

**University of Mississippi
Center for the Study of Southern Culture**

**Black Families in Yalobusha County
Interview with Dottie Chapman Reed**

December 7, 2019

Interviewer: Jasmine Stansberry

Length: 80:56

[Interview Begins]

Jasmine Stansberry: 00:20 My name is Jasmine Stansberry. Today is Saturday December 7th, 2019. I am here at the alumni house on the campus of the University of Mississippi with Mrs. Dottie Chapman Reed conducting an oral history interview. Mrs. Reed, if you could please state your name, date of birth, and where you were born?

Dottie Chapman Reed: My name is Dottie Chapman Reed, and I was born in Water Valley, Mississippi on August the 4th 1952.

Jasmine Stansberry: Can you tell me about what it was like growing up as a Black youth in North Mississippi?

Dottie Chapman Reed: I would say that it was a fun childhood actually. I lived on a farm. We had all sorts of animals and of course, we grew cotton and corn and all those kinds of things. I wasn't a real great corn picker. I was more like the water boy or water girl, but my childhood was spent with spending the night with cousins and going to church after church. That was our social life. School, work, at home, and around the house and going to church.

Jasmine Stansberry: Okay. So, as you were growing up, you talked about like the importance of church in your life especially socially, but thinking about that in the importance of your family can you

tell me about some of your role models? People who had the biggest impact on your life?

Dottie Chapman

Reed:

Wow, there were a lot of those. I think, obviously, I was most impressed with my Sunday school teachers, a lot of them who were also my elementary school teachers. You know, 1st grade or elementary school principal, but there was one woman in particular who was gigantic in my eyes. And that was Mrs. Anne Kelly Montgomery. I learned later that she was what they call a Jeanes teacher, she was over all the teachers in the county that I grew up in, Yalobusha County. Later on, she became very active in the Christian Episcopal church, and they still honor her today. She was rare. Basically, I looked up to all my teachers and the leaders in the church. The women who were leaders in the church as well. And my mom, of course you know you always have to--. Sometimes you look over your mother, but at this point in my life, she was a great influence as well.

Jasmine

Stansberry:

So growing up in the, not even just the South, but in the U.S. especially as like an African American, a person of color. During that time, did you ever experience, witness, or hear stories about discrimination from any person or groups of people as you were growing up?

Dottie Chapman

03:51

Reed:

Yes, of course. My brother and sister, we used to walk from house to house. And there was probably maybe a mile in distance that we would walk to play with our friends. On a rainy day in Mississippi, of course the roads were dirt roads, and there were red clay spots that would show up. And my brother and sister would tell me that was the blood from the lynchings. So, I was always afraid, when I was younger, I never walked by myself, but after they graduated high school and left. There were often times where I would walk from one

house to the other or on my bike. And I was always aware of being black, and maybe hearing about white men who would do bad things to black children. So, I was always careful about that.

But of course, it was, I am trying to think of, yea I guess when James Meredith was integrating Ole Miss was when I started hearing the adults whispering about the racist environment in which we lived. And It was the time of the Freedom Riders. I knew that Freedom Riders were coming in and out of town, and they mentioned specifically a man named Cotton Reader. I always thought, wow, that is a really weird name, but otherwise, they kept us sheltered from all that stuff. They didn't really tell us. I knew that there were NAACP meetings because my mother was very involved in that, but I was never at the meetings. I didn't know what kind of things they were discussing. But when James Meredith was here, integrating the university, it was a very fearful time. My grandmother lived with us, and I noticed she was real concerned. And I can't remember if we had a TV and knew exactly what was going on. But we knew that it was time for us to kind of stay in and be quiet [Laughter]. But Also in my town it was a lot of men, a lot of black men were abused, brutalized, or killed by law enforcement. And that was another scary situation, I can see why we felt very vulnerable, you know, being black.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

6:40

You spoke about civil rights, you spoke about the presence of the NAACP in town, and you spoke about your mother's involvement in the NAACP. Do you remember is there anything else that you remember about the NAACP? Or do you remember any other type of accounts of things like Black organizing or civil rights organizing in Water Valley? Even like during freedom summer or maybe other civil rights organizations.

Dottie Chapman

Reed:

No, not necessary. It was just the local people in my town. There was a lady named Mrs. Bernice Minor. She was very active. My mother, Mrs. Percy Lee Rogers, my history—the gentleman who became my history teacher—Mr. Percy Haywood, and also a member of my church, Mr. Oscar Spencer. I think a lot of their planning took place in the churches, the strategizing in the churches and those kinds of meetings. Where they just talked about the issues or talked about the brutality or something because there were people who were being beat up on Saturday night. One of my cousins her husband was killed with what they called a 2 x 4. Something that we really never discussed, even now. All those things were really sad to understand and see it happen and feels so powerless was really very sad and depressing for me as a young child. Then of course, you know, when Dr King was killed that was a really gruesome time as you have heard.

Jasmine

Stansberry:

Just curious about your cousin's husband, did they ever find out who killed him?

Dottie Chapman

Reed:

It was a policeman. It was a policeman on The Block, which you have probably heard us mention about, where there were businesses and clubs and on Saturday night that is where most of the men and some women hung out. But I don't know what happened, I think I was probably eight and my little cousin was nine. She had spent the night with us, and Sunday morning my father says, "Come on girl I have to take you home." We were like what is going on? And I didn't go with him. Normally I would have gone with him, but on Sunday we probably were getting ready to go to Sunday school and church. So later on my sister told me that her father had been

killed the night before, and we never talked about it until recently.

I called her sister to ask her sister if her mother would allow me to interview her. Because my first thought is a child was, oh what are they going to do without a father, because there were seven or eight of them. I said, "What are they going to do? How are they going to survive?" I couldn't understand how they were going to survive. That was the first funeral that I ever remember going to, and I remember them sitting there on the front row. I remember seeing the body in the casket and that is all I remember. Like I said, we never talked about it, the children, we never talked about it.

