte worked in the house weaving clothes. During the war she made clothes for the soldiers. She also gathered Red Oak bark, Maple bark and indigo leaves to make dye for the cloth. On Christmas all the slaves in the community would gather at the Holston Plantation and their masters would give them presents and big feasts. Charlotte liked living in slave days because her master was good to her and she had plenty to eat and wear. Charlotte said "In the spring all the slaves were given medicine whether we were sick or not and we were all the time in good health."

PRINCE HAAS, colored, 1958 Overton Street, Sonia Quarters, Alexandria, was born January 8, 1861, on the Lenster Plantation one mile north of Bunkie. Prince was born in slave time and his master was Charles Simpson and his mistress was Mary Simpson. Prince is 75 years old.

Prince said, "I liked living in slave time better than in these days because people do not know the value of a good Negro now. A good negro was worth a thousand or twelve hundred dollars in slave time but white folks just soon take a shotgun and shoot him now days. My mistress died in 1912 and I went to her funeral. My white mistress

was better to me than both of my wives." Prince does not believe in witch-craft or good-luck charms.

SALLY SNOWDEN, colored, Alexandria, Louisiana, sixty-five years of age. "I warn't born in Louisiana, no sah, I was born in Geneva, Georgia. Talbot County it wuz. In dem days wouldn't allow us to have church in de house even if we made a lot ob noise. Us had to be very quiet an' not have a light sometimes. My ole mammy tells me ob de times de man on one plantation wanted a woman slave on annuder plantation for his wife. De marster would buy her for him. Hit didn't make no difference if she liked him or not she had to come anyway. De slaves used to be badly treated so dey would run of in de woods an' hide fer a long time. Mammy says dey used to git so hungry dat dey would eat de ole rusty-back lizards on de ole rail fences aroun' de edge ob de plantation. When I fust come to Louisiana I didn't lak it atall. I wuz use to de red hills ob Georgia. When uses seed all de cotton on de big bayou farms uses didn't know what to think. Us had been use to de little stalks in de Georgia hills so long dat it noways seemed real. I members dat in one whole week us only picked a hundred pounds, my brudder an' me.

Since I come to Louisiana Ise done all sorts ob work, mostly washin' though. Ise served work in mah day. I got three chullun living an' five daid. Mah husban' come fum Georgia too, but us never seed each other untill us wuz in Louisiana. My grandpappy wuz comin' over to us in Louisiana when he got killed keching a greight train in de east part ob Louisiana.

Deres many a remedy dat I knows too. A man must come in de house befo' a woman in de mornin' or you will shorely have bad luck. Effen a person comes in de

house dey must come in an' go out de back or front do, nebber thu de same door. Dese ole yellow top weeds is mighty fine fer de fever

PETER HILL, colored, aged 70, Alexandria, Louisiana.

According to his records and statements, Peter Hill is now seventy years old (1937). He was born on the Meeker Plantation on Bayou Rapides above Alexandria. His mother was Betsy Hill and his father was Peter Hill. The plantation on which he was born was later owned by the Comptons, and is now split up into many small farms.

"Some ob de time on de plantations wuz turrible. My sister didn't like to work so dey staked her out and let a tree fall on her an' break her legs. Mr. Hays wuz de oberseer and many time he let his hounda follow de slaves an' brung dem back to work. Dere wuz ober four hundred slaves on de plantations.

"Sho' I knows about ghosts. One day me and my wife wuz on de bridge and she pulled me right quick. I ax her whut wuz de matter an she tole me she jus' pulled me outen de way ob de spirits. She said dey come by an' some had bodies and no heads.

"Annuder time a woman died terrible in a house and no body could stay in it 'cause at night de ghosts would knock down de planks frum de ceilin'. One time it thundered and lightened so much we couldn't go to work an' Mr. Walker come after me. I wouldn't go and he turned and shooked his fist at the clouds. Dem spirits knocked him clean offen his horse and in one week he died. He wuz so crooked up dat de men had to come and straighten him out arter he wuz dead.

"Effen you bring whisky in dis room and happen to spill it de ghosts come and drink all dere is on de floor an' den go 'way. When de spirits passes you it is jus' lack a hot steam goin' by.

"You can dig right ober money all you wants to but if de spirits don't want you to have it you sho' can't get it. One time a fella come to me and said 'Hill, tie yo' dogs tonight.' An' dat night he went on a place right close by an' got a big chest full ob money. He dug down and foun' a man'd head wif gol' teeth in it, an' brung it right into town heah.

If you say 'What in the name ob de Lord an' holy Ghost you want heah?' Dey will vanish right quick. I has eben knowed dem to light de lamp at night. An' dey will come to yo' bed an' ride yo' in Yo' sleep."

REMINISCENCES OF JOSEPH HAWKINS, negro, Alexandria, Louisiana.

Born on the Hardtime Plantation August 4, 1867, Joe Hawkins is now in his seventieth year. The Hardtime Plantation at the time of Joe's birth was owned by Joe Chambers. Mr. Chambers was the godfather of Joe. Joe says that Dennis Hawkins was his father and his mother was a slave belonging to Dr. Chatman Weims who owned a plantation on Lamourie also. His grandfather on his mother's side was Chatman Brent and that his grandmother was called Hannah. On his father's side of the family, his grandfathr was called Doc Hawkins and his wife Patient. According to Joe, those were very mournful days on Bayou Lamourie. Six years after his birth his father moved to Dr. Weims' Plantation a few miles further down the Bayou. Only a few years later the

family moved back to another plantation belonging to Mr. Chambers, called the "Burndown Place."

