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Resistance Begins at Home: The Black Family and Lessons in Survival and Subversion in Jim Crow Mississippi

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Abstract

At a very young age, black children in rural Jim Crow Mississippi encountered notions of race and racial difference. The black family—including not only mothers and fathers but also grandparents, extended relatives, and other adults in the community—played a crucial role in helping children to navigate through these racial ideologies and practices. Oral histories and memoirs reveal a world of racial lessons in which black children learned both physical and psychological survival. Through regular instruction, stories of slavery and Jim Crow, and their own actions, black adults taught children a meaning of blackness rooted in racial pride and struggle.

In 1955, Gilbert R. Mason, who had recently earned an MD, moved to Biloxi, Mississippi, and opened a family practice. By the end of the decade, this Jackson-born doctor had become a local civil rights leader who led the effort to integrate a beach on the Gulf Coast. In his 2000 memoir, Mason discusses at length the issue of when he became an activist. As a young child, he was aware of segregation and racism, and by the time he became a teenager he was fully conscious of the “capricious humiliation and degradation” black people endured in Mississippi. But in explaining the beginning of his activism, Mason pinpoints a specific moment: “When did I become an activist? Was it that day when I was twelve years old and bent over to pump air into my bicycle tires at a Gulf station on Terry Road, and a big white guy skipped up from behind and kicked me over? When I turned to ask, ‘Why?’ his smug answer, ‘Cause I wanted to,’ made a lasting impression. . . . I soon started doing small things to defy the system” (5).

Given the record of lynching, rape, and other forms of physical violence endured by African Americans in the Jim Crow South, Mason’s account of

being kicked may seem relatively insignificant. His recollection, however, hints at the ways in which racial practices and ideologies function within the realm of the everyday. And Mason's racial coming of age by age twelve raises fundamental questions about race and childhood in Jim Crow Mississippi. How did black children encounter a Jim Crow world? How did they learn the racial rules, and to what extent were these lessons subversive? Similarly, how do these lessons relate to the larger black freedom struggle?

Guided by these questions, this essay focuses on black children and the family in rural Jim Crow Mississippi. I pay particular attention to how children learned about race and racial difference and how the family played a role in navigating these encounters. My exploration of the black family relies principally on oral histories and memoirs of African Americans who were born and raised in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s in rural Mississippi. The primary argument guiding this work is that the black family—including not only parents but additional relatives, neighbors, and other adults in the community—functioned as a critical institution for protecting children from racial violence and for planting the seeds of subversion. Through regular instruction, stories of slavery and Jim Crow, and the evidence of their own actions, black adults taught children how to perform the roles of submission and inferiority. Most significant, whereas Jim Crow culture equated blackness with inferiority, the black family produced another meaning of blackness, one rooted in racial pride and struggle.

In examining the relationship between racial lessons and the black family, I draw on the work of Jennifer Ritterhouse (2006) and Patricia Hill Collins (2000). In *Growing Up Jim Crow*, Ritterhouse addresses how black and white children in the Jim Crow South learned what she calls a “racial etiquette” (3–6). For Ritterhouse, racial etiquette is more than a series of manners or customs. It refers to “a set of rules, a script, and part of a *process*, the power-relations process by which a viable relationship between dominant white and subordinate black—and therefore ‘race’ itself—was renegotiated on a day-to-day basis” (6). She contends that black children learned this etiquette as a means of survival, and through her analysis she demonstrates some of the ways in which white domination operated on a daily basis in the racial educations of black and white children (17). Ritterhouse's discussion represents a beginning point for exploring how these lessons were imparted to black children and especially for considering how teaching about race could be related to both survival and subversion.

In looking more closely at how the family could teach subversion, Patricia Hill Collins's conceptualization of motherhood in the black community is

especially useful. Focused on reconsidering the unique position of black women, Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* was in part a response to the 1960s Moynihan Report. Daniel Patrick Moynihan's study of problems confronting the black community characterized the black family as a flawed institution of absent or weak fathers and domineering matriarchs who emasculated sons and defeminized daughters. Moynihan's conclusions, however, were based on a faulty premise—that the ideal family necessarily required a breadwinning father, a stay-at-home mother, and a parents-children familial unit isolated from the larger community (a real-life equivalent of the 1950s and 1960s television family, the Cleavers). In challenging Moynihan's image of the overbearing black mother, Collins demonstrates that the stable and functional black family looked nothing like the white ideal. For most black families, the women were pushed into the work force out of economic necessity. Whether or not the father was present, the family unit extended into the community. Collins describes a series of women-centered networks, including grandmothers, siblings, other relatives, neighbors, and even strangers, all of whom became what she calls the "othermothers" assisting the "bloodmothers" (Collins 2000, 173–99). This sharing of responsibilities strengthened communal bonds, and as Collins notes, it laid a foundation for activism within the community.

Within the recollections of African Americans in rural Jim Crow Mississippi, one finds many of Collins's characteristics of black motherhood—and these "motherly" characteristics were not limited to women. As interviewees discuss their childhoods—who nurtured them, who taught them life lessons, who taught them how to act in Jim Crow society—they describe a network of individuals in the community, including both men and women. Thus, in arguing that the black family taught children about race, the family was defined much more broadly than Moynihan's ideal nuclear unit. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, and neighbors were members of a family unit that helped children learn racial rules and unlearn ideologies of black inferiority.

While Ritterhouse and Collins provide a framework for exploring the black family as a site of protection and resistance, one is still confronted with the issue of finding and interpreting sources related to the private and largely insulated domain of the black family. Traditional archival records—state documents, mainstream or black newspapers, and personal papers—provide little or no detailed information about families and daily routines. While these sources are often understood as the most reliable records of the past, they can also be misleading. For example, in his study of race and media in 1960s Mississippi, media scholar Steven Classen searched the official paper docu-

ments for local black responses to local television coverage (2004, 140–45). He found no black protest. Yet, as he spoke with local people he discovered an extensive record of protests of television from the black community. As Classen's study demonstrates, for marginalized groups, oral histories can speak to the inherent silences of traditional archives (Rolph-Trouillot 1995). But oral histories can also be useful for particular topics. As Ritterhouse observes, autobiography and memoir are particularly useful for examining racial identity (2006, 133–34). How a person learns about race and where one fits within that racial context is a personal exploration of identity, and, in that regard, the memory is perhaps the most appropriate and revealing source available.¹

Still, as with any source, oral histories can pose a methodological quandary. Memories are as much a product of the present as they are a representation of the past. For various reasons, a historical participant's memory of an event or era can change over time. With these potential dilemmas in mind, I rely on oral histories to provide insights into the black family in Jim Crow society. I treat the interviews less as a record of day-to-day activities—in which “accuracy” would be crucial—and more as a recollection of larger processes and themes. In addition, I have examined hundreds of oral histories derived from multiple collections and initiatives and conducted across the span of twenty-five years. Within this larger sample, I have paid particular attention to the themes and discourses that appear in numerous interviews.

