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Bessie Dickson Jordan
Interviewee

McCall Creek, Miss. Rt. 1

Address

Priscilla P. Ghanen
Director
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Regional Library

5-26-1977

Date of Agreement

Life in a rural community - Franklin County, MS.

Subject of Tape(s)

Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library
Oral History
Data Sheet

Austin D. Rowlin
Mrs. Bessie Dickson Jordan
May 26, 1977
Rt. 2, McCall Creek, Miss.
INTERVIEWER
DATE
PLACE OF INTERVIEW
INTERVIEWEE'S NAME

FULL NAME Bessie Dickson Jordan
ADDRESS Rt. 2, McCall Creek, Mississippi PHONE 734-2420
BIRTHPLACE Woolmarket, Harrison Co., Ms. DATE OF BIRTH Nov. 3, 1891
EDUCATION Eighth grade.

OCCUPATION Post Office clerk and housewife

TRAVELS

SPOUSE'S FULL NAME Robert Burton Jordan
BIRTHPLACE McCall Creek, Mississippi DATE OF BIRTH Jan. 18, 1888
OCCUPATION Farmer, merchant and school teacher

NUMBER OF CHILDREN Five (5)

NAMES OF CHILDREN

Lena Bert Jordan

Joe Renford Jordan

John Dickson Jordan

Ann Stewart Jordan

Milton Norris Jordan

FATHER'S FULL NAME John Jacob Dickson

BIRTHPLACE Florida

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown

OCCUPATION Merchant

MOTHER'S FULL NAME Ann E. Stewart

BIRTHPLACE Woolmarket, Mississippi

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown

OCCUPATION Housewife

MAJOR NATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE DISCUSSED She and her husband built a country store.

INTERVIEWEE'S AREA OF INTEREST AND/OR CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY The building of a country store, establish a milk route, and helped established a school.

An Interview with
Bessie Dickson Jordan
May 26, 1977

Interviewed by
Mrs. Austin D. Bowlin

Mississippi
Department of Archives and History
and the
Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library
Oral History Project
Meadville and Vicinity

BOWLIN: Your full name?

JORDAN: Bessie Dickson Jordan.

BOWLIN: Dickson?

JORDAN: D-I-C-K-S-O-N.

BOWLIN: Your present address?

JORDAN: McCall Creek, Miss. Route 2.

BOWLIN: What is your phone number, Mrs. Jordan?

JORDAN: I can't remember.

BOWLIN: We will get that later. Now your birthplace, where were you
born?

JORDAN: Woolmarket, Mississippi, in Harrison County.

BOWLIN: What was the county seat of Harrison County?

JORDAN: Gulfport.

BOWLIN: Gulfport. And the date of your birth?

JORDAN: It is now. It was Mississippi City then.

BOWLIN: Mississippi City, at that time. Alright now, the date of
your birth?

JORDAN: November 3, 1891.

BOWLIN: Your educational background. Now, you said you went through
what grade?

JORDAN: I barely finished the eighth grade in public school.

BOWLIN: Well, was that in Harrison County?

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JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Your husband's full name?

JORDAN: Robert Burton Jordan.

BOWLIN: And his birth place?

JORDAN: McCall Creek, Mississippi.

BOWLIN: Franklin County, right?

JORDAN: Yes, Franklin County.

BOWLIN: Now, the date of his birth?

JORDAN: January 18, 1888.

BOWLIN: The date of his death?

JORDAN: Thirteenth of June, 1959.

BOWLIN: Alright. Now, what was his occupation, Mrs. Jordan?

JORDAN: Farmer and country merchant and a teacher. He was a teacher at one time.

BOWLIN: He was a teacher at one time?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Now, who were his parents?

JORDAN: John, J. H. Jordan.

BOWLIN: J. H. Jordan.

JORDAN: Yes, and Adisha Cloy Jordan.

BOWLIN: Adisha Cloy Jordan?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: And how many children do you have, Mrs. Jordan?

JORDAN: I have five (5) children.

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BOWLIN: What are their names?

JORDAN: Lena Bert, Joe Benford, John Dickerson, Milton Norris,
and Ann Stewart.

BOWLIN: Ann Stewart, that is your baby girl?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Now, I know you have some special talent in your family. I
can remember personally, well, I know Milton is a good singer. I know that
and I know your son Dick was a football player at the University of Tennessee.
Now, what of some of your other children? I believe you have one daughter
that finished music?

JORDAN: Yes, at M.S.C.W.¹

BOWLIN: M.S.C.W. They are all, well, Milton lives here close to
you now and the rest of them are in different...

JORDAN: Dick lives in North Carolina; Ann lives in Brookhaven;
Milton, of course, here, and Bert lives in Hattiesburg.

BOWLIN: All right now. What was your father's full name?

JORDAN: John Jacob Dickson.

BOWLIN: And where was he born?

JORDAN: In Florida, but I don't know where.

BOWLIN: You don't know? Do you know approximately his age? When
he was born, approximately?

JORDAN: No, I don't know.

BOWLIN: Where did he die?

JORDAN: At McHenry, Mississippi.

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BOWLIN: At McHenry, Mississippi? Is he buried there?

JORDAN: He is buried at Woolmarket. That is where I was born.

BOWLIN: Woolmarket, Mississippi. And what was his occupation?

JORDAN: He was a merchant.

BOWLIN: And your mother's full name?

JORDAN: Annie E. Stewart.

BOWLIN: Annie E. Stewart. And her birth place? Do you know where she was born?

JORDAN: It was at Woolmarket.

BOWLIN: At Woolmarket?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: That was in Mississippi, same place.

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Do you about approximately what her date of birth? About when was she born?

JORDAN: No, I don't.

BOWLIN: And she was, her occupation, I suppose she was a housewife?

JORDAN: Yes, just a housewife.

BOWLIN: Just a housewife. Where did you meet Mr. Jordan?

JORDAN: At a sawmill town at Lyman, Mississippi. I was working in the post office and he was laboring at the mill.

BOWLIN: Oh, yes, that's the circumstance. That is what I was going to ask you. What year were you married, Mrs. Jordan?

JORDAN: In 1914.

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BOWLIN: 1914? And you had, I believe you said, a home wedding.
Just a quiet home wedding?

JORDAN: Yes, just a wedding at home.

BOWLIN: Well, when did you come to Franklin County?

JORDAN: I came to Franklin County in August, 1914.

BOWLIN: 1914. Did you live in the vicinity when you first came here?

JORDAN: No, not right here, but it was within five (5) miles of here.

BOWLIN: Within five (5) miles. Well, what was the name of the post office closest?

JORDAN: Well now, this was Esias at one time, but that was not the post office when I came here. It had been, but it had been changed to McCall Creek.

