

Gift and Release Agreement

We Marie Fields and Melissa Shrader  
Interviewee (print) Interviewer (print)

do hereby give and grant to Dr. Suzanne Marshall, Assistant Professor of History, Jacksonville State University, all literary and property rights, title, and interest which we may possess to the audio or video recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) conducted at

Marie Fields home

on the date(s) of 2-26-95

for the oral history collection being compiled by Dr. Marshall.

Marie Fields  
Interviewee's signature

Address Rt 2  
Flat Rock AL 35964  
Phone 205-632-2194

Date 2-26-95

Melissa Shrader  
Interviewer's signature

Address Rt 2 Box 700  
Flat Rock AL 35964  
Phone 205-632-2290

Date 2-26-95

## INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name: Marie Fields M/F F

Address: Rt 2 Flat Rock Al 35966

Phone number(s): 632-2094

Approximate age or date of birth: 12-25-1906

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: John Lyda

Places lived and when: Boliva 1906-1911

Flat Rock 1911 - Now

Education: Bach. in Education from JSU

Religion: Bap.

Business, political and social memberships (past and present) \_\_\_\_\_

Present occupation: retired

Former occupations: Teacher

Special Skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Accomplishments: \_\_\_\_\_

National Events in which interviewee has participated: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Events in which interviewee has participated: \_\_\_\_\_

National born U.S. citizen?  Yes  No

Naturalized Citizen: Yes/No Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Country from which he/she emigrated: \_\_\_\_\_

Documents, photographs, and artifacts which are in the possession of the interviewee:

Latin books etc.

Individuals recommended by the interviewee who might be candidates for an oral history interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

HISTORY 202 PROPOSAL

Melissa Shrader  
HY. 202 Tue. and Thur.

Marie Lyda Fields  
RT. 2 Flat Rock, AL. 35966

Born at Boliva, AL on DEC. 25, 1906.  
Interviewing date: FEB. 19th 1995 at her home.

During the early 20's Mrs, Fields attended JSU.  
She experienced the Depression in many different  
ways and has many memories of this time.

*kind of short!*



## Questions for Interview

1. What was it like growing up in Al during this time period?
2. Who was the Pres. and what was your family's views of him?
3. What was your family's economic status?
4. What was the community's economic status?
5. Why did you go on to school and your family's reactions?
6. What was JSU like in the early 20's? *What degree did she get? How did she use it?*
7. What world events affected you the most?
8. In 1920, Amendment 19 gave women the right to vote, ~~and~~ did you vote then? *Why? Why not?*
9. What was womens reaction to this?

*Some more questions may be needed - put some more effort into it*

Oral Interview.

Interviewee: Marie Fields

Date: Feb. 26 1995

Place: Fields' home in Flat Rock, Al.

Subject: her life during the depression

Interviewer: Melissa Shrader

**Tape Table of Contents**

**(2 Tapes)**

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A Struggle to Teach

Oral History Report

by Melissa Shrader

1995

What a wonderful Christmas present did Mr. and Mrs. John Lyda receive on Christmas Day of 1906. Their newest addition to the family was Marie, she was the only girl of their five children. At the time the Lyda's were residing on a small farm in Bolvia, Alabama. They remained in Bolvia for five years after Marie's birth.

Mr. Lyda was an educated man, and he knew the importance of education, so in 1911 he moved his family from Boliva to Flat Rock, Alabama. It was at this time that Marie's older brothers would be entering High School, and at the time, Flat Rock had the only High School in the county. With the help of some friends and family, the Lyda's loaded up their belongings on to wagons and moved to their new farm in Flat Rock.

*Their* Their first Christmas in their new home was a very special. Marie recalled the tree as being the prettiest one she had ever seen, and on it was the prettiest doll in the world. Oh! how she wanted that doll and cried for it without knowing it was for her. This was one of the most special Christmas that she remembers.

The next summer it was time for her to begin school. This was a new experience. The first day came and her older brothers were the only people she knew. She cried all day because she was so alone. When it was time for recess, all the little boys ran to the woods to go to the bathroom. When her brothers ran to the woods, Marie followed because she didn't know any better. That night her brothers tattled on her for following them every where. Her mother told her that she had to play with the little girls, but she didn't know how to play with little girls because she had ever

been around was little boys. She had only seen two other little girls before in her life.

