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Mrs. Estelle B. Johnson
Interviewee

P.O. Box 7

Silver Creek, Miss.
Address 39663

Prisilla P. Ghansen
Director
Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin
Regional Library

Aug. 23 1978
Date of Agreement

Life in Silver Creek, MS. Ferry operation on the Pearl River.

Subject of Tape(s)

Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library
Oral History
Data Sheet

FULL NAME Varina Estelle Bankston Jobron

ADDRESS Box 7, Silver Creek, MS, 39663

PHONE

BIRTHPLACE Between Whitesand & New Hebron DATE OF BIRTH August 11, 1886

EDUCATION Attended Whitesand or Sutton School

OCCUPATION Housewife

TRAVELS California; New Orleans, LA; Chattanooga, TN;

SPOUSE'S FULL NAME Solomon Jobron

BIRTHPLACE Unknown

DATE OF BIRTH July 15, 1880 (1878?)

OCCUPATION Merchant; cattle business

NUMBER OF CHILDREN Raised husband's niece & nephew

NAMES OF CHILDREN

Mary Agnes Jobron Virden

Sammy Jobron

FATHER'S FULL NAME Thomas Jefferson Bankston

BIRTHPLACE Smith County (?), MS

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown

OCCUPATION Operated Flat Ferry

MOTHER'S FULL NAME Rosa-Belle Smith

BIRTHPLACE Unknown

DATE OF BIRTH Unknown

OCCUPATION Housewife

MAJOR NATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE DISCUSSED

INTERVIEWEE'S AREA OF INTEREST AND/OR CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

Ferry operation - Wanilla to New Hebron; Whitesand or Sutton School;
Arrington drowning; Food prices; Filming of movie "Jesse James";

An Interview with
Varina Estelle Bankston Jobron
June 1, 1977

Interviewed by
Evelyn Benham

Mississippi
Department of Archives and History
and the
Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library
Oral History Project
Monticello and Vicinity

BENHAM: This is an interview with Varina Estelle Bankston Jobron, Silver Creek, Mississippi, June 1, 1977. Interviewed by Evelyn Benham. Mrs. Jobron, what is your full name?

JOBRON: Mrs. Varina Estelle Bankston Jobron.

BENHAM: What is your address?

JOBRON: Silver Creek, Mississippi, Box 7, 39663, I believe is the code number.

BENHAM: All right. When were you born?

JOBRON: 1886.

BENHAM: Where were you born?

JOBRON: Between - on Pearl River where my daddy owned the ferry.

BENHAM: All right.

JOBRON: Oh, I've got that all messed up.

BENHAM: No, no, I think you're doing just fine. Don't worry about it. Now, you told me that you lived on a farm until you were eighteen (18) years old. Where was this farm located?

JOBRON: Between Whitesand and New Hebron.

BENHAM: Okay. What kind of transportation did you have then?

JOBRON: Buggy and horseback and walking.

BENHAM: What is your father's full name?

JOBRON: Thomas Jefferson Bankston.

BENHAM: All right. And when was he born? Do you remember when he was born?

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JOBRON: Pearl River at Bankston's Ferry, owned and operated by T. J. Bankston.

BENHAM: Well, do you remember what year he was born in?

JOBRON: No, I don't remember that.

BENHAM: That's all right if you can't remember. That's all right. And what kind of work did your father do?

JOBRON: He operated that flat ferry from across the river there at Wanilla. Between Wanilla and on this side, you see. It's between New Hebron and Wanilla.

BENHAM: And what was the name of this river?

JOBRON: Pearl River.

BENHAM: What year was this that he operated this ferry? Can you remember that?

JOBRON: It was on in 1894.

BENHAM: All right. Where did your father get this ferry from?

JOBRON: He put it in himself. It was his. He owned and operated it.

BENHAM: Well, did he buy it from somebody?

JOBRON: No, he just put it up.

BENHAM: You mean he made it himself?

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: Oh, that's good.

JOBRON: It was a flat ferry. You carried your horses and buggies down on that and then there's somebody to pull the ferry across to the other side.

BENHAM: I see. Well, where was the landing place for this ferry?

JOBRON: Well, I don't think I know, but it's owned now by the Sills Ferry.

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BENHAM: Oh.

JOBRON: He sold it, you know, when he moved to Whitesand.

BENHAM: I see.

JOBRON: And it's known now as the Sills Ferry.

BENHAM: Well, is that ferry still going?

JOBRON: I think it is, I'm not sure. I've never been there, I've always wanted to go where I was born, but just never did get there.

BENHAM: Well, right. I will have to look into that. I hadn't heard about that place. Did your father charge people to go across on the ferry?

JOBRON: I just don't know. I reckon it was about a nickel or a dime; I don't know what.

BENHAM: Well, that's all right. Were there passengers that went across on this ferry?

JOBRON: Yes. That was a public road, I imagine.

BENHAM: I see. And do you know what road that was that came into that landing place? What road was that?? Do you remember?

JOBRON: I wouldn't know, but it went to Wanilla.

BENHAM: It went to Wanilla. How far up and down the river did the ferry go?

JOBRON: It just went across.

BENHAM: Oh, I see. Just across. And where did it land on the other side of the river?

JOBRON: Well, it landed near Wanilla.