BOWLIN: It had been changed. It was Esias before it was McCall Creek?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Esias.

JORDAN: E-S-I-A-S.

BOWLIN: E-S-I-A-S, and they changed it to McCall Creek?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Well, leaving Harrison County and coming this far up in the state, what was your first impression of McCall Creek, this area or this community?

JORDAN: I would never get out of these woods.

BOWLIN: I think you have kind of changed your mind about that, haven't you?

JORDAN: Well, we lived in cutover land in Harrison County where the tim-

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ber had all been cut and there wasn't any undergrowth.

BOWLIN: There was plenty of it around here at that time, wasn't it?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Well, who were some of your neighbors, Mrs. Jordan, when you first moved to this part of the country?

JORDAN: Well, the J. S. Bennett family, the J. M. Foster family, the Richard Jones family, the Cloy families were relatives of my husband. Let's see the Picketts and the Magees.

BOWLIN: Most of them still live all around here, don't they?

JORDAN: The Burrises were some more.

BOWLIN: The Burrises, they are still around here too, aren't they?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Well, I wonder about then, what was your social life? What was it like? What did it center around in this part of the country at that time?

JORDAN: Well, the little country school mostly and our churches.

BOWLIN: What was the name of that school before the other school?

JORDAN: Grange Hall.

BOWLIN: Range Hall?

JORDAN: Grange Hall. G-R-A-N-G-E.

BOWLIN: Grange Hall. Most of the entertainment was just home entertainment or that sort of thing? That was good though, wasn't it?

JORDAN: Yes, community entertainment.

BOWLIN: Community, I see.

JORDAN: Oh, yes.

BOWLIN: Well, how did you all travel during those times?

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JORDAN: Horse and buggy.

BOWLIN: Horse and buggy days. Did you ever ride horseback?

JORDAN: No.

BOWLIN: At that time now, where was the nearest railroads?

JORDAN: Well, let me see, Summit. No, Mississippi Central at McCall.

BOWLIN: Mississippi Central at McCall had already come in here then?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Well, did you travel much by train or was there any occasion for you to travel much?

JORDAN: I went home about once a year back to Harrison County.

BOWLIN: Back to Harrison County and you could go by train?

JORDAN: On the train from McCall to Hattiesburg and then on G. and S. I. on down to Gulfport, then on down to McHenry, my home town.

BOWLIN: Yes, well, you know that was the main mode of travel back in that time.

JORDAN: Yes, that was all we had.

BOWLIN: A bus line did come through Highway 98 I believe in later years, didn't it?

JORDAN: Yes, in later years.

BOWLIN: Do you remember by any chance about the first, who had the first telephone around in this part of the country?

JORDAN: It was right here.

BOWLIN: Right here?

JORDAN: Right here. It must have been a private line. The man that we bought this place from had a telephone. I don't know if it came from Summit, I imagine. I think Summit was the nearest railroad town, you know be-

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fore then.

BOWLIN: Well, usually whenever there was a telephone, that was the center of communications, wasn't it?

JORDAN: Well it was. He had the store here, you see, and it was kind of the center.

BOWLIN: And what was his name?

JORDAN: Mr. Quit Jones.

BOWLIN: Mr. Quit Jones.

JORDAN: J. Q. Jones.

BOWLIN: Well, do you remember who in this section of the country had the first automobile or were they already here when you came?

JORDAN: No, they weren't. I guess our mail carrier was the first automobile.

BOWLIN: Who was that?

JORDAN: Mr. Dan, no, Mr. Burt Raulins from McCall.

BOWLIN: Burt Raulins from McCall?

JORDAN: Yes, he brought mail out from McCall.

BOWLIN: About what time was that? Do you remember?

JORDAN: It must have been, let me think.

BOWLIN: About what year? In nineteen what?

JORDAN: Well, we moved in 1915. We moved into the house down there. We couldn't get it; we bought it, but we couldn't get it until the year was up. It was rented out by the year and that was in 1915, January, 1915.

BOWLIN: January, 1915.

JORDAN: Yes.

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BOWLIN: And Mr. Burt Raulins was the mail carrier from McCall Creek?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Well, when did you get your first car? Do you remember that or about that time?

JORDAN: It was a little later. It must have been maybe two (2) or three (3) years later than that that we bought an old trap. You know, just a trap of a car. One we had to push.

BOWLIN: One you had to push to crank. Well, I want you to tell us about that. You said something about Mr. Burt leaving your tea kettle around.

JORDAN: Well, he would have to have hot water to crank it and he would push it up and down the road and wherever he got it cranked, I found my kettle and he was gone.

BOWLIN: And he was gone and you had to go retrieve your kettle?

JORDAN: Get my kettle, yes.

BOWLIN: What was the general reaction of the people in this part of the country about automobiles at that time? Did they fancy them or what?

JORDAN: Oh, they were, yes. They were delighted really. Of course, couldn't many of us have one you know and they were just a trap when we got one. We couldn't afford a new one, just a trap that we had, but we could go in it some.

BOWLIN: Well, I imagine you were limited in your travels by the road conditions, too, weren't you? There weren't too many good roads.

JORDAN: So many hills, you know, and bad roads. We didn't have any good roads.

BOWLIN: Were there any gravel roads at that time or were they all

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dirt?

JORDAN: No, not any gravel.

BOWLIN: Do you recall about the year they started graveling the roads? About what time they started?

JORDAN: No, but it was several years later than that.

BOWLIN: After that time?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Where did you go to church, Mrs. Jordan?

JORDAN: I went to Ebenezer. That was the old established Methodist Church and Concord was a Baptist Church, but it was a younger church than Ebenezer.

BOWLIN: Yes, and you were Methodist and you went to Ebenezer?

JORDAN: Yes, I put in my membership the year that we moved there in 1914 and it is still there.

BOWLIN: 1914. And it's still there? I was going to ask if it was still there.

JORDAN: Yes, I moved from McHenry to Ebenezer.

BOWLIN: To Ebenezer Church in 1914. Well, that's a long time. Are any of the members that were there when you joined still there or are you the only one?

JORDAN: I am the oldest living member.

BOWLIN: Oldest living member of that church. Well, I just wondered. Well now, was that church in a group or charge of churches? I believe that is the way they did.

JORDAN: It was the Auburn Charge.

BOWLIN: The Auburn Charge?

JORDAN: Yes.

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BOWLIN: And one pastor pastored all of the churches?

JORDAN: Several churches. There were five (5), I believe, at one time. He pastored five (5) churches and we had services once a month, just once a month.

BOWLIN: Did you have Sunday School or just church?

JORDAN: We had Sunday School.

