

Conversation with 86 year old black female, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi (Transcription)

W4 Side A---1 Begin M4 A (1)

Q. If you keep going on this road, where do you end up? Is it-?

A. Talking about down-?

Q. Yeah, down that way.

A. Well now, you get to this store down here, that end this road. But you go into OKtoc Road.

Q. Yeah, I was thinking we were out getting toward Oktoc.

A. Yeah, that's right, that's right. Yes sir, that's where you'll end up. And of course Oktoc Road keep on down, on down, on down, about I reckon Pleasant Grov or Pine Grove or somewhere I don't know.

Q. Yeah, somewhere around Crawford or Sessums or somewhere like that.

A. That's right yes sir. You can just get on those roads, you know, leaving off Oktoc Road.

Library of Congress

Q. Yeah.

A. Surely is.

A. Are you married?

Q. No.

A: Not married, I see. Well Alright. Well, I tell you it's nice thing to be single.

Q. Yeah, it has its advantages.

A. You know I married, I stayed married about 40 years. I'm mother of how many children? 14; 7 girls, 7 boys; and I have a, I lost one of my sons. Well, My baby got killed in a car wreck and my oldest son died just natural death. He was just 10 and then I lost another son about 3 months and 1/2 ago. He had cancer; and I have another son in St. Louis with cancer, but he is still going, you know, he's still working. Surely is. So I thank the Lord for as well as it is.

Q. You must have a lot of grandchildren.

A. No, don't have too many grandchildren.

Q. Oh really?

Library of Congress

A. That's right. Sure is the truth. You know people don't fool with children now. When I was having my children, I didn't know no better. Of course, this now it's the wrong thing to do because so many sick people on the that account, you know.

Q. Yeah.

A. Sure is.

A. Yes, you want any children?

Q. Oh yeah, I think it would be fun.

A. Well, that's right. Yes sir. Well, they're nice to have. One of my daughter - Yes, I got children in West Point. One of my daughters over here this morning from West Point. Sure was. My second girl. Sure is the

Q. It's nice to have some of them close around.

A. That's right. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Q. Umm. One brother.

A. Sure enough.

Q. Lives in Alabama.

Library of Congress

A. Well alright. Yes, is he married?

Q. Oh yeah. So, I've got a niece and a nephew.

A. I see, good. Yes, surely is.

2

Yes, well I was just glad that we was up there, but it's so hot so you could go up there in the upper room and see.

Q. How does it - Are there stairs inside?

A. Stairs, that's right, stairs inside. It ain't quite finished but along as I go I'm gonna try to add to it you know. I don't mean add no more room but just, you know, kind of fix the inside so it will be beautiful.

Q. How long ago did you say you built it, started it?

A. Oh, let me see, about I reckon it was about 10 or 12 years ago now. Sure is the truth.

Q. You know, this is really pretty out here. You've got a nice porch.

Library of Congress

A. Well alright. My porch, though, it need, it need repair it need fixing and my flowers, I just you know. <unintelligible text> fix that myself. You know, Cans or anything. Cause they'll soon be ready to put in the house or die or something from the cold weather.

Q. They sure are pretty now.

A. Well, thank you ma'am.

Q. You must have to water them a lot.

A. I do. I water them. Surely do.

Q. Do you garden, like, oh I see tomatoes right there.

A. That's right.

Q. That's good.

A. Ah, this tomoato it look like it don't have, you know, it isn't so well; but I just keep it there and the one over there it's going on fine.

Q. Yeah, they look good.

Library of Congress

A. Sure is the truth. If this one had - I paid 35 cents a piece, I believe, for the plants. I didn't plant no tomatoes in the garden. And oh I had such nice tomatoes, you know, for this. They were so pretty, and then they were - children eat them. You like tomatoes?

Q. Oh love 'em (And so are many of the other them's - Not being sure of the transcription methods you've used, I'm using regular spelling for everything except a few words <the?> gonna, cause, gotta) And they just don't taste the same when you buy them in the grocery store.

