



## Oral history with Mrs. Sarah Harris Ruffin

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### Biography

Mrs. Sarah Harris Ruffin was born on April 15, 1914. Her parents, Douglas Hams of Selma, Alabama, and Fannie Parker of Vossburg, Mississippi, came to Hattiesburg in the early 1900s. The family lived at 913 Mobile Street. Mrs. Ruffin had one brother, Douglas, and three sisters, Leola and twins, Elizabeth and Idella. She and her husband, James Martin Ruffin, were married in Hattiesburg in January 1944. At the time of the interview, she lived in Brooklyn where her family consisted of a niece, Fannie Cole Dickerson; Mrs. Dickerson's husband, Bennett, and her two children, Tracy and Matthew; and the wife of a deceased nephew, France Cole. Mrs. Ruffin's niece, Vivian Sue Cole Route Dyess, lives in Hattiesburg, as do Mrs. Dyess' two sons, Jeffrey and Jesse Route.

When young, Mrs. Ruffin was did domestic and warehouse work. In 1949, she began working at the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital as a nurse's aide. She also worked as a practical nurse for the Green Point Hospital in Brooklyn, New York; for the New York City Health Department; and for the Hebrew Home for the Aged.

Mrs. Ruffin believes that "it is important to keep busy, stay active, and keep involved in different activities." She is a member of the New York State Practical Nurses Association and St. George Association of Practical Nurses. She attends the annual meetings of the New York State Practical Nurses Association, and each year she lobbies in Albany and in Washington, D.C., as an advocate for senior citizens and children. She is active in the Zion Baptist Church, where she has been a member of the Nurses' Unit and the Missionary Board. She served as a Girl Scout leader for over twenty years, and for many years, she participated in the New York Lion's Club Christmas parties held at Macy's Department Store for needy children. In addition, she takes arts and crafts courses, and each summer, she vacations in Hattiesburg and in such diverse locations as Seattle and Nassau.

Mrs. Ruffin's activities have earned her many awards, including the following: Outstanding Community Leadership Award from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the Outstanding Health Services Award from the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, the Outstanding Recognition Award from the Interfaith Medical Center Advisory Board, the Controller's Award for Lifelong Commitment as an advocate for senior citizens, and a



Certificate of Appreciation in Recognition of Outstanding Service to the Community Association of Retired Persons.

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## Transcript

*This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi. The interview is with Mrs. Sarah H. Ruffin and is taking place on November 23, 1995. The interviewer is Fannie Cole Dickerson.*

**Dickerson:** Ready? This is an oral history interview, a EURO interview, with Sarah Harris Ruffin. Today is November 23, 1995. We are in her home in Brooklyn, New York. The interviewer is Fannie Cole Dickerson. Please state your name and your date of birth please.

**Ruffin:** Sarah Harris Ruffin. April the fifteenth, 1914.

**Dickerson:** Where do you currently live? Give your address.

**Ruffin:** I live 487 Carlton Avenue, Apt. 22A in Brooklyn, New York.

**Dickerson:** Where was your place of birth?

**Ruffin:** Hattiesburg, Mississippi.



**Dickerson:** The year you or your parents came to Mississippi?

**Ruffin:** They came there in the early 1900s.

**Dickerson:** All right. The year they came to the area where you now live in Hattiesburg.

**Ruffin:** Around sometime shortly after they first came to Hattiesburg.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. And where have you lived in Hattiesburg?

**Ruffin:** Only at 913 Mobile Street.

**Dickerson:** OK. What mode of travel did you use in Hattiesburg? How did you travel around?

**Ruffin:** You had street cars and taxis.

**Dickerson:** Did you occasionally walk?

**Ruffin:** Yeah!

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. What route did you take when you walked? Where would you mainly walk to?

**Ruffin:** I lived two and a half blocks down the street from the church. I lived three and a half blocks from the school.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. Well what are some of the streets that you used, that you traveled?

**Ruffin:** Mobile Street.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. If you wanted to go to downtown Hattiesburg to shop, how would you travel? How would you use what, Mobile Street?

(Brief interruption. Telephone rings)

**Dickerson:** When you would walk downtown what street would you use?

**Ruffin:** Mobile Street.

**Dickerson:** OK. That was the route on which you traveled. Now for your family background. What was your father's name?

