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Effie Lee Williams

Interviewee

Rt. 2 Box 119

Silver Creek, Miss.

Address

Priscilla P. Jhansen

Director

Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin
Regional Library

Aug. 22, 1978

Date of Agreement

Life in Lawrence County, MS; Weather signs and superstitions.

Subject of Tape(s)

Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library
Oral History
Data Sheet

FULL NAME Effie Lee Williams
ADDRESS Rt. 2, Box 119, Silver Creek, MS PHONE _____
BIRTHPLACE Silver Creek, Lawrence Cty, MS DATE OF BIRTH 1900
EDUCATION Pleasant Grove (Crooked Creek), Lawrence County, MS.

OCCUPATION Housewife

TRAVELS Arizona, Nevada

SPOUSE'S FULL NAME 1st - Arch Showers
BIRTHPLACE Unknown DATE OF BIRTH Unknown
OCCUPATION Railroad hand

NUMBER OF CHILDREN Five (5)
NAMES OF CHILDREN
Levi Showers
R. V. Showers
Three others - deceased

FATHER'S FULL NAME Levi Smith
BIRTHPLACE Lawrence County, MS DATE OF BIRTH 1878
OCCUPATION Farmer
MOTHER'S FULL NAME Chimpie Bryant
BIRTHPLACE Unknown DATE OF BIRTH 1880
OCCUPATION Homemaker

MAJOR NATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE DISCUSSED _____

INTERVIEWEE'S AREA OF INTEREST AND/OR CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY
Cooking; Superstitions; Weather signs; Songs;

Evelyn Benham
INTERVIEWER

June 26, 1977
DATE

Home-Rt. 2, Silver Creek, MS
PLACE OF INTERVIEW

Effie Lee Williams
INTERVIEWEE'S NAME

An Interview with
Effie Lee Williams
June 26, 1977

Interviewed by
Evelyn Benham

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

BENHAM: This is an interview with Effie Lee Williams, Route 2, Box 119, Silver Creek, Mississippi, June 26, 1977. Interviewed by Evelyn Benham.

Mrs. Williams, what is your full name?

WILLIAMS: Effie Lee Williams.

BENHAM: When were you born?

WILLIAMS: 1900.

BENHAM: Where were you born?

WILLIAMS: Lawrence County. Here in Silver Creek. My daddy always told me I was born about about a mile down here.

BENHAM: A mile from where?

WILLIAMS: I reckon it's about two (2) miles from here, I think, down here in the old Rusty place. Yes, it would be about three (3) miles from Hooker, wouldn't it? You know, down here what they called the old Rusty place? Two (2) she says.

BENHAM: You think it's about two (2) miles from here?

WILLIAMS: I thought it was more than that.

BENHAM: Two (2) miles from Silver Creek? About three (3) miles?

WILLIAMS: We always called it five (5) miles from here. You see that was on down close to the river.

BENHAM: Close to what? Pearl River?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: What is your father's full name?

WILLIAMS: Levi Smith.

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BENHAM: When was he born? Well, how old was he when he died? Do you remember?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am, not exactly. He was - he died in Thirty something, Twenty...

BENHAM: How old was he when he died? Do you remember how old he was when he died?

WILLIAMS: He was close to - well, let me see now. I was born in 1900. And he always told me he was twenty-two (22) years older than me.

BENHAM: Twenty-two (22) years older than you. All right, then we'll go check back with that.

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. Then from Twenty, that made... He died in Twenty...

BENHAM: No, I just wanted to know how old he was. How old he was when he died? Do you remember how old he was?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. I could count it in a little bit but...

BENHAM: That's all right. Just a minute, I'll tell you in just a minute. He was born in 1878. He was twenty-two (22) years older than you were and you were born in 1900 and so that brings it up to 1878. That's when your father was born. Okay?

WILLIAMS: That's pretty close to it.

BENHAM: Okay. Do you know where he was born?

WILLIAMS: Lawrence County is all that I know.