Memories, the black family, and racial lessons bring us back to Gilbert Mason, the Civil Rights Movement, and, especially, the literature of that movement. The initial historical narrative of the Civil Rights Movement—one that still holds sway with many scholars and within mainstream culture—revolves around nonviolent tactics, national organizations, and prominent leaders. According to this interpretation, the movement stretched from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, climaxing with the passage of national legislation, just as it was beginning to fragment and fade into the Black Power era.² Since the 1990s, however, this narrative has increasingly been challenged by scholars and the memoirs of movement participants. Collectively these studies have stretched the temporal boundaries of the movement, situating the movement within a larger and earlier struggle for freedom. Accordingly, within these recent scholarly trends, Mason's childhood memory of being kicked by a white man is very much a part of the larger story of the fight for civil and human rights.³ Likewise, a closer examination of the black family reveals that, within the everyday realm, African Americans—as mothers, as fathers,

as relatives, as neighbors—were participating in a larger daily struggle and were contributing to what would eventually become a mass movement.⁴

Black Children Encounter a Jim Crow World

From the late nineteenth century until the legal demise of segregation in the 1960s, Jim Crow rule reigned throughout the South. Many of the primary characteristics of this form of white domination were crystallized in the 1890s. Despite being guaranteed the right to vote with the Fifteenth Amendment, black males were steadily disenfranchised through new laws and intimidation. The 1890s also witnessed the lynching of more than one thousand African Americans, by far the highest total for any decade in the post-Reconstruction/Jim Crow era.⁵ Economically, exploitation within sharecropping and the crop lien system left a large segment of African Americans (and poor whites) in a state of poverty and a cycle of dependency. Socially, laws dictating separate spaces for blacks and whites were sanctioned by the federal government with the Supreme Court's 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. The 1890s did not give birth to Jim Crow rule in the South so much as it cemented that rule within virtually every aspect of Southern life.⁶ Indeed, Jim Crow rule represented far more than a series of laws and customs, or of political and economic practices. It was, as Grace Elizabeth Hale argues (1998), a "culture of segregation" that dominated the daily lives of black and white Southerners.⁷

This culture of segregation was directly connected to the proliferation of particular racial ideologies. In the Jim Crow South, notes Hale, "segregation, as metaphor and as law, depended upon the myth of absolute racial difference, a translation of the body into collective meaning, into culture" (1998, 40). Rooted in an ideology of white supremacy, racial difference in Jim Crow society permeated everyday life. Whether African Americans were trying to vote, ordering a burger in a restaurant, talking to a white person, or meeting a white person on the sidewalk, laws and customs functioned to remind them of their blackness in relationship to whiteness. In these physical and behavioral markers, blacks were taught that they were different from whites and that their inferior status was a result of those differences. For those in power, the ultimate goal of these daily racial lessons, these manifestations of white domination, was less about policing racial lines than it was about getting blacks to police themselves. White segregationists wanted blacks not only to act submissive but also to believe that they should be submissive. In that sense, Jim Crow rule was dehumanizing on two levels. Most obvi-

ously, the visible effects of segregation, disfranchisement, and violence were reminders of the relative worthlessness of black life. On a deeper level were the psychological effects in which, constantly bombarded with messages of inferiority, blacks could begin to believe those messages. Thus, even as lynching and other forms of dramatic racial violence have received much scholarly attention, it was frequently the mundane manifestations of race that dehumanized African Americans (Hartman 1997). In fact, it is through everyday interactions that many black children seemed to discover what blackness meant in a Jim Crow society.

One might suspect that for children the initial recognition of blackness would have been tied to a lynching or some other dramatic event. However, of the hundreds of interviews I consulted for this study, none of the interviewees linked their initial racial awareness to an act of physical violence. Many children were unaware of the violence around them in part because their parents sheltered them. As Minnie Weston explains, she occasionally heard adults whispering about some tragedy and she saw women crying, but no one explained to the children what had happened.⁸ In addition, prior to beginning schooling, black and white children played together, seemingly with little or no recognition of racial differences or what those differences meant.⁹ Instead, many Mississippians remember their initial awareness of racial difference as beginning on the path between home and school.

In Jim Crow Mississippi, the differences in schooling for black and white children were dramatic. Generally, white students had physically superior facilities, newer textbooks, and a longer school year than black students.¹⁰ Initially, however, black students noticed a much more visible distinction between the schools—they walked while the white students rode buses. As James Robinson, who started school in the late 1920s or early 1930s, recalls, seeing the white children on the bus was when he first recognized racial differences.¹¹ John Johnson explains that he felt disgusted when he saw that the bus for white students was almost empty.¹² It seems unlikely that Robinson and Johnson, as young children just beginning school, would have instantly understood the racial implications of these trips. Perhaps the presence of an older student would have explained it, or perhaps it became clearer after a certain number of these daily repeated stagings of difference.

The walks to school were a critical part of the racial learning process not only because they came early in life but also because they were an unambiguous visual display of racial difference. In these situations, difference was marked by what Michael Hanchard (2001) refers to as “racial time.” For Hanchard, racial time refers to a temporal manifestation of domination that began with

racial slavery, in which time became an expression of oppression and racial difference. One of the components of racial time, for instance, is represented through “waiting” as members of “subordinate groups objectively perceive the material consequences of social inequality, as they are literally made to wait for goods and services that are delivered first to members of the dominant group” (256). In other words, waiting is both a form of oppression and a marker of racial difference. Hanchard’s observation helps explain black Mississippians recollections of the trips to school. For these students, their blackness meant that they were denied access to a technology—the bus—that white students had. Beyond the visual impact of the bus/technology belonging exclusively to whites, blacks had to wait longer to get to school. Black and white children were exposed to these racially defined differences daily.