BOWLIN: Well, now, you didn't use the emersion type of baptism. You just sprinkled, didn't you?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: I know they were talking about using a branch down here, I think, to baptize from Concord.

JORDAN: They did, yes, this creek down here, yes, they did.

BOWLIN: You are still a member there, you say?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Well, when did you move to this present location, in this particular place that you are now?

JORDAN: In 1922.

BOWLIN: In 1922?

JORDAN: Yes, in the fall of 1922.

BOWLIN: What was it called then?

JORDAN: It was McCall Creek. The named was changed.

BOWLIN: Now, I want you to tell us about your store and how it was constructed - just in your own words - about how the blocks got made and all that sort of thing.

JORDAN: Well, it was just a big old square box, the store that we

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bought, you know, with shutters, not windows in it, shutters, you know.

BOWLIN: You bought a store already built?

JORDAN: Yes, and furnished with all the stock. Yes, this Mr. Jones had the store there and he had gotten too old and his family was all gone and he and Mrs. Jones couldn't carry on. He put it up for sale and we bought it. We couldn't stay in it many years. We had to build another church (Meaning store) and we decided we would make concrete blocks, you know. We hired a Negro from Summit that had a little machine to make little individual blocks. He would come out on Monday morning. We would go and get him and he would work all the week. He would go back to Summit that Saturday evening and get drunk and he didn't come back Monday morning. Jordan and I got to making blocks before he came back, so I helped make the blocks in that store building.

BOWLIN: And they are still there now?

JORDAN: Yes, they are still there.

BOWLIN: Well, I just wanted everybody to know about that because I think it is quite unusual.

JORDAN: Well, yes, it is.

BOWLIN: Now, what type of store was it? Was it just a general store?

JORDAN: Just general merchandise for a country store.

BOWLIN: Just general merchandise.

JORDAN: Yes, groceries and some dry goods and feed and gas.

BOWLIN: Farm tools, probably?

JORDAN: Yes, farming tools, seed, feed, and that sort of thing.

BOWLIN: Seed and feed and that sort of thing?

JORDAN: Yes, yes.

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BOWLIN: You didn't carry as some of the store did in Brookhaven, the farmers over a yearly period?

JORDAN: No, we didn't afford it. We couldn't finance that kind of business.

BOWLIN: I see. Now, what kind of records did you have to keep back then? Did you have to keep government records as they do now?

JORDAN: We reported income tax then.

BOWLIN: Did you have to do that from the very beginning?

JORDAN: I believe we did, but I don't know that we did. It was 1922 when we took over that store in the fall. I don't remember that we started right then. I don't know that Mr. Jones had to make that report, but soon after that, I know, we had to, if we didn't start then. I don't believe we started at the time we bought that store, but soon we had to make that report every month. That was a record of our daily sales and we had to send a certain per cent.

BOWLIN: That was to the State?

JORDAN: Yes, that was to the state.

BOWLIN: Then you had to pay a state income tax?

JORDAN: Yes, yes.

BOWLIN: That was before the federal income tax?

JORDAN: Yes, before federal income tax.

BOWLIN: In other words, you didn't have all these many forms and all to fill out that people have to do today.

JORDAN: No, no. Since then, we have so often wished it was back where it was then.

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BOWLIN: Well, I can't imagine. Just simple ledgers probably at that time were sufficient to keep up with your business, wasn't it?

JORDAN: Yes, that's true.

BOWLIN: Did you have to have a license to sell certain items?

JORDAN: Yes, we did, retail merchandise. We had to pay a license fee.

BOWLIN: You had to pay a license fee?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: I just wondered if any type of merchandise or anything that you carried had to be licensed?

JORDAN: No, we just sold medicines, just ordinary medicines.

BOWLIN: Just over-the-counter type, patent medicine, I believe they were referred to as that then?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Was it customary about that time for the wife to work with her husband in business?

JORDAN: It was at my house. I don't know if it was with all the other wives or not.

BOWLIN: Well, I just wondered if you had to keep store?

JORDAN: Yes, I sure did. I had a cow bell out on the front of the store. I would lock the store and I would run down here to do some of my work, you know. If a customer came he would ring my bell and I would run up there and wait on him and run back down here to do some more work.

BOWLIN: That was one way to get it done.

JORDAN: Yes.

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BOWLIN: Back that time, though I guess it kind of paid to keep it in the family. I mean you didn't have to hire extra help, did you?

JORDAN: No, no, we never did hire a clerk. No, we did it all by ourselves.

BOWLIN: Did it all by yourself.

JORDAN: We did it all by ourselves until our children got big enough to help us carry on, but we never did hire anyone.

BOWLIN: I guess your children grew up keeping store.

JORDAN: Yes, but they didn't like it. Our oldest daughter, we would have her to watch. She would sit on the porch and watch, you know, and she could hear a car coming. She hated to tend to the store. She would say, "If you stop at that store you are just a horse." If it went on, she would say, "No, he is a gentleman; he went on."

BOWLIN: I guess she didn't realize exactly what that store meant?

JORDAN: No, I wanted them to stop.

BOWLIN: You wanted the business didn't you?

JORDAN: Yes, that's true.

BOWLIN: I guess it gives you a good feeling today to know you could serve the community in that capacity?

JORDAN: Oh, yes. I enjoyed it and we accomplished something. It helped us on to something else, you know.

BOWLIN: That's right.

JORDAN: And the business grew.

BOWLIN: The people in this part of the country lived a long way from Brookhaven, Summit, or to some place. It was a whole day's drive or

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journey by wagon or something. They saved a lot of time.

JORDAN: Indeed they did. That is true. They would call us all times of night if they had a sick cow or a sick horse or a sick baby or something. You know, they'd come down to the store for something. They would call us all through the night.

BOWLIN: Did Mr. Burt do any veterinarian business?

JORDAN: Tried to.

BOWLIN: Most country stores, you know, the people thought the country store man knew all about veterinary business. I just wondered?

JORDAN: Well, Mr. Becker in Brookhaven started the creamery in Brookhaven - old man Becker. So he came out here to get Jordan to work up a milk route from this community. Well, he worked among all the neighbors in the community, encouraged them. Of course, everybody was trying to make a living. It was hard to make a living. Well, he encouraged enough of the farmers to buy some cows. All they had to get was the cows and a barn. They didn't have all that sanitary business that finally developed, but they just started and they would milk their cows. We had a truck that picked up the milk and carried it in. Well, it was a start in the right direction, you know. The people would have a way to milk their cows and still live at home and get along. It was just wonderful. And the creamery today is the results of it, you see, in Brookhaven. They still have it there.

BOWLIN: Everything has to have a beginning.

JORDAN: It does. Indeed it does.