BENHAM: Oh, I see. The Sills place was near the Monticello side and then it landed at Wanilla.

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JOBRON: No. That ferry began up here at New Hebron and went across the river to Wanilla.

BENHAM: Oh, that way, I see.

JOBRON: That's the way it went. You know, Mamma's brother ran a steamboat up and down the river.

BENHAM: Who did?

JOBRON: My mother's half-brother, Robert Fox or Bob Fox.

BENHAM: Oh, he did? What was the name of the steamboat?

JOBRON: I don't know the name of it.

BENHAM: Did you ever hear of a name called the "Kitty Nye?"

JOBRON: No, ma'am.

BENHAM: That was the name of a steamboat that burned in Pearl River.

JOBRON: Well, I never heard my mother say anything about any of his burning, but he ran that steamboat up and down there looking for Louisa Arrington that got drowned.

BENHAM: Oh, yes, yes, I remember. And he was looking for that? I see. Well, we'll come to that later. I don't want to get too far into it yet. But I'll get back into that. Just a minute. Can you describe what your father's ferry looked like?

JOBRON: Well, I know how they all looked. It was a flat bridge down on the water and it was pulled by a big rope. The ferryman, you see, just stood on the flat boat and pulled the rope in the ferry and guided it, you know, and it went on the other side and met the road on the other side.

BENHAM: Oh, there was a rope across the river?

JOBRON: Well, yes. I guess it was. And he pulled that rope and guided

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that flat boat, I call it a flat boat, it's just like a bridge, you know, except it didn't have anything up above it, I don't think.

BENHAM: Well, did it have a railing around it so that nothing would go fall off like the cattle?

JOBRON: Yes. They took the horses on there, you know, and it scared me to death.

BENHAM: Right. And the buggies had to go across there. They could roll into the river, couldn't they?

JOBRON: They could.

BENHAM: If they had no railing around it.

JOBRON: They had a railing.

BENHAM: They did have one.

JOBRON: But not to go in. They'd latch it, you know, when we and the buggy would get on the inside.

BENHAM: What was your mother's maiden name?

JOBRON: Rosa-Belle Smith. Her mother was married before she married Smith. Rosa-Belle Smith.

BENHAM: How do you spell Rosa?

JOBRON: R-O-S-A.

BENHAM: R-O-S-A, Rosa, How do you spell Belle?

JOBRON: B-E-L-L-E. Some people write it all together. Now, my mother married twice. But you don't want the second one?

BENHAM: No. I just wanted her maiden name. Do you remember when she was born? Do you remember where she was born?

JOBRON: No. I think she was born on the Pearl River, though.

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BENHAM: But you don't know exactly where?

JOBRON: No, there's an old Fox house that sat there at Wanilla, you know. I think it's torn down now.

BENHAM: Well, I would like to have known wherever that was.

JOBRON: I think that was right in town where, you know, there's a Bud Case that lived there, you know, a long time.

BENHAM: I don't know about them.

JOBRON: And I think that's their old house, but their old home was right there somewhere.

BENHAM: Was that near the trestle or something?

JOBRON: The what?

BENHAM: Was her home near the trestle? There is a trestle there at Wanilla. They said there was a ferry that went across from there. That must have been where it was.

JOBRON: I don't know. I had an uncle that ran a ferry there for years and years and years. That was my mother's half-brother, George Fox.

BENHAM: George Fox.

JOBRON: And Mamma's daddy, Smith, ran a ferry there a long time.

BENHAM: Yes, I've heard about that name, Smith's Ferry.

JOBRON: W. J. Smith.

BENHAM: And what happened to that?

JOBRON: Well, I just don't remember whatever became of that. I reckon he sold it to somebody.

BENHAM: Where did you go to school?

JOBRON: I first started at Whitesand.

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BENHAM: Can you describe this school that you first went to?

JOBRON: Yes. It was just one little hut sitting out there in the woods. And one door with big wide steps to go up. There weren't any rooms or anything.

BENHAM: What did the children write on?

JOBRON: Write on? Slates with a pencil. I did it myself.

BENHAM: You did? I remember a long time ago that they had slates and I used to write on them, too. Mrs. Jobron, I would like to ask you something about this school. Was it a private school or a public school that you first went to?

JOBRON: It was a public school, I think, four (4) months in the year.

BENHAM: And who was your teacher, your first teacher?

JOBRON: Well, I don't remember the first, but I remember Miss Clara Longino was one of my first. And Mr. Russell, Charlie Russell, was one of my teachers.

BENHAM: Okay. Can you remember what kind of clothes you wore when you first started school?

JOBRON: I wore flannelette dresses and just most anything I could get. You know, cloth was hard to get way on back there. You had a store to go to, you know, you'd take a dozen eggs, get five (5) cents for them and get a yard of calico for five (5) cents. So I guess that's the kind of dresses I wore.

BENHAM: Well, this was a pioneer town and so people dressed like pioneers.

JOBRON: Yes, they did, and they didn't have clothes like we have now.

BENHAM: Well, you know, I have always said that I have a real kinship, I feel a real kinship with a pioneer woman, because I have lived like a pio-

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neer up there on the Hilliard place for thirty-five (35) years.

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: So I don't feel that the pioneers had a thing on me, because we are still pioneering up there.

JOBRON: Well, I reckon I am too.