When Governor Wells became governor of Louisiana, they moved on his plantation on Bayou Boeuf. "Dats why my father met my mother. We moved around so much in dem times. When the Yanks come down fum de North uses went to Texas wid our marsters. Dere my father met my mother 'cause Dr. Weims went ober dere at de same time. Den when we come back de yankees tuck my father to drive wagons on de march. When de battle was fought at Fort Hudson my pappy runned off and made his way back home.

I members dem early times lack dey wuz yistiddy. De fust baker in Alexandria wuz named O'Shee. I eben members de fust saloon and de boats dat used to come up and down de Red River. All de rail-roads has ben put in since I members. Dere wuz de Center p'int fum Houstain and de T. & P.

All up and down de Bayou Lamourie dey wuz de finest people in de world. When I wuz a little fella, I used to go all about the white folks and dey sho kept me fine. Mrs. Rougeau de mother of them all was de finest woman in de whole country. Many a chile dat wuz black she kept fed fum her kitchen. All de people on de big plantations wuz as fine to us blacks as possible.

REMINISCENCES OF ADAM HALL, negro, Alexandria, Louisiana.

This negro, living on Maple Street, is one of the oldest negroes in this section of the state. According to his own statement and all records, Adam Hall was born on Flowerton Plantation on the Bayou Boeuf in 1833. The old negro is what may be called an aristocrat of his race due to his early life among the whites and the fact that he recalls

the old South. He holds the white man in great respect. Physically, Adam is emaciated in form but has a mind that seems to be especially keen for one of his age. He has a face of a man of seventy and a countenance that invites confidence. He can no longer see and hear well, a fact which seems to worry him a great deal. Of open countenance and fearless eyes, he still sees humor in life and to hear him laugh as he holds his hands to his face makes one wonder at the qualities that he must have possessed when in the prime of life.

Adam remembers several incidents of his boyhood that he takes great pleasure in relating. One of the things of great importance to him in the old rule of his master, Charlie Flowers: "Never get in too great a hurry, Adam, and you will live many years longer." The old negro to this day gives that rule as the reason for his long life and ability to continue actively until only a few years ago.

"Uncle Adam states that his masters were all the finest men in the South, treating him so well that he had no desire for any change in life as most negroes have. In relating the experiences of his boyhood, he smiles as he says, "There was four of us, brothers in the Flowers' Home. The others hurried on in life and I am the only one left."

One of the experiences of early life of Adam happened because of his disobedience to his mistress who warned him to keep away from the wild boys of his race. "I disobeyed her once and that like to have killed old Adam. I runned off with

know

some bad boys living on the plantation near Lecompte and you/the first thing I knowed I was almost dead. I had my hip broke, my ankle broke, and my wrist broke. I couldn't move, couldn't get up and them boys runned off an' lef' me, yes suh. One girl wouldn't

leave me and got an ole feller from over de bayou to come to me. He come an' befo' he got dere started calling me.

"Adam," he says, "what's de matter with you?"

"Mah leg's broke. I can't get up."

"No it ain't, Adam."

"When he got dere he saw hit wuz. I wuz all crumpled up an' couldn't noways move. Well, sush, you talkin' 'bout good kere. I got hit. Four doctors come to save Adam dat time. Dr. Compton, Dr. Cornal, Dr. Hardy, an' annuder one.

Den de war come (Civil War) an wuz we scattered? Dere wuz eighteen of us in mah family an' only eight left. I went to New Orleans wid mah marster and Mistus. We lived on the biggest street in New Orleans. Didn't I tell you I wuz de messenger boy on de plantation? Well, Suh, when de war come dey tuck me to carry messages in de army. Hit wuz dangerous dem times. I seen 'em fall all 'round an' I kept traveling. Neber got hit in a place in de whole time I wuz in de fracus.

"We wuz right dere in New Orleans when Gen'al Banks stormed de city. Such times I neber seed in all mah life. Den we come back here to farm some mo'. Fust thing we knowed de overseer had us move de rail fence fer dat new wire fence. Dr. Compton tole us what it wuz goin to be like, but de over seer wuz a persuadin' feller an' we put up de new fence an you see whut come of it.

I 'member de steamboats on de Red River jist like yistiddy. Dere wuz de "John T. Moore", de "Grand Duke" which wuz Cap'n Doty's boat. Den dere wuz de "Big Horn" and de Red River Mail Boat. De big ones couldn't come up de river, but we had some boats in dem days.

Does I 'member Gen'al Grant? Sho I members him. He had side-burns come way down de side of his face. I saw Gen'al Robert Lee. Dem wuz times in dis section I tell you. Frances Castle wuz de fust surveyor in dese parts long befo' Mr. Sylvester an' Mr. Bringhurst. Many a day I went wid dem in de swamps claring ways and runnin' lines. Why a man could live in dem days.

I 'members de first bishop in de Catholic Church here. Old Father Bellier started de church in dis section. My little girl had a boil on her face. Hit wuz a terrible place an' de doctors wanted twenty-five dollars to cure it. One day I tuck her to the Catholic Church an' Father Bellier come out and looked at it. Den de Nurse come out and looked at it. She rubbed her hands ober de place an' when she finished, she said, "Adam I am not charging you for this, but if you want to give a dollar for to help some other little girl, it will be fine." Dat place got all right an' dem doctors didn't get no twenty-five dollars fer it nuther.

De head an' de eye is de cornerstone of a man's life. If you jest trusts in God and believes in him in de right way you ain't goin' to fail in dis here life. Once a feller come down frum de North an' he was as crooked as a rams horn. Dats de way dey are. Don't eber deal wid crooked people, 'cause dey are as crooked as a rams horn an' putty soon you git day way too. Don't eber deal wid fools, cause putty soon you be a fool too. It's jist lak I say. De Lord is the cause of all de good things a man gits in life. It ain't nothin' in ole Adam keepin' him here. Hit's de Lord's work dat I been here all dese years. You got to trus' him all de way tho' an' not jist half-way."