BOWLIN: It is good to know you have some part in helping to establish these things.

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JORDAN: Yes, it was interesting. People had enough confidence in Jordan that he could talk them into, you know, get them interested in some project that he could see something in it. We picked cucumbers one year, you know. Everybody planted cucumbers. We did everything anybody else ever did do, trying to make a dollar. That was the size of it.

BOWLIN: You had to do it to make a living, didn't you?

JORDAN: Yes, all of us did, all our neighbors and us too. We all did it. We were neighbors.

BOWLIN: There wasn't really any industry of any to speak of in this part of the country or way to make a living?

JORDAN: No, no, there wasn't. There was no public work of any kind; nothing here.

BOWLIN: You did have a small sawmill around and about or did you, here some of the time?

JORDAN: Well, sometimes we would have a little portable mill that would cut a little.

BOWLIN: Just a little portable mill. What about the syrup mills? Did they make the syrup?

JORDAN: Yes, they made syrup.

BOWLIN: Well, did you buy the syrup from them and sell it?

JORDAN: Yes, we would buy it. They would pay their burial insurance with their syrup. Hartman would give us - don't remember just how much - but people would pay their burial insurance with their syrup. Then somebody would come along, maybe who furnished us would take the syrup off our hands and we would get produce for that. We did every way in the world to

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help the people get something that they could manage and live on, you see, and they paid their burial insurance with that syrup.

BOWLIN: Was your husband a burial agent for Hartman or something?

JORDAN: We collected to this day. We have collected for Hartman to this day from the time we opened our business here.

BOWLIN: Until now?

JORDAN: Yes, Milton does right now.

BOWLIN: Is that right?

JORDAN: Yes, started then and been doing it ever since.

BOWLIN: Well, I didn't know anything about that. That is something I didn't know anything about. I remember people back in my day having to pay their bills with their produce and that sort of thing.

JORDAN: Yes, we would take chickens and eggs and Jordan would haul them to town, you know, and would buy up something we needed for the store with our chickens and eggs and bring it back. It was a hard life, but we didn't grumble.

BOWLIN: Rewarding, I'm sure.

JORDAN: It was. We raised our children and accumulated enough that we could make a more comfortable home.

BOWLIN: You have a beautiful and comfortable home right now.

JORDAN: Well, we made this house over. It was just about down when we bought it, but it was shelter and it was alright.

BOWLIN: I imagine the foundation was good. Back then, most of the foundations of homes were constructed good.

JORDAN: Yes, it was good. Still is good. Of course we leveled it up and made it up to make us a good home.

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BOWLIN: It must be nice to stay in one place that long and still call it home and enjoy being there.

JORDAN: Yes, it really is. It has been wonderful.

BOWLIN: Do you remember just exactly when the Independence School was built here?

JORDAN: Well, the fall that we moved here in 1922 that was its first session of school there in the new building.

BOWLIN: That was a high school, I believe, right?

JORDAN: Yes, Independence High. Yes, it was a high school.

BOWLIN: I thought that I remembered that.

JORDAN: It wasn't an accredited school, but it was a high school.

BOWLIN: It was a high school. How did it come to get the name of Independence? I believe you told me a little about that.

JORDAN: Yes, your father-in-law was...

BOWLIN: Grandfather-in-law.

JORDAN: Yes, grandfather.

BOWLIN: Yes, it was grandfather-in-law.

JORDAN: Well, he was, his place was going to be in this territory, you know. He said, "I don't want it named for any of these schools." That, "We are joining together and I want it different from any of the others." He said, "How about naming it Independence?" Well, every other school agreed, so it was Independence School. That is where it got its name. Mr. Bowlin named it.²

BOWLIN: Well, that's a good idea. I mean not to name for another.

JORDAN: Yes, and it was a good idea about the school. Couldn't

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any one school claim more than the other. It wasn't the name of any of the other schools, you know. It was our school.

BOWLIN: It wasn't a part of another school. It was your school.

JORDAN: No, sir. It was a new school.

BOWLIN: It gradually became Independence Community, I understand.

JORDAN: Yes, it was a community center. It was great - the ball games and all those things, you know.

BOWLIN: I imagine your social life sort of centered around the school at that time, didn't it?

JORDAN: Yes, it did. It improved our social life. The ball games and things, you know, threw us together and we enjoyed it.

BOWLIN: Do you remember who the first principal was by any chance?

JORDAN: Yes, Mr. Carey Young.

BOWLIN: Carey Young.

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Now, he was the first principal. I believe Mr. Ratcliff was principal at some time, wasn't he?

JORDAN: He was, and Mr. Ernest Jones was our principal after Mr. Young.

BOWLIN: Mr. Ernest Jones after Mr. Young?

JORDAN: Right, and Mr. Ratcliff³ was early, but I don't know just what year Mr. Ratcliff was here, but those two were the two first ones.

BOWLIN: Do you know if any of the teachers, the original teachers, of this school are still living?

JORDAN: Yes, let me see now. The first was a lady down here. She

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was a Terry, Ruby Terry. But now, let me think. Mr. Young was our principal and a Porter was one of the assistants and I can't remember his name. Your husband ought to remember him.

BOWLIN: He might, because he went to school at Independence.

JORDAN: Yes, he did. I imagine he remembers.

BOWLIN: I just wondered if any of them were still in this part of the country.

JORDAN: Well, this lady that I remember down here that is still living, was a teacher here. I don't know how early in history of that church (school) that she was here. She lived with me and was Miss Ruby Terry. She was a young lady then, but I can't remember about what year it was. It had been here about two (2) or three (3) years. I can't remember.

BOWLIN: Do you know about what the qualifications were, the educational requirements were for teachers then?

JORDAN: A teacher's license, as far as I know, was all that was required then, because it was just starting out, you know.

BOWLIN: Yes, I see. They didn't have to have a college degree?

JORDAN: No, no special degree, no.

BOWLIN: Who were the trustees? Do you remember?

JORDAN: Well, Mr. Lane Ratcliff was one and let me see now, I believe Mr. Roscoe Cain was one. I know Mr. Lane was a good one, a good trustee.

BOWLIN: He was my husband's uncle, you know. He married my father-in-law's sister. He was Uncle Lane to us.

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JORDAN: Yes, I know, he was sensible you know. He had a good head. He was my husband's close friend. They were good friends. Mr. Lane was one of the trustees I remember. I believe Uncle Richard Cloy (that was Jordan's uncle) was one of the trustees at that time. He was, because I remember a girl that got a place because she knew him through Jordan. Richard Cloy was one and Lane Ratcliff was one, but now I can't remember - that Cain might have been Roscoe Cain. I'd say Roscoe Cain.