BENHAM: I really like it. I mean up to a point, you know. I don't like it to be too inconvenient, but I don't mind it. I think it's really good for you. Do you remember how old you were when you started school?

JOBRON: I'm just guessing, I guess I was about five (5) or six (6). Six (6), I guess.

BENHAM: All right. And what was the name of the school?

JOBRON: They called it Whitesand or Sutton School.

BENHAM: What kind of animals did you have for pets?

JOBRON: We had dogs and cats. And we had cows and calves and horses and mules.

BENHAM: Did you ever have any wild animals for pets?

JOBRON: No, not that I know of.

BENHAM: Did a lot of children go to school when you went to school?

JOBRON: Not too many because, you see, people were not thickly settled then, you know, and there weren't so many.

BENHAM: All right. Did you have holidays at school?

JOBRON: Well, we had Christmas and Thanksgiving, just like they do now.

BENHAM: Were there any other days?

JOBRON: Not that I remember.

BENHAM: How did you all celebrate these holidays?

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JOBRON: Well, on Christmas we'd have a Christmas tree and somebody to act Santa Claus, you know. At the end of school, you know, we'd always have a big get-together and have recitations and things like that, you know.

BENHAM: Had what? What did you say you had?

JOBRON: Recitations, speeches.

BENHAM: Oh, recitations, I see. Well, how did they dress when they graduated? Did they have a cap and gown?

JOBRON: No, no. We just went in what we had. Just most any kind. My mother always had decent clothes.

BENHAM: Probably made something real kind of special for everyone.

JOBRON: Yes, that's right.

BENHAM: Do you know anything about the Larkin School? Private school?

JOBRON: Larkin?

BENHAM: Yes.

JOBRON: It was over here at Silver Creek. There's one here right back of this first store up here. And he had a sister that lived with a Mrs. Wilson up here and I was there when she passed away. And my daddy went to school to him and he won a Bible for some trait that he did. Little Bible about like that.

BENHAM: Does he still have it?

JOBRON: No, I don't know what I did with it. Threw it away, I guess.

BENHAM: Well, those things get misplaced through the years, you know.

JOBRON: And you don't think anything about you ever needing them.

BENHAM: That's right. I read somewhere that this private school was remodeled and made into a home, Is it still there now?

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JOBRON: I don't think that school's there, but it's right up there close to that Sophie Sutton Mission, And I went to school there day in and day out.

BENHAM: And where is the Sophie Sutton Mission?

JOBRON: It's right up there where the Sutton School, Whitesand School.

BENHAM: I see. All right. Mrs. Jobron, why did your family decide to leave the farm and move closer to the town of Silver Creek?

JOBRON: Well, I think one thing, the train came here, you know, and I reckon everybody was just enthused over it, you know. So my stepdaddy bought a farm, big farm, and we moved down to Silver Creek and they still own that farm.

BENHAM: And your grandfather still owns the farm?

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: And what is the name of your grandfather?

JOBRON: He was a George.

BENHAM: I see. I mean, what's his first name?

JOBRON: Joseph.

BENHAM: Joseph George. All right. Do you know why Silver Creek was called Silver Creek?

JOBRON: After the creek down here, It was called the Hall first. There's a Masonic Hall here and there are two (2) Hall brothers that, I think they were doctors and that old Hall sat right up there on the hill.

BENHAM: And is it still there?

JOBRON: No, the Methodist church is just below where it was. There's a house there now.

BENHAM: I see. Can you describe what the town of Silver Creek looked

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like when you left the farm and moved to Silver Creek? What did Silver Creek look like?

JOBRON: Well, I don't know, there's a few houses here and after we moved here we had a Coca Cola plant here.

BENHAM: Is that so?

JOBRON: A Coca Cola Bottling Company. And then we had an ice plant and it was run by a Mr. Nelson that lived here, Sebe Nelson. I think there was five (5) hotels here, you know. Everybody was just carried away with the train moving in.

BENHAM: What was the name of this train?

JOBRON: Gulf and Ship Island, Illinois Central, and Mississippi Central. We had three (3).

BENHAM: Three (3) trains? My goodness. But that was before the tornado came and wiped out everything, wasn't it?

JOBRON: No, it was after when the trains came in. The reason I know, we always called it a hurricane. Between our house and the next place crossing going to Prentiss and Silver Creek, there's a crossing there and that hurricane was between our house and that crossing.

BENHAM: I see. Well, that was really something, it must have been.

JOBRON: The logs were just laying like that, you know. There was a strip, I reckon, a half-a-mile wide and it just came right across that road.

BENHAM: My lands.

JOBRON: It was between our house and that crossroad.

BENHAM: Did it touch your house?

JOBRON: No. It was before we moved there.

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BENHAM: Oh, I see.

JOBRON: But it was still there because nobody ever gathered the logs up and did anything with them; they just rotted.

BENHAM: Well, where did your family live when you moved to Silver Creek?

JOBRON: We lived at Whitesand.

BENHAM: No, but after you moved to Silver Creek, where did you live?

Is this the house that you are living in now?

JOBRON: No.

BENHAM: Where did you live?

JOBRON: Back down below here about half-a-mile.

BENHAM: What highway is this?

JOBRON: I don't know. I believe they said it was Forty-three (43); I'm not sure. It's the Columbia highway.

