

JACKSON STATE COLLEGE
Jackson, Mississippi

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWER AGREEMENT

O. H. 78.06

I, ROY WEICH, in view of the
(Interviewer, please print)

historical and scholarly value of the information contained in the
interview with ~~A. H. JACKSON~~ & RUBY DAWSON, knowingly and
(Interviewee, please print)

voluntarily permit Jackson State College, Jackson the full use of this
information, and hereby grant and assign to Jackson State College,
Jackson all rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information,
whether or not such rights are now known, recognized or contemplated.

Roy Weich
Interviewer (signature)

O. H. 78.06
Interview Number

6-24-78
Date

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW AGREEMENT

You have been asked for information to be used in connection with the Oral History Program at Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi, The purpose of this program is to gather and preserve information for historical and scholarly use.

A tape recording of your interview will be made by the interviewer, and a typescript of the tape will be made and submitted to you for editing. The final retyped and edited transcript, together with the tape of the interview will then be placed in the oral history collection at Jackson State University Jackson, Mississippi. Other institutions or persons may obtain a copy. These materials may be made available for purposes of research, for instructional use, for publication, or for other related purposes.

I, Ruby Dawson, have read the above and, in view of the historical and scholarly value of this information, and in return for a final typed copy of the transcript, I knowingly and voluntarily permit Jackson State University, Jackson, the full use of this information. I hereby grant and assign all my rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or not such rights are now know, recognized, or contemplated, to Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi.

Ruby Dawson
Interviewee (Signature)

6-20-78
Date

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Farish Street Project
Jackson, Mississippi 39217

INTERVIEWEE: Ruby Dawson
INTERVIEWER: Roy Welch
DATE: June 20, 1978 (Date of Interview)
SUBJ: "Smith Robertson School"
OH 78.06

W: This is an interview with Mrs. Ruby Dawson for the Jackson State University Oral History Department by Roy Welch, of Jackson, Mississippi, on June 20, 1978, at 3:00 P.M. in Mrs. Dawson's home at 224 East Davis Street.

W: Mrs. Dawson, what is your age?

D: I was born in 1904, that's seventy-four.

W: Where were you born Mrs. Dawson?

D: Jackson.

W: In Jackson. What is your occupation now?

D: I am a retired teacher.

W: Where was your family from originally?

D: Oh, my father was from here and my mother was from Tougaloo.

W: They originated in Jackson?

D: That's right.

W: What was their occupation?

D: My father was a Pastor and my mother was a housewife.

W: Who is the oldest living ~~in the family,~~ member of your family now?

D: I am.

W: How many sisters and brothers do you have in the family?

D: I had four sisters and one brother.

W: When you all lived in Jackson did you all own your home or rent your home?

D: Owned it.

W: ~~Now~~ in your grade school you went to Smith Robertson a few years, right?

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D: That's right.

W: And then to Tougaloo?

D: Tougaloo, that's right.

W: Where did you have your college education?

D: Tougaloo.

W: What period of time were you at Smith Robertson?

D: Well, it must have been the third and fourth grade and from there I went to Tougaloo.

W: Could you tell me something about your experience at Smith Robertson?

D: Well at that time, Professor Lanier was our Principal. It ain't much I could tell you about it. (Laughter)

W: Well, what did you like about the school?

D: Oh well, I liked Professor Lanier. At the time we had a lot of drilling. I remember that he could get the attention of everybody by himself. I just enjoyed that. We marched out on the playground and it was almost like in the Army. After I grew up, I could realize that I enjoyed it.

W: What did you dislike about the school?

D: Well I, there wasn't anything that I disliked about the school.

W: Do you remember any of your teachers?

D: Yes, Mrs. Barnes and Betty Marino.

W: What subject did you like at Smith Robertson?

D: Geography. . .my mother liked it.

W: What did you do for recreation?

D: Well, I had sisters and we played games in the yard. After that my father asked us to come in and study.

W: What about at school, what kind of recreation did you have at school?

D: Well, we played regular games like lost my handkerchief, and little games like that.

W: While at Smith Robertson did you all have textbooks, were they free?

D: No.

W: You had to buy your own textbooks?

D: Yes.

W: Did they have a library at the school?

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D: No.

W: A lunch program now?