BOWLIN: It might have been Mr. Roscoe since he lived in this community, How were the schools financed then? Were they financed through the state or federal system?

JORDAN: Well, they had a special levy on the district, but now I don't know. I imagine they got what just an ordinary public school would have gotten out of the county. I don't know what that was.

BOWLIN: It wasn't all the federal financing of schools then that has come to the school system now?

JORDAN: No, they had special tax on this territory to finance the school.

BOWLIN: Where was the nearest college - do you remember? - at that time to this particular location?

JORDAN: That must have been Copiah-Lincoln as far as I can remember. One of our teachers came from there.

BOWLIN: That is at Wesson? Copiah-Lincoln at Wesson?

JORDAN: Yes, that's right.

BOWLIN: Now, about Whitworth College - do you remember if it was

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at Brookhaven at that time?

JORDAN: Yes, yes, it was.

BOWLIN: I thought Whitworth College was there.

JORDAN: It was a four (4) year college. No, I don't know. It was a two (2) year.

BOWLIN: I know Whitworth College has been there quite a few years.

JORDAN: Our oldest daughter finished at Whitworth College. I believe it was a two (2) year college, a junior college.

BOWLIN: How was the children transported to school then at first?

JORDAN: At first it was mule wagons and then it got to the motor.

BOWLIN: Bus? To the bus?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Did any of them have to walk long distances?

JORDAN: Yes, they walked a half a mile or more.

BOWLIN: None of them like they used to years ago, way back?

JORDAN: No.

BOWLIN: They had better ways of transportation to get to school.

Well, where was the nearest doctor at that time?

JORDAN: At Auburn. Dr. Walker was the doctor at Auburn.

BOWLIN: Did he have an office down there?

JORDAN: Yes, just his little private office.

BOWLIN: Just a private office. And he was just a general practitioner?

JORDAN: Yes, for the community.

BOWLIN: How did he travel?

JORDAN: Horse and buggy.

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BOWLIN: I guess he went all over the territory?

JORDAN: All over the territory.

BOWLIN: Anywhere he was called, I guess. That's the way country doctors did.

JORDAN: You had to go and get him, you know. There was no telephones.

BOWLIN: No telephones, so you had to go and get him. Did Mr. Ratcliff ever practice in this part of the country?

JORDAN: Yes, he lived here at one time, I believe. Now I don't know where Dr. Ratcliff lived. He was my doctor when my first child was born. He was my doctor when my oldest child and my youngest child were born, my two (2) daughters.

BOWLIN: Dr. Ratcliff, Dr. Marion Ratcliff?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: I thought that he had lived somewhere in the Auburn community.

JORDAN: He must have been ahead of Dr. Walker, because Dr. Ratcliff was my doctor.

BOWLIN: Then he moved on to McComb, I believe, after he left Auburn or in that community.

JORDAN: Yes, and went into City Hospital, you know, Dr. Gladys and old Dr. Ratcliff, Dr. Marion, they had the City Hospital.

BOWLIN: The City Hospital?

JORDAN: Yes, he was such a sweet man.

BOWLIN: He was a lovely man. He is my mother-in-law's oldest brother.

JORDAN: Oh, I didn't know.

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BOWLIN: You see, my mother-in-law was a Ratcliff. He was her oldest brother and Mr. Coley Ratcliff that was the principal was her youngest brother.

JORDAN: Mr. Coley was fine, too. I loved him, too. He was so nice.

BOWLIN: Let's see now. We have already talked about industry here and just didn't have any, did you? Not in this part of the country at that time.

JORDAN: No.

BOWLIN: Do you remember about when you got your first phonograph? About what time or what kind was it? Was it one of these old wind-up kind or was it just...

JORDAN: I don't believe it was. I can't remember. If we could talk to Milton he knows all about it. That is how come us with it.

BOWLIN: In other words, you did it for Milton?

JORDAN: Yes, for Milton's sake. He loves music, but I just can't remember anything about our machine.

BOWLIN: You don't remember the type of music that was played then, or do you?

JORDAN: No, he just liked it all.

BOWLIN: He just liked music and still does, I believe.

JORDAN: Yes, he loves music.

BOWLIN: Do you remember about the time the radios came in?

JORDAN: For some president election was our first radio that we got.

BOWLIN: That was a big thing, I mean, to bring the national news

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into the community.

JORDAN: Yes, indeed it was. Jordan dashed out and bought one on account of that election. I know he didn't pay for it all when he got one, anyway.

BOWLIN: Well, I guess that was about the first time or means that we had of getting the national news as it was happening.

JORDAN: Yes, that is true, that's right.

BOWLIN: There wasn't enough telephones or newspapers.

JORDAN: No, we got a telephone long after that time.

BOWLIN: What kind of newspaper did you subscribe to?

JORDAN: We got The Commercial Appeal once a week. That was our newspaper.

BOWLIN: Commercial Appeal came from Memphis, was that right?

JORDAN: Yes, it came from Memphis.

BOWLIN: In other words there wasn't a Brookhaven or Jackson paper in this part of the country at that time?

JORDAN: No, if there was we didn't have the money to subscribe to it.

BOWLIN: You didn't subscribe to it. You could possibly get more news from the Memphis paper since it was larger.

JORDAN: Yes, it was a good newspaper and we got it once a week.

(Begin side two of tape)

BOWLIN: About the depression time here, it was hard. People didn't have the money to pay their bills, did they?

JORDAN: No, and we grew cucumber; we grew string beans; we grew

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Irish potatoes for the market, you know. We would go around to the neighbors and get anyone that would try, you know, to get enough money to buy their fertilizer and their seed. We did that to try to finance ourselves along during that time. Anything that we would grow to sell. Irish potatoes - we did that one time. Trying to make some money. The whole community did it, you know. We all worked together.

BOWLIN: Everybody worked together.

JORDAN: Yes, several families would join in, you know, and grow and then we would get it to market someplace. We would have a buyer, ordinarily. Maybe then they would furnish the seed and maybe help finance the fertilizer or something to get the people interested and get them to work. And then we'd get them to town or somebody would get them there. We did everything that we could to make a dollar. We milked cows. We did everything that anybody ever did try to do to make a living; we did it too.

BOWLIN: Well, it paid off.

JORDAN: Yes, it paid off. We could feed our families.

BOWLIN: It was a combined effort, a community effort, too, that everybody worked together, wasn't it?

JORDAN: Yes, and Jordan had a teacher's license. The first thing that he ever did when he started out was to get a teacher's license. He went to Ruston Cave College in Tennessee two (2) years. Mr. Burt Raulins persuaded him to go up there to school. He was just in a public school. He had gone to Auburn. That was better than the ordinary school just scattered around in the country. He went there for a year or so and then he went.