So when I asked her if her mom would allow me to interview her for my column. They said, "Yes." Then when I called back later to follow up. They said, "They had spoken too soon." They had said yes before they talked to her about it. When they spoke with her about it, she did not want to do it. And she is having some memory issues, so I understood. So I don't know any more about it. That was just one instant. I know that the adults tried to do whatever they could do about it, but they kept all of that from us. I believe somebody may have written about this particular sheriff from what I heard but I have not seen it. I don't know what was written about him, but he was notorious during that particular time.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

So I am just assuming, that the town law enforcement still considered that case like a cold case or something.

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

They probably never even, are you kidding? They probably never even investigated it. They probably said that he was drunk and belligerent and resisting arrest. You know, one of my cousins who lived-- I guess I'll say cousin, lived in

Arkansas, and he had come to visit. And one Sunday morning the police came to our house, and said that he needed to leave town as soon as possible. And he had to leave town. That was common, that kind of thing was very common in Mississippi, you know. Because the police were the mafia.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

12:18

So you talked a little bit earlier about James Meredith integrating Ole Miss, and about how there was a lot of talk and even fear in your own family. Your grandmother being kind of fearful and about it being a scary time.

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Yes, because of the closeness because we were only 18 miles from Oxford [Mississippi]. So they were scared that whatever that riot and stuff would roll over into Water Valley possibly that what they were afraid of. And they were afraid for Meredith, and his life because at that point they were shooting, and someone had been killed

Jasmine
Stansberry:

Do you remember, you quite young, but do you remember like what you were thinking or what your thoughts were even about James Meredith or even like the University of Mississippi?

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Yeah, I had no clue. I don't know if I had ever been to Oxford [Mississippi]. I probably had maybe for a church meeting or vacation Bible school. I think at the time I probably realized that other schools had gone through the same thing because we heard a lot about Alabama and Wallace standing in the door and all of that. And We heard about Little Rock and places like that to a certain extent, so I think it was just a part of the time. But this was close to home. I didn't have any concept of the university at all. I just knew that it was a white school maybe, and that he was trying to get in and that it was

a good thing. I really wondered where he came from, and the fact that he was a little older I was curious about that, I think.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

So, during your senior year of high school, and you say you graduated in 1970? When you were a senior in high school, and it was around that time to start thinking about which college or university that you wanted to attend. What was that like? How did Ole Miss get on your list?

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

Well, we knew I think going into our senior year that we would be the last class to be graduating from Davison high school, from the all Black school. And freedom of choice had come in 1968, and three young ladies from my high school had chosen to go over to the white school that wasn't a choice that I wanted to make. We had reservations and we're kind of sad because our school was going to be closed. And it was going to be merged with the white school.

I think I wrote about the fact that we had a white high school counselor and at that time they were doing a lot of standardize testing. That was the first time that it had been introduced on that level, and we resented that, we resented that a lot. A lot of students resented having a white counselor, so we didn't get sufficient counseling because he was at the white school then he would come over to the black school. And he was a nice gentleman, but we were teenagers and a little crazy. I had come to Ole Miss the summer of 68, I think, in the summer of 69 by invitation of one of the women who had gone to Water Valley High. She was enrolled at Ole Miss, and she invited me to come and participate in pre-college. So, I came up here for the summer, and I was really impressed with the black students that I met, especially Connie Slaughter who ended up being a law student at the time. We lived in what we call new dorm the tallest dorm, I believe that is where we stayed.

You know, just meeting some of the Black students from across the state, and we did fun things like we were having a birthday party in the dorm for somebody. And the guys called and said there was an incident at the student union, the grill we called it. So, we ran up the hill to help, and that is when I saw Connie Slaughter approach the campus police and speak and stand up to them that really impressed me. I think that was the first summer I was here or the second summer. Anyway, at that time football players had a tendency to sit on the steps of the grill and eat watermelon and pick on black students who walked by. There was some kind of confrontation, and I was really impressed with Connie and how she handled that. When I graduated; however, I went to Detroit. I was anxious to leave Water Valley and went to Detroit. Looked for a job all summer and could not find a job, so I had to come back home. And the only place that I had applied was here, [University of Mississippi] through the precollege program, and they already had my scores and everything. They already had a schedule of classes and everything, but That was just part of pre-college, I never planned to come. My sister graduated from Rust college, so I had teachers from Alcorn and Jackson State. We had gone to Jackson State for summer festivals, but I had not been on any other campus and had no idea there was a whole new world in Atlanta, Georgia. Just unexposed, We were sheltered and not exposed. I'm trying to remember if any of my other teachers, we knew about Valley State, Mississippi Valley State, Alcorn, Jackson State, and I probably knew about Memphis. But I didn't even think about out of state, you know.

When I couldn't get a job in Detroit I had to come back, my mom said, "I guess you going to school, going to college I guess." I guess so. She put me in a car and drove me up here to Mrs. Dotsey Foster's house on Jackson, well I'm not sure,

her house was on Jackson, but Austere C.M.E church is where Mrs. Foster attended. I knew her my mom knew her, and she called Jennifer Jackson to come and pick me up the next morning and take me over to the campus. And that is how I ended up at Ole Miss. I know that I probably had one suitcase of clothes, and my mother had given me maybe \$10 or \$20, I don't know. Not a lot, because we did not have a lot when we got over two at the Colosseum, we were walking across, Jennifer was already in the school, I think she was a year ahead of us and ahead of me.