For many black students, these regular enactments of Jim Crow were enhanced by the actions of those who rode the bus. For example, Walter Sculark recalls the white children calling him derogatory names.¹³ Others, such as Herman Leach, endured name calling and spitting from the bus, and H. Scott dodged bricks and bottles hurled from the bus.¹⁴ At other times the bus driver was involved. Attending school in the 1920s, Alice Giles recalls the bus driver swerving toward her and other black children.¹⁵ On David Mathews’s walks to school, the bus driver often veered into mud puddles as he passed black students.¹⁶ The public enactment of race by white students and especially by white bus drivers represented an even more powerful lesson in the meaning of blackness in a Jim Crow world. Even in the absence of physical violence, the act of slinging muddy water on students or the driver threatening or pretending to threaten their lives by swerving toward them was a powerful act of dehumanization. The students and the driver affirmed not only that blacks were inferior but that black life was subject to the whims of whites, and the black body was rendered dispensable. Whatever messages black students took from their walks to school, the visual symbol of buses and the actions of the people on the buses established an easy-to-interpret presentation of difference in which white people had the advantage.

Interestingly, these memories of linking initial racial awareness to schooling seem to contradict recent child development research on racial socialization, the process by which children learn and understand race as a category of difference (see Hughes et al. 2006; Quintana et al. 2006; Spencer and Markstrom-Adams 1990). Sociologists Debra Van Ausdale and Joe R. Feagin persuasively argue that children as young as three years old may have “a solid and applied understanding of the dynamics of race” and that young children are not simply

imitating adults but rather “are actively reproducing in their everyday lives the matters and realities of race and racism” (2001, 2–3).¹⁷ Van Ausdale and Feagin’s conclusions suggest that black Mississippians in the age of Jim Crow may have already been well versed in race before they began school. With that possibility in mind, how, then, do we evaluate the memories of black Mississippians that place the original encounter with racial difference with the beginning of schooling? In fact, the memories of the historical participants and the sociological work may not be contradictory. Black children in Mississippi may also have been learning about race at age three and four. Nonetheless, for many of them, the beginning of schooling was a formative moment for racial identity. The traumas of these experiences were repeated daily, suggesting that their impact likely eclipsed earlier encounters with racial difference. Accordingly, for many black children, the trips to school more clearly revealed their racialized position within a Jim Crow world.

Away from school, some black Mississippians remember an initial awareness of Jim Crow coming through other interactions with whites, often from unknowingly crossing racial lines. Such was the case for Horace Buckley. At a Christmas parade, a white girl approached a young Buckley and offered him her balloon in exchange for a piece of the candy he had collected. Suddenly a white man intervened, and as Buckley recalled, the man said, “Get back there nigger. Don’t you never, now I kill ya.” Buckley went home saddened, understanding “that there was a difference and the difference is there, and you’ve got to live with it.”¹⁸ Until the white man entered the scene, Buckley may not have even realized that he had crossed a Jim Crow line. However, he went home knowing that interactions between black men/boys and white women/girls were off limits. His difference from the white girl was made explicit, and he was threatened for not observing the racialized and gendered rules that governed that difference.

Another early lesson in race for some black children related to interactions between their parents and white people. Some were disturbed or confused in witnessing their parents acting submissively around other adults or even around white teenagers.¹⁹ For Alma Ward, this experience came from seeing her father cry. Ward’s father passed a white man in a car, and according to Ward, the man then told her father’s boss that he would “kill that nigger if he ever pass me again.” After receiving this message, Ward’s father was in tears, and the image left a lasting impression on Alma.²⁰ In these encounters and others with whites, race trumped the familial hierarchy, and children saw their parents reduced to a subordinate, almost childlike position. One would suspect

that these displays of power relations could undermine parental authority and potentially threaten the black family. At the very least, such encounters could represent potent lessons in the meaning of blackness.

Whether through the trips to school, firsthand encounters with whites, or bearing witness to their parents' relative powerlessness, early on black children recognized a world in which race was important. By the teenage years, one can assume that most black Mississippians had a fairly clear sense of racial difference. As Johnny Jones realized when he was about thirteen years old: "Then I began to see how white people do colored people. . . . If you said something you wasn't supposed to say, you got beat up. . . . If you didn't say yes sir, no sir, you might get beat up . . . They called everybody nigger. Wouldn't call you by your name. . . . All the niggers that talked back to them got beat up, run out of town, or something."²¹

Perhaps Jones was already aware that in Jim Crow society blacks and whites were different, although it was not until he was a teenager that he understood the importance of publicly acknowledging his inferiority in order to avoid getting beat up or worse. His response is fairly consistent with that of others in that, even if they first encountered racial difference when they started school, it often was not until the teenage years that the full implications of blackness began to take shape. That is, black children might have known to follow the rules without necessarily knowing why or what those rules meant within a racialized society. For those reasons, exposure to Jim Crow expectations yielded a variety of emotions among black children. Some African Americans recall that initially they may have believed there was some truth to the dominant racial ideologies. William Raspberry, who would later become a syndicated columnist for the *Washington Post*, explains, "I suppose, if I'm very honest, the way the system worked left me thinking vaguely—I would never have said this when I was growing up—that maybe black people were inferior."²² For Amzie Moore, Jim Crow cultivated more than a vague sense of racial inferiority. Moore, who would become an important civil rights leader in Mississippi, recalled from his childhood, that given all the advantages whites had, he thought "that it was sinful to be black, that God only loved white people," and that "there had to be something wrong with me."²³ Whereas for Raspberry and Moore, the sense of inferiority seemed to seep into their psyches without them really being conscious of another alternative, for Bennie Gooden, the realization of being black in a Jim Crow world was far more jarring. As he recounts,

At first I didn't know I was black. I didn't know that I was considered poor because everybody around here, everybody you had to deal with, they were in the same predicament. It had to be discovered, and then when I discovered that I was poor and black and different, and my thoughts didn't amount to a hill of beans, I [realized I] was not counted. Because I was considered a leader among my peers, I thought I had some station in life. Only to find out that I was not considered. My thoughts, my well-being was not important whatsoever. I wasn't nothing. That's shocking; that's disturbing.²⁴

From their memories we do not know if they internalized the dominant ideology, only that they remember believing on some level that they may have been inferior. Nonetheless, for these individuals, this remembered early stage of believing in their inferiority has become part of their personal narratives. Thus, for Bennie Gooden, his own sense of his racial coming of age was tied to a traumatic moment. Perhaps built upon earlier experiences, in this one moment Gooden became aware of what his blackness meant in Jim Crow Mississippi.

