

INTERVIEWEE: Ike Ward

INTERVIEWER:

DATE: Aug. 2, 1978

I: We and...we are here in Seville, Florida on August 2, 1978 to interview

Mr. Ike Ward, who is 116 years old, was born in 1862 as a slave.

And he is going to share with us this morning some of his experiences and life.

were
Mr. Ward, where/you born?

W: Richmond, Virginia.

I: In Richmond, Virginia, in 1862.

W: Yes.

I: Do you uh, could you tell us a little bit about the house and your family?

W: Well, I can tell you as far as I know, you know. See, I was snuck
to my people's, and brought to Savanna, Georgia, and sold.

Well, you see, at that time, I wasn't large enough, you know, I understand, pure nothing because I was took to Batchelor, Georgia, for
a slave. ~~My~~ ^{My} ~~was.~~ ^{was.}
~~now~~ people ~~want~~

I: Right. Do you remember, as you got a little older, your family talking at all about the Civil War, do you remember any of those experiences?

W: Well, I, I heard the people talking about it, that's all I can explain to you.

I: What, what did they tell you?

W: Well, they told about my father, and my bossman, and I don't know
^{so,} and/told me how they toted him, and then after, he ~~was~~ shot over here at the monument in Florida. See, there was more Indians up there. So, he mentioned only that. Going back to his dad, now(?), of course, I wouldn't even try to explain nothing much about it,

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W: because I was, knew too much about it.

I: Right, all right. You were sold from Richmond to Savanna?

W: My daddy and them was not, no, I was not-- I was a child.

I: You were just a child, but you went with them to Savannah?

W: Why, sure!

I: Uh-huh, and how long did you stay in Savannah?

W: Well, I , I couldn't tell you that.

I: Okay.

W: Cause I, I don't know nothing about that, I had to go with them,
when they were carried as slaves.

I: So you went to where in Georgia?'

W: In Batchelor, Georgia.

I: Batchelor, Georgia;

W: Yeah!

I: Oh!

W: I'm from Batchelor. My people came, my people are in there.
And the white lady me took the house in the home.
Here I was raising up in "the House" when I was a child
And they hung gallowe

I: So it was ~~in~~ that house in Batchelor, Georgia that you grew up.

W: Yes.

I: What was this woman's brother's (?) name? Do you remember?

W: Yes. The white leader?

I: Yes.
Miss Nancy Melton.

W: It's nationally known.

I: Miss Nancy Melton.
It's nationally known. What kind of a ~~XX~~ house was that?

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W: (Laughs) Well, it was a old log house, you know how, back then, you know, there wasn't much limbs, there wasn't much lumber. you had to cut down trees, ~~did you,~~ now I wasn't large enough to do that. But you had to cut down trees and notch 'em, you know, stick in. See that up there? ~~your~~ knife up there? That's the way, you could see scare somebody with that same thing hanging up there.

I: Mm-hm.

Q: Know what that is?

I: No, sir, I sure don't. Why don't you describe it?

W: You Want me to give it a try?

I: Sure, I'd appreciate that very much.

W: This is what you, you peel that log with, you see?

I: Uh=huh.

W: A round log, ~~XXXX~~ we'd peel you standing over it this way, ^{see} ~~reaching~~ the bark.

I: I see. What it is, in physical description, is a kind of a straight metal bar with a fairly sharp edge on it, and two handles. That's

what you scrape the bark with.
 W: That's right. It's just ~~XXXXXX~~ and them ~~XXXXXX~~ what my father used to have. I kept it.

I: I see.

W: Now, that's that's, that's over what, 150 years old.

I: Well, that's quite a prized possession, I'm sure of that. How old were you when you started doing that kind of work?

W: Well, see, they raised me up as on a child ~~XXXXXX~~ and I, I didn't do this, people have done this. All I done was tend to the house and ring the bell for the hands to come in. I was a houseboy.

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I: Oh, I see! I see. So you worked around inside the house.

W: Inside.

I: Did you live in the house, or did you live in a cabin near it?

W: See, They kept me in the house, right with the children.

I: I see.

W: I was ^{ai} raised up right with them/

I: Did you, what kinds of food did you eat?