BENHAM: The Columbia highway, all right. Now, you said that your father built your home. Is this the home that he built that you are living in now?

JOBRON: No. The home between Whitesand and New Hebron is where he built. We moved from the river up there, you see.

BENHAM: I see. You were first living on the river.

JOBRON: Yes, and then we lived between Hebron and Whitesand.

BENHAM: I see. And that was the house that your father built?

JOBRON: And where he died too. He died two (2) years after we moved out there.

BENHAM: Is that house still there?

JOBRON: No, some of the family sold it.

BENHAM: All right. What were some of the flowers that grew in your

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yard when you were young?

JOBRON: There were red roses and Seven Sister roses and honeysuckles. I don't know, my mother had all kinds of flowers about every three (3) feet apart. She had flowers set out all over that yard. And honeysuckles and there's another, what do you call these old things?

BENHAM: Zinnias?

JOBRON: Yes, we had them.

BENHAM: Petunias?

JOBRON: Yes, we had all of them. But most of Mamma's flowers were yard flowers, you know, Crepe myrtle, that's what I wanted.

BENHAM: Crepe myrtle, that's an old-fashioned flower.

JOBRON: And flags, you know.

BENHAM: Yes, flags.

JOBRON: And there's an old timey red rose.

BENHAM: I want to get that. Isn't it a tiny little bitty red rose?

JOBRON: Well, about like that and it blooms once a year. And I'll give you a piece.

BENHAM: Would you? Oh, wonderful, I've been trying to get that rose for years. I had a little piece growing out there in my driveway and the man that scrapes the road ran over it and I went out there and I told him I didn't want that tractor parked, You know, years ago they just parked anywhere on your place. When they scraped the road, you know, and they'd come to the end of the day and they'd take off and leave their tractor there. I said, "You just ruined my rose." And he went out there and he said, "Where is it?" I said, "You don't see it, but I know where it is and you killed it."

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and I said, "Now I have to go and hunt up another rosebush somewhere."

JOBRON: I've got two (2) out there. We have a farm out here in the country and it had that rose on it. Some Negro set it out, I know. That thing is that big around, it's the prettiest thing in the spring you ever saw. But they bloom one day and dead the next.

BENHAM: I know it, but they are an old-fashioned rose.

JOBRON: And they smell good, too.

BENHAM: That's right, and have a little leaf to them.

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: All right. Don't forget now, you are going to give me one.

JOBRON: The thing about it, you ought to get it, you know, in the early spring. In February or March.

BENHAM: Well, maybe I can just take some cuttings.

JOBRON: No, my mind's not too long. So make me think of it.

BENHAM: Mine isn't either. Mine's getting bad.

JOBRON: Everybody tells me that when I say mine's bad.

BENHAM: Oh, you ought to see the young people. When I went to college, the young people were just as bad about forgetting as I was.

JOBRON: They say they are now.

BENHAM: I know it, so you see I don't feel badly about it. And don't you feel bad either. Let me see. How old were you when you met your future husband?

JOBRON: I reckon I was about seventeen (17), sixteen (16) or seventeen (17).

BENHAM: All right. What is his full name?

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JOBRON: Just Solomon Jobron was all that I heard.

BENHAM: Do you remember when he was born?

JOBRON: No. I'll tell you, he was born six (6) years younger than me on July 15. Now, if you can count that up.

BENHAM: And you were born in 1886.

JOBRON: On the eleventh of August, 1886.

BENHAM: Okay. And he was fifteen (15) years older than you were?

JOBRON: Well, around that.

BENHAM: Well, that's all right. My husband is twelve (12) years older than I am, so I don't care about it.

JOBRON: Well, I don't mind at all.

BENHAM: Well, how old was he when he died?

JOBRON: He was eighty-one (81), I believe.

BENHAM: Okay. Well, that will give me an idea. That will tell me when he was born.

JOBRON: I say he died in eighty-two, I think.

BENHAM: No, how old was he when he died? How old was he when he died? Eighty-one (81)?

JOBRON: He is six (6) years older than me.

BENHAM: Oh, six (6). How old was he when he died?

JOBRON: He was eighty-two (82), I think.

BENHAM: He was born in 1895. If he was eighty-two (82) and it's 1977 now, that would put him being born in 1895.

JOBRON: He's been gone seventeen (17) years.

BENHAM: Oh, I'm sorry. Do you remember where he was born?

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JOBRON: No, I've heard him say though he came from West Virginia here. He and his brother John.

BENHAM: Let's get when your husband really was born, so we don't get a mistake. Now, when was your husband born?

JOBRON: July 15, 1880.

BENHAM: All right, thank you. All right. What kind of business was your husband in?

JOBRON: All kinds. Mercantile business and buying cattle and shipping them to New Orleans and he just did most any kind of work. We farmed one (1) year. So he ran a store here for thirty (30) years. And we had three (3) different stores in Silver Creek at three (3) different times.

BENHAM: What kind of different stores were they? What did you sell in each one of them?

JOBRON: Just everything that anybody would want. From something to eat, and we even kept the commodities during the two (2) world wars and issued out to the people.

BENHAM: Well, how did the first World War affect your business? Did it affect your business very badly?

JOBRON: I don't think, I don't think it did; we kept going and we didn't go broke like a lot of people.