Uncle Adam is living with his son now and has been for the past several years. The wife of the son states that until about eight years ago Uncle Adam would get up long

before them in the morning and not be back until late at night. His last work was trimming hedges and working yards for the residents of Alexandria. Some of his quiet spirit seems to have been imbued by those about him, giving sensitiveness of manner that is rarely found in negroes.

CARRIE JEFFERSON, colored, Corner Vance and Houston, Sonia Quarters, Alexandria, Louisiana.

When asked when she was born she replied, "I wuz born the second year of surrender on the 6th day of November." When Carrie was asked if she believed in witches she said, "Witches are just the circulation of your blood stopped.

On Christmas Carrie gets up and thanks God that she is living to see that day and every Friday she fasts. She doesn't eat or drink anything until 12:00 o'clock and then she goes around and prays for the sick. Carrie said, "I never seen a ghost so I don't believe there is any."

LOUISE BATUM, colored, Alexandria, Louisiana, born July 4, 1865, age 72.

When asked where she was born she said, "my parents throwed up a tent when coming from Texas and I was born under it." Her parents were Lantier and Lucillia Young who lived in slave days. Louise said, "Their master was very mean to them."

When asked if she believed in ghosts Louise said, "I saw one ghost; I was coming from a society with a large crowd and when we got near the river I saw something white moving slowly toward the river and disappeared. My hair stood straight up on my head.

No one said anything till we got home and I said "Did anybody see anything?"
 Everybody said they saw it but were all afraid to say anything till we got home."

UNKNOWN

One negro man who refused to give his name said, "I believe in ghosts but they won't hurt you if you know how to talk to them. I can feel them better than I can see them. When you pass a place and you feel creepy and afraid you feel a ghost. If you say "Holy Father don't let this ghost bother me," he won't hurt you.

JIM ANDERSON, colored, 2216 Overton Street, Sonia Quarters, Alexandria.

When asked how old he was and when he was born he said "I don't know but I am about 68 and I was born on the 4th of "Septenova." I don't know because we didn't have no "writin" in those days."

Jim said "I didn't know what day the negroes were freed until about thirty years later. It was changed from the 4th of July to the 19th of June.

On those days we had big horse races at the end of Monroe Street. We would hold tournaments and the contestants were dressed in uniforms. The rider who took the most rings would crown the Queen of the Tournament and the next the Maides of Honor. After the tournaments we would have big Balls."

Jim worked for Governor Moore for about thirteen years. He carried Governor Moore's grandchildren to school and back. Jim was eating cornbread mush out of a tin pan when interviewed.

Jim said "I don't believe there is no such things as witches and goo-luck charms. My preacher told me there was no such things. I am going to join the meeting 'befo' long."

MAMMIE JACKSON, colored, born October 9, 1836, age 100 years.

"We lived good---our people wasn't mean and crabbish. Our boss man didn't allow any white folks to interfer with any of his niggers. The "Boss" man called the slaves his niggers. The boss didn't allow us to go amongst the other slaves for he didn't whop us. Church and sociation we had dat all the time, and big dinners at the church. Lights along the road to show the path. He never had overseers over his niggers along the path either. On account of dat we was called Mr. Cooks' free niggers.

We got new clothes twice a year in July and at Christmas. Us slaves use to sing while we worked and no one to interfer calling us.

Like in picking cotton the master would pay us by the week. The women who had children, they got lots of cotton to make wuilts. If you got married like on Saturday, dey call your company and have a big dinner. To help us out dey give us sugar, flous, chickens and eggs, and when us white folks give big dinners all the time something tete (to eat) left be put in a brown barrel and divi-de amongst us niggers after dey eat.

When we free day come my boss give me plenty of clothes, something tete, spending wheel and wool to spend when us got where us was going. Dem white folks Mr. Cooks and Mistress Cooks show was good."

N O T E S

Interviewed by Rouceive Baham, Louisiana College Student,
NYA worker who is assigned to this project.

CHAPTER 6 – Summary and Conclusion

Although Ronnie W. Clayton's book, *Mother Wit: The Ex-Slave Narratives of the Louisiana Writer's Project* was an anticipated scholarly publication in Louisiana, the reality is that Mother Wit is simply a compilation of eighty-two ex-slave narratives, surrounded by a brief introduction and an index. Considering Clayton's extensive knowledge of The Federal Writers' Project and The Louisiana Writers' Project, I expected to find a significant amount of historical information pertaining to these two entities, as well as Clayton's synthesis of the ex-slave narratives of the LWP within Mother Wit.

Mother Wit provides a brief two-sentence statement of editing practices, which is insufficient for the amount of editing performed on the ex-slave narratives of the LWP included in Mother Wit. Punctuation, grammar, dialect, and structure of the ex-slave narratives were edited, and words were added and omitted, yet the editing was inconsistent within the same narrative and from one narrative to another. Furthermore, a number of structural changes made to the ex-slave narratives altered the meaning and emotions of the narrative. It is my argument that if an expanded, more comprehensive and thorough statement of editorial practice that included all aspects of the editing performed, were included in Mother Wit, readers of Mother Wit would not be left questioning the authenticity or editorial practices of the ex-slave narratives of the LWP presented in Mother Wit.

However, editing the ex-slave narratives of the LWP for inclusion in Mother Wit was not the first instance of editing performed on the narratives. Many of the interviewers were hired for the project without any previous interviewing, transcribing, or

writing experience. Because of their inexperience, many of the interviewers altered their final drafts of the ex-slave interviews or manipulated them to the point of rearranging each paragraph.