W: Peas, beans, and... I ate what the white folks ate at that time. But the outside people didn't do that. They didn't have it to eat. They had to eat what you could get, what the master'd give them.

I: So you ate pretty well?

W: Yes. You could tell I ate pretty well ^{until I was raised, ... (laughs)} because I was very _____.

I: I guess you're still eating pretty well, huh? Yes!

W: Well, I had a, a lots of friends, you know, when we were about ^{with the} ~~there~~ children.

I: What kinds of games did you play with those kids?

W: Well, we'd, we'd tease them... I think I've got...if they're only pushing buttons, you know, an a thing, ^{and beat everybody in the} whole yard. I've got a bag upstairs that, of, in the house. I'd like to show you, but I couldn't get to them now. And so we'd pick and when we'd want to bet, you know, we'd go and get a whole lot of straw, and make some short ones, some long ones-- if you grabbed you a ~~the~~ long one, you win.

I: Oh!

Q: That's the only kind of game.

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I: That's the games you played. *Yes.*

W: Uh-huh. Now *he'd peel you.* He'd peel you for having a fire.
~~cause~~ We didn't have no matches, I don't know where you'd put matches.

I: You saved it for building fires.

W: Yes...I've got to have me a fire, and then you could strike fire on that *, kindly,* in your kitchen.

I: And you got paid for that. Do you remember how much you got paid?

W: Oh, yes, *you know,* a penny, a nickel, / a week.

I: Big money in those days! Oh, yeah, sure!

W: Nickel was a big figure. And then you have your half-pennies, *they give us that.*
Didn't get to play more. you know, then big pennies, half-pennies, ~~then your~~ _____.

I: Did you get to get any kind of an education as a young child, Mr. Ward?

W: Not a bit, not a bit. I got all, I didn't get any education until I was 105, right here.

I: Well, ah, you, living that long, with all due respect, is an education ^{the} in itself, but I meant in / formal sense did you--you got no reading or writing--

W: That's right--no--wouldn't let me.

I: ...any of that when you were a young child?

W: I can get out there on the ground right now and make marks, and you CAN HAVE YOUR PENCILS and *pay a thousand dollar worth,*
I'll get lost. Get down on the ground and give me enough string ~~to~~,
 I'll tell you, right on the ground.

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I: That's very interesting.

W: I never knowed how to read and write. You'd, you read that there, and it'd show you how, how old I was,...105.

I: Mn-hm, when you started to do that, huh?

W: Yep.

I: Well, Mr. Ward, when you were a young child then, in your earliest years, your parents--did you stay in close contact with your parents? even though you lived in the ^{"Big"} ~~real~~ ^(?) house?
stayed

W: Well, I ~~lived~~ with the white folks, I told you that, of course, but they ~~was~~ allowed me, about once a month, to visit my people, they was no, you know, about a mile and a half from the house. I stayed in the house up here, and I kept that house clean...

I: Well, when you went to visit your people, ^{how,} /who was there? I mean, well, did you have brothers and sisters--

W: Oh, yes!

I: --and cousins?

W: Why sure!

I: Uh-huh. How big a family was it, do you think?

W: Well, it was a pretty large family, it was over--

I: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

W: I had 5 brothers.

I: Uh-huh.

W: I had 5 brothers. I've got another ^{" "} ^{brother} living now that's older than me.

I: My word! Where is he?

W: Down south, Lloyd, Florida. That's the fellow you hear tell of, oldest man in the world, ~~and it takes years.~~ ^{In the state of Wash}

I: Where is he living?

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W: He's living there down in Bordecow, Bartow.

I: Bartow--Charlie Smith!

W: Charlie Smith, that's my brother.

I: He is your brother!

W: Oldest brother.

I: Well, that's very interesting, I didn't know that. I didn't know that.
Is that common knowledge?

W: What's that(?)?

I: That Charlie Smith is your brother?

W: Yes, everybody, everybody in the state can tell you that, I've even got his pictures and everything, from when I was down to visit him.

I: How come his name is Smith and yours is Ward?

W: Well, he was owned by another company, he was owning slaves down/ there with(?) this same man, Carter . When he got, he, Carter give it to him. My master started me off: I bought land for twenty cents a nickel after slavery, through(?) my father and my brother-in-law.