Who did I run into but Beatrice Hawkins, the girl who had invited me to pre-college, my homegirl? Patricia Hall, who was in my class, and I think there was another person, anyway they took me by the hand and took me to the colosseum floor and helped me register for all my classes. And you probably don't even know how that process worked, but You had to go from one table to another to pull the cards that you needed. Like if I was going to take English 101, I went to the English and got that computer card. Then biology and effective study, all the black students who scored below a certain score on the ACT or SAT had to take effective study and whatever. So, I got registered, but I had no financial aid. I had no dorm, so they took me to the dorm. And I don't know who I spend the night with probably in a room where they didn't have a roommate or something, so I got in the dorm. Then Beatrice probably took me to financial aid in all of that, so that is how I got started in school at Ole Miss.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

Can you tell me about your first year? What was your first year like here at Ole Miss?

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

Well, we were I think we were one of the largest freshman classes to enter. Don't know how many of us. There was

people from everywhere Louisville, Columbus, Georgia, Batesville, Hernando just a lot of interesting students and upperclassmen. I was always very impressed with the upperclassmen because they were also smart, and some of them were in ROTC and stuff. They embraced us. they embraced the freshmen, and it was really a tight knit group of folks. We looked out for each other.

Jasmine

I'm assuming you're talking about the black students.

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

The black students, yes, the black students. There was a black student union, of course, and we had Reverend Wayne Johnson as our counselor. He was in a tiny little office in the wide, a building there we called the wide. In terms of the environment, it was just huge, we felt so isolated. As a matter of fact, when I was thinking the other day I said, "This campus is really strange to me when the black students don't speak to each other." When black people don't speak to each other because when I was here, everybody black spoke to each other. Some freshmen in my class had been here for summer school, so they knew the ropes in some of our classes you would be the only black person in the class. I made some friends along the way, some white friends, living in the dorm was interesting because I had an Asian freshman. My freshman year I had an Asian roommate, she didn't stay. She left the university. We lived in the old dorms like Summerville and Isom hall and I'm not even sure what else. But we had fun. We used to go eat out a lot, and I had cousins who worked in the cafeteria which was a help. It was always reassuring to see them when I went to the cafeteria. Money was extremely tight. Work study was a blessing. The classes were hard. I think, I know for me, English, first year English and second year English was real difficult. We didn't do a lot of; I think we should have done a lot more study groups than

Reed:

we did. I think Reverend Johnson did offer that opportunity if you needed help finding a tutor or something like that. I didn't have any problems in the classes until I started and some of my political science classes. I often found myself having to debate with some of the white boys because some of them could be pretty indignant. I could overlook what you were saying, ignore you, or top down and stuff like that. But basically, all the professors were pretty nice, pretty nice. I felt that I got teased by black girls and that kind of hurt my feelings, but it was okay I survived it. It was upperclassmen, two upperclassman females who came to my rescue and encouraged me not to let them put me down because I wasn't able to dress like they were able to dress and that kind of stuff. But it was challenging and right away you learn, well I learned, there we were not as privileged as the white kids in terms of our education, financially all of that. They had cars. They had fraternities and sororities. We were oblivious to them, I believe. It was almost like we didn't exist.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

That is interesting because I have interviewed someone before, her name was Kate and Charles Austin, when I interviewed her, she said something similar like it was almost like the black students just did not exist.

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

Right, right, oh yeah. Kate and Charles, I love both of them. We looked up to them. Those were, they were a good example of the upperclassmen who looked out for us. We had a corner in the grill. Did they tell you that we had a corner in the grill? It was a black corner in the grill where some of the law students and guys played cards, so when we went in to eat, they wanted to know how we were doing. They gave me a nickname and I will never tell you what that was. [Laughter] anyway, that is where we hung out. That was a gathering place. It was like when you walked in the post office was in

the grill too, so everyone would go there to check their mail. There was a calendar, and then around this corner was the black corner.

You know, everyone knew that is where the black folk hung out, so every now and then some white students would weave through there. But they would be going around the door unless they were comfortable with us and laughing and talking. And all of that we occupied that space on the inside and outside.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

Were you a member of any of the organizations on campus?

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

Nothing Other than the black student union because the AKAs [Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority] came in my senior year. My roommate was one of the founding members of the AKAs, but I was focusing on graduating. And my brother passed the fall of my senior year, so that was kind of a distraction too. And I don't know if I could afford to pledge, you know. I didn't look into it that deeply. She asked me if I wanted to, and I said, "I don't think so." And I didn't. It was after I left that the delta came on board and whoever else.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

So, you came here in 1970, and you sort of talked about some of the confrontations, well some of the issues like the issue with the white athletes and some of the harassment.

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:** 28:45

Oh yeah. I talked about the gas who would take care of us. I don't know if I mention how Robert Bridgefort and probably Archie Jones would collect our IDs when there was a concert. This was my freshman year. There was a Temptations, I want to say it was the Temptations and Forge Hops, but I'm not sure it may have just been the temptations. But they get in line

early. [Interruption from someone entering room] They got in line early to get, you didn't see pictures in my scrapbook? I had pictures in my scrapbooks.

Jasmine

I must have missed that one.

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

You must have missed that one. So, they got in line early to get the tickets, so we got really good tickets. B.B. King came, Dionne Warwick, I thought that I was in heaven. Anyway, we had really good seats on the floor of the Colosseum, and all of this was so big, I had never been in a building as big as the Colosseum. Other than when we went to Jackson for a high school choir competition at Jackson State. We got to sit on the 3rd row right in the center, great seats. I was with my freshman roommate and her husband to be. I was with a guy named Ralph Carter, and we were sitting there just checking everything out. And Archie Manning had broken his arm, and he came in in a casket and he always had these big, huge guys with him. They were probably football players too. And somehow, we heard mumbling.

Reed:

We could not hear exactly what they were saying, but all of a sudden, Archie's casket hit Ralph in the back of the head and all bedlam broke out. I could not believe it came up but it did not take long, you know, the chairs were flying. And campus security surrounded us. I was so scared I could not believe it. I was like, oh my god I just knew we were going to jail because they had taken the Fulton Chapel protesters to Parchman. So, they calmed everything down and Archie and his crew left and all that. They were upset because we had such good seats.