In an effort to maintain the validity, substance, integrity, and historical value of the ex-slaves and the ex-slave narratives of the LWP, I allowed the ex-slaves to speak through me and guide me in the work I have done for this thesis. I began my endeavor with the Ronnie W. Clayton Collection housed in the Cammie G. Henry Archives of Northwestern State University. Despite the arduous task of sorting and cataloging this collection, I created a Finding Aid for the Ronnie W. Clayton Collection in order to better facilitate research within the Collection.

The next step in my effort to maintain the validity, substance, and integrity of the ex-slaves and the ex-slave narratives of the LWP involved working with the ex-slave narratives. I began by attempting to locate the ex-slave narratives included in Mother Wit. After searching the Cammie G. Henry Archives, Hill Memorial's Special Collections, and the Louisiana State Library in Baton Rouge, and searching the website of The Library of Congress, as well as corresponding with Florence M. Jumonville, Ph.D., Chair, Louisiana and Special Collections Department of the Earl K. Long Library at the University of New Orleans, I managed to locate all but eight of the eighty-two ex-slave narratives that were included in Mother Wit.

Once I located the seventy-four of the ex-slave narratives, I photocopied them and hand-keyed them into *MSWord*® documents for Sonny Carter, Digital Imaging Specialist at Northwestern State University, to include on the web site for The Federal Writers' Project Collection of the Cammie G. Henry Archives. In embarking upon this project, I

laid the groundwork for the partnering of Archivists with the researchers. While this partnering has been temporarily put on hold due to budgeting constraints, the project will likely be posted on-line within the next few years.

In order to make The Federal Writers' Project portion of the Cammie G. Henry Archives web site searchable, I continued my work on the ex-slave narratives by identifying and pulling search terms from the narratives. The search terms are appropriate to any level of research, and when the budget restraints at Northwestern State University are lifted, they will be entered into the database of the ex-slave narratives. Doing so will enable scholars, researchers, and laypersons to navigate the collection database.

The ex-slave narratives are historical documents and, sadly, have lain unavailable and unresearched for more than fifty years, collecting dust and waiting for someone to give them the voice they so desperately crave. The ex-slave interview transcripts are historical documents, and despite the fact that they may not be exact renditions of the actual interviews because of editorial changes made to the interview transcripts by the interviewers and others, these documents are the only evidence we have of the work conducted by the Louisiana Writers' Project. More importantly, they are also the only testimony we have on record of the lives of these ex-slaves. It took tremendous courage for the Negro ex-slaves to honestly relate their life stories to the mostly white interviewers. If we, as scholars, do not allow the ex-slaves to speak their own language through us, how else will they be heard? What was the point of interviewing the ex-slaves if those interviews cannot be read, heard, researched, and enjoyed by all? We

should treat the ex-slave narratives and the spirits of the ex-slaves with the respect, manners, tact, and dignity they deserve.

APPENDIX A:

Ronnie W. Clayton Collection

(1924-1987, n.d.)

ACC# 695

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

**Processed 2004
Updated Finding Aid Created 2005**

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

This collection contains the working files used by Ronnie W. Clayton for his 1974 Ph.D. dissertation, *A History of the Federal Writer's Project in Louisiana*. This collection also contains essays, newspaper articles, and other articles written by Clayton, as well as Southern History and Folklore articles, Oral History articles, Slavery articles, and articles pertaining to Lyle Saxon. In addition, contained within this collection are numerous articles and correspondence pieces pertaining to The Federal Writer's Project, The Federal Theatre Project, The Federal Music Project, The Federal Arts Project, and The Louisiana Writer's Project. For related materials, see The Federal Writer's Project Collection, also contained in The Cammie G. Henry Research Center.

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

Box #1

- Folder 1** Clayton Correspondence, 1974 – 1976; 1983 – 1985; n.d.; Missouri Baptist College Documents
- Folder 2** Clayton's American History Notes; Federal Writer's Project essay written by Jonathan Beasley, 1973; Maurice Dantin speech written by Clayton, 1978; History articles (6).
- Folder 3** New Deal notes and articles
- Folder 4-A** Clayton's essays (7)
- Folder 4-B** Clayton's essays (9)
- Folder 5** Clayton's drafts and revisions of articles
- Folder 6** Newspaper articles by and about Clayton, 1975-1976; 1980; n.d.

8-C-2 & 3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

Box #2

Clayton's Dissertation

Folder 1-A

Clayton's Dissertation

"Preface"

"From Relief Rolls to Relief Work" (2)

"Poverty is a Heartless Taskmaster" (4)

Folder 1-B

Clayton's Dissertation, con't.

"Launching New Projects"

Untitled

"From Plan to Print" (3)

"Life and Labor on the Local Projects" (2)

Folder 1-C

Clayton's Dissertation, con't.

"The Politics of Relief" (3)

"Golden Age and Silver Screen" (2)

"Changing of the Guard"

Folder 1-D

Clayton's Dissertation, con't.

"The LWP's Major Publications"

"Completed Projects and Unfulfilled Promises"

"Friends No More" (5)

Folder 1-E

Clayton's Dissertation, con't.

"A Sacred Trust"

Untitled (3)

"Epilogue"

Letter to Dr. Noggle; Typed list of corrections; Notecards (9); Graphs (3); "Discussion of Sports and Recreation;" "Personnel Changes;" "Problems;" "A Sign of the Times" (2).

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

Box #3

Articles and Correspondence

Folder 1

Southern History and Folklore Articles

“Slave Imagery in the Literature of the Early Republic”

“Surveying and Mapping North American Culture”

“Mother & Son”

“Southern Women”

“Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves”

“History from Slave Sources”

Folder 2

Oral History Articles

“Book Reviews”

“The Nine Commandments of Oral History”

“Remembrance of Things Past...”

“Get it in Writing...”