I: Did you, did you have any sisters?

W: Had 2.

I: Two sisters.

W: Normabelle and Edith. They all dead. Passelaway.

I: Any aunts and uncles and cousins live with you?

W: Oh, not live with me!

I: Or lived in that, when you say you went off for a, once a month to go visit your people-

W: Oh, yeah, oh yeah, down there.

I: And did they all work in the fields?

W: See, some of them worked in the fields, some of them worked different

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W: places, you know, in slavery time. Yeah, .And white folks had them out there cutting logs and different things, you know, and building. Rolling logs, cut and build to make farms. Didn't have what all we've got now, had to do it by hand.

I: What did you sleep on?

W: Well,--

I: When you were a kid?

W: Well, I slept pretty well, now, about me sleeping, but my people, they slept pretty bad, some of them. Some didn't, ^{then,} and/some they had good ^{they} masters (2) and some/didn't.

I: Well, what I mean is, what kind of mattresses did they have?

W: Oh, let me get these out here--you see this moss on the trees?

I: Uh-huh.

W: Well, they went and got that, and took this bagging cotton which you bag up cotton with? Well that was your mattress at that time.

I: Did you, could you remember--and you would have been very young, you would have been about 3 years old, but I'm sure you must have heard stories about it--

W: Oh, yes.

I: --did you remember, or did your parents ever tell you anything about how they felt when Abraham Lincoln died--

W: Oh, yes, mm-hm.

I: --and freedom came?

W: Yes, mm-hm.

I: What kind of stories did you hear?

W: Well, we hear, I heard talking 'bout how nice ^{it was} ~~a~~ boy; I can remember

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W: when they come to free us. They give us, give them two years, the Yankees give them two years, they ^{could} ~~a better~~ use them. And when those two years was out, there was, and Mr. Marsh come--I remember they coming down, several of them ^{had} ~~done~~ them guns, they'll free us. And the people woun'dn't turn us loose, wouldn't turn the people loose. And so they told them, "You turn them loose," and said, "Now, I'll be going off and be coming back, and if you ain't turned them/loose niggers when I come back, we'll turn y'all loose." I seen all of that. And then some of them turned them loose, some didn't, some, some wouldn't, some of the colored people, like me, wouldn't ^{never} ~~know~~ return loose. And you know, I, I think more of slavery ^{time} ~~down~~ right now than I do now .

I: You think more about it now?

W:Y Yes!

I: Why is that?

W: Well, in a way, you look at the people out here meeting you on the road and killing you, and doing ^{you} any kind of way ^{Now} ~~and~~ I traveled, I traveled some and spent some time in countries with a government. And every country that we've been into, I took real good notice of it. Everything old enough to vote and register, they register. Look at this state--you know I'm telling you the truth! It's 60% of your people living have not registered!

I: So you think people ^{were} ~~more~~ more involved in a simpler life, even though it was slavery. Do you think it was ^{more} ~~preferable~~ preferable to living today?

W: Why sure! They treat you more nicer, and they're back to me, and

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W: I, I wouldn't say so, as much, you know, coming to colored people. It's, I hate to see it, but you look at this young race, white and black. Tougin. They're now in slavery time. ~~XXXXXX~~ If we ~~we married(?)~~ buried ~~the~~ two people that are in slaverytime in 12 months, mister, I'll give you money! Now look here! Them, everyday, it's here.

I: Yeah, a lot more violence is what you're saying.

W: Yeah, that's right.

I: Yes. As a matter of fact, I noticed what you were talking about, traveling, it said in that newspaper clipping that I read about you that right after the Civil War you went to Africa.

W: Oh, yes!

I: Tell me about that, how did you, how did that happen?

W: I stayed in Africa two years.

I: Well, how did it happen that you went to Africa?

W: Well, I went to Bishop Turner, in Brundidge Georgia. He carried about 5000 over ~~to the~~ of us, it looks like, was on the ship.

I: Bishop Turner.

W: One year, that's right. It was one year of traveling, on the old English Channel!

I: How did you manage to meet him?

W: Well, he was taking up the hands, taking up people, you know, to go over with him. You had to have so much--that's, that'll do--they had, they had so much, you know, of people up on the boat before it could turn loose.