Jasmine

There were black students who were upset with--.

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

The white students were upset with us.

Reed:

Jasmine

Oh, the white students. This was a conversation between white students and black students because y'all had better seats to see the temptations.

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

Yes, and this was Archie Manning. You know who Archie Manning is right? The quarterback.

Reed:

Jasmine

Okay.

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

Peyton and Eli Manning's father from Drew, Mississippi.

Reed:

Yes, the quarterback plus he had broken his arm, so he was not playing. He was probably just beside himself.

Jasmine

And he hit Ralph Carter in the back of the head?

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

Yes, Ralph had a hot temper

Reed:

Jasmine

I heard. During the interviews that I did this summer, his name came up.

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

32:09

See, now you know that I am not lying. Anyway, the temptation said that they were not going to come out until things settle down. And that is what made things settle down. When they came out, we danced and sung to every song, standing up. We did. By that time, all the other black students --. I just thought oh this is the most wonderful thing. I have not forgotten that story, and interestingly enough Peyton ended up at UT [University of Tennessee] where one of my girlfriends was the director of, what do they call their, the Black Cultural Center. And she said Peyton was always over

Reed

there on the sofa. His kids turned out pretty good I guess, anyway there was there is one instance of that comradery, that I really liked. The way the guys would get in line to get our tickets and stuff. We would go to the football games, only to support the blacks in the band. That was the only reason that we went to football games, and I was at the game where Willie Heidelberg played for Southern [Mississippi] and honey, he scored a touchdown in everybody just we loved it. So, they talk about that a lot in sports, the fact that he was--. At the time, Ole Miss had no black football players, and I had an opportunity again to ask Johnny Vaught a question. I don't know how, I think it was in the spring of my freshman year, and I had heard that he was going to have a press conference or something in the Commons which was right next to the cafeteria, the old cafeteria. And I don't know how I got in there, or why, maybe from my political science class I heard about it. Anyway, I did ask him. I said, "When are you going to sign a black football player?" And he said that they were looking at some players, and everyone was like they couldn't believe that I asked that question. But why wouldn't I ask that question? They was probably wondering why I was in there in the first place, but anyway, that is when he signed Ben Williams and James Reed the following year. I think they came in 72, I think they came in 72. I may have been a sophomore when I went in there and asked that question, I'm not sure. That was one incident with them, but other than that everything for us was pretty smooth. We didn't have any confrontations, one on one that I know about. I think the guys might have had more incidents in the twin towers, that is what we called their dorms when they lived down there. Otherwise, we would go to the games like I said to support Ben and James, but all those rebel flags were such a turn off. we didn't do that.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

I can only imagine, so when you all came--. You talked earlier about the Fulton Chapel protest. What was that like when you were, when you first came here and you were a student and I'm sure you heard about there was a protest here earlier in the year.

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Right, right. You know what affected me more than that was the fact that a black student drowned in the swimming pool.

Jasmine
Stansberry:
Dottie Chapman
Reed:

When did this happen?

That happened in [19]69, no it was either the spring of [19]70 or the fall of [19]69. His name was, I don't want to misquote it. I will have to ask. I think one of my girlfriends is coming up at 3:30. What was his name? I can't remember his name. Anyway, that worried me more than the Fulton Chapel incident, and I know that they investigated it. I'm sure there is something written up somewhere, and I am assuming they said it was an accident.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

Okay, so that happened around or right before that up with the people.

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Right because the up with the people thing was in the spring before I got here, but I didn't hear about it until a little later period I didn't get the details of it. One of my roommates, well you talked to Linda Louis Jamison, she went to Parchman. Beatrice Hawkins, the girl who got me here from Water Valley she went.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

I didn't get to meet her.

Dottie Chapman 37:27 She lives here now, in Oxford [Mississippi]. Beatrice
Reed: Hawkins and Daniels is her married name. She lives out by highway 7, no it is 6 going toward Batesville in one of those beautiful subdivisions. So she may be willing to talk to you. I don't know if she is planning on participating in the--.

Jasmine (37:57)
Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman
Reed I don't know I have not spoken with her in a long time, but yeah, it was people like her. I heard about Donald Cole, and they told me about him. His sister was in our class; Linda Cole was my classmate. I heard about him, and who else, Kenny Mayfield. People that they talked about, but I did not meet them until later on. But That was terrible, because Linda and most of them got arrested at the Y. They didn't get arrested at Fulton Chapel. Jim Donald, uh Howard Donald was in my class, the Donald brothers. Cleave and all those, who is the one who is in Memphis? John.

Jasmine
Stansberry: Yeah, he is kind of stern.

Dottie Chapman
Reed: Howard Donald had a motorcycle, I rode on his motorcycle with him that was fun. I'm trying to think of any other fun times. Oh, I told you we had a black house, right? There was, there was I think it was the building that sits next to Burns, but I may be wrong. It was somewhere in that little black neighborhood around Central High some of the gas had a house that we used to go in party at. We had an Afro ball, a couple of times. The first one that was my freshman year. We had a Afro ball, and you would not believe, hot pants were in. Because I had a, I didn't plan to wear hot pants, but I had hot pants. The closet door in my room fell on my foot so I

couldn't wear shoes, so I would wear my hot pants and a vest to the Afro ball. I had a picture. I had a picture; I took a picture with Otis Sanford. Now you know Otis Sanford?

Jasmine
Stansberry:

He is in Memphis.

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Yeah, he was with The Commercial Appeal, and now, he is at, I guess he is at LeMoyne-Owen or the University of Memphis as a professor or something, journalism.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

He is at the University of Memphis.

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Yeah.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

I didn't know that he went here. I don't know how I missed that.