“Oral History Evaluation Guidelines”

“Oral History: An Appreciation”

“Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves: Approaches and Problems”

Folder 3

Slavery Articles

“Out of the Mouths of Ex-Slaves”

“The Slaves”

“Huck Finn and the Slave Narratives”

“Weevils in the Wheat...” (2)

“The Background of the Slave Narrative Collection”

“A Divided Prism...”

“Life Under the ‘Peculiar Institution’”

“The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography”

“Ex-Slave Interviews & the Historiography of Slavery”

Folder 4

Lyle Saxon Personal Correspondence

Folder 5

Lyle Saxon Articles, 1927; 1931; 1938; 1974; n.d.

Folder 6

Government Documents Regarding Administration of WPA, 1937-1939.

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

Box #4

Articles, LWP, FWP, and FTP

- Folder 1** WPA Newspaper and Magazine Articles
- Folder 2** Bridgeman WPA Essay
"Folklore Among the Slaves"
- Folder 3** Louisiana Writer's Project Documents, 1935-1937;
1943; n.d.
- Folder 4** Louisiana Writer's Project Articles, 1938-1939.
- Folder 5-A** Federal Writer's Project Articles, 1935-1943; 1961;
1967.
- Folder 5-B** Federal Writer's Project Articles, 1970; 1977; 1979; n.d.
- Folder 6** Federal Writer's Project Documents, 1933; 1936-1937;
1939; 1941-1943; 1945-1946; n.d.
- Folder 7** Federal Writer's Project Correspondence, 1933; 1936-
1939; 1941; n.d.
- Folder 8** Federal Theatre Project Documents, 1936-1939; 1943;
1948; n.d.
- Folder 9** Federal Theatre Project Articles, 1936-1939; n.d.
- Folder 10** Federal Theatre Project Correspondence, 1935-1939; n.d.

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

Box #5

FMP, HRS, and FAP

- Folder 1** Federal Music Project Articles, 1936; 1938; 1942.
- Folder 2** Federal Music Project Documents, 1935-1940; 1943; 1945; n.d.
- Folder 3** Federal Music Project Correspondence, 1935-1940; n.d.
- Folder 4** HRS Articles, 1938; 1940; n.d.
- Folder 5** HRS Documents, 1936-1941; 1943; 1945; n.d.
- Folder 6-A** HRS Correspondence, 1935-1938
- Folder 6-B** HRS Correspondence, 1939-1941; n.d.
- Folder 7** Federal Arts Project Articles, 1961; 1969; 1975; 1982
- Folder 8** Federal Arts Project Documents, 1935; 1937; 1939; 1942; 1945; n.d.
- Folder 9** Federal Arts Project Correspondence, 1936-1940; 1942; n.d.

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

Box #6

Correspondence

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Folder 1 | Marcus B. Christian Correspondence, 1935-1956. |
| Folder 2 | Marcus B. Christian Correspondence, 1957-1974. |
| Folder 3 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1935. |
| Folder 4 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1935-1936. |
| Folder 5 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1936. |
| Folder 6 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1936. |

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

Box #7

Correspondence

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Folder 7 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1936. |
| Folder 8 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1937. |
| Folder 9 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1937-1938. |
| Folder 10 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1939. |
| Folder 11 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1939-1941. |
| Folder 12 | WPA/FWP Correspondence, 1942-1946. |

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

Box #8

Correspondence, Reports, Notes, and Articles

Folder 13

Clayton Publication Correspondence, 1974-1987; n.d.

Folder 14

WPA/FWP Reports, 1935-1937.

Folder 15

WPA/FWP Reports, 1937-1942; n.d.

Folder 16

Clayton's Notes, 1984; n.d.

Folder 17

Oral Histories compiled by Clayton, 1974-1985; n.d.

Folder 18

Articles

Journal excerpt by Moreau B. Chambers

Marcel Armand

"New Orleans: A First Impression"

"My W.P.A. Man" – Marguerite Clark Life History

(2)

"Carnival Song"

"Bibliography with Explanations..."

"Booker T. and W.E.B." Poem

"Axman's Jazz"

"Scares"

8-C-2 & 3; 8-D-3

Clayton Collection

Acc # 695

Box #9

Articles, Reviews, and Lyle Saxon

Folder 19

Louisiana Folklore Articles (5)
"Colonel J.F.H. Claiborne"
New Orleans City Guide Documents (3)
Bibliography (2)
"Why Lincoln Grew a Beard"
"Marcus B. Christian & the WPA History of Black People
in Louisiana"
"Music Clubs and Orchestras"
"Traits"
"When Freedom Came"
"Witches"
"Writing Traits"
"The Basis for the Discussion of Slavery"

Folder 20

Reviews and Press Releases, 1937-1946; n.d.

Folder 21

Lyle Saxon Newspaper Clippings, 1937-1979; n.d.

Folder 22

Lyle Saxon Materials, 1935-1940; n.d.

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M E M O R A N D U M

July 30, 1937.

TO: STATE DIRECTORS OF THE FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT
FROM: Henry G. Alsberg, Director

The following general suggestions are being sent to all the States where there are ex-slaves still living. They will not apply in toto to your State as they represent general conclusions reached after reading the mass of ex-slave material already submitted. However, they will, I hope, prove helpful as an indication, along broad lines, of what we want.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS:

1. Instead of attempting to interview a large number of ex-slaves the workers should not concentrate on one or two of the more interesting and intelligent people, revisiting them, establishing friendly relations, and drawing them out over a period of time.
2. The specific questions suggested to be asked of the slaves should be only a basis a beginning. The talk should run to all subjects, and the interviewer should take care to seize upon the information already given, and stories already told, and from them derive other questions.
3. The interviewer should take the greatest care not to influence the point of view of the informant, and not to let his own opinion on the subject of slavery become obvious. Should the ex-slave, however, give only one side of the picture, the interviewer should suggest that there were other circumstances, and ask questions about them.
4. We suggest that each state choose one or two of their most successful ex-slave interviewers and have them take down some stories word for word. Some Negro informants are marvellous in their ability to participate in this type of interview. All stories should be as nearly word-for-word as is possible.

