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U.19 Long Civil Rights Movement: Breaking New Ground

Interview U-0658
Walter Jackson
29 June 2011

Abstract – p. 2
Field Notes – p. 3

Abstract – Walter Jackson

Interviewee: Walter Jackson

Interviewer: Robert Hunt Ferguson

Interview Date: June 29, 2011

Location: AT&T Building, Capital Blvd, Jackson, MS

Interview Length: 00:28:26

Given the fact that Mr. Jackson did not become a land owner until the 1980s and since he is involved with conservation policy, we mostly talked about some of the policies that face farmers currently, his experiences growing up in Ruleville, his involvement with the Extension Service and 4-H. The main purpose of the interview, however, was so that I could provide Mr. Jackson with an overview of the project face-to-face. He has proved indispensable when it comes to putting me in touch with black farm owners in Mississippi. Mr. Jackson has been one of my best sources.

Field Notes – Walter Jackson

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THE INTERVIEWEE: Mr. Walter Jackson was born near Ruleville, Mississippi in 1960 in a sharecropping family. Mr. Jackson was the second youngest of ten children. His parents were sharecroppers until he was in the 8th grade when the family moved “to town” and moved into a house in Ruleville. Mr. Jackson went to Alcorn State University and got a job with the Extension Service directly out of college in Bolivar County, Mississippi. In the 1980s, Mr. Jackson moved to Holmes County near Lexington, bought land (the first in his family), and took up cattle farming. He continued with the Extension Service and also began work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service based in Jackson, MS. Mr. Jackson continues to raise cattle and work for the NRCS.

THE INTERVIEWER: Robert Hunt Ferguson is a PhD Candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ferguson is white, male, native North Carolinian, aged 32 in the summer of 2011. His research focuses on race relations and labor in the rural Jim Crow South.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW: The interview was conducted in the AT&T Building near the Old Capital in Jackson, Mississippi. I interviewed Mr. Jackson on his lunch break. During the interview I mention several times that he should feel free to keep eating while we chat. The interview was in a large, cafeteria style room. There were perhaps a half dozen people in the room who were out of earshot of our conversation.