BENHAM: What kind of work did your father do?

WILLIAMS: Just farmed.

BENHAM: What is your mother's maiden name? What was your mother's name

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before she got married?

WILLIAMS: Bryant, Chimpie Bryant.

BENHAM: Chimpie?

WILLIAMS: Chimpie, C-H-I-M-P-I-E.

BENHAM: All right. When was your mother born?

WILLIAMS: I used to know, of course. Let's see.

BENHAM: Well, how old was she when she died?

WILLIAMS: She was fifteen (15) years old, she said, when her first child was born and he was born, he was about five (5) years older than me. Our old family Bible got burned up and I just can't remember what was her proper age or my father neither. That's as close as I could come to it.

BENHAM: Well, do you remember how old she was when she died? Can you remember that?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am.

BENHAM: All right.

WILLIAMS: Looks like I can remember things further, you know, what she told me.

BENHAM: Yes, I know.

WILLIAMS: But after their death, we kept up with it. Now I expect some of the other children might know it to a tee.

BENHAM: That's all right. I'll check back. You say she was fifteen (15) years old when you were born?

WILLIAMS: When her oldest child. He was five (5) years older than me. That made her be...

BENHAM: Let me see. You were born in 1900. And they were older than

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you. That was...

WILLIAMS: He was five (5) years older than me.

BENHAM: That was 1895 when your brother was born, right?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: You said he was five (5) years older than you were?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: So he was born in 1895.

WILLIAMS: I think that's right. I heard him say he used to go over it after Mama died, but we didn't write it down and I had a fall and it looks like I can't think fast.

BENHAM: Well, that's all right. We've got it down now. Did your mother work away from the house? Did she have a job working for somebody else?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. I never knew her to do anything but work there on the farm.

BENHAM: How old were you when you started school?

WILLIAMS: Six (6).

BENHAM: Do you remember the kind of school that you went to?

WILLIAMS: Went to school in an old church house.

BENHAM: Where was this school?

WILLIAMS: Down here.

BENHAM: Down here where?

WILLIAMS: Right down here at the church, down where the church is at now.

BENHAM: What's it called?

WILLIAMS: Pleasant Grove.

BENHAM: All right.

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WILLIAMS: Back then they might have called it Crooked Creek because I...
Old Crooked Creek.

BENHAM: Is that school still standing?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. That school has been burned down for years. And
they built another little school. And there's where we went to school at.

BENHAM: All right. How long did you go to school? Do you remember?

WILLIAMS: I was about eighteen (18).

BENHAM: Until you were about eighteen (18) years old? Did they have
school all the time, all year long?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. They just had school about six (6) months.

BENHAM: I see.

WILLIAMS: Was it six (6) months?

BENHAM: That's about it. That's about it. How did you get there?
Did you walk to school?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am,

BENHAM: About how many children went to school when you went?

WILLIAMS: Oh, Lord.

BENHAM: Were there lots of them?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. There were over a hundred of them went.

BENHAM: What did you like best about school? Why did you like to go
to school?

WILLIAMS: I just like to go. It was hard to learn. Papa whipped me
so much, I reckon, I got scared about not learning.

BENHAM: Well, why did he whip you? Because you couldn't learn or what?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

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BENHAM: Oh, goodness. Well, it was fun to go to school and play with all the children.

WILLIAMS: Yes, I tried. Anyhow, I got knowledge of what I was going to school for.

BENHAM: Some people just take longer to understand something. I know I do. But once I learn it, it's there forever I think. What kind of games did you children play when you were little at school or at home? What did you play?

WILLIAMS: I don't know what they called it, we'd run around and drop handkerchiefs. You know, get a ring, just ring up and...

BENHAM: They call that "drop the handkerchief."

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: Now, what else did you play? Did you play hide and seek?

WILLIAMS: Yes, and get a vine and throw it like that and jump. Stand in one place and see how many times you can jump.

BENHAM: Oh, jump the rope. Oh, you used a vine? What kind of vine was this?