A. No, don't taste the same.

Q. They cost a fortune and don't taste good.

A. That's right.

Q. Yeah, I usually try to plant tomatoes, but this year all that rain, and then it got dry and they died.

A. I see. Well, alright. Do you live out to the college or you just drive there?

Q. No, I just - yeah - I live up on South Montgomery right before you get to Highway 12.

A. Oh I see. Well alright.

Q. Do you get into Starkville much or do you just stay out-?

Library of Congress

A. You see, You see now, on the Mondays I go to town I set (?) my mission. I have three missions: One is a prayer mission and the, oh I can't think of it now, but anyway; I have three missions. Now this prayer mission I go to town every Monday. While I was doing that mission I challenged the Lord me not me by myself. Challenged 3,345 men to prayer. I often wonder about that because look like the world need prayer so much now. Alright then my, my first work was a certain (?) family worships.

<3?>

now that's that's what's wrong with the world today. Just People just - Their homes is, you know, corrupt. Then the next next work I done was just offering prayer in the home and I had it down, but I don't have it, I can't think of it right now. So, that's the starting of my mind to fix this little you know, prayer house here, surely is. Now the prayer, prayer, prayer meeting that's one. I go to every Wednesday to prayer meeting: that's from 8 till, 8 till 9. Don't have it but just and Then up here it's just an hour. And Anybody can come, you know, what like, but people don't come as I say. And all, It isn't don't hold the services too long for anything. They prayer mission, the prayer meeting, and prayer movement; now, the prayer movement that's the men from 8 to 60 Christ and me, me and christ was able to challenge and as I say, I often wonder about those people some of them. Well now some was real young at the time and I don't know whether they ever think about that or not. And some few people's praying Because if it wasn't, you know, the world couldn't hold up: Yeah, Some few is praying. I'm hoping. Sure is the truth. Your parents living?

Q. Uh huh.

A. Is? Well, that's good.

Library of Congress

Q. Yeah.

A. You're such nice ?.

Q. They're in their 70's and they're very healthy, I'm happy to say.

A. That's right. That's right. Well I'm 84, 86.

Q. Well, you look healthy too.

A. Yes, 86. Well, I'm doing pretty good with health, but my eyes is in bad shape. I had cataract removed off each one of my eyes, but you know after you remove the cataract they still don't, they still isn't just like they once was. But I'm thankful I can see.

Q. Yeah, did you have that done in Starkville?

A. I had one took over in West - in Columbus. That doctor killed himself here last year or year before.

Q. Oh yeah, Dr. Boggess.

A. That's right. And I had the other took off in Denver. I have a daughter out in Denver, and a Dr. ? out in Denver removed the other one, sure did. So they done a good job; I just realize my age now, you know when you start getting old. This other lady told me she say your body start falling apart. She told me her body started falling apart when she got forty.

Library of Congress

Yes, and that's true. Something get wrong, my knees or my eyes, something but This part of my body is pretty good.

Q. Have you lived out here all, a long time?

A. Long time, long time. Now I was born, I don't know whether you know where New Prospect is or not, Now, that's my home church. Well, after I married and me and my husband stayed together a long time, we separated and I moved to town. I was wor do you do you remember when the cotton mill was running?

Q. No, I was not here then, but I know where it is. The old mill.

A. That's right, that's right, yes sir. Well, I worked over there, went to town then, I worked over there and I bought me a home up town and then that's when I united with this Methodist Church, with Griffin. But now New Prospect Methodist Church is my old home church, and as I say, I like to go to anybody's church.

Q. Yeah.

A. I even, well I don't have much time for the Muslims. How you like them?

Q. For the what.

A. Muslims.

Q. Oh well -

Library of Congress

A. You nevers been (?) with them? I just visit them. Yes, I

<4?>

just visit them. I never joined. But I like their method of rearing their children. Seem like, you know, They are - I don't know - but anyway look like they take more pains. You know children, now they don't have much time; People don't have much time to teach them what they need to know. Sure is the truth. But the muslims - I-I I don't visit them that much to their homes or church but sometimes they pick me up, you know I'll be walking from town, and they'll pick me up and I just listen to the children then how they you know, talk. Yes sir.