I: Where in Africa did you and Henry McNeil Turner ~~turner~~ go ?

W: The hand part of ~~the~~ It was called the southern part of Africa, as you go up-- it wasn't named like it is now.

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I: Uh-huh.

W: So where you are, I couldn't explain that to you.

I: Right

W: B ecause it was all part of ^{the} southland. ANd the wild(?) a lot of people was up in the mountains..

I: Well, did you plan on settling there, in Africa?

W: Yes, we did--my daddy and them--

I: Your people--

W: --that's where they come from.

I; Yeah.

W: Had one brother had to jump overboard ~~over a bull~~ before he come to the United States.

I; You had one--?

W: One brother of mine, ^{I was} one of my brothers jumped overboard(?) ~~over a bull~~ before he got to Liverpool, England.

I: Uh huh.

W: Well, they couldn't name him until they got to Liverpool, England. They stole ^{the} white folks' went over there, and took him! My daddy told me, and my mother, when they had that ship, you know, and had all kinds of eats, you know, and you know people, you know, ~~XX~~ over in that part of the world at that time, they can't, didn't have enough to eat. I just wanted to go over with them; I aim-⁽ to.

I: So your daddy was born in Africa?

W: Yes, sir!

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I: I see.

W: And mother.

I: And they were going back to Africa after the war?

W: No! No, I'm the one--

I: You--oh, you're the one who went away, I see.

W: Yes! I'm--

I: I'm getting a little confused here, I'm sorry, sir.

W: That's all right, I'm the one.

I: You went back.

W: My people's all dead when I was over there.

I: I see. And you, and, when you went back to Africa and you stayed two years?

W: Two years.

jI: Two years. What did you do when you were there?

W: Well, I'll tell what I done. I used a machine that I get over there to make different things, you know, where--

I: Like what things?

W: What you eat with--spoon, and what you plow with.

I Oh, I see, farm machinery and things like that, tools.

W/ Well,
Yeah, yes, right. /I've got some of the stuff that I made, where you eat and stir and all, that's knives and forks.

I: Uh huh.

W: It's over to the house over there.

I: I see.

W: If you'd like to see them, I'll show them to you before you go.

I: Oh, yes, I'd like that very much, thank you.

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W: Yeah, I have a whole lots of stuff.

I: So you planned on sort of staying and making those kinds of tools in Africa?

W: Well, I was feeling but I couldn't catch no wife/over there and so I came back. ,you know,

I: You couldn't catch no wife!

W: Yeah.

I: Why not?

W: You want to know why, I'll tell you(?), they'll eat you, they'll kill you, they was wild people at that time in Africa.

I: And a charming man like yourself, you couldn't catch a wife over there?

W/ No, man, ~~you~~ ^I couldn't get to talk to them, you ~~had~~ ^{got} to run them down! Chase 'em. In town, too, boy, they'd get teams.

I: Now how was that?

W: Well, you, at that time, we uh, we had apples, you know, we had taken over with us, we'd get them apples and ^{play} A. If you couldn't get to them, maybe you could play music.

I: Mm-hm. So that's how you did it, was playing music.

W: Sure, you'd catch one of them, but it'd take about 4 or 5 of us to hold her.

I: Just to get one, huh?

W: Mm-hm/

I: Yeah. How old were you? when you--

W: Well, when I went over?

I: Yeah.

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W: I was 17 years old.

I: 17 years old...so that would have been in 1879 that you went to Africa, and you stayed through that period?

W: Yeah.

I: Did you have much news from the United States when you went? I mean, anything when you were in Africa did you ever know/about what was going on in the United States?

W: No, hm-mm, no. I had some pictures ^{of} over there Now, you know? (?)...

I: So when you were there, you were just sort of ~~XXXXX~~ out of touch with what was going--

W: Well, we were just out of, out of community(?) with anything but what went there.

I: Right.

W: See what I'm saying by that?

I: Right. Well before you went--

W: No church, no church or nothing.

I: Well before you went to Africa, ^{you were,} and/before you met Bishop Henry Turner, did you, ⁱⁿ living in Georgia, did you ever come across problems with the Ku Klux Klan? when you were, say, 13 or 14, or any--did you ever see them?

