

TAPE LOG

COLLECTOR Terrance Jones TAPE NO. 6081
TAPE TITLE (INFORMANT OR EVENT) Interview with Manton
CORRESPONDING DATA SHEET NO. _____ PHOTO LOG NO. with any
FIELDNOTES (DATES OR OTHER RETRIEVAL NO.) _____
CASSETTE _____ REEL-TO-REEL REEL SIZE _____ CASSETTE
SIZE (in minutes) 60 min MONO _____ STEREO _____
SPEED 7½ 3¼ 1-7/8 15/16 SIDES/TRACKS _____

INTERVIEW DATE Mar. 12, 2001 TIME 3:30 pm
PLACE OF INTERVIEW(S) WTVM Radio Station
Valdosta Ga

SETTING AND CIRCUMSTANCE Formal Interview

FOLKLORE RECORDED Contemporary Gospel

TOPIC SUMMARY

TIME OR METER READING (OPTIONAL)	TOPIC / INFORMANT
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5. Cultural and Regional differences
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Interview

My interview was conducted on March 12, 2001. The person that I interviewed was Memlon Williams. Memlon is a corrections officer at Valdosta State Prison, an entrepreneur, and also hosts a radio gospel hour on WJEMS, sundays at 2:30 p.m. ~~on Sundays~~.

Memlon is a Bronx, New York native. He was born in 1956 to William and Margaret Williams. He is the oldest of five children. Memlon has been married for 24 years, and has two children. His wifes name is Sandra, and his daughters are Elizabeth and Naquan.

tj: How did you get started in music, and what made you pursue gospel music.

mw: Honestly I would have to go back to conception. Both my parents were Gospel singers, and my mother would actually sing to me while I was in her womb.

tj: What has been some of your experiences in music, that has led you to where you are today.

mw: I started out in high school playing in a band. Actually I played several instruments in junior high school, such as the trumpet, piano, and the drums. I was in a band in high school called *Liquid Pleasure*. I went on to be in several bands and toured the East Coast. I played in places like the Apollo, Baby Grande, and Central Park, with various local artists like *Change*, which originally featured Luther Vandross, and other bands. I also performed and arranged Music for a brother named Paul Shabazz. He himself has written for R&B groups such as *Bell Biv DeVoe*, *Vanessa Williams*, and *Frankie Beverly*. He has also produced rap groups such as *Public Enemy*.

tj: Basically you have an extensive background in the secular area, but what has made you move toward Gospel.

mw: My parents were into Gospel, and I have worked with some of the legendary greats in Gospel, like Ben E. Cummings. I was apart of the National Convention of Choirs and Choruses, that was started by the late James Cleveland. I was able to participate in the conventions and submit music, and I credit alot of my background to my roots in Gospel.

tj: What makes Gospel Music significant to you?

mw: The message. No matter what the music may bring, it is the message of the music. The liberation that comes with God's love and grace. Basically the message.

tj: Being a Baptist from the South. I was wondering if there were any differences between the congregations in the North and the South?

mw: Yes, definitely. It is a different world to me. I had to reeducate myself when I came to the South. I was not familiar with Jubilee or Quartet music, so I had to learn it. Some people like different music more than others, I like choirs and contemporary more than I like jubilee or quartet music.

tj: As a dj, what would you say the age demographic of your listeners, and what age group makes up the bulk of your listening audience?

mw: Monday through Friday, we generally have an audience from 18 to 45. On Saturdays from 2:30p- 5:00p, we usually we hit an audience from the ages of 12 to 35, because I feel that they are the missing link in bringing people to the Lord.

tj: In regards to the latter demographic. What is Gospel bump?

mw: Gospel bump basically, is hip-hop with a religious message. If you are older you are probably in Contemporary Gospel and Jubilee. If you are younger you are probably into hip-hop.

tj: So what you are saying is that is Gospel with a hip-hop edge?

mw: Yes.

tj: What direction do you see Contemporary Gospel music going in the future?

mw: I see it blowing up so big that it may take over the music industry. Thanks to people like Hezekiah Walker, Kirk Franklin, Yolanda Adams, and BeBe and CeCe Winans: they are bringing Gospel music to the people so that they can entertain you and send you a message.

tj: These artists that you have mentioned are all under forty. Do you think that this is a factor in gospel music moving so fast in the world and the industry today?

mw: Yes and No. There are people like Apostle Darryl Coley who are over forty, who is also a popular key figure in Contemporary Gospel music. His music is geared toward teaching young people to praise and sing for the Lord. In my opinion, he is bringing more to the table than younger artists.