WILLIAMS: Just any kind of old vine we could get.

BENHAM: Grape vine or something?

WILLIAMS: Grape vine or muscadine vine.

BENHAM: All right, you said you went to school until you were about eighteen (18), right? All right. What was your first home like when you got married? How old were you when you got married?

WILLIAMS: Eighteen (18).

BENHAM: All right.

WILLIAMS: Nineteen (19). I was nineteen (19) when I got...

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BENHAM: Well, what was your first house like when you got married?

Do you remember the house you went to when you got married?

WILLIAMS: Yes, the old house burned down here not too long ago.

BENHAM: Where is it? Is it where this house is now? Where this house is got burned. Where did you move to when you got married?

WILLIAMS: I moved in the house with my mother-in-law and daddy-in-law.

BENHAM: And where was that?

WILLIAMS: That was back up here about a mile. Newt Showers' old place, they called it.

BENHAM: The what?

WILLIAMS: Newt Showers' place.

BENHAM: Newt Showers'. Did you have a lot of neighbors?

WILLIAMS: I liked to sew.

BENHAM: What?

WILLIAMS: I liked to sew.

BENHAM: Oh, they sewed?

WILLIAMS: Yes, you know, making quilts and...

BENHAM: Oh, yes. Did you have neighbors living near you? Did you have a lot of neighbors that lived around you?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. Not no lot of them, you know, but it was pretty thickly settled.

BENHAM: Okay. Do you know of any home remedies that you people used to use a long time ago? Say like if you got the stomachache, what did you do for that?

WILLIAMS: Honey, I don't know.

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BENHAM: Well, you had to know, What did your mama do? What did you do?

WILLIAMS: I can't... I want to keep putting that hand up there.

BENHAM: I know it and then we can't hear you.

WILLIAMS: Let's see. I was a big girl before I knew them to do anything. They'd get some kind of weed they called goldenrod for fever and bathe you in it.

BENHAM: Bathe you in the goldenrod?

WILLIAMS: Yes, boil it and make a kind of tea and let you drink some of it and then they'd bathe you in this old weed we call "bitterweed." These little yellow balls.

BENHAM: Yes, yes, and that was, what was that for?

WILLIAMS: Fever.

BENHAM: Fever?

WILLIAMS: Yes. And I don't know what she did when we had old runny nose. I can't remember that now.

BENHAM: Well, what did you do? Suppose you cut yourself on something with something, what did you do about that?

WILLIAMS: She'd put some turpentine on it or coal oil, one.

BENHAM: All right, What did you do when you went to church? What did you all do when you went to church?

WILLIAMS: Nothing but sit down and listen at them - the old folks, you know.

BENHAM: Did you sing in church?

WILLIAMS: Yes. We had to help them sing.

BENHAM: Where is this church that you went to?

WILLIAMS: Pleasant Grove down near Crooked Creek.

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BENHAM: Did that first church burn up or something?

WILLIAMS: Yes, I think they had two (2) to get burnt, two (2) schools.

BENHAM: All right. What did you all do to entertain yourselves when you were growing up? You know, some kind of social life.

WILLIAMS: Just played.

BENHAM: What did you do? What did you do? And when you got older, did you go on a picnic?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am.

BENHAM: You didn't do that?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. Never been to a picnic in my life.

BENHAM: You haven't? Oh my goodness, we are going to have to remedy that, won't we? All right. Well, did everybody get together?

WILLIAMS: Nothing but go to church and Sunday School and back home.

BENHAM: What was your husband's name?

WILLIAMS: My first husband's name was Arch Showers.

BENHAM: Showers. What was his first name? His first name?

WILLIAMS: Arch.

BENHAM: What?

WILLIAMS: Arch.

BENHAM: Arch Showers?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: All right, and how many children did you all have?

WILLIAMS: Born is five (5) but you know, there weren't but three (3) of them...

BENHAM: Well, what were their names? What were your children's names?

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WILLIAMS: R. V. and Levi.