Q. Do you walk from here to town?

A. Well, I leave walking, but more or less, you know, everybody most know me; they'll pick me up.

Q. Yeah, that'd be a pretty long walk.

A. That's right. Pretty long walk, but I have done it.

Q. How long does it take to get from here

A. Well, I don't know -

Q. if you walk the whole way?

Library of Congress

A. Well about I don't know a pretty good bit. I, I, you know I usually catch somebody and bring me on in. Sure do. But take pretty good and alot of strength. Yeah, it takes a lot of strength. Sure is the truth. It's six miles now from here to town, that's right six miles. I go out to the, we call it the Poorhouse crossing but they call it the Montgomery Extension now. And go out that far. And - Of course now this, if I go down here to the Oktoc road, I get to the, you know asphalt quicker. But that's so much farther around because you have to go on, you know, way on by the college, then on to town.

Q. Yeah, Probably not as many people passing along there to stop.

A. That's right.

Q. Why is this, I know the name of this is, or people call this Poorhouse Road. Why?

A. That's, that's That's the one I'm talking about now when we get out here to the to the road crossing, then the Poorhouse road starts.

Q. Oh, that's on the other side of Montgomery,

A. That's righ, that's right.

Q. O.K.

A. Yeah, surely is.

Library of Congress

Q. I just thought maybe this was called that since it goes straight across.

A. Now, this one have a name, but I can never think I can never think what it is. This little spur road have a name, surely do.

Q. Yeah. There are a lot more gravel roads back in here than I ever knew until I started driving around looking.

A. That's right. You teaching or you working?

Q. I'm teaching there.

A. Oh yes, I see, well alright. yes sir.

Q. But I just, I'm so glad to find you here, to tell- because I've been, I've passed that place so often, and every time I look at it I think, gosh I'd like to know more about that cute little chapel. And I thought you might be the one who would know something about it, and you were the perfect one. Is that, do you, Do you own that, all that land? Or is that all, just the chapel?

A. Well now, on this side, On this side of the road.

5

Q. yeah, that's what I mean. Like where - That's a lot of land.

Library of Congress

A. Well, it do pretty good. Do you see these, Did you see these trailers up here?

Q. Oh yeah.

A. I think It's about it's about 2 acres or 3 acres I sold those people. I wanted an indoor toilet and I sold the part of the land to be able to, you know, fix me an indoor toilet, a long time ago. Surely d

Q. Yeah. Well, what about the cattle, the cows up there?

A. Well, the cattle belong to us too, me and my son.

Q. You got a lot of, a lot going then out here.

A. Yes sir. Well, I just like to have them. The son, wasn't for him, though, I couldn't, you know, I could take care of no cattle.

Q. Yeah. Do You all grow crops too or just the cattle?

A. No, we don't grow no crop; we used to, but you see I'm not able now to do anything and my son working out; Wouldn't have no luck with no cattle, I mean no crop.

Q. What kind of things did you grow when you did?

A. Corn and peas, just anything, you know.

Library of Congress

Q. Yeah.

A. But now, I don't think we ever did have no cotton here, my husband did, but we never did, me and my son.

Q. What was it like when you worked at the cotton mill? What did you do there?

A. Well, I just, I just, you know, swept and cleaned up and do things like that. But it was so interes- I think about that so oft- time, you know, how they - you ever, Ever see them spin the cloth?

Q. Huh-huh

A. Well That's what they done there. The other people, but now I was just to clean up, you know. Sure w

Q. Yeah. That's- I think it'd be kind of interesting to see, you know.

A. Well it is.

Q. to watch it going on. When did they close it down?

A. Well, I don't know. It's been a long time, I reckon maybe - oh, a long time, maybe 8 or 10 years. Oh, It's been longer than that. Long time,

Library of Congress

Q. Yeah.

A. Surely have. I don't know just exactly. But I tell you what started it I guess what did they call that when they started thes, building these houses around, all these big houses and things of that kind? And I can't think now. But anyway that- (<unintelligible text> Note: If this isn't <unintelligible text> hear, see back of this page) They started losing this down, then, and I had worked there until I was, you know, age of, what you cal it, when they -

Q. Retirement?

A. retirement, That's right, Retirement. Yes I had worked there until I was able to retire. And I retired and it didn't go on too much, you know, longer after that.