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

How did you miss that? He was a year behind me, I think or two. He came with John Whiting. John Whiting was with Otis, and I don't know, I think John might have majored in journalism as well. John Whiting lives in Atlanta now, and that was the other thing about our class. So many smart kids. I mean, there was one boy who was a genius. His name was John Hubbard, and we don't know where he is to this day. He was here for the freshman year, 4.0 in everything, in everything. I couldn't believe it. John what did you get in Mrs. so and so class, "4.0, I got an A." I mean, he was so smart. And they were from South Mississippi. His cousin is Victoria Hubbard. I have emailed him in the past, or ask some of his frat does anyone know where John is? Or what happened with John? He was really, really bright and a lot of the upper class

were too. I always thought of them as the talented 10th that caliber of students.

There was Ralph Lassiter who had invented stuff and Clarence DuBose. People who majored in pharmacy, you know, things that I had not even imagined being from Water Valley. People who, Earl Richards was a great photographer. He is still here in the area. Have you met Earl? He might be at the program today as well. Then there was James Hull, who is very radical. He had worked in the civil rights movement even before he got here, registering voters in West Point [Mississippi]. What is the college over there? Mary Holmes is Mary Holmes, yeah Mary Holmes is set in West Point [Mississippi]. Is that in West Point?

Jasmine

I am not sure.

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

Reed:

Anyway, he was very active politically in high school, and he bought a lot of that to Ole Miss. He was present in the black student union, and he is doing a lot of work now in Tupelo [Mississippi]. He manages a lot of political campaigns. He has a program called Trail Blazers, and I was one of his Trail Blazers a couple of years ago. He should also be there today. Also, such as Leroy Wallington, you probably met him. No? He was a, a lot of students transferred from northwest, he transferred from northwest as did Patricia Brassel. She was a year ahead of me here, but anyway, and the Donalds just a lot of outstanding smarts, the Floyds, Vicki, Joannie Floyd was in my class. And her sister, Kathy, came behind her; her brother Michael was a student here. They were from Vicksburg, and they were very middle class. I never even met that many middle-class blacks either. Even Hickenbottom Kelly, I know you know her?

Jasmine Stansberry: No, just Kenneth Mayfield, Donald Cole, Patricia Diane Taylor, well now she is--.

Dottie Chapman Reed: Wise

Jasmine Stansberry: Yeah, Wise and Patricia McCoy.

Dottie Chapman Reed: Yeah, so it was Patricia McCoy and my girlfriend Linda Louis Davidson, who I hope will come here for the program, who consoled me when I started crying when these other girls, I won't name them, they were all from Oxford, teased me about my clothes. Who Did I ask you about that you said you didn't know?

Jasmine Stansberry: You said something Hicken?

Dottie Chapman Reed: Hickenbottom. Edith Hickenbottom was a high-ranking officer with FedEx; she is from here [Oxford, Mississippi]. She has given money to the university. One of the women's programs, she owns one of the delis here. And not MacAllister's. I think she has one in the airport in Memphis and maybe one in a retail store in Memphis.

Jasmine Stansberry: I will have to look her up.

Dottie Chapman Reed: Yeah, Edith Hickenbottom Kelly. She was in the business school, and they have honored her as well. Because She was very smart and still is very smart. She married a gentleman from here, James Kelly. His younger brother Larry always worked in Neilson, the department store. Larry is deceased

now, so is James now. Edith is very active with the FedEx foundation in all of that. Have you been to a black student alumni reunion? No? Well, Most of the time, Edith has attended, but like I said, she like Rose Jackson and Flenorl have really been honored by the university.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

Okay, well apparently, I have a lot more research to do. I didn't know that. So, you believe that things have started to get better since you have first come here in 1970 and by the time you left you think things began to get better for black students?

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

Yeah, I would say so because when I came Doctor Jeanette Jennings was the only black faculty member here. She was in the social work department, and she was from Hattiesburg, Mississippi. as a matter of fact, I received the Jeanette Jennings award during the black history reunion in 2009. So Jeanette was here, then Malveaux came, she taught. She was teaching gerontology; she is still living in San Francisco and she is related to Ralph Eubanks. I think she is 90sish. And you will know her daughters maybe Julianne Malveaux, who is an economist who you see on CNN. I think she has twin girls; one was a president of Black MBA association at one time and the other is a TV journalist. She probably has more children than that, but anyway Malveaux name you will recognize.

There was a Mr. Taylor who came and he taught social studies, then finally they brought Doctor Lucius Williams here. He set up a learning center in the library, and I can't remember the years. But I guess doctor Reader may have came in 73 or 74, and his daughter Darlene graduated from Ole Miss as well. They lived in a faculty house on campus. When I graduated I applied for an admissions counselor job, I

tripled minority enrollment those years that I recruited for four years. By that time, the Ques [Omega Phi Psi] were on campus, and probably the Kappas [Kappa Alpha Psi] and the Deltas [Delta Sigma Theta] were on campus. So, we had a lot of positive growth in terms of black student involvement on campus by then. And I recruited people like Rose Jackson and so many others I can't even name, but they made their marks. We started an ambassador program, James Hull we had a program called the master achievement conference there we did during Black History Month. Where we brought not the national Merritt, some national merit if we could get them to come, but the national achievement scholars we're the ones who scored under the national merit level. So, we invited the national achievement scholars or really I took recommendations from any of the counselors when I was recruiting. Who are your top students? We would love to have them spend two or three days on the campus and go to some classes and meet some professors and that is what they did. That was a great recruiting tool.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

How did you feel after graduating and eventually coming back and working as an admissions counselor? How did that feel for you?

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

Well, I don't know at what point besides from having a job, which I needed a job that was a great thing, but I think my solace came in the fact that I was educating students in terms of financial aid and the admission process. Which I didn't have that advantage other than pre-college because you know, most of most of us, I filled out my own parents' confidential statement because my mom had 8th grade education. My father could not read or write; my sister had gone to college. So I did my own stuff. I figured a lot of these kids would be first generation students, black students in particular, and not

really know the ropes. So that was what my spill was all about, it was about the importance of going to college at this point, you really needed to do that or at least try. I explained the application process for financial aid and admission and talked about opportunities to come for summer programs and what have you.