BENHAM: "V?" "V?"

WILLIAMS: Levi's the oldest.

BENHAM: Levi. Levi what?

WILLIAMS: Showers.

BENHAM: All right. What was the second name? What was the second child's name?

WILLIAMS: R. V.

BENHAM: R. V. Showers?

WILLIAMS: Them are the only two (2) that lived.

BENHAM: Oh, you only had two (2) that lived.

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am, and a little girl named Tippi.

BENHAM: Did she live to be grown?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. She died little.

BENHAM: All right. Well, let's see. What did you do in your new home? What kind of food did you cook?

WILLIAMS: Greens, bread, peas, made cakes and egg pies and picked berries and things like that and made pies.

BENHAM: Did you all ever quilt? Did a lot of women get together and make quilts and things like that?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. We just... When I got big enough, we just quilted our own quilts. All of us sisters, we'd quilt. We'd get together and quilt. I know Mama used to have some of her folks to come and help her quilt.

BENHAM: Can you tell me something about your wedding day? Do you remember when you got married?

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WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: What did you wear when you got married?

WILLIAMS: A white dress. Bought a white dress from my cousin.

BENHAM: Do you know how it was made? Can you remember?

WILLIAMS: It was made with old-fashioned gathers on the waist.

BENHAM: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Buttoned up and down the back.

BENHAM: All right. What kind of work did your husband do?

WILLIAMS: He worked on the railroad.

BENHAM: What was the name of the railroad?

WILLIAMS: Mississippi Central.

BENHAM: All right. Do you think that the black people and the white people get along pretty well together?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: Do you think that they have always gotten along well together?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. Of course all them that we were around. We used to help her papa scrape cotton and we always got along good. Never had no shouting and fighting. We'd all get in the field and scrape cotton. That's all we knew to do.

BENHAM: All right. What are some of your favorite recipes? Do you have any favorite recipes that you go by all the time and cook?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am.

BENHAM: Well, when you first got married and when you were growing up with your children and you were married, what were your favorite recipes?

WILLIAMS: Making Irish potatoes in salad and I used to make eggs.

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Take eggs and sweet milk, boil the eggs and then chip them up. Put sweet milk and butter in it and set it in the stove and let it bake.

BENHAM: I bet that was good. Did you hard-boil the eggs first?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: What was that called?

WILLIAMS: Egg pie.

BENHAM: Oh, it's an egg pie?

WILLIAMS: Just like you make a bread pie.

BENHAM: Yes.

WILLIAMS: You know, you drop your little dumplings through it.

BENHAM: Oh, you put the dumplings with the eggs?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. You see, I had done boiled the eggs and then have enough water in them to drop you a few dumplings in there.

BENHAM: Oh, yes. I bet that was good.

WILLIAMS: And turnip greens are good. Cook the meat down in them. We had old-time meat then.

BENHAM: What kind of old-time meat did you call it?

WILLIAMS: Well, we killed our own hog and smoked it.

BENHAM: Oh, yes.

WILLIAMS: And put that meat on and let it get done just about and then put me some turnip greens in there and we called this a meal dumpling.

BENHAM: Meal dumpling?

WILLIAMS: Yes. We don't put any milk in that. Just make them up with egg and salt and baking powder like that and a little flour.

BENHAM: Oh, I bet that was good, too. It sounds good, doesn't it?

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WILLIAMS: Then drop that over in that turnip and let it get done.

BENHAM: And you put dumplings in the turnips, too?

WILLIAMS: Yes, meal. Make it up out of meal, you know. Make it up about like them old balls of thread.

BENHAM: Oh, you mean, was this cornmeal that you made it with?

WILLIAMS: Yes, cornmeal that we raised.

BENHAM: And you put cornmeal and what else?

WILLIAMS: Cornmeal and a little salt and...

BENHAM: Cornmeal and salt and what else did you put in with it? How did you hold it together? Did you put milk or water?

WILLIAMS: Put a little flour. Put a little flour in it to hold it together.