Q. Well, you know now, that, that old cotton mill is a campus building. Was it-?

A. Well now, that's just the way the building was then, but of course I don't know how it is inside cause I haven't been there, been inside.

Q. I haven't ever been in it, but it's the physical plant building for the school.

A. That's right.

Q. and I just wondered, was the cotton mill connected with the school in some way?

Library of Congress

A. No, no. I guess it was state, I don't know. Well the school's state too, I think. I think it is, yes. Well, anyway I don't think it was connected with the you know, with the cotton mill.

<6?>

Q. Yeah. In fact, you know, that whole area of town, now, they've started calling the Cotton District

A. That's right. Oh, they do?

Q. fixing up little houses around in that area and a lot of apartemnts they've built and they advertise them in the paper as the Cotton District because of the old cotton mill there.

A. I see, I see, well alright; I didn't know that. In fact, I can't read much now, and I never did fool with newspapers too much; I mostly used you know, religious papers. And-So I didn't know I didn't know all that was going on about the Cotton District.

Q. Yeah, it's really changing.

A. That's right. That's right. Yes, everything is changing. Surely is.

Q. What do you think about - That's one of the things I'm trying to get people to talk to me about, the things, the changes in Mississippi. What do you think has changed most in the Mississippi recently or any, in any time?

Library of Congress

A. That's right, well, I just don't know exactly, but well I would say to the living quarters, what I mean by that, just as we was talking about these houses, you know. I can't think to save my life because it used to be just any kind of shack, you know. But of course now, everybody is living in a good house. And I can't think about, when I need to think about things I can't think of them but after all, why, that's one thing that has changed so much, because everytime you look out now if you pass a house used to be a time you'd know a colored person live there but you don't know who there now cause there's houses all the same. Yeah, surely is. So I know it's a great change in the buildings. And-

Q. What about the people, you think the people have changed much?

A. Well, for the worse.

Q. Oh?

A. I ought not to say that, but it's for the worse. Well, it, you know. You have to tell the truth.

Q. Yeah, sure.

A. Yeah, you have to tell the truth. But now The people has changed for the worse now. The reason I know why I know that, I go to the jailhouse every Friday; I go to prayer meeting every Friday morning and then at from 8 to 9 sometime I leave before 9; then I keep on to the jailhouse and I find so many youngsters in there, not too many women, but men, and sometime white people, but not as many as there are colored, so I'm sure the world is changing for the worse. We liv now entirely in Noah's day. Cause people just - they don't regard each other. The least little ole, you know, thing happen, They kill each

Library of Congress

other and all that, so the lives of the people is changing, but it's for the worse. yes, I think we're in the last days now. Noah's time. Surely is.

Q. You think TV might be a bad influence on people?

A. It is a bad influence, a bad influence. Yes sir and I have I have some horses I want to show you.

Q. Oh I would love to see them.

A. They not real now. I'm talking about some pictures.

Q. Oh, oh.

A. Come on in

Q. Oh, you have a nice house.

A. Now some youngsters - I have them right here - some youngsters promised me they gonna frame these for me, but when I went there they were gone. And so I don't know how I gonna do. I reckon I'll just have to wait. Now this horse, I got this from Denver, when I was out there.

Q. Oh, that's nice.

Library of Congress

A. This represents war. Alright And this is the false religion; that's what we're in now, the false religion. Alright and This horse represents disease; and we have a lot of that now. Yes sir. This horse represents famine and we going on to famine. Yeah, we going on to famine, and this is so sad now as much

<7?>

food as we have now; unless we change our lives, then we're going into this. Yes, The Bible don't lie. Yeah, we're going into this. Surely is the truth. And I, I want them framed, you know and put up, up in the prayer house if I can.

Q. Yeah, was, Who did them? some-

A. My cousin of mine, her name is Myrtle. Myrtle Adams. She work out here at Alexander you know, where that school is?

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A. Well, anyway now she had, she done this for me. And I went everywhere in to climbing the steps and dropping tears, wanting to get it done. and none of the people that work with this type of work, they didn't, wouldn't do it for me. So I told her about it and she took it and fixed them for me. And I just- As I said now, I don't know, last week, I think it was I took it down here up town to a place up there where they're selling frames and the man told me he was gonna do it, but I never did catch them open no more. Sure is the truth.