So that was the gratification in it for me, I really didn't care where they went to school, I really didn't. Even though I was recruiting for Ole Miss, and I was able to answer their questions if they did want to come here and they felt afraid. If I could do it, then they could do it, and I would be here for them. A lot of the times, we would have Ole Miss night in various cities where all the Deans would go and we would go as admissions counselors. We had a song and dance group that we took with us as well, and I had an opportunity to talk to black parents. I say, "I made it through don't worry. I will be here." And to tell the students my office is up on the third floor of the Lyceum, but if you need something, you come and let me know. I think that helped a lot of them decide to come, and when they came for the visits, they were even more comfortable because they got to meet other black students like I said it was during Black History Month. We would have a table open or something like that. They got to attend classes, you know, they got a real feel for it. That was how that part felt.

But of course, there were sometimes when I was, you know, the only black in the group. I mentioned at dinner last night, we went to Natchez, Mississippi and that was the first time I saw a black waitress with red bandannas on their head. When we traveled there was an incident in Clarksdale, Mississippi late one night, because we must have been coming from Greenville, Mississippi, and it was me and one of the

admissions counselors who was the director of the group. And another almost part time admissions counselor who played drums for the group. We shared offices; I shared this office with three guys. So, we were coming back with the kids on the van, all white kids, a lot of them were from Highland Park or highland village in Dallas [Texas], very upscale, and Sam Haskell was one of them. And Sam Just got kicked out last year as the director of Miss America pageant. Do you remember hearing about that?

Anyway, Sam graduated from here as well, he was like one of the managers of the group. And they were hungry or something, and we pulled into, what we thought was a little restaurant. And we went in, me and Charlie went in, climbed up on this stool. And all have a sudden it got really quiet, really quiet. And Charlie says, "I think you better go back and get in the van." I said, "I think so." When he came back to the van he said, "That a white woman had been killed that day by black men, so they were not very welcoming to me at that time of night in Clarksdale, Mississippi." That was like the only incident that we had, but there were times when I would go to a school.

And it would be an all white school because I covered everything from Jackson [Mississippi] and up because we had a recruiter who lived in Jackson, and she went South or whoever was down there then. Initially, sometimes I was intimidated, but I got more comfortable. We practiced a lot Before we went out with our speech. Sometimes we teamed, when I first got started Dick would go with me, the other black recruiter would go with me. I don't know if my boss ever went with us a lot, but I got more and more comfortable. I was always mindful of getting home before dark. No matter where I was or to the hotel. And all of this was new to me,

you know, staying in a hotel, eating in a restaurant, and a lot of times I would be by myself being very careful. And knowing that I was representing the university, it was an interesting experience.

I told them last night about when I was in, I think, it was Amite County. I pulled into the first school, and it was beautiful, up on a hill. It was beautiful in South Georgia, I mean South Mississippi. I looked out, and it was another school with kids playing on a playground, and I asked somebody, "What is that over there?" They said, "Oh, That is the boys' school over there, and this is the girls' school over here." so that was one of the choices that you had, freedom of choice to go to the black school or white school, in some counties decided to do it for all girls and all boys. So that kind of blew my mind. I was like, really, they went that far. I am trying to think of any other times, but you know, like I said it was interesting to be able to travel throughout the state. I remember going to Ruleville, Mississippi in the school is right across from Fannie Lou Hamer's daycare center and Mount Bayou, Mississippi. It was an interesting time in my life to be able to ride up and down the road in visit. You had to use a map back in those days [Laughter] no GPS.

Jasmine

Stansberry:

What years were you an admissions counselor?

Dottie Chapman

Reed:

From 74 to 77. Oh, of course I like to tell people that the other fun part was coming down the stairs. Our office was on the third floor of the Lyceum, and I would go down the stairs, and I was Angela Davis, you know, back. Here is this white family, and I pop in the admissions office.

Jasmine

With the Afro?

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

Reed:

Yeah, I say, “Well hi how are you? I am Dottie Chapman Reed, and I will be your admissions counselor. I am here for your campus tour.” Sometimes we would walk, and sometimes I would ride with them. And sometimes if it was a girl they wanted to see a dorm, so the students got used to me knocking on the door and asking, “Hey can I show your room?” Sometimes with rooms I would say, “Okay, not this one another one.” You know, it was interesting. And I tell too, the easy part, I think part of it was, and I skipped that part. My work study job was in the computer center, in that was when they had the big mainframe computer. I learned a little, you know, I knew if something happened, and the guys were smoking or on a break or something how to keep it going. I should have learned a whole lot and majored in computer science and been wealthy by now. The guys from the admissions office come over to the computer lab to run the grades and stuff, so that is how I got to know them. During registration, the registrar asked me if I wanted to work registration. So, I needed that work in registration over there in the Colosseum, that was my connection with admissions. I knew the director of admissions. I knew the registrar. It was a graduate student, Ben Jones, and I was never able to find him again. He was here for something in the summer, and he was working in admissions office. I think he was working on his PhD I don't know for sure, but he knew the director of admissions and all of that. So he told me that spring of 74 that the university was looking to hire the first black admissions counselor. I said, Ummmph. And Dr Williams was here too; he was encouraging me because he was a vice chancellor. I said, “I don't know. I don't know if I want to apply. I don't know” Being convinced to apply, and I did. I finished all of

my classwork, and I started, I went home to Water Valley, I am still job hunting. I applied for to be a narc, you know what that is right?

Jasmine
Stansberry:

A narcotic.