BENHAM: Yes, you had to put something else.

WILLIAMS: Oh, your water, some water.

BENHAM: Put water?

WILLIAMS: Water.

BENHAM: Put water.

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am, put water.

BENHAM: And that held it together?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: And you didn't use baking powder or anything?

WILLIAMS: No, don't need no baking powder.

BENHAM: And when do you drop it into the turnips? Just before they get done?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

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BENHAM: Oh, I see. And you called that what? Meal turnip greens?

WILLIAMS: I don't know what we called it.

BENHAM: You called it something. You called it turnip green meal or something like that.

WILLIAMS: Meal.

BENHAM: Dumplings.

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: Dumplings turnip greens?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: Oh, yes, dumplings turnip green. That's cute. I never heard of that expression before.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: I never heard of that name before.

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. I've cooked a many one of them.

BENHAM: Yes. All right, is there any other recipes you want to tell me about?

WILLIAMS: I loved to make tea cakes.

BENHAM: Oh, I know it. I never have been able to make those right. How did you do that?

WILLIAMS: Well, just sift off flour and put a little soda and a little baking powder. You put a right smart little baking powder in it. And make it up with water and - it's mixed up there in my mind. What pie we talking about now?

BENHAM: We're talking about the tea cakes.

WILLIAMS: Tea cakes, yes, ma'am. Put a little soda and baking powder and get you some syrup, according to how many you want. You get you a cup of

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syrup or two (2) cups of syrup. Get two (2) cups of syrup with a big family. And get two (2) cups of syrup and about a cup of water. (Pause.)

BENHAM: Mrs. Williams, what did this, right where you are living, what was it like a long time ago? What was this little community called in here?

WILLIAMS: Hooker.

BENHAM: Hooker.

WILLIAMS: We had a Hooker Post Office.

BENHAM: Where was this post office? Do you know?

WILLIAMS: You know out here where Mr. Dayt, I don't know what - Mr. Johnson, Johnson that was our postmaster, sure was.

BENHAM: What else did you have out here besides a post office?

WILLIAMS: Well, he had a little store there and we'd go there and buy stuff. Sometimes Daddy'd send us out there to buy tobacco and snuff, little baking powder and soda. He'd go when it was time to make grocery. What little groceries, you know. We farmed and we near about lived out of the farm. He'd buy a little rice sometimes. We'd be glad for him to buy rice.

BENHAM: I bet you did.

WILLIAMS: He always kept a little rice and flour.

BENHAM: Well, do they still call this community the Hooker Community?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. That's what's what on our telephone. Lot of them are on Hooker Road.

BENHAM: I see.

WILLIAMS: I don't know what they call mine. I don't think they got it on there. It's an old dummy line now, but they still call it Hooker I imagine. The old Hooker Road joins...

BENHAM: All right. Do you know any old superstitions, like a black

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cat crossing your path?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: I mean, that's a superstition. Do you know of any other old superstitions that you can tell me about?

WILLIAMS: It's a rabbit.

BENHAM: A rabbit?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: What about a rabbit?

WILLIAMS: Says if a rabbit crosses the road going to your left, it's good luck.

BENHAM: Oh, my goodness. I'm really going to have to watch that from now on out. Well, suppose he's going the other way?

WILLIAMS: It's bad luck. Some folks say turn around and go back and some folks would back up and walk backwards...

BENHAM: They would? Oh, my goodness.

WILLIAMS: Till they crossed where the rabbit was.

BENHAM: Oh, my goodness.

WILLIAMS: I reckon that's a superstition.

BENHAM: Yes, that's a superstition. Yes. Well, what else about it? Did they...

WILLIAMS: Those are the only two I know about. The black cat and the rabbit.

BENHAM: Well, did people use the signs to plant by? Like if the moon was full, you didn't plant, or they did plant or something like that?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. Plant on full moon and twin days.

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BENHAM: What's a twin day?