Q. Hmm. That's odd.

Library of Congress

A. And I just, I wouldn't take nothing for these.

Q. Yeah.

A. But while I was out in Denver, as I say, a man preached one Sunday they had these, these horses four horses of Revelation. Course I'm not able to read it, you know, it's it's in print, but I'm not able to read it. But I just love 'em so much. And now as we was talking a while ago about the times, now this is causing all this trouble, false religion. That's cause if we were true religious, you know, the world, the, the world would be a paradise.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Yeah, surely would. Yeah, it's -

Q. I wonder why we're in in false religion, why do you think? I mean-

A. Well the devil, it's the devil; yes, certainly is, that's, that's, that's him. Now He keeps folks minds stirred you know, in the wrong direction, and it's a sad story, but it is. Now, right now sometime, you know, people that talk about, is it hot to you?

Q. No, not really; I like summertime. I like hot weather.

A. Sometime, haven't been too long; let me see now how long that's been, indeed it hadn't been a month got started; but, anyway I was just thinking about that before you come. Lot of people are superstitious. And when they have a little child they say, don't you, don't go around that tree. You come back around this way. Nothing to that. But now Sorcery that's

Library of Congress

true. You believe in that? Now I don't just say, I don't mean I, you know What I'm talking about, now that can be, sorcery. You heard of it?

Q. Oh yeah. yeah.

A. And I tell my children: No mama, no mama, well now whatever the Bible say you just look for that. You just look for it now. It don't, I, I, I don't take part in it, but I do believe because a boy kept coming here one day, one week as I was trying to say while ago, and he said: you know you used to come and pray, a good-sized fellow, somebody sending him, you see, and I you know I used to come to our house and pray with, the lady, I don't know whether the lady is his mother or she reared him or what, but say, you would come there and pray for us. Well I didn't tell you about that part of this work, but anyway I used to, Yes I did, I said family worship, didn't I? And he said you used to come th<unintelligible text> and prayed with us, there he was getting up to me, you see, and I talked to him and finally as I mentioned to you about my eyes, now I'm in the Methodist Church, but you a white lady but you gotta watch folks. Somehow this child, now I don't - a lady had told me at prayer meeting, she said she found some sorcery at her own house, and she told me how it made her feel and all, and she said they found it, dug it up, you know they was, you know, workin' (Note: Consistency?) in the

<8?>

flowers and dug it up. alright I can't go through all of it, but anyway. Then finally one day this boy kept coming, kept coming and I'd watch him, so my son was out at that barn and he <we?> out this way and then he turned around and he come back and he went right out there. You'll see that smoke where I was burning up that trash, and he, he dropped, he wanted to see where my son <was?> and he dropped something and since that time, now if I had of thought and just buried the stuff, I found it, I'm telling the truth, I found it.

Library of Congress

Q. What, what was it like when you found it?

A. Well, it was - the lady told me said what was at her house, it was in a plastic bag but see my s<unintelligible text> isn't, isn't good. I couldn't tell what it was, but it was in a plastic bag and when I saw it I picked it up on the end of the stick, I was kind of cleaning around, I picked it up on the end of the stick, and it looked like it might have been chitlins or something in there But still I wasn't thinking that's what it was. And so since that time my eyes failed me, they were already dim, you know. I told you about taking the cataract off, but my eyes failed me and after burning that stuff. Well I was, I tried to burn it up. I had two daughters to come out there and they all would say - she got ?. And they'd say mama, say, that ain't, that, no, no. And I say, I must say you college folks but I got <unintelligible text>. And it won't burn, so this lady said, I don't know. So after I burned it - she say it wouldn't burn but it did. After I burned it, you know that fumes lit all in my flowers and if I get on this side of the house under that tree, it gets strong. I just can't go on telling you about it.

Q. Gosh.

A. It was too much.

Q. Well, what was it like, you said the person said he could feel it, feel the sorcery in the house?

A. No, that was me!

Q. Oh, oh, o.k.

Library of Congress

A. No, I, I hadn't, it hadn't got in the house. I guess the Lord, you know, wouldn't let it come in. But it was, it was on me, at the time, when, you know, I could feel, tell the difference.