W: Never ^{old no. King like that} see ~~none of those back there~~ No sir, there wasn't nothing back then that I knowed of.

I: Were you at all interested in politics as a young child ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ growing up?

W: Well, some things.

I: Like what?

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W: I believe in one thing, I don't know whether it's right or wrong, I was raised, I was raised on these white people, they're the ones that I had to ~~that could talk how anyone please~~ (3). And look at me now-- I can go anywhere.

I: Mm-hm, I can see that, I can see that.

So you stayed and came back in 1881, you would have been 19 when you came back, right?

W: Well, I couldn't tell you about a number, or things like that, 'cause and I didn't know, I wasn't having no education, /I might tell you one thing and it'd be understand another, see. Well, I wouldn't miss seeing(?), all I can ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXX~~ is what--

I: What went on?

W: Yeah.

I: We.. what caused you to leave Africa after two years, the fact that you couldn't get a wife?

W: That's all.

I: That's all. So you just came on back.

W: Yeah. Well, I had to pay to come back, I give Captain Gilligan a piece of diamond that I found-- at that time you could find diamonds over there.

I: Diamonds.

W: Yeah. You know what a diamond is!

I: Yes, sir, oh, yes!

W: And I found a piece the second year I went over there. See, I went over there where my father, I mean, my mother was born and raised there. I was only, space later but I got a 1/2 ended up being dead,

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W: I couldn't tell you. I ought to have an uncle over there now in some of them. But I can't tell because I never gotten over there to do nothing.

I: Yeah, sure, I can see--
heard

W: I just / my father say my brother and mother was over there.

I: What did you do when you came back? Where did you go?

W: Lived in my plantation.

I: And where was that?

W: Batchelor, Georgia.

I: You went back to Batchelor, Georgia, I understand.

W: Yeah, man, I went back there and my people, they give me a oxen, and 40 acres of land. ^A And they told them Mr. ~~Moz~~ ^{Miles}, they told them Mr. John ~~Moz~~ ^{Miles}, if he had anything they wanted, that they could have it.

I: Who was John ~~Moz~~ ^{Miles}?

W: White man, running a big business. And uh, Richard and I(?) didn't ask him for nothing at all, but my master and them told us, and John ^{them} told them, told ~~me~~ that whatever I wanted, they'd let me have it. But I didn't use it; I came back and I tell you what I done. I married

I: Oh, you found a woman over here? Right.

W: Boy! and I married that woman, too! Even went and bought a license. What you think about it? I married like the Lord want me to marry, and we had to pick that woman and jump over that boom.

I: You did that, jumped over the boom?

W: Yeah, man, I married her. That's the onliest marriage I ever had. See, I bought license for a whole lot of them. Well,...

I: Can you describe/that, do you know how that ceremony of jumping over
how

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I: the broom backwards got started?

W: Well, it's ~~in~~ in the beginning, ~~I~~ I could go back and get the Bible and, and find it out. *it was*

I: Is that where you think it comes from, the Bible?

W: Yeah, I think so.

Uh huh

I: ~~XXXX~~, but everybody did it in those days, didn't they?

W: Oh, yes!

I: Yeah. Whitepeople did that as well as blacks, didn't they?

W: Oh, yeah, oh my God, man, you ought to have seen the white folks 'mad(?)'. He couldn't jump over backwards, and he'd come on over to get married today. I've seen them marry 5 and 6 times, wasn't happier. But if you see her jump over that broom, and you couldn't, that, another ~~XXXXX~~ ten, ten months after, you could court her again. I got the young woman's broom broke on me one time. Well what did I do with that broom? I: ...at the same time, uh hhh.

I: This ~~XX~~ ^{was} just a regular broom, right?

W: ~~XXXXXX~~ Yeah.

I: I mean, we're not--

W: Yeah... a regular...

I: --you just sort of lay it on the ground and then jump over it?

W: Yeah, lay it over on the ground and the man be standing there, no book; only a blue-back speller. And he'd be reading that, maybe, and he'd read, "So-and-so-and-so," and spell it. *He'd say*

"all right now? You're going to take this for your wife, do you?"

"Yes, sir!" "You going to take care of her?" *"I said"* "yes!"