WILLIAMS: Them two (2) little boys. You know, it used to be two little boys on the gold dust box? She might could remember. It would be two little boys and they was black, I think. They'd be just as black as they could be and I don't know what they called that gold dust; they must of called it twin boys, I reckon.

BENHAM: What did they have to do with the planting?

WILLIAMS: I don't know. A lot of folks plant on it now.

BENHAM: They plant when? What connection does the planting have to do with the twin boys?

WILLIAMS: Oh, they say your crop does better, you know. Just like you plant beans or peas?

BENHAM: Yes.

WILLIAMS: If you plant them on them boys, they make them have more peas on the vine.

BENHAM: You mean you have to take the picture off and plant it in the ground?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am.

BENHAM: Then what are you talking about?

WILLIAMS: Just plant it on that sign, that moon, you know, when the moon is in that sign.

BENHAM: When the moon is in the sign?

WILLIAMS: You know, the moon, sometimes the moon is in the...

BENHAM: Oh, yes, it goes around.

WILLIAMS: Yes. See can I get... (Pause)

BENHAM: All right, Mrs. Williams, you were telling me that when they had

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the twins, the zodiac sign of the twins, it meant that was a good time to plant what?

WILLIAMS: Anything.

BENHAM: I see.

WILLIAMS: Anything you want to plant in your garden,

BENHAM: I see. Did you ever hear about the Klu Klux Klan? Did you ever remember hearing your mother speak about that, about that group of people that came through here? Or your great-grandmother? After the Civil War was over? Did you ever hear her speak about that?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. But they told such a little about it. I couldn't even remember anything. Because when I got big enough there weren't none of them in here, I reckon. I never did hear tell of them, nobody in a Klu Klux Klan.

BENHAM: All right. Was your great-grandmother a slave or was she related to a slave or something?

WILLIAMS: Yes, I imagine she was a slave, because she was old, old when I remember.

BENHAM: About how old was she? Do you remember how old she was when you remember how old she was?

WILLIAMS: No.

BENHAM: But she was a slave?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: Your great-grandmother was?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: Do you know what her name was?

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WILLIAMS: On my mama's side?

BENHAM: Yes. Your great-grandmother, the one who was a slave,

WILLIAMS: Both of them,

BENHAM: Both of them were slaves?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: All right. Do you remember their names?

WILLIAMS: Grandmama, my mama's mama, was named Mary. Now I don't know what she went by. One or what. But she said her mama and daddy got killed in slavery times. They gave her to some more folks and I don't know if she went by their name or not.

BENHAM: I see. All right. Sometimes they do that. All right. Can you remember anything that she told you about during the slavery days?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: Can you remember something?

WILLIAMS: She told about how she toted water. She said she mostly helped the lady round the house. I think white people raised her after her parents got killed.

BENHAM: Is there anything else you can remember about the slavery days that you heard your great-grandmother speak about?

WILLIAMS: That's about all I remember hearing her talk about. About her parents got killed and the white lady raised her.

BENHAM: Were they kind to the slaves that you remember?

WILLIAMS: She never said anything about them being mean to her. I never heard her say.

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BENHAM: All right, Did you ever hear of any body getting lynched or hung or something?

WILLIAMS: I don't know, No, ma'am, not since I've been big enough to know. I used to hear some of them talk about somebody getting hung, but I don't know who it was.

BENHAM: Suppose somebody did something wrong a long time ago in the community. What did the people in the community do with them? How did they punish them?

WILLIAMS: When I got big enough to know it, just put them out and make them work the road out that day. Just work them with shovels and hoes and axes and things.

BENHAM: That was a good way, wasn't it?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: Right. Make them work.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: All right. How did the Depression affect you? You remember the depression that came around in the 1930's? How did that affect you and your family?

WILLIAMS: Pretty rough.

BENHAM: How do you mean it was rough? In which way was it rough?

WILLIAMS: Well, there was no money to be made. We just had to live out on the farm.

BENHAM: Do you think that the people that lived on the farm were a whole luckier than the people that had to live in the towns?