Q. Yeah. How did, how did it feel?

A. Well my eyes was just just can't hardly see. But now everybody is not the same. Cause she told how it made her feel and everything. But I couldn't tell it just like she said it, but you watch, the Bible say watch and pray, yeah. And so that's what I'm trying to do now. But I, What I, what I was fixing to say now people don't want to hear the truth now and I get up and tell the truth in Church. It was a man there didn't like it. now I don't know whether he done it, but I know who brought it. I don't know whether he sent it, but I know who brought it, this boy brought it here.

Q. Did you ever say anything to him about it?

A. No, No, I never did say anything about - I haven't seen him since. I haven't seen him since the last time he come here. Sure is the truth. Yes, so you watch and pray because these days are dangerous, yeah these days are dangerous, sure is the truth.

Q. What do you- When you go to the jail do you pray with the people?

A. Yeah, pray with the people. Surely do, pray with the people.

Q. Do most of them seem sorry for what they've done to get in jail, or do you think

A. No

Library of Congress

Q. they're gonna go out and do it again?

A. No They don't pay no attention. Rather unless it, it's in their hearts to know it, they don't pay it too much attention. I have a have a nephew and he's been in jail now how long? He's been in jail about I reckon, maybe 2 months or 3 or longer, but he told me Friday I was there. He say, Aunt Beauty, he say - I'm - They had him shelling peas He and another one of the other prisoners were shelling peas to cook for dinner.

<9?>

He say I'm sorry I missed my prayer. I said well, it isn't too late. So they were outside, you know, trustee. And after he told me - that's my son, he's mentally - After he told me that he was sorry he missed his prayer I said well now we can pray right here. The jailer and everybody's nice, you know. They don't mind me coming in. And I bowed and prayed with him, surely did. But I heard, now he didn't tell me, I heard they had sentenced him for 10 years for rape, yes sure is the truth. So I'm so glad you come.

Q. Well, I'm just so glad. You've been very helpful becuae that's, I'm trying to talk to a lot of different people, you know, around town, off and on campus and I wanted to get to talk to some people out here and then when I saw that chapel, I knew I really wanted to talk about it.

A. Well, alright, well that chapel I know you you've seen it cause it's been there for long, long time. And I'm try If you find anybody now this child told me - they were youngsters - all of them what was in this place where they frame - you know where the light, where they light place.

Library of Congress

Q. Yeah.

A. Well now they're using that little place there for their work and he did explain to me all about everything but I, you know, couldn't think of it all. I said, Well, Will you be here Wednesday? He said, Yeah I'll be here Wednesday. But when I went they were closed. So if you hear <talk?> of anybody that can frame them for me I'll be willing to pay them.

Q. Ok, I sure will. I'll keep, I don't really know, but I'll keep my eyes open for it, but -

A. Well that's all they had; they had just frames and I wanted, you know, I wanted it framed I don't want to cut none off. And I, if I could find a place like that-

Q. Yeah, that would be perfect cause that's, yeah, Those are nice to have, and they'll be good in that chapel

A. That's right, yes sir. But I'm prayer scarce now. I'm prayer scarce no. Surely is and we need it more now than ever before.

Q. Uh huh.

A. Yes, surely do.

Q. Well, you have been very helpful and I appreciate this.

A. Well, alright now. You don't have to hurry off.

Library of Congress

Q. Well this - It is so pretty sitting out here, you know, just watching ... it's so much cooler on this porch than it is out out around the town.

A. That's right, that's right. Surely is the truth too.

A. Yes, well I'll be up-town tomorrow; that's Wednesday I go to town every Wednesday for prayer meeting, 9 to 10, sometime 2, sometime 3. But you know Noah didn't stop. He preached 120 years. People wouldn't come. Nobody was saved but he and <his?> family. And then Daniel. No. Wasn't but one saved in Daniel's day either. They put <Dan?> in the lion's den, but he didn't stop. And who else was there? The three Hebrew boys. <you?> know they were just the only ones that was wishing for the true God. So It's nice to try to find out about the true God now cause it's so many Gods.

Q. Yeah.

A. Yes sir surely is.

Q. Well,

end M4 A(1)