

Gift and Release Agreement

We Myra Willis and Cheri Hancock
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

her house

on the date(s) of 3-17-95

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

Myra Willis
Interviewee's signature

Address 16116 rd Hwy 9 Piedmont rd

Phone 447 8345

Date 4-12-1995

Cheri Hancock
Interviewer's signature

Address 200 Sanders Hill Dr
Weaver, AL 36277

Phone 820-1675

Date 4-12-95

INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name: Myra Lou Rainey Willis M/F F

Address: 16116 AL HWY 9

Phone number(s): 447-8375

Approximate age or date of birth: 1-22-21

Mother's Name: Mattie Rainey

Father's Name: Dailey Rainey

Places lived and when: Calhoun County

Education: grammar

Religion: Congregational Holiness

Business, political and social memberships (past and present): _____

Present occupation: homemaker

Former occupations: pastor's wife; factory worker

Special Skills: _____

Major Accomplishments: raised 5 children

National Events in which interviewee has participated: Great Depression

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: _____

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

Additional information: _____

Cheri Hancock
4-5-95

Myra Lou Rainey Willis

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Place of Birth *Calhoun Co. AL b. Jan 22, 1921*
3. Parent's names
4. How she got her name and why her hair wasn't cut until at the age of fifteen when she did without her parent's permission.
5. Working on the farm-chores, in the fields, and schooling.
6. Began to attend church regularly at the age of eight years old.
7. How she got her dad to go to church.
8. Transportation-horse and buggy until at the age of fourteen when her parents got a car.
9. The effects of The Great Depression on her and her family:
 - they had food and gave to others who didn't
 - missed school one winter because they had no shoes
 - her uncle and his family moved in
 - how her dad made extra money
 - crops grown
 - things bought from the store
10. Bought groceries and went to school in Piedmont:
 - walked seven miles a day to school
 - she only made it through grammar school
11. The hopes of a better President in the Great Depression:
 - Roosevelt was elected and things got better
 - welfare provided work for some
 - earned extra money by cutting wood for stoves
12. Red Scare:
 - some neighbors built bomb shelters
13. Kennedy was her favorite President:
 - where she was when he died
14. Natural Disasters:
 - tornado in Goshen Community, 20 were killed in a church
 - tornado destroyed some of her home at the age of seven
15. How her and Sanford Willis, her husband, met:
 - their first date
 - dated for six months
 - had a double wedding with her cousin
 - had five children all at home except the youngest
 - names of doctors and how they were brought to the house
16. Became a minister's wife at the age of 26:
 - moved to pastor churches
 - she spoke to youth one night and 19 were saved that night
17. Her daughter, Martha, was in a tragic accident-many of her friends were killed
18. Family members that went to war:
 - Jimmy Willis, son, wounded in Vietnam War, drafted in '66 or '67

- Sanford Willis, husband, drafted in 1945, but didn't go overseas, went through basic training three times
- Jimmy went to Japan and was shot but survived
- 19. How her education suffered by long hours in the field
- 20. For fun in the community:
 - playing musical instruments
 - ice cream supper
 - candy pulling and how it is done
- 21. After last child she worked in a sewing factory
- 22. Denomination-Congregational Holiness Church
- 23. Opinions on state politicians
- 24. Has been married 57 years and tells present size of family
- 25. Financial problems while married
- 26. Crops they raised
- 27. The making of sorghum syrup:
 - people falling in skimming hole
- 28. Meals: breakfast-syrup, biscuits, gravy, and ham
main(lunch)-Sunday is a special meal
supper-cornbread and milk
- 29. Always traded goods until 3 yrs. after married
- 30. Peddlers came to house-dresses
- 31. Milk in springs
- 32. Holidays-Christmas, Easter, and Birthdays

Cheri Hancock
4-5-95