Marie doesn't remember learning how to read and write because she could do both before she ever started to school. She passed first grade and the next year she made two grades in one year. She loved school and enjoyed learning.

Marie graduated from Flat Rock High School in 1923, at the age of 16, a young girl uncertain of what the future would hold. Just a few short weeks after graduation her principal made arrangements for her to go to college at the Jacksonville Normal School to get a teaching certificate. She was shocked by his confidence in her. He informed her that she could attend Jacksonville that summer for one hundred dollars. Marie didn't have the money, so she borrowed it from her older brother Elbert, who had a good job at the time. A few days later she boarded a train in Valley Head to begin her journey for Jacksonville. This was the second time she had ever ridden a train. The train went as far as Wellington. When she departed the train she was lost and alone, she had no idea of which direction to go ~~in~~. Fortunate for her <sup>to</sup> nice young men had a Taxi service and escorted her to where she would be staying, all for the price of two dollars. Which was well worth the money since she had no idea of where she was.

She finally reached Jacksonville and the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howell, <sup>where</sup> Marie and five other girls would be boarding. This



was the first time she was ever away from home. These six girls shared two rooms between them. In these rooms there were no screens on the windows. It was too hot to keep them down and the mosquitos <sup>were</sup> was too bad to leave them open. Marie came up with a plan. She decided that they should soak <sup>the</sup> there sheets in kerosene to keep the mosquitos off of them. They decided to try it and went in together to buy a can of kerosene. That night they slept under those kerosene sheets, head and all. <sup>Yuck!</sup>

She came home at the end of the summer with a certificate to teach. Her principal made arrangements for her to teach at a small school at Christian Home. There she boarded with another family and started teaching for the first time grades one through seven at the young age of sixteen. She made sixty dollars a month and paid fifteen dollars of it for board. The following school year she went to St. Clair county to teach. There she and another teacher taught grades one through seven, with Marie teaching one through four. They boarded with a Mr. and Mrs. Talley. That winter they took a science class in Ashville, Tenn. <sup>earned</sup> that gave them college credit. A college teacher from Jacksonville was their teacher. When school was over in the spring she returned home.

That summer she was unable to return to college because she had to take care of her sick mother while her father and older brothers were away working.

In 1927, Marie married a young man named Grady Fields, and in the fall she returned to teaching. She taught for three years after they married then had to quit to take care of her sickly mother-in-law. In the meantime she had her first and only child, Maxine in 1935. In 1947, her mother-in-law died. Marie returned to teaching as a substitute.

In 1955, Marie returned to college once again at the University of Alabama, along with her daughter and son-in-law. She had missed school so much, and this was the first time in thirty-three years that she had attended school. Her husband told her he could make it through the crop, and encouraged her to return to school and live with her daughter. She got her teaching certificate renewed that she had received in 1923. That fall she began teaching once again and in the winter took extension class from Jacksonville. During the summer she would live in Jacksonville for summer school, return home to teach in the fall, and in the winter took more extension classes.

In 1963, Marie graduated from Jacksonville. She had been in school off and on for forty years. She finally had her teaching degree.

Marie and her family went through some hard times. She has lived through four wars. Her family was not rich, but was able to provide well for the family. During the 30's the government issued ration books that limited the amount of goods bought and sold.

While Hoover was President, the community of Flat Rock felt he was too strict and blamed him for the Depression and hard times they were going through. But these were the best hard times, families and communities pulled together to make it through the hard times and most everyone was happy. During the Depression the High School closed at Flat Rock. Since then there had not been High School in Flat Rock. When Roosevelt became president in 1932 this was a happy time for the rural areas in Alabama. It was a promise of a New Deal that brought hope of prosperity back to the little area of Flat Rock, Alabama. Life was different then, people cared about one another and helped out families in need. People used only what they needed and left plenty for others. Those were the good days.

Good info.  
Use  
some quotes  
for the tape!  
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