BENHAM: That's right. And during the Depression, you made it through all right too, didn't you?

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: How did it affect the people around in Silver Creek?

JOBRON: Well, I don't know. We furnished the commodities. Of course,

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our government furnished them, you know, and we just issued them out to the people. And I don't think we got anything from it, but we sold our products, you see, as they were buying their food or getting their food. We sold them what they wanted there in the store,

BENHAM: Well, you know, that's the thing about the pioneers. They had been so used to having life hard that when the Depression came along or whatever, a war, they just went right on. It didn't bother them at all, did it?

JOBRON: Well, it didn't seem to. We just got adjusted to whatever conditions we had.

BENHAM: That's right.

JOBRON: If we had plenty of everything we enjoyed it and if we had less, we enjoyed that. Everybody seemed to be happy.

BENHAM: Yes. That's what's wrong with the world today - they just want everything and they can't be satisfied.

JOBRON: No, the more they get, the more they want.

BENHAM: That's right.

JOBRON: The Bible says you can gain the whole world and then lose your soul.

BENHAM: That's right. And so what does it benefit you if you do that?

JOBRON: Nothing.

BENHAM: You said that you reared two (2) children?

JOBRON: Yes, ⁷⁾ma'am.

BENHAM: All right. Where did these children come from?

JOBRON: They were my husband's niece and nephew.

BENHAM: I see.

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JOBRON: Mary Agnes Jobron now Mrs. Tom Virden, and Sammy Jobron. They both live in Jackson.

BENHAM: All right.

JOBRON: They might not like for me to tell.

BENHAM: Well, I don't see what harm that would do.

JOBRON: Well, I don't either.

BENHAM: Aren't they proud that they were reared by you?

JOBRON: They say they are.

BENHAM: Well, all right then, they've got to show it. You mentioned that you were related to the Foxes and Arringtons. In what way were you related to the Foxes?

JOBRON: My grandmother married General Fox's son. She was an Arrington and married General Fox's son.

BENHAM: What was his name?

JOBRON: Arthur Fox; no, it was Charles Fox.

BENHAM: All right. And were they living here in the county? In Lawrence County?

JOBRON: Yes, at Wanilla, I think.

BENHAM: All right. Now, how are you related to the Arringtons?

JOBRON: My grandmother was an Arrington.

BENHAM: I see.

JOBRON: And married a Fox, and then she married a Smith.

BENHAM: No, your grandmother was an Arrington, was that on your mother's side or your father's side?

JOBRON: It was on my mother's side.

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BENHAM: Do you know any old stories about these two (2) families? Do you know any stories about the Foxes?

JOBRON: Well, I don't know that I know any stories about them, but my grandmother owned Wanilla when her husband died. The deed was left to her when her husband died as General Fox's wife's dowry. That's the way the deed was made.

BENHAM: And so she owned Wanilla.

JOBRON: Yes, she owned all that land around there, so they told me, now.

BENHAM: Right. I know it, because in the history of the county they say that there was a Fox that owned across Saddle Bag Creek.

JOBRON: Well, that was Mamma's brother.

BENHAM: I see. What was his name? Arthur Fox?

JOBRON: No, Arthur Fox is General Fox.

BENHAM: Oh, General Fox, Well, who was the one that owned across Saddle Bag Creek?

JOBRON: It was Mamma's brother, George Fox. And he married a Mary Youngblood, Dr. Youngblood's daughter.

BENHAM: I tell you, there're so many people all related and inter-related, aren't there?

JOBRON: There weren't many people then to choose from; they just married who they came across, I reckon.

BENHAM: Who they loved.

JOBRON: Yes. And made a home for themselves.

BENHAM: Now, let's see. Well, do you know any stories about the Arringtons?

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JOBRON: Well, I don't know that I do, only the two (2), Joanna and Louisa that got drowned. They moved to Clinton to educate their children and while they were up there two (2) of their sons left and went to California to the gold mines.

BENHAM: I see.

JOBRON: And when they got over there, they wrote back to their mother and father to go over there, you know, and I think their father died, but the boys came back and got their mother. And their name is in the books, the telephone books over there. I went over there and read it for myself. I looked in the telephone book and there were their names. And I have a half-sister that's been over there, too.

BENHAM: And did you call them up when you got over there?

JOBRON: No, I didn't. But my half-sister went over there and she went to see those folks.

BENHAM: Well, wasn't there a tragedy in the Arrington family?

JOBRON: Well, those two (2) girls got drowned. They were college graduates, I reckon, and they went in a boat down to Monticello to, they told me, you know, to a dance, I reckon. And coming on back they had a Negro to row the boats. And there's a man that one of those girls was going to get married to and they went to the dance and on coming back, the Negro, they told me, got a hold of some whiskey and he rowed that boat in a whirlpool and drowned those two (2) girls.

BENHAM: I see.

JOBRON: And I don't know whether it drowned the boy or not, but it drowned the two (2) girls. They were both dressed in black taffeta, my

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mother said.

BENHAM: Oh.

JOBRON: And they figured that, you know, the waters gave up the body of one and the other one it never did and they figured that that dress got caught on a cypress snag and it being taffeta, you know, it just wouldn't let her come up.