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to Ruston Cave College in Tennessee. He went for two (2) years and he cooked for a bunch of boys at a club home for boys. He got to where he got where he could get enough education that he could get a first grade teacher's license. That was a big help; sometimes it was \$65.00 a month, but that was a lot of money then.

BOWLIN: That was big money then.

JORDAN: Yes, it was, all along he got to where if you would teach so long, then you were exempt, you didn't have to take the examination any more. He got to where he had his license all the time and he could get a school and enjoyed it. He loved it. That helped us along you know. He would ride a horse over to Little Springs and out to Coward school and to different schools where he could go from here to teach. That was before we bought the store. He couldn't do much of it after we bought the store because when we took over there that tied him at home.

BOWLIN: Sort of a fulltime job, wasn't it?

JORDAN: Yes, he had to be at home. Along during all the time he could get a school. It was just for six (6) months, but it was that long that we would have that little bit of income. Enough to buy us a buggy.

BOWLIN: You know you can't buy much with that now, but at that time you could.

JORDAN: No, you couldn't buy much with it now.

BOWLIN: Compared to the way things sold then that wasn't bad at all.

JORDAN: No, we lived at home. We made our living at home. I

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tell people a lot of the times I can't cook meat yet because we didn't live on meat. We lived on milk and vegetables. I could milk a cow and work a garden.

BOWLIN: I can't milk the cow. That is one job I wasn't cut out to do, to milk the cows.

JORDAN: I could milk the cows and I had three (3) children that could do the same thing. We milked every morning and got that milk off on that milk route.

BOWLIN: Now about the milk route, there was a man who drove the milk truck, wasn't there?

JORDAN: Yes, he picked up the milk every morning early.

BOWLIN: Now a days these milk cans you see are antiques, but they did put their milk in them.

JORDAN: They weren't antiques then; they were everyday things. Yes indeed. We would draw water and cool the milk, you know. When we had the milk we would set the cans of milk in a big tub of water to cool it so it would keep overnight. The milk man would pick it up early in the morning.

BOWLIN: When did you get your first refrigeration, electric or otherwise? When did electricity first come through here? Do you remember when you got your first electricity?

JORDAN: The first refrigerator we got, we bought one for the store and it was coal oil. It would burn coal oil. Just as soon as we got current in to where we could get electricity, I got that coal oil one, you know. I never did get a new one. I always got a hand-me-down, but I used it and was glad to get it.

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BOWLIN: Well, the kerosene motor - did it run by, the coal oil operated it just like a fuel?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: And that was your refrigeration for the store?

JORDAN: Yes, that was the first that we had.

BOWLIN: You know, I didn't ever know that they had that kind.

JORDAN: Yes, we did. It was coal oil operated.

BOWLIN: Did you ever just use ice? Did you ever have an ice-house, or just use ice for refrigeration?

JORDAN: We had an ice man that would come maybe twice a week. He came from Summit, I reckon. He would come around and sell, maybe a hundred pounds or something. Maybe on the Fourth of July Jordan would go and get a truck load of ice and bring it out here and sell it at the store, you see, on the fourth of July morning.

BOWLIN: People always made ice cream on the Fourth of July, so they had to have ice.

JORDAN: Yes, that's what they did.

BOWLIN: That is a tradition, I guess, that goes back a long way.

JORDAN: Way back, yes.

BOWLIN: Fourth of July is just associated with ice cream, home-made ice cream.

JORDAN: That's right. Yes indeed. Everybody had it.

BOWLIN: Well, I don't know. The prices then, I guess, were generally in line with the economy. Everything didn't cost very much then.

JORDAN: No, it didn't cost too much. I can't remember what it

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was, but it wasn't too expensive.

BOWLIN: Your sugar and all of these things came in bulk at that time and you measured it.

JORDAN: Yes, we had our eggs and everything at home and our milk, most of us. You see, most of us had a cow or two.

BOWLIN: In your store, as you sold it, for instance, your coffee, did you sell coffee beans?

JORDAN: Yes, green coffee.

BOWLIN: Green coffee.

JORDAN: Yes, and the people had to parch it. We would buy it by the sack of green coffee.

BOWLIN: Your sugar came in bulk form too, didn't it? And everything had to be measured?

JORDAN: Yes, there is an old barrel out there in an outhouse now that we kept matches in, in our old store. We were afraid; you know sometimes they say rats will set a house on fire, you know, cutting matches. There is an old barrel out there in one of the outhouses now that we kept our matches in where the rats couldn't get to them.

BOWLIN: Rats couldn't get to the matches. Well, that was a precaution, because you didn't have anything to fight fire then, no fire department or anything, did you?

JORDAN: No, and no insurance.

BOWLIN: No insurance or anything else.

JORDAN: That is true.

BOWLIN: Do you remember, we'll get back into after the depression now, when the boys went off to the Second World War? I am sure you were aware

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of that. I believe you said you had a son in that war, didn't you?

JORDAN: I had three (3) sons in it.

BOWLIN: You had three (3) sons in the Second World War?

JORDAN: Yes, my oldest boy was the first one that had to go. Then Dick was at Copiah-Lincoln. They got Joe out of school at Hattiesburg and they got Dick out at Wesson. He was a student at Wesson.

BOWLIN: Did they all serve overseas?

JORDAN: Yes, they were all pilots.

BOWLIN: Is that right?

JORDAN: Yes, they all went overseas and all were pilots.

BOWLIN: All came back safely?

JORDAN: Yes, didn't get a scratch. Joe had to bail out one night over India. He got out of gas; he got lost and got out of gas. He told the crew, he said, "Well, we are out of gas and there is nothing to do but bail out." He told them that the way was open and they had to go, but nobody went. He was the first one that bailed out. He would have been the last one to leave the plane, but wouldn't anybody else jump until he jumped. He went out first and then they all followed him. No one lost their life.

BOWLIN: That's great that they came through that way.

JORDAN: We had some terrible times during that time. I lived on my knees.

BOWLIN: Most people did. My only two (2) brothers served in that war.

JORDAN: They all came back as healthy as they were when they went.

BOWLIN: There were some casualties in through this community though,

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wasn't there?

JORDAN: Yes, we lost boys. A Ratcliff, no, not Mr. Lane, a Norton boy out here.

BOWLIN: I believe one of Holmes Lofton's boys was one of the casualties, I believe.

JORDAN: Yes, they lost their boy and Charles Griffin had a boy to die.

BOWLIN: Right. I believe I remember that.

JORDAN: We lost some boys. Mrs. Gussie Arnold, didn't she lose one? No, I don't believe she did.

BOWLIN: I don't know that she did. I know that she had two (2) boys, but I don't know that she lost one in service.