~~He~~ now, walk right up here." They had a place, you know, just

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W: like that, you know, where you's jump, and you stand there. "and I know, Bucky"--just like this here. He'd say, "Now, all y'all got to jump, you got to jump over the broom, both of you at the same time." So we'd go back and we'd train that before we'd get to ~~XXXXX~~ that, I'd go back and get my gal and train. We'd train jumping over that broom.

I: Oh, you practiced jumping over the broom, trained for it, I see!

W: Oh, yeah, man, right! --

I: To make sure you didn't goof it up.

W; That's the way we courted.

I: Yeah.

W: That's just the way we courted.

I: Jumping over--

W; Both learned that.

I: And you just had to make it over the broom?

W: Yes.

I: That's all, and then you wer e married.

W: We was married. Then you could go home, and that's your wife, you could do anything you want to do.

I: I see.

W: But you better not do--

I, Nothing bad, right? yeah, I can understand that.

W: Your wife'll beat the skin off you, man!

TI: Well, what, what, when you and your wife got married by jumping over the broom, and--did you build a cabin?

W: Yes.

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I: Set up to farming, right?

W: Yeah, I had done, I had done built it.

I: Oh, you'd already built the cabin.

W: OH, yes.--

I: Way in advance.

W: --you had to prepare for a woman at that time before you'd get her.

I: I See.

W: 'Fore you married her, you had to have a home, you'd have everything in there, ~~where~~ ^{but} your mother-in-law and everything could go in there and fix the house ~~=~~ off for you and your wife. That's where you went; that's where the 775711 is.

I: I see.

W: I don't know about the white folks, ~~XXXX~~ 1. say I'm talking you but they had to marry just like us.

I: And when you uh, when you started farming, what kinds of things did you grow?

W: Well, we grew peas, your cukers, peanuts, peas...

I: What did you do about meat and fish and things like that, did you hunt?

W/ Well, oh yeah, we, you, you could kill ^{ow} we could see deers and bear bears and panthers, everything, right around you r place. You can get all the meat like that you want ^{after} ~~to have in~~ slave ~~XXXX~~ time. ^{if} ~~but~~ you had the gunpowder to kill them.

I: What kind of/gun did you have^a?

W: We had, we had a, an old \$40 breechloader.

I: Breechloader, I see.

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W: *They would not give much like that*
 No, ~~there was not any,~~ no guns.

I: Mm hm. But you could use that for hunting.

W: Yes.

I: I see.

W: All them big hunters, *your big ones* ~~they got maps that~~ went out, and they killed him. Bring him and have him and throw him in the wagon, give him to them, cut up, you'd go home and skin him.

I: Mm hm. When you, when you first got married, Mr. Ward, and you were farming and hunting and sort of providing for yourself and your wife, do you think you were, you were pretty well off, or did you rec--did you think you were poor compared to other people, now how did you sort of think of yourself and your family in those days?

W: Well, I tell you how all of us feel *we feel just like this:*
~~we didn't know what's~~ *no work. She's going to have them.* And uh, money, we didn't have. I worked all, I, I worked a whole, I worked a whole month for \$5.

I: Mm hm. That's not very much money.

W: Not unless ~~I didn't (?) get all,~~ I had, always something to eat, and get anything I wanted.

I: What did you do for entertainment, when ^{you} ~~people~~ rested and relaxed, what did people get together and do?

W: Well, we got together and prayed(?).

I: Did you ever go to dances and things like that, did you get to--?

W: Was no, man, there wasn't no dances--

I: No dances or anything like that, uh huh.

W: --no, sir, no dance at all, brother. And uh, we'd always meet in

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W: one place, and were praying and the/white folks went in and tore t
 that down. ~~I don't know.~~ *yeah.*

I: They tore your church down.

W: Wasn't no church!

I: Or, what's the--

W; Where we had, where we had--

I: Where you had your service?

W: Yeah. Some of them were rag-tag, and I think...

I: One of the things that I had heard about slavery with regard to reli-
 is that, ^{,now,} gion/ and this of course is going back again/to when you were a ver y
 young child, uh, is that many slaves prayed around a tub of water.

Did you ever see anything like that, or practice that?