WILLIAMS: Was to me then, I'd rather live on the farm.

BENHAM: Well, you could have a cow and you could have a garden, but in

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the city you couldn't have that, could you?

WILLIAMS: No. We had cows and hogs.

BENHAM: So you did get to eat and lots of people that lived in the city didn't have anything to eat, did they?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. That's what we would hear them say.

BENHAM: That's all right.

WILLIAMS: What was that? A spider or a fly?

BENHAM: It was one of those mud daubbers, but that's all right. I want to know how come the people, some of the people at the Pleasant Grove Cemetery, you know, out there, why did some of them want to be buried on top of the ground and some of them in the ground?

WILLIAMS: That's these late ones.

BENHAM: They are? They wanted to be on the top?

WILLIAMS: Yes, they wanted to be in them vaults.

BENHAM: Oh, I see.

WILLIAMS: Put them on top of the ground. But all them older people... I reckon the first one I knew about was Mrs. Mack. And Mattie Sutton from down there at Monticello. I think they buried her son under the ground. Might be she buried her son, but one of them was under the ground and the other one was on top. And then Cousin Bark's wife is buried, was buried on top the ground. Those are kind of late people. They were put there since '55.

BENHAM: I see.

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. From '55 back they were all buried under the ground.

BENHAM: All right. Do you know any old songs?

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WILLIAMS: That my mother used to sing?

BENHAM: Or that you used to sing to your children. Do you know any old songs?

WILLIAMS: I near about forgot all them old songs. I used to sing, sometimes I'd sing "Rock-a-bye-baby," That was a song Mama taught us when we were nursing and I still sung.

BENHAM: Well, can you sing some of it for me?

WILLIAMS: I can sing some of it.

BENHAM: Well, go ahead and sing it. I'll help you to start off if you want me to. Da-da-da, go ahead, Rock-a-bye-baby.

WILLIAMS: Rock-a-bye-baby, don't you cry.
Mama be back after while.
Rock-a-bye-baby, don't you cry.
Mama be back after while.

BENHAM: Oh, that's very sweet. Yes, I've never heard that version of it. Yes, that's very pretty.

WILLIAMS: And our church song, we sing "Glory Halleluiah,"

BENHAM: You want to sing a part of it?

WILLIAMS: I can't sing much now, you see, how I...

BENHAM: That's all right. Oh, I think it was beautiful. Well, sing as much as you can sing. Does it go "Glory, glory, Halleluiah?"

WILLIAMS: Glory, glory, Halleluiah, glory, glory, Halleluiah, I can't sing. I done forgot it.

BENHAM: That's all right. Glory, glory, Halleluiah.

WILLIAMS: Glory, glory, Halleluiah, glory, glory, Halleluiah. I just

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can't think now of the words, I keep forgetting.

BENHAM: I know it's kind of hard when you get a little older to remember.

WILLIAMS: I used to sing:

Swing low sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home,
Swing low sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home.

BENHAM: All right, that's fine, That's fine. That's nice.

WILLIAMS: I know a little bit more of that, but I just can't get it together.

BENHAM: That's all right. Can you tell me some of your hobbies? What are some of your hobbies?

WILLIAMS: What you call that?

BENHAM: Well, like making a quilt. Do you still make quilts?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: What else do you like to do? Do you like flowers?

WILLIAMS: Oh, yes, I like flowers. I like my garden.

BENHAM: Yes, yes. Well, those are all hobbies, you know.

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: That's what I mean. Do you like to visit people and talk with people?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: Have you done much traveling around?

WILLIAMS: Not too much. I lived in Arizona here about two (2) years.

BENHAM: And where else?

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WILLIAMS: Flagstaff, Arizona. I been out there about, I don't know exactly how many times, about seven (7) or eight (8) times.

BENHAM: Okay.

WILLIAMS: Just on a trip.

BENHAM: Is that where some of your folks live out there?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: Your children?

WILLIAMS: They were my second husband's children.

BENHAM: I see.