JORDAN: I don't remember.

BOWLIN: I was just looking at this board. This is right interesting. You were talking about writing on this board that your son made this for you when he went into service or about that time.

JORDAN: While he was in college he did that furniture.

BOWLIN: This bookcase?

JORDAN: Yes, that bookcase. And he had this little piece of wood left, you know. He just varnished it or whatever he did to it. It was nice then. It looked nice when he brought it for me, but I have always used it to write on, and I still do. I write on it yet.

BOWLIN: That's just a plain board, but I had never thought of that. I always try to get a book and prop up to write on.

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JORDAN: On Sunday afternoon I would sit out in the shade somewhere in an armchair, you know. That would fit across my chair and I would write to the boys on Sunday afternoons.

BOWLIN: That is a good idea. I have never seen that done before. That is an idea that I will take advantage of because I need one. Let's see, we have discussed the war. I want to ask you something about the Board of Supervisors. I believe the Board of Supervisors and all that was already in effect when you came here, right?

JORDAN: Yes, we had Supervisors.

BOWLIN: Your county government was already set up; your sheriff and all that?

JORDAN: Yes, we had our county officers.

BOWLIN: Were they responsible for the upkeep of the roads and everything?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: The way they are now, they had similar responsibilities?

JORDAN: Yes, like it is today. Very much like it is today. Of course, there have been lots of improvements, but they were responsible for the roads and what-not. Mr. Jones was a member - the man that we bought this place from - Mr. Quit Jones, he was a member of the Board of Supervisors a long time.

BOWLIN: Was a Mr. Lewis a supervisor at one time, a Mr. Washie Lewis?

JORDAN: That was in Lincoln County.

BOWLIN: Oh, that's right, he was across the line over there.

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JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Now, did Mr. Jordan ever hold a public office?

JORDAN: Yes, he was floater representative from Franklin and Lincoln counties one time.

BOWLIN: In the State Legislature?

JORDAN: Yes, that was the only office he ever held.

BOWLIN: When was that, Mrs. Jordan? Do you remember the year?

JORDAN: Let me see, who was the governor then?

BOWLIN: In other words, it was somewhere in the thirties that he served in the State Legislature?

JORDAN: Yes.

BOWLIN: Just what effect did the closing of Independence school have on this community?

JORDAN: It was detrimental to the ongoing of the social life and what-not. We had no ball games to go to and no things at the school house to come to.

BOWLIN: No common interest?

JORDAN: No, it took us to McCall for everything. It was a hindrance to our progress in a way to lose our school.

BOWLIN: Yes, I'm sure it was, because that was the common interest of this whole community.

JORDAN: Yes, it was the community center and we just had to go somewhere else, if we had any amusement, you know. I missed a lot of ball games that I would have enjoyed down here.

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BOWLIN: Did you like basketball?

JORDAN: Oh, I loved it. I loved it. When my children were playing I just enjoyed it so, and I always enjoyed it.

BOWLIN: Basketball was really the sport in the school at that time.

JORDAN: It wasn't too rough; it was not like football. I am afraid of football; it is too rough.

BOWLIN: What time did Independence school leave here? It must have been sometime, was it in the early Fifties? Somewhere in the Fifties, I believe, or was it in the Sixties? I believe it was in the late Fifties when the Independence School was disbanded.

JORDAN: I imagine it was. If I could talk to some of these kids around here that had to go up there, they all know.

BOWLIN: I believe it was somewhere around that time, because I remember about the time it was. Some where around the late Fifties.

JORDAN: My children all finished high school at Copiah-Lincoln except Joe. He just wouldn't go away from home to go to high school. The school was not an accredited school and we wanted them to go farther than just high school.

BOWLIN: Yes, I see.

JORDAN: If they didn't get a better foundation they couldn't go on.

BOWLIN: They couldn't make it in college.

JORDAN: No, they couldn't, so they all went to Copiah-Lincoln and finished high school except Joe. Of course, Joe got in Southern alright. He made his grade and got in. He got two (2) years there before the army got him, but he never did go any more, then. He married while he was in service

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and stayed in ten (10) years. Dick went on because he played ball. He made his way playing ball, so he went on. Of course, we sent Milton and Ann on through. Now, Milton didn't graduate. He was at State. No, let's see...

BOWLIN: Ole Miss?

JORDAN: Yes, he was at Ole Miss. He was a senior, but he didn't get to graduate, because he had to go on, you know. So, when he came back, his daddy was getting old enough he couldn't carry on in the store so and I had written to Milton before he got out and asked him what he would say if I asked him about coming home and taking over and he said, "Well, I have always wanted to come back home and live, but I wouldn't tell you because I was afraid some of the rest of the children wanted it and I didn't want to be in their way." But they were all married except him. Of course Ann was a young girl. She was single, but of course she couldn't take over like. So when he came home we told him we were going to give him the store. He said, "Well, if you're going to give me the store I will always be in it and there is no point in me going on and getting a diploma just to say that I have finished college." He was a music student. He never would take; he would take anything else but the music had to go on too. So he was going to be a musician or nothing and that was the size of it. So he didn't want to go on then. When he got out of service, he said, "If I'm going to take store I'll just..."

BOWLIN: About what, when was that, I mean when did you turn it over to him? That was in the Fifties too, wasn't it?

JORDAN: When he got home out of the service and Ann married and he was at home just before she married and seems like she married in... I

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can't remember. I can't remember dates, never could in history. I don't remember.

BOWLIN: But it was back, I think it was in the Fifties somewhere. The reason I said that, we came along in the early Sixties and he already had the store then. So I know it must have been in the Fifties.

JORDAN: I'm sure it was. It was along in the Fifties. That's what it was.

BOWLIN: Well, Milton plays the piano now, I believe, doesn't he?

JORDAN: Yes, he play any kind of insturment.

BOWLIN: Any instrument?

JORDAN: He loves music.

BOWLIN: I know, someone told me that he played. I have heard them say he played for the church.

JORDAN: He does. He plays for the Masons a lot and dances and things, you know, on Saturday nights. So when he's gone all night long, he goes all over the country, to Jackson and Baton Rouge and everywhere. Sings on Saturday night. Well, on Sunday morning he doesn't get in until three or four o'clock. After they've played and they eat and they separate, he's just up all night Saturday night. Well, sometimes he doesn't get to church. And then these Taylors out here are good churches workers; they are the best.

BOWLIN: That's Mrs. Ruby Taylor's children?

JORDAN: Yes, one of the daughters plays real well and Milton usually leads and that's the biggest help that she needs, because sometimes she doesn't get the time just right. She reads notes real well, but if Milton

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leads, he can lead her.

BOWLIN: He can direct?