W: Why, sure! ~~And they, they, they~~ Had to pray there, they came in then,
 kneeling in the next yard, then with their head bent, people owned
 us, then they'd pray in the yard, go with us, they had a place.
 They was mighty/^{nice}to us, where we was owned.

I: Did they ever let you in the white churches?

W: No.

I: Never?

W: No, sir, we didn't go there! You might make your, drive your mule
 and wagon, get him to turn there, but you got away from there,
 you could not go back there and ge t him. One way or another.

I: Well, when you were uh, then when you first got married, you and
 you r wife had children?

W: Yes.

I: How many did you have?

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W: I didn't have but 5 boys and 1 girl, that's all. And my wife did that, I didn't have nothin'!

I: Well, you're right about that! 5 boys and 1 girl, uh huh. And did they all live right around you, too, as they grew up, or--?

W: Oh, yeah, left here and went into the army, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ and got killed over France.

~~XXXXXX~~ Well, two of my boys die, in France. I was in France when they got killed.

I: In World War I.

W: That's right. I was a horse -laughter put in there.

I: Did you get involved in the Spanish-American War in 1898 with Cuba?

Did you get involved in that war?

W: I stayed there 2 years solid.

I: In--Cuba?

W: In-- yeah, I went to Cuba, fighting.

I: Oh, you did fight in the Spanish-American War!

W: Oh, yes sir, mm hm. killed ~~old~~ everything in my regiment but two of us

I: Who was your commanding officer?'

W: Oh, uh, I've got his name, too, but I can't--

I: Well, that's okay if you don't remember, that's, that's no problem.

So you went in the army--?

W: Yeah, left right here. Left from over there, Batchelor, and went over there and walked out in the fields and volunteered in Batchelor, Georgia.

I: Uh huh. so you enlisted, then?

W: Yes.

I: I see, to go fight in the Spanish-American War. And you left your,

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I: your wife and your family in Batchelor while you, while you did that.

W: Yes.

I: I see. What was that like, being in Cuba in the War?'

W: Well, I can't do--it's been so long and different things...^{fact} and I can remember, I had all my papers, but they got burned up, and I didn't have sense enough to go back to Batchelor. And have--see, I got burnt out, and if I ~~had~~ had new papers made, why of course i might have got something, but after you burn them all up, you need new papers, in Washington they burn up everything. Tell me, I don't know, know where it is.

I: How did you get burned down?

W: Hm?

I: How did you get burned down, how did the papers get burned, do you know?

W: Uh, me and another fellow and I went to the field to set to work. And my wife come down to the field, we went together. And she was up at the gate, and I was plowing, I ^{was} plowing oxen. And John said, "John has ~~set~~ set our house afire, look at the smoke!" It was a fire.

I: You've no idea how it got started?

W: N--he uh, --yes. I've got that in me, we would, oh he used to work with me in the field, and he felt bad that morning. And I told him, I said, "John," I said, "We're going to leave you here at the house." He wouldn't ^{take} ~~take~~ anything. And he went out in the lot and got up tomatoes and things, he said he'd cooked them. And he left a piece of wood in the stove, and you know, and it was

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W: and he burnt it,
too long,/and he forgot to, he said he forgot to shove it up, and
it fell over.

I: So did you rebuild your cabin and all of that, have to start over?

W: oh, yes, oh, yes.

I: Boy, that must have been discouraging, to watch your house go up
in--

W: yeah, yeah.

I: --smoke...that type of business.

W: Yeah, I went, I went by the white people,ⁱⁿ/to the white folks' church(?),
Miss Beir, you know. And said, "Ike," and I said, "Yes."

Said, "Well, we are all going to put in, and give you some money.
and we're going to send Mr. Morris down there,^{and he'll do the building,} and all you've got
to do is just ~~XXXX~~ half of the stuff. Like that.

So I fixed the stove and everything, so he came down, built home,

I'm well-thought of ^{by} white people, you know.

I: I have a question for you, it just, just popped into my head, and
we've passed the subject, but I'd sort of like to go back to it
real quickly, um, it concerns your, your early, early, early years,
when you were a boy--who named you "Ike"?

W: My master did.

I: Your ~~XXXXX~~ master named you Ike.

W: My master did.

I: Do you have any idea why he chose "Ike"?