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Yeah, a narcotic agent. I went to Jackson, and you know they have you jumping hurdles and all of that kind of stuff. I can't believe I was able to do that. [Laughter] Anyway, they offered me the job, and I said, "I can't take it. I can't do that. I can't do that." So, I didn't take that job. I spent the summer pumping gas at my cousin's service station which was right on Main Street Water Valley. At the time, everybody was wearing hot pants and stuff. I can't think of where else I looked for a job. That is when Dr. Kenneth Wooten called me for an interview, he was the director for admissions. I got the job.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

So, you became the first black admissions counselor?

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Yeah, I was the first black hired over the administrations.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

Wow, that is amazing.

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Especially someone who did not want to go to school in the first place, remember I went to Detroit. I was not coming back to Mississippi. I didn't apply anywhere else. I am telling you unbelievable. So had I known about Spellman I would have been down there. That is when it all started and that is it. It was interesting, and I think that is what made it easy because I knew the admissions folks. I had worked with the sociology

department. I was going to tell you, when I got ready to leave Ole Miss. One of the guys from the sociology department said, "He thought that I felt more comfortable on this campus than most white folks did." I said, "Really." I didn't want to give anybody that impression. That is how I met Dr. DeRosier, Arthur DeRosier, was the vice president of academics, and when he accepted the job as president at East Tennessee state, he asked me to go with him there. I said, yes, and it was hard leaving here.

The kids gave me a really nice plaque, and we had lunch at the warehouse which doesn't exist anymore. And subsequently I stayed in touch, that allowed me to be in touch for really seven years of Ole Miss people. That is why I am still connected or hear from former students and everything. I run into them here or there, in Atlanta [Georgia] and everywhere, so many of them have done so well. I am so proud of them. The Carter family was here too, you know when we started talking about impressive black students. Mae Bertha Carter sent six kids, 7 almost seven kids here. I know six of them probably graduated from here. Are you familiar with her story?

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

No ma'am.

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

Jasmine. Mae Bertha Carter and her husband lived on like a tenant farm in Drew, Mississippi. The same hometown as Archie Manning's. She sent her kids to integrate Drew high school. They tried, they kicked her out of her house, that is how much they didn't want her to send her children to the school. Her oldest son was ahead of me. I believe Stanley was ahead of me, then one was in the class with me. Then Gloria was behind me, and others came behind her. She has been

recognized nationally. There is a book about her life. Gloria has a foundation where she is doing something with the school, within the school system I am not sure. But Just look her up it is Mae, M-A-E. Bertha, B-E-R-T-H-A, I think, Carter.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

I will definitely look that up. My grandfather was born in Drew.

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

Really. I mean when you Google, she is no longer living, you will see a picture of the whole family, the whole Carter clan. They have interviewed Gloria and her sisters on PBS, so it is not ran every now and then, you know, during Black History Month you may hear them replay that interview.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

Is she any relations to Ralph Carter?

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

No, Ralph is from Oktibbeha [County in Mississippi] or something like that in the South. Him and Earl Richard, who are close, I think it is Oktibbeha, Mississippi. But Ralph, have you talked to Eunice Carter at legal services? She is his ex-wife.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

Okay, Where is that at?

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

Legal services. North Mississippi legal services. She works there. And Clarence Franklin is still here. Have you met Clarence Franklin? Okay, Rhondalyn [Peairs] knows Clarence; I have his phone number. When I was here before, he had just had Some kind of surgery, knee replacement or something like that, and I didn't get to see him. He was in my class; he is very artistic. He is from Centreville, Mississippi;

the same town is Anne Moody. He has stayed here that is another good contact. You could talk to him.

Jasmine

I would definitely like to.

Stansberry:

Yvonne Townsel:

Yeah, Clarence Franklin. Eunice Carter. Beatrice Daniels. Patricia Brassel. They are all here. Patricia didn't, Pat she lived at home, I think that is the only reason that she did not participate in the Fulton Chapel protests or whatever that night. Yeah, you have to, but the Carter kids they were all so quiet, and they had a certain temperament about them. I always admired them for what they had gone through. You know, integrating the schools in Drew and being sharecroppers in being put out of their house. I don't know what all else they did, but it is all in a book. I can't think of her name, they were at Emory, that is where I met Mrs. Mae Bertha when she came to town. I know one thing that I regret is when Fannie Lou Hammer died. We didn't have enough money to really go to her funeral, but we really wanted to. I am just so sad that we didn't go.

Jasmine

Did you know that she came here? Did you know that she visited here before?

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

No, I didn't know that.

Reed:

Jasmine

She spoke at the law school

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

Oh, probably after I was gone. There was another good thing North Mississippi Rural legal services was just coming alive when we were here. So we had to report, we had the

Reed:

opportunity to interact with them. great lawyers like attorney Lewis Miles and he just died last year. Alvin Chambliss, who is still working on the heirs case, I don't know all the details of it but it has been a long case. Wilhelm Joseph, who was from Trinidad, he is up in DC, the Baltimore area, I mean those guys were--. John Brittain, I did not know, but there was Harold, what was Harold's last name? He was the one that gave me this, Harold Hall, I think that was his last name. He was the one that gave me this nickname, and unfortunately, he was killed in a car accident. Marlow Gambrell was another outstanding lawyer and last student that mentored us. I guess I could say it that way, because they encouraged us, and they instilled in us the importance of civil rights. And being black and proud and speaking up. We were not in love with this university at all. We did appreciate the fact that we were going to get equality in education, but it was all about doing it for our causes in our people. It was about trying to make for a better community, better homes, and a better life for those to come behind us. They instilled that kind of stuff in us.