D: We carried our lunch.

W: You carried your own lunch?

D: Yes.

W: How did the students care for the school? Did they do any damage or anything like that?

D: No, they were better than they are now. We didn't have none of that.

W: In other words the students supported the school?

D: That's right.

W: They liked the school. Do you recall any special hard times that the school area might have had while you were there?

D: I don't recall any.

W: Approximately how many students were in your grade while you were there?

D: I'll say about 45, something like that, maybe more. I don't remember.

W: Approximately how many students were in the school? Was it almost real crowded?

D: Yes, but we got along alright. It seems like at that time, I'm not criticizing now, but the discipline was better. I don't know whether it was from the home training or what it was.

W: You mean better than it is now?

D: To me it was.

W: Were you at the school at the time of the fire? Didn't it burn one time?

D: I wasn't there.

W: Did they build any new parts to the school while you were there?

D: No.

W: You said you left Smith Robertson at the fourth grade?

D: Yes.

W: That was about 1915 probably?

D: Something like that.

W: That's when you went over to Tougaloo to school. ~~two~~ *two space*

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D: That's right.

W: You finished your college education there?

D: ~~Well,~~ I came back here and taught.

W: Which school did you teach in?

D: In Smith Robertson.

W: You taught at Smith Robertson?

D: Smith Robertson and then . . .

W: That would have been around 19 . . .

D: 1928. Then I went to Mary Jones.

W: You went to Mary Jones?

D: Then I went in the summer, back to finish my college.

W: How was a teacher's salary in those days?

D: I first started out with \$35.00. *spell out or do it the same way*

W: Thirty-five dollars a month?

D: Yes.

W: What did you teach at Smith Robertson, what subjects?

D: I started out with the third grade.

W: Third grade?

D: ~~Third grade and then~~ I was transferred to the first grade.

W: How did you like the first grade?

D: I liked it better.

W: ~~Then~~ who was the Principal while you were teaching? Was it still Mr. Lanier?

D: Yes, until he died.

W: After teaching at Smith Robertson, ~~then~~ you went to Mary Jones, and how long did you teach there?

D: I don't remember now. ~~Then~~ I came back to Smith Robertson and ~~then~~ I was transferred over to Reynolds School. *later I*

W: Reynolds School?

D: I stayed over there until I retired.

W: What year did you retire in?

D: In 1967.

W: How did you like teaching at Smith Robertson?

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D: I liked it.

W: You liked that? While you were teaching did they have any. . . ^{space} ^{space} was it any difference from when you were a student there and the time you taught there one time and moved to Mary Jones and back. Did they have any new additions or anything like that?

D: Yes.

W: Was it remodeled or anything?

D: Yes.

W: It had been remodeled?

D: Yes it had.

W: ~~Okay~~, do you remember approximately the size of the school? ^{Do} You know the number of classrooms or anything like that?

D: It's about the same as it is now.

W: About the same as it is now? ~~The number~~, the student body was it about the same?

D: Yes.

W: Do you recall any happy memories from Smith Robertson?

D: Yes, it does something to you to go back after you have been to school there and to go back to see where. . .

W: Right.

D: It's something to me, I know.

W: I know. I understand. What about any unhappy memories associated with Smith Robertson?

D: Well, when I was transferred I didn't think I would like it but I did.

W: You mean transferred now. . .

D: To another school.

W: In other words the school system wanted you to go?

D: Yes.

W: That's when you were transferred over to Reynolds School?

D: Reynolds School. It was closer to home.

W: Do you recall how the people supported the school in the community?

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D: ~~Well,~~ they were nice.

W: In other words they were nice enough. It was a good working relationship between the parents, students and the faculty and so forth like that?

D: ~~You see,~~ we were in the same community.

W: Smith Robertson then served a large community then?

D: That's right.

W: The other schools actually grew out of Smith Robertson so to speak?

D: Yes.

W: You said after Smith Robertson you went to Reynolds and then you retired?

D: Yes. That was in 1967.

W: You've been living here at this address that long?

D: Yes.

W: Okay. Mrs. Dawson we've been talking about these questions, something about Smith Robertson. I know you wouldn't have any objection for Jackson State using this tape for any kind of scholarly purposes would you?

D: No.

END OF INTERVIEW