

MARIA HICKS: What is your name?

MR. WALKER: My name is Sidney Walker.

MARIA HICKS: When and where were you born?

MR. WALKER: I was born in Helena, Arkansas, out in the country area, the year 1893, October 12.

MARIA HICKS: Who were your parents?

MR. WALKER: My parents were Mr. and Mrs. Sidney and Lucille Walker.

MARIA HICKS: Where in Arkansas did your parents come from? Will you tell me something about your parents and grandparents?

MR. WALKER: My parents came from around Tunica, Mississippi. They were sharecroppers. Later they owned their own farm. They did not really like sharecropping, because at the end of the year...at the end of the year you never ended up with nothing. My parents were two of the happiest people, although they had many problems. I can not remember anything about my grandparents, although I would hear my parents talk about them.

MARIA HICKS: How many members were there in your family?

MR. WALKER: There were fourteen children in my family, seven girls and seven boys.

I was the eleventh child. Boy! did we have a good time. My mother never had a dull moment, she was constant shouting, "Stop that or this or I will tan your hide."

MARIA HICKS: What kind of education did you have? Can you tell me about your first day in school?

MR. WALKER: I most certainly can remember my first day in school. I was very anxious about going to school. I could hardly wait. During my time school only went to the sixth grade. If you finished the sixth grade it was a proud thing to do. Well, I finished the sixth grade. I had planned to go to Shorter College in Little Rock, Arkansas. I really wanted to become a teacher but my parents were not able to send me to college. We did not have opportunities like the children of today, grants

and other aides from the government. The government was in poor condition at this time and they did not have any money.

MARIA HICKS: Tell me about your first day in school, Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: Oh, yes, I had almost forgotten about that first day in school. First of all let me tell you what my school looked like. We had a small-one large room-- schoolhouse with a large wood or coal burning stove and it would do the job of heating the place up. There were not many students at one time because some of the children had to go to school during different seasons. Our teachers did not have a college education. They were young and most of the time had finished the sixth grade.

MARIA HICKS: What were your chores as a child?

MR. WALKER: Since we lived on a farm my chores were many. I had to feed the hogs, milk the cows, cut wood for the fireplace and help harvest during harvesting time.

MARIA HICKS: How did your family make a living?

MR. WALKER: My parents made their living by selling products from our farm. We sold quite a large amount of cotton and okra and tomatoes. We never had to buy anything from the city because we raised it on our farm.

MARIA HICKS: Where did you live during the depression and how many rooms did you have in your home?

MR. WALKER: I lived in Scott, Arkansas, during the time of the depression. I was married and away from home at this time. I had no children and I lived in a four room house. It was just a simple house with a small amount of furniture.

MARIA HICKS: How did you make a living during the depression?

MR. WALKER: There were almost no job offerings during the depression so a man had to work on a job in order to feed his family, so I worked chopping and picking cotton, for .75 cents a pound. Prices were low for food so .75 cents was a nice sum of money.

MARIA HICKS: What kind of foods did your wife prepare for you?

MR. WALKER: My wife prepared just what we had in our garden, greens, sweet potatoes, corn on the cobb or fried corn and okra. When you talk about the thirties you are talking about some hard times. People were glad to get anything to eat, especially the ones who had large families and the ones who did not have families.

MARIA HICKS: Mr. Walker, is there anything you would like to tell me about your parents or the 1930's that we have not talked about?

MR. WALKER: Yes, I would like to tell you one of the funny stories that my parents would tell me. It was this lady who was thought to be dead and she was on her cooling board. This lady all of a sudden rose up and everybody ran out of that place. That same lady never looked right. She got married and had a family. I would like to ^[say] one last time that the 30's were hard times and people these days cannot appreciate what they have now.