WILLIAMS: I go out there to see them.

BENHAM: Well, where else have you been?

WILLIAMS: I went to Arizona and I went to, I had a sister that lived in California and I went out there. And I got a daughter now that lives in - let's see, what's the name of that? Las Vegas, Nevada. Las Vegas, Nevada. Let me get you a letter because you...

BENHAM: Well, that's all right. That's enough, that's in Nevada, you've been to Nevada. That's all you need to say; you don't need to say anything more.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: All right, is that the only places that you have been?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: All right. Do you know how to play any kind of a musical instrument?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am.

BENHAM: You don't know how to play the piano or anything like that?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am.

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BENHAM: A guitar?

WILLIAMS: No.

BENHAM: All right. Do you know any funny stories? Do you know of anything funny that happened to you just recently or a long time ago or something that you can remember?

WILLIAMS: A fall. I had a fall and broke my leg.

BENHAM: Oh, you did? Well, was that funny?

WILLIAMS: Well, it wasn't right then, but you know, sometimes when you get to talking about it, it seems funny.

BENHAM: It does. Well, what happened?

WILLIAMS: Well, I went and put up a hog and she was a pet and she broke in my tater bed and I went out there to go put her in her pen. And I went there and got the hammer and fixed the door so I could nail her up when she got in there. I put her some feed in there and she went in there and went to eating and when she saw me pick up the hammer she say, "Woom," and come out by me. Just come for that leg looked like.

BENHAM: My lands,

WILLIAMS: Knocked it out from underneath and threw me down.

BENHAM: I see. Did you ever get her in the pen?

WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. You see, when that leg broke up there wasn't anything I could do.

BENHAM: I see,

WILLIAMS: I mean I couldn't, it looked like I couldn't stand on this foot. I felt like both of them were broke, but it wasn't but one when I got to the doctor.

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BENHAM: All right. How do you feel about life in general? How do you feel about your life so far? What is your philosophy about life? How do you look at life, you know, living it from day to day? What does your preacher tell you, how to live your life everyday?

WILLIAMS: Be a Christian, yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: Have you always tried to be like that all your life?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: And what else does he say to do? The Bible, you read the Bible, don't you?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

BENHAM: What does the Bible say that we must try to do?

WILLIAMS: Live a perfect life, No sin.

BENHAM: Does it say to love each other?

WILLIAMS: Yes, Love your neighbor as thy love thyself.

BENHAM: That's right,

WILLIAMS: Do unto all men as you would have them do unto you,

BENHAM: Do you try to live by that rule?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: All right. Is there anything else you want to tell me?

WILLIAMS: Not right now, I can't think.

BENHAM: All right. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about that we haven't gone over?

WILLIAMS: No. I always like to go to church and Sunday School. And that's part of my life until when I get where I can't get out here and work and go to church and Sunday School. I tell my boy that's living, I say, "Just put

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me in the old folk's home. I'll be all right."

BENHAM: That's right. Does your son live close by you?

WILLIAMS: Well, he stays a good little piece.

BENHAM: But he lives here in Mississippi?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. He stays up here in what they call New Hebron.

BENHAM: Oh, yes. I know where that is,

WILLIAMS: Back out from New Hebron. Between New Hebron and Mendenhall,
ain't it?

BENHAM: I see.

WILLIAMS: Back in there somewhere.

BENHAM: Does your daughter live around here, too? I mean, no, your
other son?

WILLIAMS: He's dead.

BENHAM: Oh, he's dead?

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. The other two (2).

BENHAM: I see.

WILLIAMS: The little girl. Then I had two (2) that were born dead. They
didn't have any name. Least I never did name them.

BENHAM: All right. Thank you very much, Mrs. Williams. If you don't
have anything else to say, we're going to come to the end of this tape. And I
want to thank you very much for, you know, wanting to help us to participate in
this program. And so I will stop the tape right now.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

BENHAM: And thank you very much again.

WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.

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(End of Interview)

(Transcribed by Evelyn Benham)