BENHAM: Yes, yes, I know that. We have an old, it must be the old Fox Cemetery, that is right across by Saddle Bag Bridge. But it is on Rufus Edwards', the old McCullough place.

JOBRON: I know where it is.

BENHAM: Right. And they have the tombstone that tells the story about Lucy and Louisa Arrington. And it tells that story. It was a sad story. They said they found one of the bodies, but the other one they never found. That must have been the most heartbreaking thing for that family.

JOBRON: I think so.

BENHAM: That I could even think of.

JOBRON: It's been in the Lawrence County Press, you know. I saved it so my folks could see it that didn't live here.

BENHAM: Now, you said something about being related to the Drakes. And where do they come into your family?

JOBRON: Well, Joanna Drake was my grandmother's mother. It's my great-great-grandmother.

BENHAM: And you said that Sir Walter Drake, Sir Walter who? You told me that.

JOBRON: Sir Francis Drake.

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BENHAM: Sir Francis Drake, I mea.

JOBRON: But I was just joking about that. I think they were related.

BENHAM: They had to be.

JOBRON: They said that we were. My foreparents.

BENHAM: And where did they come from?

JOBRON: England.

BENHAM: Right. Now, who were the Syrians that lived in and around Silver Creek?

JOBRON: The Syrians?

BENHAM: Right.

JOBRON: It was the George family. And my husband came from Lebanon, too.

BENHAM: Lebanon, too. Oh, Solomon Jobron.

JOBRON: And his brother, John.

BENHAM: Were you known as the Syrians? Were the Lebanese known as Syrians?

JOBRON: I don't know. I don't know nothing about that country.

BENHAM: I don't either. They said there were some Syrians that lived in Silver Creek and I wanted to know who the Syrians were.

JOBRON: Well, they came from Lebanon.

BENHAM: Right. Well, like I was born in Nicaragua. That's way over there in Central America. Now, they don't have any Nicaraguans up here, but you know, if they said, "Well, I understand that there was a Nicaraguan that lived here in Lawrence County fifty (50) years ago." And they said, "Oh, yes, I know, that was Mrs. Benham, you know." So that's how that goes. There's nothing wrong. You can be just as proud to be whatever you are.

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JOBRON: My husband says it's just whatever you made yourselves.

BENHAM: That's right.

JOBRON: And he really made a success. You can see.

BENHAM: Now, you are talking about being the Jobron or the George?

JOBRON: The Jobron.

BENHAM: Now, you didn't marry a George, did you?

JOBRON: No, my mother married a George.

BENHAM: Oh, your mother married a George. I see. Okay. That's how the Georges came into the family.

JOBRON: Yes, but I wouldn't mention the Georges in this.

BENHAM: Okay. Well, that's all right, you've already said that. But it's not important. It's not important. No, I just asked you how it came into that. You said the different kinds of things that were in the stores. Did you always swap eggs and butter and things like that for things at the store?

JOBRON: No, now there's a store about a mile from where we lived that if we had eggs or, I don't know if we ever sold butter, but we sold eggs. That's for five (5) cents a dozen.

BENHAM: My lands. Five (5) cents a dozen. That's kind of like, you know, we lived in New Orleans, we came from New Orleans. And I remember that you could buy shrimp for five (5) to ten (10) cents a pound. But that was thirty-five (35) years ago. You couldn't even look at it today.

JOBRON: Oh, no. And eggs today, I pay sixty (60) cents for mine a dozen, but I get them from a home lady.

BENHAM: Well, how much would you say that five (5) dollars could have

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bought years ago?

JOBRON: Everything in the store, I guess. I don't know.

BENHAM: All right. Well, you remember that movie called "Jesse James?"

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: It was filmed in Silver Creek in 1953. How did the people in the community react to this movie?

JOBRON: Well, they were just tickled to death over it, I think. The streets wouldn't hold the people that came. So I guess they liked it.

BENHAM: Well, did the people around here get a chance to act in the movie?

JOBRON: Well, I think maybe my girl was in it. I don't know. They came down here nearly every day. They were in Jackson at that time, you see. And they'd come down.

BENHAM: Why did they want to film it in Silver Creek? Do you know?

JOBRON: Well, I reckon there was plenty of room here for it, you know. There were just a few stores and the people here just turned everything over to them, you see.

BENHAM: It must have been an exciting time for everybody, wasn't it?

JOBRON: Well, it was. And my grandson came from Louisiana. He and his wife and little girl and they brought a man and his wife and son with them; they stayed here several days.

BENHAM: Everybody got to see all the home folks.

JOBRON: Yes, that's right. They had a car, though, at that time.

BENHAM: How do you think that the church customs of long ago were? Do you know what the church customs were long ago in the church? What were the

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customs?

JOBRON: Well, they had their business meetings on Saturday instead of Sunday. And then, if anybody got drunk or went to a dance or something like that, they had one fellow that got up and reported him. And then he was turned out until he repented and asked people's forgiveness and then he was carried back into the church on another trial. They weren't supposed to go to dances and do all kinds of things like that.

BENHAM: I see.

JOBRON: Don't you think that's pretty good?

BENHAM: Well, I don't know. I love to dance.

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: And I don't think that's bad, but I don't think you ought to get drunk. You know, the Bible says that we should be moderate in everything. In other words, there's a middle ground for everything.

JOBRON: A drunkard doesn't know the middle ground.