For some black children, recognition of racial dynamics could lead to unusual conclusions. Growing up, Hettie Love saw that white people had the best of everything—the biggest houses and the best food and cars—while blacks were always working in the kitchens of whites. As she understood it, “the lighter you are, the whiter you are, the power and the things you had, the easier time.” Based on these observations, she determined that she should marry a white man.²⁵ Love's interpretation is intriguing because her confusion about race—that on a personal level she could solve it through marriage—hints at the extent to which race and its meanings are learned. At the same time, Love sees the racial divide as easily crossed, believing that she too could reap the benefits of whiteness.

Ollye Brown Shirley also had an unusual reaction to racial differences, related in part to her family's material condition. Shirley's family was financially better off than many of the neighboring white families, to such an extent that poor white children came to the house and Shirley's mother gave them leftover biscuits. For Shirley, the confusion between race and class came when she saw these less privileged white children riding the bus while she walked. At that point she “knew something was amiss.”²⁶ Shirley's confusion relates to an apparent discontinuity in her worldview, from seeing herself in an economically privileged position, to seeing the poorer children with access to the technology of the bus.

There was also, however, another range of personal responses to the

violence of Jim Crow that revolved around hatred. Some black children felt hatred for whites or believed that whites hated blacks. Ironically, in spite of the pervasiveness of racial violence against blacks, segregationists tried to perpetuate a paternal message of whites loving and caring for blacks. As Joel Williamson contends (1986, 250–51), many whites believed they were living in a racially harmonious society in which blacks were happy and content and whites were their protective parents. Yet, despite what whites believed, some African Americans interpreted the violence of Jim Crow as proof that they were despised by whites. Ruby Williams and James Nix each came to believe that whites hated blacks, although it is not clear whether they learned this lesson from their personal experiences or perhaps from their parents.²⁷ From the perspective of these African Americans, white hatred of blacks seemed to represent in part a reaction to the senseless killings, the legal injustices, and the general dehumanization and devaluing of black life.

While most interviewees who expressed hatred toward whites also noted that this feeling eventually faded, it is impressive and revealing how frequently Jim Crow oppression cultivated this reaction. For some, hatred of whites emerged from personal experiences. Soon after Lee Willie Miller's father died, a white man came to collect payment on a \$300 loan he had made to Miller's father; the white man took everything—220 acres of land, all the houses on the land, the mules and horses, and the wagons.²⁸ Whereas Miller's hatred seems in part linked to a feeling of impotence to change the situation, for some African Americans, hatred of whites was expressed through a desire to retaliate, as was the case with Samuel Bailey. When Bailey was about twelve or thirteen years old, his brother hit a white man. Soon after, a mob came to the Bailey house, threatening to lynch his brother, who then fled the state. Samuel resolved that when he grew up, he "was going to kill all the white people" he saw.²⁹ For many African Americans, the gradual accumulation of racial injustices bore the fruits of hatred.

In sum, as African Americans were exposed to racial difference, as they came into contact with the violence of Jim Crow society, they learned what it meant to be black in Mississippi. To a child, it meant walking to school, it meant being relatively powerless in the presence of whites, and it meant that race mattered more than social class or age. Above all, it meant being dehumanized. In teaching black children how to navigate and potentially transform these messages of inferiority, no institution played a more important role than the black family.

Lessons in Jim Crow, Lessons in Subversion

In response to everyday racial dehumanization in Jim Crow Mississippi, the black family served as a source for nurturing and protecting black children. Mothers, fathers, siblings, neighbors, teachers, and even strangers were part of this structure in which, as one Mississippian explains, “everybody was your mother.”³⁰ Within this familial context of teaching survival and overcoming messages of black inferiority, three components were especially significant: (1) instructing children in the racial rules for protection; (2) teaching children to perform, not to accept, their expected Jim Crow roles; and (3) providing an alternative meaning of blackness rooted in racial pride and struggle.

Adults recognized that at an early age children needed to know Jim Crow customs for their own protection. As Patricia Hill Collins notes, this “socialization for survival” has historically been a central feature of black mothering (2000, 183–89).³¹ While some parents were more direct in explaining the reasons behind the customs, many of the children recall being taught what to do and what not to do without any explanations. Most of these instructions related to how to act around white people. For example, Maurice Lucas was taught to answer whites with “yes, sir” and “no, sir”; Jessie Stewart was told to enter white homes through the back door; and Chris Young Sr. learned that he should never go to the white section of a restaurant.³² Obie Clark recalls more-detailed instructions. He was told that if he went to the general store and it was closed, he should not go to the front door even to get someone’s attention but should still go to the back door.³³ Furthermore, for some, the lessons were imparted regularly. As Alma Ward recalls, her mother told her “almost daily” to address white people with titles.³⁴

In addition to the rules about how to act in public and in the presence of whites, many of the conversations focused on black children’s interactions with white children. John Johnson grew up playing with white boys in the neighborhood until one day his mother told him he could no longer play with them. Although Johnson was initially confused by his mother’s edict, his mother later explained that there were certain things blacks and whites could not do together and that he had to be careful or something would happen to him.³⁵ Charles Scott was also told to avoid whites and to be careful with what he said to whites. Scott learned to stay in his “place,” which meant “you did not get around, you didn’t hang around, you didn’t have jokes, and make these jokes with white folks.”³⁶ While some parents did not explain why playing with white children was off limits, others made it clear that whites posed a danger. For example, Alice Giles’s parents told her that

if she tried to drink out of the white water fountain, she might be beaten by whites.³⁷ Meanwhile, although Richard Rose is not specific concerning who taught him the racial rules, he explains that he was taught to address whites with titles and to ride in the back of the bus or to risk being jailed or being beaten by police officers.³⁸