JORDAN: They can do real well together and she plays all the time, but if she's not there he plays.

BOWLIN: Was Mr. Jordan a Mason?

JORDAN: Yes, and Milton is a Shriner.

BOWLIN: He is?

JORDNA: Yes, and so that's the reason he goes to a lot of those things and it takes him all night on Saturday night and they have their get together and he's in a little band. There's four (4) of them and they get along real well.

BOWLIN: I knew he was in a quartet at one time. I've heard him sing.

JORDAN: They still got that quartet. They get together once in a while, but they are not organized like they were any more. But he loves that little band and they all go places and play. Two (2) of the men, well three (3) of them, two (2) of them is in Summit, and one (1) is in McComb and Milton, that's the four (4) of them... And they do enjoy it. He loves music. He and Ann are both inclined that way.

BOWLIN: Just for the record now, in your own words, I just want you to tell us what you think about... Well, one thing, about your opinion of Franklin County now. Also, about the quality of life in this little small community. Just what does it mean to you?

JORDNA: Well, it is ideal as far as I know. There is no higher and lower when it comes to the needs of the community. Everybody falls in.

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Our barn was burned recently - sometime last year - and everybody as far as knew or could see the smoke or anything else, came and worked just as hard as they could trying to put it out. It was too far gone when we knew it. It is remarkable to see the turnout of the people; there is no blacks or white when it comes to that. Of course, there are no blacks in the community, but everybody is there with both hands, just anything in the world they can. It's just ideal; that's just all I can say.

BOWLIN: Well, it's just a good quality of life. The religious influence the churches had. With two (2) good churches in this community, I'm sure it had a...

JORDAN: It is; it's a good... You can say three (3) because Mt. Gilead is right over the way.

BOWLIN: Yes, Mt. Gilead is right over the hill. That's true, that's three (3) right in this community.

JORDAN: Exactly so, and we have, of course the membership is small at Ebenezer, but it is a good agreeable Christian hearted people and the other churches are the same way. Now I have always visited at other churches, not as much at Mt. Gilead, because it was farther away. But I'd go to Concord always when I could and I tell you one reason. I was always a charter member more or less at Ebenezer and I felt like I was responsible for carrying on more. But if I go to Concord I'm not, I don't have any responsibility. I can go in and sit down and enjoy it all. I love to go over there. It's just great. It couldn't be any better with human beings is the way I call it.

BOWLIN: Well, I know the moral values too in this type of community. There is a high regard for moral standards and values and a good place to

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raise your children.

JORDAN: Yes, it is. It is great.

BOWLIN: Well, it must be kind of gratifying. I know we talked about the young people going off to war, but some went off to the shipyards and places and stayed and didn't come back, but they can't wait to retire to get back home.

JORDAN: Back home is right.

BOWLIN: There is a general homecoming I notice in our part of the country.

JORDAN: Yes, there is. There are so many of them who are coming back home.

BOWLIN: Coming back home. And so many of our young people, so many of our young married people are coming back here.

JORDAN: Coming back, want their homes here.

BOWLIN: I think they are realizing that the quality of life in a small community is better.

JORDAN: It is better.

BOWLIN: It is better. A good place to bring up your children.

JORDAN: It is great. I wouldn't ask for better.

BOWLIN: Well, in just a final conclusion then, I just want to ask you, do you think you have had a good life?

JORDAN: I think it has been excellent. I have had some hardships, but it made a better Christian out of me in a way. There are two sides to life and how we make it, you know, means a lot. So I was unfortunate. I lost my parents early in life. My mother died when I was twelve (12) years old

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and there were seven (7) of us. I was ten (10) years old and my sister was twelve (12); she was the oldest one and the baby was born the day she died. Well, that was a terrible blow to a family of children. Our father, he wasn't as Christian, he was, he lived it. He was honest and fair in work and everything, but he didn't impress us with the everyday living of life like mama did, you know. Like I remember that she taught me when I was just ten (10) years old and under ten (10) years old. But that was hard and then I lost my daddy when I was seventeen (17), but he married a good woman. She had two (2) children of her own and we got along. We never did have a cross word. And as soon as I got, I went to work at sixteen (16) years old and I am working today. And I haven't regretted any of that. And I have had a happy life. I couldn't ask for better. I have had excellent health. I have gone through some serious operations, but the Lord has been with me through those things and He is still today. So, I don't have any problems or any regrets.

BOWLIN: You don't know, that's so good to hear people say that. They have to have lived a rich full life.

JORDAN: It is. I'm happy and I loved life and I love people, but I'm ready to go when my Master calls me. I keep; I'm ready.

BOWLIN: You stay ready. That's the way to be.

JORDAN: Yes, I'm ready. Because I don't harbor enemies or ill will. I don't do that and I love life.

BOWLIN: Well, I feel like that people in this community respond in the same way. Because I've always heard that. Miss Bessie, was, you are affectionately called Miss Bessie.

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JORDAN: Yes, everybody calls me Miss Bessie.

BOWLIN: Most people that I have heard refer always say Miss Bessie is such a lovely person.

JORDAN: If I have any enemies, they keep it to themselves; they don't tell me.

BOWLIN: Well, that's the best way to keep it. That is the best thing that enemies can do.

JORDAN: That is right.

BOWLIN: Well, we appreciated this interview just so much and have enjoyed being with you.

JORDAN: I'm just so glad. I've enjoyed it.

BOWLIN: I just wish you many more happy years.

JORDAN: Oh, there can't be many more, but that's all right. That is out of our hands, you know.

BOWLIN: Well, we just - that is right. That is out of our hands.

JORDAN: Well, but, I'm ready. I stay ready, but I love life. I have enjoyed it.

BOWLIN: And I have just enjoyed being with you and talking to you. Well, I hope, I am sure this will be a good contribution to our state history, that the people can know something about the quality of life in our small community.

JORDAN: Well, I hope so. I'm sorry that I couldn't tell you more dates, but I'm...

BOWLIN: Well, we know the general area, general time when all of

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these things took place. Well, this has been a pleasure, as I say, being with you. I know this is going to be an asset to our book.

JORDAN: Well, I'm glad in all the round that I met you. I have enjoyed you so much. You're just my kind of people and I've enjoyed it.

BOWLIN: Well it is just a pleasure to be here and this will be recorded. And this is Mrs. Bowlin recording from the home of Mrs. Bessie Dickson Jordan and the date is May 26, I believe, 1977.

(End of Interview)

(Transcribed by Mrs. Austin D. Bowlin)

Transcriber's Notes

¹Mississippi State College for Women, now known as Mississippi University

for Women or M.U.W.

²Mr. Son Bowlin.

³Mr. Coley Ratcliff.