BENHAM: That's right. But you shouldn't be drunk.

JOBRON: No.

BENHAM: But you can drink. Now, you know, even Christ drank wine. Now my family, my mother and father always had wine on the table.

JOBRON: Mine had eggnog on Christmas.

BENHAM: Well, we had wine and we grew up with it. You see, my father came from Poland, from the old country. Way over there in Poland and came to Nicaragua and met my mother. My father joined up with the Moravian missionaries and came over to Nicaragua and met my mother there, you know, and married her. They always had wine and beer and things like that.

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JOBRON: I think these old countries all did.

BENHAM: That's right.

JOBRON: They grew those grapes, you know, and they made wine out of grapes.

BENHAM: That's right. And the thing about it is now, the new thing about wine is that they have found out if you give wine to older people to drink, you know, just before they go to bed, it helps them to relax, it helps their indigestion. My mother drank wine right up until she died.

JOBRON: My aunt did that gave me this house and home. She had a quart bottle of whiskey she kept in her wardrobe, you know. And I can just see her with that red flannel gown on throwing that... I never made it any habit though.

BENHAM: No, I haven't made it either.

JOBRON: Don't want any of it. I believe it's the most hurtful thing there is.

BENHAM: I don't want it to rule my life.

JOBRON: No, I don't either. Well, it usually does that and it gets a hold of you.

BENHAM: If you let it. You can let it do it, But I thank God that I haven't got that habit.

JOBRON: I've known it a good many times where it's hurt people.

BENHAM: Yes, that's right. I have too. Were there always church missions? Church missions, did you have any church missions years ago, long ago?

JOBRON: I don't remember anything like that. I've heard people say that

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women paid a dollar a year and no, fifty (50) cents, I believe, and the men a dollar. As much as they wanted to pay, you know. We didn't have all this missionary work like we have now.

BENHAM: I see. You didn't have any. I see. Okay. Can you remember how the Fourth of July was celebrated in Silver Creek?

JOBRON: No, I guess we all worked and went on with our work. I don't know.

BENHAM: You didn't help shoot firecrackers and all that sort of stuff?

JOBRON: No, I don't remember anything like that.

BENHAM: All right. Well, how did you react to the St. Regis Paper Company coming into Lawrence County? You know, they say that Silver Creek is the gateway to the plant, you know, the mill. How did the people feel around here about St. Regis?

JOBRON: Well, I don't know how they feel. They just know it's out there and the man here in Silver Creek that married a girl that's kin to me, he sold them the land to put that mill on there. Nutchess Sandifer.

BENHAM: That's right.

JOBRON: Owned and operated the land that St. Regis mill is on.

BENHAM: And they are related to you?

JOBRON: Her daddy was a Johnston. And my grandmother was a Johnston. Brother and sister's children.

BENHAM: Then you are related to Earnestine Johnston?

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: You are related to Garson Johnston, the mail carrier over at Monticello?

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JOBRON: Yes, and I know Thelma Newton and Isaac right across the road from them.

BENHAM: Oh, yes, the Newtons. I know them, too.

JOBRON: She's a good friend.

BENHAM: Yes, they're very nice. He has beautiful flowers that he grows.

JOBRON: I know.

BENHAM: He's got a row of daisies from here to Timbuctu.

JOBRON: Azaleas?

BENHAM: Daisies. They are perfectly beautiful. They had them over at the old Silver Creek Baptist Church during the Pilgrimage and I took a picture of them. They were beautiful. How long has your family been in this county? Can you remember?

JOBRON: Well, been here ever since before I was born. My daddy worked in the store for old man George and Jerry Johnston when he was a boy. And that's how come him going to school down here.

BENHAM: Well, about how many years is that? Can you remember? It's over a hundred years, isn't it?

JOBRON: Yes, I am sure it is.

BENHAM: Because if you are ninety-two (92) years old now and you have always lived here and you were born in this county, right?

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: So it's got to be over a hundred years or pretty close to it. I am glad I didn't put any washing out today.

JOBRON: It's dry weather most everywhere. My niece, I had a letter from her, she said it was.

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BENHAM: Do you think that the people's lives changed very much by St. Regis coming here?

JOBRON: Well, it's helped a lot of people, because, you see, they got jobs and working and before, you know, there weren't many jobs for folks.

BENHAM: That's right.

JOBRON: And I think it's helped it a lot.

BENHAM: Do you remember when electricity came to Silver Creek? Could you remember the year that it came? That electricity came to the town?

JOBRON: Not exactly, but we were the first ones to get it.

BENHAM: All right. Well, about how old were you?

JOBRON: I expect I was about twenty-five (25), I'm just making a guess.

BENHAM: All right. Do you remember what year the town had water, town water came to Silver Creek?

JOBRON: Who?

BENHAM: Don't you all have a big well here for town water?

JOBRON: For town water, yes.

BENHAM: Do you have town water in your house?

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: Do you remember when it came into this Silver Creek?

JOBRON: It's been about five (5) years ago, I reckon.

BENHAM: Is that so? All right.

JOBRON: There's a big tank up here.

BENHAM: How does Silver Creek compare with Monticello?

JOBRON: Well, there are more people there.

BENHAM: Where?

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JOBRON: In Monticello than there are in Silver Creek.