5. More emphasis should be laid on questions concerning the lives of the individuals since they were freed.

The interviewer should attempt to weave the following questions naturally into the conversation, in simple language. Many of the interviews show that the workers have simply sprung routine questions out of the context, and received routine answers.

1. What did the ex-slaves expect from freedom? Forty acres and a mule? A distribution of the land of their masters' plantation?

2. What did the slaves get after freedom? Were any of the plantations actually divided up? Did their masters give them any money? Were they under any compulsion after the war to remain as servants?

3. What did the slaves do after the war? What did they receive generally? What do they think about the reconstruction period?

4. Did secret organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan exert or attempt to exert any influence over the lives of ex-slaves?

5. Did the ex-slaves ever vote? If so, under what circumstances? Did any of their friends ever hold political office? What do the ex-slaves think of the present restricted suffrage?

6. What have the ex-slaves been doing in the interim between 1864 and 1937? What jobs have they held (in detail)? How are they supported nowadays?

7. What do the ex-slaves think of the younger generation of Negroes and of present conditions?

8. Were there any instances of slave uprisings?

9. Were any of the ex-slaves in your community living in Virginia at the time of the Nat Turner rebellion? Do they remember anything about it?

10. What songs were there of the period?

The above sent to: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Ga., Kentucky, La. , Md.,
 Mississippi, Mo., N. Car., Okla., S. Car., Tenn., Texas, Virginia, W. Va.,
 Ohio, Kansas, Indiana

The main purpose of these detailed and hourly questions is to get the Negro
 remembering and talking about the days of slavery. If he will talk freely, he
 will be encouraged to say what he pleases without reference to the questions.

It will not be necessary, indeed it will probably be a mistake, to ask
 the questions of every person. Any incidents or facts he can recall
 to set down as nearly as possible just as he says them.

A second visit, a few days after the first one, is important, so as to
 get all the worth while recollections that the first talk has aroused.

Get a good picture of the ex-slave around his home.

1) Where and when were you born?

2) Names of your father and mother. Where did they come from? Names
 of your brothers and sisters. Tell about your life with them and describe your
 home and the "quarters." Describe the beds and where you slept. Do you remember
 anything about your grandparents or any stories told you about them?

3) What work did you do in slavery days? Did you ever earn any money?

4) What did you eat and how was it cooked? Any preserves? Rabbit? Fish?
 What food did you like best? Did the slaves have their own gardens?

5) What clothing did you wear in hot weather? Cold weather? On Sundays?
 Any shoes? Describe your wedding clothes.

6) Tell about your master, mistress, their children, the house they lived
 in, the overseer or driver, poor white neighbors.

7) How many acres in the plantation? How many slaves on it? How and at
 what time did the overseer wake up the slaves? Did they work hard and late at
 night? How and for what causes were the slaves punished? Tell what you saw.

QUESTIONNAIRE
STORIES FROM EX-SLAVES

The main purpose of these detailed and homely questions is to get the Negro to thinking and talking about the days of slavery. If he will talk freely, he should be encouraged to say what he pleases without reference to the questions.

It will not be necessary, indeed it will probably be a mistake, to ask all of the questions of every person. Any incidents or facts he can recall should be set down as nearly as possible just as he says them.

A second visit, a few days after the first one, is important, so as to gather all the worth while recollections that the first talk has aroused.

Get a good picture of the ex-slave around his home.

(1) Where and when were you born ?

(2) Names of your father and mother. Where did they come from? Names of your brothers and sisters. Tell about your life with them and describe your home and the "quarters." Describe the beds and where you slept. Do you remember anything about your grandparents or any stories told you about them?

(3) What work did you do in slavery days? Did you ever earn any money ?

(4) What did you eat and how was it cooked? Any possums? Rabbits? Fish? What food did you like best? Did the slaves have their own gardens?

(5) What clothing did you wear in hot weather? Cold weather? On Sundays? Any shoes? Describe your wedding clothes.

(6) Tell about your master, mistress, their children, the house they lived in, the overseer or driver, poor white neighbors.

(7) How many acres in the plantation? How many slaves on it? How and at what time did the overseer wake up the slaves? Did they work hard and late at night? How and for what causes were the slaves punished? Tell what you saw.

Tell some of the stories you heard.

(8) Was there a jail for slaves? Did you ever see any slaves sold or auctioned off? How did groups of slaves travel. Did you ever see slaves in chains?

(9) Did the white folks help you to learn to read and write?

(10) Did the slaves have a church on your plantation? Did they read the Bible? Who was your favorite preacher? Your favorite spirituals? Tell about the baptizing; baptizing songs. Funerals and funeral songs.

(11) Did the slaves ever run away to the North? Why? What did you hear about the patrollers? How did slaves carry news from one plantation to another?

(12) What did the slaves do when they went to their quarters after the day's work was done on the plantation? Did they work on Saturday afternoons? What did they do Saturday nights? Sundays? Christmas morning? New Year's Day? Any other holidays? Cornshucking? Cotton picking? Dances? When some of the white master's family married or died? A wedding or death among the slaves?

(13) What games did you play as a child? Can you give the words or sing any of the play songs or ring games of the children? Riddles? Charms? Stories about "Raw head and bloody bones" or other hants [sic] or ghosts? Stories about animals? What do you think of voodoo? Can you give the words or sing any lullabies? Work songs? Plantation hollers? Can you tell a funny story you have heard or something funny that happened to you? Tell about the ghosts you have seen.

(14) When slaves became sick who looked after them? What medicines did the doctors give them? What medicine (herbs, leaves, or roots) did the slaves use for sickness? What charms did they wear and to keep off what diseases?