Within the black community, fear for the safety of children represented an especially acute concern for parents. Racialized dangers lurked everywhere, and the police and courts—institutions ostensibly charged with protecting the citizenry—offered little or no protection for black citizens. Numerous examples illustrated to parents that, even for children, real or perceived violations of racial customs could result in injury or death. In 1942, for instance, Ernest Green and Charlie Lang, both fourteen years old, were arrested and charged with the attempted rape of a thirteen-year-old white girl. The three children played together frequently, but this time they were seen by a passing white motorist. Although there was no evidence of attempted rape, the two boys were taken from the jail by a mob and lynched. According to an investigator hired by the NAACP, during the lynching the boys' genitals were cut off, their skin was pulled from their bodies, and a screwdriver was jammed down their throats.³⁹ Despite a federal investigation, no one was ever found guilty or punished for these two deaths. Similarly, in the following decade, after fourteen-year-old Emmett Till was murdered for allegedly whistling at a white woman in a country store, his killers escaped punishment within the legal system.⁴⁰

For boys, the major concern was that, similar to Green, Lang, and Till, they would be accused of improper behavior around white females. Thus, in teaching boys to be careful around white women, parents could even act harshly and, from the child's perspective, irrationally. For instance, on a bus with his father, James Nix saw a white girl and remarked, "Daddy, isn't that nice, pretty, long hair?" After returning home Nix was scolded and whipped by his father, which at the time confused James, who did not realize he had done something wrong.⁴¹ His father, though, understood that seemingly innocent remarks about white girls could have tragic results. The fear of a black male being arrested, beaten, or killed for looking at a white woman was so prevalent that, as Elizabeth Pitts recalls, many in the black community referred to it as "eye-raping."⁴² Although fear of being lynched was less prevalent among girls, interracial interactions also posed potential dangers. Winson Hudson (2002, 21–22) avoided walking alone at night because she feared being raped by white males. Whereas a black boy whistling at a white woman could be grounds for a lynching, white men

could look at, have sexual relations with, and rape black women with little fear of reprisal or reprimand.

While children's physical survival was a primary concern, parents and other family members also worried about the psychological well-being of their children. As William Raspberry's mother explained to her son after he had grown up, she had always tried to "build us up . . . because she knew the world was going to knock us down some and she wanted us to be about where we ought to be, and through that dual process."⁴³ For Raspberry and other children, a dual process, or some other means of separating expected public actions from the self, became an important part of the learning process. This process often involved lessons in both performance and racial pride.⁴⁴

Dating back to the period of enslavement, in which African Americans "performed" particular roles for masters, some people understood these enactments as "wearing the mask" or as a form of dissemblance.⁴⁵ Each of these descriptions conjures an image of disconnection, of giving an outward appearance that does not reflect the true feelings or beliefs of the individual. Accordingly, while some parents did not explain to their children why they had to follow the racial rules, other parents made it clear that these were only enactments that should have no bearing on a child's sense of self-worth. For example, Obie Clark's parents instructed him in how to act as a "second-class citizen," such as by addressing all whites with "Mister" and "Miss" and by going to the back doors of stores. Yet Obie understood that these lessons were strictly about protection, noting that his family knew of blacks who tried "to be first-class citizens" in public and then disappeared overnight or lost their property.⁴⁶ In public space, Jim Crow rules became the stage directions, and the expected deferential and submissive role of blacks informed the script.

Children also learned about these performances from observing other adults. For example, Jasper Neely's father explained to him, "White folks love us when we laugh," and as Neely noted, his father frequently laughed when in the presence of whites, only to "cuss them out at home."⁴⁷ Some may be tempted to understand the father's comments at home as only a release of tension rather than as a life-changing lesson for his son. However, by identifying to his son that his laughter was a means of appeasement and by revealing his "real" self at home, the father demonstrated a powerful subversive tool. Neely's father enacted the white-created stereotypes but rejected the notion of black inferiority. Whether intentional or not, Neely's father, through his distinct actions in public (laughter) and private (cussing), made it clear to his son that the racial customs were absurd and dehumanizing.

The lessons in performance were critical not only for maintaining one's

dignity but also for recognizing the moral vacuity of Jim Crow rule. As James Robinson explains, he learned not necessarily right and wrong but rather “what was right and wrong at that time to make it in life.”⁴⁸ Robinson received a lesson in both survival and ethics. Enactments provided a means for disconnecting racial customs, the law, and political authority from issues of morality. That is, the law was not about right and wrong, or just and unjust, but rather it was, as Robinson learned, something you obeyed to survive. The potentially subversive nature of that lesson should not be underestimated. As children learned to play-act around whites, they developed a sense of right and wrong derived not from Jim Crow culture but from sources within their own community.

As opposed to a notion of blackness that emerged from Jim Crow ideologies, many African American children learned a meaning of blackness rooted in racial pride and struggle. The home became a central site for these lessons. Whereas in general many women have conceived of work in the home as exploited and unpaid labor, as Patricia Hill Collins illustrates, black women have often interpreted this work within a racialized context. Historically, observes Collins, various family labors, such as “teaching children survival skills . . . suggests that Black women see the unpaid work that they do for their families more as a form of resistance to oppression than as a form of exploitation by men” (2000, 46). We can extend this observation further to note that for both black men and black women, teaching children meanings of blackness that challenged Jim Crow notions was fundamentally an act of resistance. In many instances, these lessons were paired with instructions about how to act in which children were told that, despite the rules rooted in the notion of black inferiority, they were as good as white people.⁴⁹ At times, children learned lessons in racial pride from watching adults. Alma Ward, for example, recalls an episode on a bus when she was with her mother and some friends of her mother, one of whom could pass as white. When one of the “black” women sat beside the woman who could pass, the bus driver instructed the darker-skinned woman to move away from the “white lady.” But, as Ward recounts, the “white” woman said, “I’m black. I wouldn’t look like it if you didn’t tip around and do things in the neighborhood and pretend that you don’t like. That’s why I look like I look. But I’m a black woman and this is my daughter-in-law and she goin’ sit with me.”⁵⁰ In addition to chastising the driver for the dual sexual standards that permitted relationships between white men and black women, this was also a moment in which a light-skinned African American woman proudly and publicly embraced her blackness.