Wayne Johnson was just the utmost advisor. I worked for him, and he had a little store on Jackson Ave. Did you hear about that? Wayne had a little coop where he had groceries and stuff for people who could not afford more and for students. I worked there, and he paid me in nickels, dimes, and in quarters just enough to put gas in my Volkswagen. This is when I was a student; I got a Volkswagen my senior year. I lived off my work study, and little money that Wayne paid me. He had a newspaper called the Soul Force. I had a copy of that in my scrapbook. He was very instrumental in keeping a lot of us on the right path; he and his wife both. I think she is passed away too now, but we honored her period when I got the Jeanette Jennings award; they also gave a Wayne Johnson award. I can't remember who got it, but I remember nominating people for that. And Jeanette Jennings, oh my

goodness, she lived on campus, and that was a gathering place for us as well just to sit around and learn. She was a social work teacher, and she mentored a lot of us. Maire Malveaux did as well. it was a nice strong bonding time. We enjoyed each other; we learn from each; we helped each other.

**Jasmine
Stansberry:**

My last question is, also, I'm sure you heard all the talk about how old miss is going to remove the confederate statue from where it is and move it. And all this is going on here, the student protests and protesting the IHL and all of that. I want to know what your thoughts are on that. As well as what would you say to current students, even student activists, who are protesting?

**Dottie Chapman
Reed:**

71:27

Wow, I don't know. I did meet James Meredith; he came back while I was recruiting. So, I was able to go over to the dorm where he lived and get to know him a little better. I also was tasked with showing people Faulkner's home. When I told you that I did the campus tours, I had to do Faulkner's home. I think when we were in school, the statue and all of that we were just oblivious to it. It did not bother us, because I think we were just so focused on getting our degrees and not being intimidated. But as time has rolled on, end within the environment that we are living in today with regard to racism. It is difficult to say, what advice I would give activists because it seems like it's a losing battle where the University of Mississippi is concerned. I don't know if they will ever relinquish that good old boy control. I applaud all of them to keep fighting on. I enjoy most of the (72:57). I am very impressed with the first black female Rhodes scholar, the other day. I know that the people who come in and serve as the president of the black student union has really done great things since we left here. So, I applaud all of the activists, and I am really glad to see the faculty stepping up and helping you

guys. You know, that is my little cousin Larry Hawkins who came in behind me who refused to carry the rebel flag. He was the first black cheerleader, yeah.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

Didn't that happen in the 80s?

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

Let's see. I left here in 77, so I am not sure when Larry was in school. But he has come back. I keep saying Larry, it was John. John Hawkins there are a lot of brothers. [Laughter] Anyway, he has come back and done a panel, doing a panel discussion during black history month. You know, people have really helped Rose was president of the alumni association, Rose Jackson. More black faculty, you know Dr. Ross, all of those are doing really, really great up here. So I don't know what the solution is going to be for this university. I really don't. I hesitated myself to even come back and be involved because, you know, at some point I let my alumni association dues lapse. it must have been, what was it? It was some particular event. I think it was one of the Klan things, I don't know, it was something that the university did, and I could just not handle it. I'm going like they are just; I don't get it.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

They let them [Ku Klux Klan] march on campus.

Dottie Chapman
Reed:

I don't know if it was that or not, but anyway, we talked about it last night. I was considering whether I really want the university to support my project to get involved with the university again to put my face out there. What happen if the plan threatens to come, then the paternity boy, oh, the noose they put the noose around Meredith's statue. Then the fraternity boys with the rifles; it just goes on and on and on. I

was involved in the alumni group in Atlanta, and we were the ones who got the Ole Miss tag for Georgia. We had the University of Mississippi, and we had Ole Miss on there. Since then, I just pulled back a little bit. Because so many, the problem is, part of the problem is that we don't get the support from the majority of the white alumni. They don't get it. Some of them are still walking around with the old Colonel rebel shirts on. I'm sure there are black students who could care less too. They are just here for their education.

I think it is more than, our problems are even bigger than the University of Mississippi that is the thing. It is a national issue that we have. We need everybody to be on top of their game. We need everybody to speak up. Because we have generations of children coming behind us who are depending on it. Depending on the millennials and the gen Xs in all of that to fight for equality. I just say hang in there, and don't sweat the small stuff that is one thing I would say. Try to stay read up and woke as you guys say. Be willing to take a stand and that is hard sometimes, but with this project, I don't know. I Never thought that I would be back here in this particular spot where I am doing something with the university and now I am really trying to move away from using the "Ole Miss" term period. I hate that I have it on my tag now.

Jasmine

It is on my car

Stansberry:

Dottie Chapman

I think that it is okay, but there are not any other colleges that I know of the don't use their real name. There is UT. There is Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame. Alabama is Alabama. Mississippi State, so it Wouldn't be too hard to use "UM.edu", you know in the email. And let people still use Ole Miss if they want to use Ole Miss, and let people wear Ole Miss if

Reed:

they want to wear Ole Miss. That is okay as long as we know what it means, now versus what it meant then.

[Interview Interrupted by someone walking in room]

Dottie Chapman

Reed:

So, I think there could be a solution, but there is still so much racism in Mississippi. My girlfriends who live here remind me of it often when we are talking on the phone. Because I sometimes forget, you know. But you don't have to go far to experience it when you are in the South, but almost all over now.

Jasmine

Stansberry:

Yeah, definitely.

Dottie Chapman

Reed:

Some people, I read the other day, one of my home girls on Facebook, and I am not a big facebooker, but I saw that she said, "She sent her Ole Miss purse to Dooney and Bourke, and they replaced it with a new Ole Miss purse [New Miss]. One of my girlfriends has an Ole Miss purse, and I told her, "I think you need to stop carrying your Ole Miss purse." She said, "I don't know." [Laughter] Anyway, but it is just a purse. Yeah, we have bigger issues to deal with.

Jasmine

Stansberry:

Well, I want to thank you for allowing me to interview you this morning. It was definitely very helpful as I began to progress to the dissertation phase. I am definitely going to keep you in the loop comma in work on transcribing this. When I've finished transcribing this, I will definitely send you a copy.

Dottie Chapman

Reed:

Okay, that will be fine. I appreciate what you are doing, and I wish you all the success in the world.

Jasmine
Stansberry:

Thank you.

[End of Interview]