(15) What do you remember about the war that brought your freedom? What happened on the day news came that you were free? What did your master say and do? When the Yankees came what did they do and say?

(16) Tell what work you did and how you lived the first year after the war and what you saw or heard about the Ku Klux Klan and the Nightriders. Any school then for Negroes? any land?

(17) Whom did you marry? How many children and grandchildren have you and what are they doing? Do they help support you.

(18) What do you think of Abraham Lincoln? Jefferson Davis? President Roosevelt? Booker Washington? Any prominent white man or Negro you have known or heard of?

(19) Now that slavery is ended what do you think of it? Tell why you joined the Baptist Church and why you think all people should be religious.

Mr. John J. Swann
Director
Writers' Section
Book Projects Administration
1714 New York Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D. C.

[Signed] John A. Lomax

Dear Mr. Swann:

In accordance with the request contained in the memorandum on a technique for securing the orderly and efficient transfer of material collected by writers' projects, we are submitting herewith a statement covering the items listed in Item IV, which was prepared by Mr. Lyle Snow, State Director of the Louisiana Writers' Project.

You will note that our set of all important rare sets of 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 Courthouse Building, Royal Street, which will be loaned to the project by the State Department of Conservation.

We shall advise you when the permanent depository is selected in New Orleans.

We hope the above statement will prove satisfactory. If you wish any additional information, please do not hesitate to write us.

Sincerely yours,

John A. Lomax
John A. Lomax
State Director
Division of Community
Service Programs

WJ0403

Attachment

enc. for Jerry (with attachments)

644
S. J. [unclear]

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
OF LOUISIANA
803 CANAL BUILDING
NEW ORLEANS

JAMES H. CRUTCHER
ADMINISTRATOR

RAYMOND 9711

January 12, 1942

Mr. John D. Newsom
Director
Writers' Section
Work Projects Administration
1734 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Newsom:

In accordance with the request contained in the memorandum, On a Technique For Ensuring the Orderly and Efficient Arrangement of Material Collected by Writers' Projects, we are submitting herewith a statement covering the items listed in Step IV, which was prepared by Mr. Lyle Saxon, State Supervisor of the Louisiana Writers' Project.

You will note that 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.

We shall advise you when the permanent depository is selected in New Orleans.

We hope Mr. Saxon's statement will prove satisfactory. If you wish any additional information, please do not hesitate to call on us.

Sincerely yours,

Alma S. Hammond
ALMA S. HAMMOND
State Director
Division of Community
Service Programs

B70403

Attachment

cc: Mrs. Kerr (with attachments)

651-3117

At the outset it should be stated that the Louisiana Writers' Project has never since since August. In doing so we have taken the opportunity to rearrange our files so that they are now in good order. It is a simple matter to assemble all material in the files as published in one of the Washington Memorandum. We have already segregated all material as outlined in step II. This material has been bundled because the proposed system of filing exhibits is limited. The bundles have all been clearly marked, indexed and an index of their contents has been prepared.

New Orleans, La.
January 9, 1942

Statement of the Louisiana Writers' Project
Covering the Points Raised in Section IV, of the
Washington Memorandum On a Technique for Ensuring
the Orderly and Efficient Arrangement of Material
Collected by Writers' Projects.

At the outset it should be stated that the Louisiana Writers' Project has moved twice since August. In doing so we have taken the opportunity to rearrange our files so that they are now in good order and it will be a simple matter to assemble all material in the files as outlined in step I of the Washington Memorandum. We have already segregated all material as outlined in step II. 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.

Guide to Three Camps in the Alexandria Vicinity.

Alexandria-Pineville writings in pre-flight stage - 5,000 words

Preliminary (unedited copy) of reports and city writings - 14,000 words

Parishville Field - in outline stage.

Camp Park - in outline stage.

Service Man's Guide to New Orleans and Vicinity - in outline stage.

Research on all camps, in form of newspaper

references, almost finished. About 100 pages of references.

Notes and excerpts being made.

INDEX TO THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

IN GENERAL

Editor's Review Index completed and typed and now being double checked.

Index to be completed in three months.

Index to the Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society completed

through 1934.

(I) List of Publications in process, with approximate status of each:

1. AMERICA EATS

Essay for the Southern section will be completed by Jan. 15, 1942.

Completion of volume will depend on how soon material from other sections reaches this office.

2. LOUISIANA FOLKLORE

Much of the material in final form, the rest in pre-final form.

3. NATIONAL DEFENSE SERIES

Guide to the French Quarter for Service Men already published.

Guide to Three Camps in the Alexandria Vicinity.

Alexandria-Pineville writeups in pre-final stage - 2,985 words

Preliminary (unedited copy (Tours and city writeups - 14,700 words

Barksdale Field - in outline state.

Camp Polk - in outline stage.

Service Men's Guide to New Orleans and Vicinity - in outline stage.

Research on all camps, in form of newspaper

references, almost finished; about 210 pages of references.

Notes and excerpts being made.

4. INDEX TO THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND AN INDEX TO DEBOW'S REVIEW

Debow's Review index completed and typed and now being double checked.

Should be completed in three months.

Index to the Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society completed through 1938.

5. TRAVELLERS IN LOUISIANA

Vol. I (1519-1765) seven eights finished.

Vol. II (1800-1825 only part worked on to date) 124,100 words in pre-final stage.

6. PAMPHLETS ON STATE PARKS

Tchefuncte State Park manuscript will be completed in three days.

7. SPANISH IN LOUISIANA

All research is completed and volume is one fifth written.

8. LOUISIANA FACTBOOK - 10% complete.

Chronology: 80% complete.

Approximately 500 chronological entries made.

Two file drawers of research collected.