W: Well, I don't know, but he had me and he named me, and people tried
to ~~give me new~~ ^{get me to} changing my name--

I: After the War, after freedom.

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W: Yes, mm hm.

I: Mm hm, but you didn't want to do that.

W; I'm not going to do it. I'm goinig to die with this name.

I: Well, I thing that's--if you've kept it this long, you might just' as well keep it a while longer, yeah, I can understand how you feel about that!

W: Yeah. And the reason ⁶why he named me, his wife told him one day, she said, "John," she said uh, "They're naming all--I'd asked another one--", she said, "They're naming all the niggers now, and who should ever keep our name," and he said, "Well, they don't care where he is, as longas we've lived and helped take care of him." Yeah. He told him, said, "Well," he said, "I've owned a lot of them. Some of them I gave ~~KA~~ ~~XXXX~~ ^{to Morris(?)}, some of them I gave ^{to you to} ~~XXXX~~ name, ~~XXXX~~ and I'm going to name some." And they had this man who owned all of it. He was bitch, a white fellow. He wanted to name some of them, so my master told him, "No," he said "You with your millions of niggers here, and you can't even name them. Now you get on back up--" Boy, that tickled me. And oh, they had fights, you know, oh, yeah, and they'd ~~borrow(?)~~ ^{steal} niggers. Wanted--

I: Wanted them, huh?

W: Wanted to name them, you know.

I: Well, if your master's last name was Melton, why "Ward"?

W: John Melton was his name.

I: Was his name. Well, how di you get the Ward?"

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W: Well, I came ~~here in the war~~ ^{of course with Ward!} I couldn't tell you more than one ~~th~~ thing ^{was} to my daddy's ~~XXXX~~ name.

I: Your daddy's last name was Ward.

W: yeah, my daddy's last name, that's all I can tell you. That's ~~it~~ Why I'm a "Ward".

I: Uh huh, and your master named you IKE, I see. Very interesting.
 in
 Okay, so you enlist ed/the Span ish-American War--?

W: Yes.

I: --and you fought in Cuba--?

W: Yes.

I: While you were there, did you uh, did you ever uh, see Teddy Roosevelt?

W: Mm, oh, yeah!

I: Can you describe what he was like in Cuba?

W- Well, I'm going to tell you something--I, I, to tell you the truth of it, I wouldn't try to start because I might make a mistake you know, see.

I: Mm hm.

w; Naw, I wouldn't, I don't think I'll make my bet on that.

I: But you weren't part of the Roughriders.

W: Oh, yes!

I: You were part of the Roughriders! I s that what you're saying?

W: Yes, uh, seen a million men go down.

I: Uh huh. And did you make that charge up San Juan Hill? WEre you a part of that?

W: Yeah, some of it.

I: Mm hm. Well, that's very interesting.

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I: And then you came back from Cuba, and then, and went back to Batchelor, back to farming, I guess.

W: Yes.

I: Okay. And then what happened to you?

W: Well, I stayed there until about two years after my marriage. And me and my wife, I asked her one morning, I said, "Missus, sit down!" She said, "No, Ike," *Yes, I'll be right down. There's more to you.* *I figured she was* ~~life.~~ *life.* I said, "Well, we ~~can't have~~ *carry them with us* ." I said, "I want to get where I can make some money, sure enough." So right there-- I'll show you where I paid, sold out, right over there if you read it. Let your wife read it, she --there, that is your wife.

I: And you moved here in 1913?

W: Mm hm.

I: Now how did you wind up in Seville?

W: Well, the kids (?), I'll tell you how I come to came down in this part of the country... *come to a place in Palatka* ~~some kind of~~ Palatka, I used to work in Palatka. And uh, there was a man that was down here named Coward. I met him. He said, "Nigger!" I said, "Yes." *You see, I had to talk, you know, because during that time they would be killing your nigger unless you talk with the white folks.* He say, uh, "They tell me you knows all about horses!" I told him I did. He said, "I see in your records where your master learned you how to rope horses." See, I can catch a horse or cow, you know. *He gave* ~~and~~ get me a horse. He said, "I want to hire you." I go, "Well, I'll come down with you." so I came on down here with him and I was *with him* ~~there~~ in the woods. Stayed there two years.