BENHAM: All right. Is there anything else?

JOBRON: And they have work over there and I don't know, they claim St. Regis set that mill out there. I think Monticello claims it. But Silver Creek furnished the ground for it to be put on. But I reckon the water probably belongs to Monticello.

BENHAM: Who does that river belong to, Pearl River?

JOBRON: It belongs to everybody, I guess.

BENHAM: That's right; it belongs to everybody. It's on this side of the Pearl River, right? So I'd say that it belongs more to Silver Creek than Monticello.

JOBRON: Well.

BENHAM: Because Monticello is on the other side.

JOBRON: Yes, it surely is.

BENHAM: Well, they say in the history that's been over there in the library that Silver Creek is the gateway to the plant, to the mill. Okay. We'll leave it at that, then we'll be safe, won't we?

JOBRON: Yes.

BENHAM: What church do you belong to?

JOBRON: Calvary Baptist Church.

BENHAM: Did the people years ago have dinner outside?

JOBRON: Yes, on the grounds. When protracted meeting came along, you know, they had that. But they didn't have it any other time.

BENHAM: Well, what's a protracted meeting?

JOBRON: Well, where they get a preacher from somewhere else to come in

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and preach a week, you know.

BENHAM: Oh, yes.

JOBRON: That's what we call a protracted meeting.

BENHAM: I see. Well, did you all ever have a Chatauqua here?

JOBRON: It used to come here every year. Preach on different subjects, you know.

BENHAM: Was it in a tent?

JOBRON: Yes, I think so.

BENHAM: I remember that myself when I was growing up, when I was maybe ten (10) years old or so. They used to have Chatauquas that came to the little town that I lived in in Louisiana. Do you see many changes in the young people today than they were when you were growing up?

JOBRON: Yes, those short dresses are quite a change.

BENHAM: Well, they're supposed to be coming down now, though.

JOBRON: Yes, I think they are.

BENHAM: Well, what about the morals, do you think that their morals are any different than they were when you were twenty (20)?

JOBRON: Well, I don't know young people that well. The way people talk, there's quite a bit of difference. But I don't know myself, because I couldn't say - only what I know.

BENHAM: All right.

JOBRON: I imagine some good and some bad.

BENHAM: Right. I think it's like that no matter what generation you live in.

JOBRON: I think so, too.

BENHAM: What are some of your hobbies?

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JOBRON: Oh, crocheting and making quilts.

BENHAM: Do you still make quilts?

JOBRON: Quit it. And I do my housework and make a garden, have a little garden, and I just try to keep up my house.

BENHAM: Well, that's good.

JOBRON: I guess that's about all.

BENHAM: Well, do you drive your car?

JOBRON: Yes, I drive to town.

BENHAM: How far?

JOBRON: About a quarter.

BENHAM: About a quarter of a mile from here?

JOBRON: Yes. I could drive anywhere I want to go. I'm just afraid to go alone, afraid I might have trouble or something, you know. My car is not right new, but I've taken good care of it.

BENHAM: That's the thing to do. Have you done much traveling in your lifetime?

JOBRON: Well, I went to California one time, and I've been to New Orleans and Chattanooga, Tennessee. I have folks living there. And I don't think I've ever been any further than Chattanooga. And that's about the extent of my traveling.

BENHAM: All right.

JOBRON: And Jackson and went to see my daddy's people.

BENHAM: Where is that?

JOBRON: Up in Smith County. He was, I reckon, born in Smith County there near Raleigh.

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BENHAM: All right. Can you tell me what your philosophy is about yourself?

JOBRON: No,

BENHAM: Well, how do you feel about life in general?

JOBRON: Well, they say it's what you make it. Don't they? I think that's it.

BENHAM: Well, do you feel that way about it?

JOBRON: Well, I guess it is, but you got to be able to do something or you can't. You got to be. Well, I don't know. I guess I've had a pretty good life. We've always had most anything we wanted to eat. We had plenty work to do, though. Well, we had a far better living than a lot of our neighbors had. But we always worked and always had plenty. But I said I saved what I had and I didn't throw it away after it came into my hands.

BENHAM: You knew how to handle things. My mother was like that. My mother could stretch everything to go all the way around the world no matter how many times, you know, and so some of that has rubbed off on me.

JOBRON: Maybe, if you just follow her thinking, maybe you will come out at the end good, too. I told some of them yesterday, talking about buying cars, I said, well, I always paid cash for my car; I never threw away anything. I always took care of it and I worked all my life and I could buy one today if I wanted to.

BENHAM: Well, that's what I've tried to do with mine. Mine is fourteen (14) years old, but I try to take care of it.

JOBRON: I bought mine in 1966, I believe.

BENHAM: Yours is just two (2) years younger than mine. Mine is 1964.

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JOBRON: Mine was too, and I looked on the bill, you know, where I bought it, and I found out it was a 1964.

BENHAM: Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about, Mrs. Jobron?

JOBRON: No, I don't think.

BENHAM: All right, Well, I want to thank you very much for cooperating in our history program. And this is the end of the interview.

JOBRON: And your're going to give me a copy of it?

BENHAM: Yes, I will. All right, thank you again, Mrs. Jobron.

JOBRON: You're just plumb welcome.

(End of Interview)

(Transcribed by Evelyn Benham)