In homes and schools, black children were also exposed to discussions of black history and culture reinforcing messages of racial pride. Daisy Livingston's grandparents frequently told her about Africa and about Haile Selassie and also traced her ancestry back to an African queen.⁵¹ Closer to home, James Cohen and many of his neighbors would walk a mile and a half to a house with the only radio in the neighborhood to hear the Joe Louis boxing matches.⁵² Sarah Automon, who began teaching in the early 1950s, recalls that not all black schools permitted the teaching of black history and culture. In some of her teaching jobs, however, she could talk about black history, as well as use plays and poems written by African Americans.⁵³ Similarly, David Wicks's teachers brought in black magazines and newspapers. In school, Wicks learned about numerous influential African Americans, including prominent political figures such as Booker T. Washington and Mary McLeod Bethune; and cultural icons such as Marian Anderson, Roland Hayes, and Fritz Pollard; as well as activist and educator Benjamin Mays and medical pioneer Daniel Hale Williams.⁵⁴

Beyond the involvement of some black teachers, at times parents went to great lengths to overcome the educational setbacks imposed on black schools. As I previously mentioned, most schools had to rely on used textbooks that had been discarded by white schools. In these textbooks, African Americans were either absent or represented in stereotypes. In Peter Stewart's school, however, the parents bought books with black characters, including, as Stewart recalls, a book in which Dick and Jane were black.⁵⁵ Whatever else segregated schools represented, some educators were able to take advantage of their relative isolation from whites to introduce children to positive images and black role models.

Along with the messages of racial pride, children were also connected to a long tradition of struggle through storytelling. For the period of my primary focus—the 1930s through the 1950s—much of the storytelling about the black experience came from grandparents. Perhaps, as the elders in the family, grandparents understood it as their duty to pass these stories on. Or, given that many of the stories were about slavery, maybe this generation felt a special compulsion to keep this history alive through its retelling. Regardless, for the most part the grandparents were the storytellers, and their stories were filled with tales of slavery, mistreatment, and racial horrors.

The stories about slavery were told by some who had been born enslaved and by many others who were passing on the stories they had learned from the previous generation. Most of these stories related the harshness and brutality of enslavement. For example, some children heard that under slavery

their ancestors were prohibited by white masters from praying.⁵⁶ Georgia Bays's grandmother explained that she put a bucket over her head to disguise her praying.⁵⁷ Many of the tales recounted extreme violence. Eura Bowie, who was born in 1911, remembers her mother relating many gruesome stories about enslavement, including enslaved people being forced to eat from a trough and a black man being "burnt up."⁵⁸ Similarly, Minnie Weston, born just a few years earlier than Bowie, recalls her father telling stories of slavery he had heard from the previous generation.⁵⁹ One of these stories included enslaved people being made to stand on top of bricks that had just been pulled from a fire. Her father heard that his mother had been forced to stand on these hot bricks, and, according to Weston, "that made him hate" white people.⁶⁰

But these stories of violence and mistreatment were not limited to slavery. Herman Leach's grandparents told him about blacks being hung from a bridge, while both Hettie Love and Minnie Weston heard from grandparents about relatives who had been lynched.⁶¹ For others, the more contemporary tales were also more personal. John Johnson, who grew up in the 1940s and 1950s, remembers his mother telling him about how the police treated his father. If his father had been consuming alcohol, they followed him until he had walked almost home, and then they arrested him.⁶² Meanwhile, Cora Fleming's mother told her that Cora's grandmother had been raped by a white man. As a young girl, Cora, decided that an old white man in town was the one who had raped her grandmother. She threw bricks at him, at which point her mother explained that he was not the one.⁶³

What was the larger purpose behind these stories? Perhaps on some level, these gruesome details—especially of stories from the recent past—were told as cautionary tales to scare children into being careful around whites. There are certainly numerous examples of parents using fear to protect their children. One can also understand these stories, coming primarily from grandparents, as a means of passing on a personal and communal legacy. At the same time, what distinguishes these storytelling projects from general genealogical motivations was that the storytellers were presenting an alternative history. In this history, unlike that of mainstream society, blacks endured extreme violence and the laws and customs were sources of racial injustice. Stories of racial horrors, whether about slavery or a recent nearby lynching, underscored the injustice and tragedy that defined the status quo for blacks.

Regardless of how children interpreted these stories, they were exposed to a worldview that rejected Jim Crow ideologies. If the signs and customs of the mainstream suggested that blacks were inferior, that white people loved

black people as children, the stories of slavery and violence described a much different world. This was a world in which black people were treated unjustly, in which their bodies were abused for the pleasure or profits of white people. Through stories of violence and tragedy, black children were indoctrinated into a community whose history was in part one of pain and struggle.

In describing the various ways in which black children learned and unlearned Jim Crow, I have referenced examples from various individuals. While this approach draws out key themes and issues, it does not illustrate a major characteristic of racial lessons: varying one's response based on particular contexts. I return once again to Alma Ward, whose experiences collectively illustrate the nuances of racial lessons and also demonstrate that racial lines were contested and negotiated on a daily basis.

Ward was born in 1937 and raised in Itta Bena, about twenty miles from where Emmett Till was murdered in 1955 following an alleged violation of racial custom at a country store. Ward recalls her own country store moment as a young girl. In a store owned by a relative of Till's murderers, she asked for a bag of popcorn but forgot to address the white man as "sir" or "mister." The man commanded Ward to repeat her request, and this time she added "sir." She left the store and "cried all the way back home." After explaining to her mother and grandmother what had happened, Ward's mother wanted to go back and confront the white man. The grandmother, however, said no, reasoning that Alma had not been physically injured. In this case, the grandmother was thinking of survival. However, on other occasions, it is clear that the grandmother not only understood when she could safely cross racial lines but also that there were times when she should fight back.⁶⁴

The incident began when Ward's grandmother went to Greenville and allowed a friend to stay in the house she was renting in Itta Bena. No one paid the water bill, and the city shut off a water line that provided water to several houses, including Ward's. Someone turned the water back on. Soon after, a white city worker confronted Ward's grandmother, asking why she turned the water on. After telling the man that she had not turned on the water, he, according to Ward, replied, "Don't get smart with [me] nigger, because you know you're talking to a white man." Ward's grandmother answered, "I don't care who I'm talking to," and a few moments later as Alma watched from the yard, she saw the white man running away, with her grandmother behind him—wielding an axe. Alma's grandmother not only disregarded the rules of racial deference but she did so in dramatic fashion by threatening violence. She was later supported by an influential white man in the community, and the utility worker was fired.⁶⁵

On another occasion, Alma witnessed her grandmother mocking the racial customs of social address. As Alma and her grandmother passed a mechanics shop, a familiar white mechanic yelled out, "Howdy, Grandma." The mechanic was taking part in one of the mundane ways in which white people dehumanized African Americans by addressing them with nicknames—such as "uncle," "auntie," or "grandma"—instead of with a title or name. As Alma recalls, her grandmother responded, "Howdy, Grandpa," explaining that if she were his grandmother then he could be her grandpa. Once again, Alma's grandmother directly challenged a white man and in the process called into question a Jim Crow custom. Although, according to Ward, the white man became angry, he did nothing.⁶⁶