Charters and State Constitutions: 80% complete.

Abstracts totalling 50,000 words completed.

9. HISTORY OF THE NEGRO IN LOUISIANA

Volume is seven tenths finished.

10. FRENCH QUARTER RESEARCH IN PROPERTY TITLES

Approximately two thirds of the French Quarter covered to date.

11. BATON ROUGE; AN INFORMAL HISTORY FROM CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTS

Much of the research completed but work temporarily suspended.

(2)

List of Publications Proposed:

(a) Additional Defense Pamphlets: Most of these are still in the idea stage but are being discussed with the Chairman of the local branch of the National Defense Council.

(b) Additional State Park Pamphlets. As requested by the State Conservation Commission, one of our co-sponsors.

(c) Hands That Built America. We should like to make our contribution to this Series if Washington plans to go ahead with it.

(4) Name of agency selected by the Project and its Sponsor for possible housing of data.

(3) List of General Material by Folders or more General Group

Headings:

(a) Bundles of non-essential materials including early drafts of published items, galley and other proofs, etc.

(b) Card indices including Bibliography, Lists of people interviewed, etc., prepared at one stage or another in the development of the project.

(c) A library of reference books, pamphlets, scrapbooks, etc., collected since the beginning of the project.

(d) A general reference file of newspaper materials, documents, translations, built up since the beginning of the project and being constantly added to.

(4) Name of agency selected by the Project and its Sponsor for possible housing of data:

January 17, 1962

One set of copies of all important work - manuscripts, research material not used already in printed publications, additional folklore material, etc., has already been segregated and 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, by the Writers' Project if necessary. 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. It has been agreed, long since, between the State Supervisor of the Louisiana Writers' Project, the State Director of Community Service Programs Division and the Sponsor that such an arrangement be made upon the Project's termination. 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.

January 17, 1942

Mr. James H. Crutcher
State Work Projects Administrator
803 Canal Bank Building
New Orleans, Louisiana

Attention: Mrs. Alma S. Hammond
State Director
Community Service Programs

Dear Mr. Crutcher:

Please thank Mrs. Hammond for her letter of January 13, 1942, transmitting Mr. Saxon's statement on the activities and file material of the Louisiana Writers' Project.

The choice of the Louisiana Library Commission at Baton Rouge as the agency for possible housing of Writers' Project files is approved by this office. The New Orleans Depository for duplicate material should preferably be an agency that can offer library facilities, such as are available in Baton Rouge, rather than only a library. Please keep this in mind in selecting the New Orleans depository.

You have no doubt already received through the regional office instructions for the redirection of the Writers' Project. These will serve as a guide in determining which publications should be continued, limited, and suspended. In general, all publications that aid the military, industrial, and civilian war effort should be continued and expanded, and conversely all activities not directly related to such effort should be limited or suspended. Significant publications that are almost in final form and for which publication is desired should be completed, so that work already done will not be wasted.

Applying these criteria to the Louisiana project's list of publications, we suggest the following action for publications in process:

History of the Negro in Louisiana: This subject is particularly significant at the present time, and it may be possible to obtain some publication subsidy from the Roosevelt Fund or other organization interested in Negro welfare. Since the Louisiana Library

January 17, 1942

Referring to the list of publications proposed, additional detail with books on the Negro prepared by other State projects, we urge that work on the manuscript be brought to speedy completion.

National Defense Series: Continue

America Eats: Continue this assignment, since the material has been gathered and the book can without doubt be brought to completion in the near future.

Louisiana Folklore: Suspend.

Index to the Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society and an Index to Debow's Review: Continue as an interim activity, if the personnel situation makes this advisable, until the entire staff is occupied with war effort activities.

Travellers in Louisiana: Complete Volume I if this can be done in a short time and publication is assured. Complete the 1800-1825 section of Volume II if this portion of the volume can be published. Suspend further work.

Parables on State Parks: If publication arrangements have been made for Telesignals State Park, complete the manuscript. Suspend further work.

The Spanish in Louisiana: Since this activity is estimated as only one-fifth written it seems wise to suspend it. However, you will note that socio-ethnic studies are placed in the category of activities to be continued or expanded. We are unable to offer definite advice without more information about the nature of the undertaking. Is it chiefly historical or is it focused on the present? Please discuss this activity with your official sponsor, and send us further details.

Louisiana Factbook: Suspend. If the texts on the chronology and/or charters and State constitutions can be completed in the near future and publication is assured, these sections should be finished.

French Quarter Research in New Orleans: Suspend.

Water Lore: Suspend.

University of New Orleans

Lafayette • New Orleans • Louisiana 70148

Mr. James H. Crutcher

-3-

January 17, 1942

Referring to the list of publications proposed, additional Defense Pamphlets, obviously, should be undertaken. No further work should be undertaken on State Park Pamphlets and Hands That Built America. For your information, the latter item and all other proposed national books have been suspended.

Sincerely yours,

Walter M. Kiplinger, Director
Public Activities Programs

J. B. Newson, Director
WPA Writers' Program

Hanau;sf
170403

Sincerely,

Chubb
Elmer Hardy
Activist



University of New Orleans

Lakefront • New Orleans • Louisiana 70148

EARL K. LONG LIBRARY

ARCHIVES and MANUSCRIPTS/
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPT.

July 12, 1985

Mr. Ronnie W. Clayton
1911 Shirley Park Place
Alexandria, Louisiana 71301

Dear Mr. Clayton:

We are most pleased to learn that the information supplied in our letter of June 18 is of value to your work. I must, however, refuse your request of June 20 for copies of the ex-slave interviews in the Christian Collection. 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.

If you believe that we can be of service in other matters, please feel free to call upon us.

Sincerely,

Clive Hardy
Archivist



DCH/yf

A Member of the Louisiana State University System