Alma's grandmother exemplifies the complexities of learning Jim Crow. Through example, she taught Alma that in some situations whites could be safely challenged and on other occasions, such as in the country store, it was more appropriate to follow the rules and avoid conflict. Even though we do not know from Alma's recollections how her grandmother knew the difference, or to what extent a young Alma would understand the difference, the larger lesson imparted a potentially empowering ethic. Alma learned to follow the rules not because they were fair or just but because she wanted to survive. If survival or physical well-being were not at stake, she could ignore the rules. As well, Alma's experiences demonstrate the ways in which various components of a racial education functioned together. She learned to follow certain rules for protection, to treat these actions as performances (such as using "sir" to avoid violence), and then to assert her agency and her self-worth by standing up for herself when it was safe.⁶⁷

Conclusion: The Black Family and the Black Freedom Struggle

The voices of black Mississippians included in the previous pages describe the black family as a crucial institution within the community. In their descriptions, the lines between family and community are blurred as various individuals took on the responsibilities of nurturing and protecting children. From parents, grandparents, neighbors, and other adults, African American children learned not only how to avoid physical harm but also how to avoid psychological harm. The black family was not only a refuge, not only a place of retreat from the bricks and insults hurled from bus windows, but it was also potentially a place where children learned subversion. In contrast to the public spaces where a culture of segregation bombarded children with the markers of black inferiority, within the insulated realm of the family, children

heard messages that rejected ideas of racial inferiority. In addition, the lessons in performing particular roles carried its own significant subtext—that some laws and customs were unjust.

But to what extent can we connect these lessons to the larger black freedom struggle? Within the context of Jim Crow Mississippi, despite the frequent references to lessons from family members and recollections of particular childhood moments, we are nonetheless left with only snippets of memories of childhood. Beyond recounting the instructions and experiences, it is perhaps impossible to make a direct, detailed connection between these racial lessons and acts of resistance later in life. Still, the difficulties in uncovering a historical record of everyday life for children should not prevent us from asking questions about the formative years for learning about race in the Jim Crow South. In addition, as Patricia Hill Collins contends (2000, 189–92), when women within the community became nurturers for all black children, they connected these children to the concerns of the larger community. In that regard, the nurturing networks created by these women (and, I would argue, by black men as well) fostered political activism.

I began this essay with civil rights leader Gilbert Mason describing being pushed over by a white man as the critical moment in which he became an activist. Although Mason mentions earlier experiences with humiliations, he does not go into detail as to how he learned racial difference or how he came to realize that black inferiority was a myth. Mason's experience represents an appropriate metaphor for what we know about the Civil Rights Movement. Numerous studies detail major events of the movement—from students in Greensboro, North Carolina, refusing to budge from their lunch counter seats to thousands of passengers in Montgomery, Alabama, deciding to boycott the buses following Rosa Parks's arrest. We know much less about how thousands of activists reached a point at which they were willing to take action that risked their lives. What led them to those decisions? Especially given that the Civil Rights Movement is generally understood as a *mass* movement and as a *grassroots* struggle, this is not an idle question. Accordingly, oral histories, despite their limitations related to memory and context, are an invaluable source. And while it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions about the black freedom struggle, it is nonetheless clear that the black family played a pivotal role for many black children in establishing a foundation for challenging the dominant ideologies, laws, and customs. The black family not only nurtured and protected, but it also promoted subversion.

Endnotes

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1. For more on memories as a source, see Hall (1998); Nora (1989); and J. W. Scott (1991). On the particular functioning of memory in the South, see Brundage (2000, 2005).

2. For historiographical discussions of the Civil Rights Movement, see Joseph (2000); Lawson (1991); and Payne (1995).

3. For example, see de Jong (2002); Gilmore (2008); Hall (2005); Joseph (2006); Kelley (1996); Tyson (1999); and Woodruff (2003).

4. My discussion of domination and resistance draws on the conceptualizations of James C. Scott (1990); as he notes, the lines between the oppressor and the oppressed are continually being negotiated by each side within the realm of everyday life.

5. "Lynchings by Year, by Race," Archives at Tuskegee Institute, cited at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Law School Web site, <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/shipp/lynchingyear.html> (accessed July 10, 2008).

6. In many places in the South, passing segregation legislation was practically a formality. In Mississippi, Neil McMillen observes that "the color line was drawn in the attitudes and habits of its people, black and white, well before it was sanctioned by law" and "white sentiment crystallized" even before the end of Reconstruction (1989, 3–4). For more on the importance of the everyday realm in marking racial boundaries in the post–Civil War South, see Harris (1995).

7. For more on segregation, race relations, and racial violence during this period, see Ayers (1992); Gilmore (1996); Kousser (1974); Litwack (1998); and Wright (1986).

8. Minnie Weston, interview by Paul Ortiz, August 8, 1995, Moorhead, MS, tape recording, "Behind the Veil: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South," John Hope Franklin Historical Collections, Duke University, Durham, NC (hereafter cited as BTV).

9. Although Ritterhouse notes that black and white children playing together led to tensions across racial lines (2006, 143–79), it is not clear from her discussion—nor is it borne out in the interviews—that these racial dynamics were critical in the years before schooling.

10. For more on schooling for African Americans in the South, see Anderson (1988).

11. James Robinson, interview by Mausiki Scales, August 10, 1995, Itta Bena, MS, tape recording, BTV.

12. John (Henry) Johnson, interview by Mausiki Scales, August 2, 1995, Greenwood, MS, tape recording, BTV.

13. Walter Sculark, interview by Paul Ortiz, August 2, 1995, Cleveland, MS, tape recording, BTV.

14. Herman Leach, interview by Doris Dixon, August 8, 1995, Yazoo City, MS, tape recording, BTV; H. Scott, interview by Mausiki Scales, August 8, 1995, Yazoo City, MS, tape recording, BTV.

15. Alice Giles, interview by Paul Ortiz, August 8, 1995, Indianola, MS, tape recording, BTV.

16. David Mathews, interview by Paul Ortiz, August 5, 1995, Indianola, MS, tape recording, BTV.

17. Much of the earlier research on racial socialization, originating with the work of Jean Piaget in the 1920s and 1930s, assumed that young children (prior to elementary school age) were not capable of understanding racial differences in a meaningful or coherent way. For a fuller discussion of socialization issues within the African American community, see Caughy et al. (2006); Thornton (1997); and Thornton et al. (1990).

18. Horace Buckley, interview by Michael Garvey, May 11, 1977, Hattiesburg, MS, transcript, "Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi," William D. McCain Library and Archives, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg (hereafter cited as CRMM).

19. H. Williams, interview by Mausiki Scales, August 8, 1995, Yazoo City, MS, tape recording, BTV.

20. Alma Ward, interview by Doris Dixon, July 31, 1995, Itta Bena, MS, tape recording, BTV.

21. Johnny Jones, interview by Mausiki Scales, August 2, 1995, Itta Bena, MS, tape recording, BTV.

22. William James Raspberry, interview by Chester Morgan, December 6, 1983, Hattiesburg, MS, transcript, CRMM.

23. Amzie Moore, interview by Michael Garvey, March 29 and April 13, 1977, Cleveland, MS, transcript, CRMM.

24. Bennie Gooden, interview by Homer Hill, March 15, 1994, Clarksdale, MS, transcript, CRMM.

25. Hettie Love, interview by Doris Dixon, August 2, 1995, Itta Bena, MS, tape recording, BTV.

26. Olye Brown Shirley, interview by Donald Williams, June 18, 1999, Jackson, MS, transcript, "Civil Rights Documentation Project," L. Zenobia Coleman Library, Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, MS (hereafter cited as CRDP), http://www.usm.edu/crdp/html/transcripts/manuscript-shirley_olyle-brown.shtml (accessed February 20, 2005).

27. Ruby Williams, interview by Paul Ortiz, July 31, 1995, Clarksdale, MS, tape recording, BTV; James Nix, interview by Sarah Rowe, March 7, 1993, Hattiesburg, MS, transcript, CRMM, <http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/oh/nix.htm> (accessed February 20, 2002).

28. Lee Willie Miller, interview by Donald Williams, July 29, 1999, Vicksburg, MS, transcript, CRDP, http://www.usm.edu/crdp/html/transcripts/manuscript-miller_lee-willie.shtml (accessed February 22, 2002).

29. Samuel Bailey, interview by Alferdteen Harrison, July 6, 1982, Jackson, MS, transcript, "The Farish Street Historic District Oral History Project," Margaret Walker Alexander Research Center, Jackson State University, Jackson, MS.

30. Charles Scott, interview by Paul Ortiz, August 4, 1995, Itta Bena, MS, tape recording, BTV.

31. Jennifer Ritterhouse also demonstrates that in the Jim Crow South black children learned the racial rules as a means of physical survival (2006, 17).

32. Maurice Lucas, interview by Mausiki Scales, August 7, 1995, Renova, MS, tape recording, BTV; Jessie Stewart, interview by Doris Dixon, July 28, 1995, Greenwood, MS, tape recording, BTV; Chris Young Sr., interview by Doris Dixon, August 8, 1995, Yazoo City, MS, tape recording, BTV.

33. Obie Clark, interview by Donald Williams, March 13, 1999, Meridian, MS, transcript, CRDP, http://www.usm.edu/crdp/html/transcripts/clark_obie.shtml (accessed February 21, 2002).

34. Alma Ward interview.
35. John (Henry) Johnson interview.
36. Charles Scott interview.
37. Alice Giles interview.
38. Richard Rose, interview by Paul Ortiz, August 3, 1995, Itta Bena, MS, tape recording, BTV.
39. Madison S. Jones Jr. to Walter White, November 7, 1942, Mississippi Lynching Collection, Margaret Walker Alexander Research Center, Jackson State University, Jackson, MS.
40. For a comprehensive study of Till's murder, see Whitfield (1988).
41. James Nix interview.
42. Elizabeth Pitts, interview by Mausiki Scales, July 24, 1995, Greenwood, MS, tape recording, BTV.
43. William James Raspberry interview.
44. As Jennifer Ritterhouse notes through the evidence of black autobiographers, experiences with racism played a direct role in African Americans beginning to acquire a sense of who they were as a "black" person (2006, 112–17).
45. For more on the concept of dissemblance, see Hine (1989). For a discussion of how these dual lessons were taught to children during enslavement, see King (1997).
46. Obie Clark interview.
47. Jasper Neely, interview by Worth Long, February 19, 2000, Grenada, MS, transcript, CRDP, http://www.usm.edu/crdp/html/transcripts/manuscript-neely_jasper.shtml (accessed February 22, 2002).
48. James Robinson interview.
49. Johnny Barbour Jr. and Clara M. Barbour, interview by Donald Williams, January 25, 1999, Jackson, MS, transcript, CRDP; Daisy Livingston, interview by Doris Dixon, August 3, 1995, Greenwood, MS, tape recording, BTV; James Nix interview.
50. Alma Ward interview.
51. Daisy Livingston interview.
52. James Cohen, interview by Mike Garvey, February 2, 1976, Hattiesburg, MS, transcript, CRMM, <http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/oh/cohen.htm> (accessed February 19, 2002).
53. Sarah Automon, interview by Mausiki Scales, August 4, 1995, Greenwood, MS, tape recording, BTV.
54. David Wicks, interview by Mausiki Scales, July 25, 1995, Itta Bena, MS, tape recording, BTV.
55. Peter Stewart, interview by Charles Bolton, August 20, 1997, Jackson, MS, transcript, CRMM, <http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/oh/stewart.htm> (accessed February 21, 2002).
56. See, for example, H. Williams interview; Ruby Williams interview.
57. Georgia Bays, interview by Doris Dixon, August 1, 1995, Lyons, MS, tape recording, BTV.
58. Eura Bowie, interview by Paul Ortiz, August 9, 1995, Moorhead, MS, tape recording, BTV.
59. Minnie Weston interview.
60. Minnie Weston interview.

61. Herman Leach interview; Hettie Love interview; Minnie Weston interview.
62. John (Henry) Johnson interview.
63. Cora Fleming, interview by Paul Ortiz, August 7, 1995, Indianola, MS, tape recording, BTV.
64. Alma Ward interview.
65. Alma Ward interview.
66. Alma Ward interview.
67. Alma Ward interview.

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