**Ruffin:** Douglas Harris.

**Dickerson:** And where is your father's place of birth?

**Ruffin:** Selma, Alabama.



**Dickerson:** What was his major occupation? What, when, where, if you know.

**Ruffin:** I knew him as working at Newman Mill while we were growing up.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. What kind of mill was that?

**Ruffin:** Sawmill. Lumber.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh, and what year you would say?

**Ruffin:** From the early 1900s.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. What's your mother's maiden name?

**Ruffin:** Her maiden name was Parker.

**Dickerson:** And what's her first name?

**Ruffin:** Fannie.

**Dickerson:** What was your mother's place of birth?

**Ruffin:** In Mississippi.

**Dickerson:** Vossburg?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** Well, say it.

**Ruffin:** Vossburg, Mississippi.

**Dickerson:** And Jasper?

**Ruffin:** Maybe it was Jasper County.

**Dickerson:** OK. What date were they married?

**Ruffin:** I don't know.

**Dickerson:** OK. What place did they get married at?

**Ruffin:** Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

**Dickerson:** OK. And what was your mother's occupation?



**Ruffin:** Well, she was a good cook. She used to work in service for white people.

**Dickerson:** And then? After the children came, what did she do?

**Ruffin:** She stopped going every day, she stayed home. She'd work two or three days a week.

**Dickerson:** OK. Housewife, OK. Do you have any brothers and sisters? Please give their names, their married names, too.

**Ruffin:** They are all deceased now. I'll give them though. Elizabeth Cole, Elizabeth Harris Cole. Idella Harris. They were twins. Leole Natalie Harris Sepp Watts and Douglas Harris, Jr.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. What is your spouse's name?

**Ruffin:** James Martin Ruffin.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. The date and the place in which you two were married.

**Ruffin:** Forrest County, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

**Dickerson:** What year? What month and year?

**Ruffin:** January 1944.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. Do you have any children?

**Ruffin:** No.

(The interview continues on tape one, side two.)

**Dickerson:** Sarah, what were the classes like, the grade levels and the size?

**Ruffin:** When we got to seventh grade looked like there was seventy-five or a hundred children in that seventh grade class, because you had those from our side of town and those from cross town.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. What sections were those where the children came from from across town?

**Ruffin:** East Jerusalem and the Newman quarters.

**Dickerson:** The ones from Sixteenth Section. Where is that? Is that-

**Ruffin:** They came.

**Dickerson:** All right they came, too.



**Ruffin:** Sixteenth Section children went to East Jerusalem School, the majority of them. But those that lived out on Corinne Street and way out on Pine Street, they came to Eureka.

**Dickerson:** How many high schools did you have in the town?

**Ruffin:** One.

**Dickerson:** One high school, OK. So they all came to Eureka High School.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** So you're saying that in some of your junior high school classes you had a hundred students in the class. Were the rooms large enough? You had enough seats and chairs?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh, OK.

**Ruffin:** Like these double chairs together, but you probably didn't have no arm board to write on. You learned to write in your lap.

**Dickerson:** How many teachers were in this one classroom with the children?

**Ruffin:** One, one.

**Dickerson:** One? Were the children noisy or disruptive?

**Ruffin:** They were afraid to.

**Dickerson:** And why was that?

**Dickerson:** They got a whipping by talking in class.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** It's takes-with your parent to tell you about Miss Jones. Said Miss Jones put you in the electric chair and electrocute you. (laughter)

**Dickerson:** Meaning that she'd whip you.

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** OK.

**Ruffin:** Right across your back.



**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. What happened when you became in high school when-high school began there at ninth grade, right?

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** And were the classes departmentalized, meaning you changed classes?

**Ruffin:** Yeah, you changed classes. But it's the funniest thing. The children on our side of town finished twelfth grade. But just a lot of those that stayed out there around, out there where Mack Waters and them lived. Now Eddie Austin didn't come to school after we were fifth or sixth grade.

**Dickerson:** OK. That says something for education during that time because now in here, in New York and throughout the country, you know, you have a class size and they don't want you to go over a certain number.

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** All right who were the principals at that time, at the time you attended Eureka?

**Ruffin:** I attended all my life there. They didn't change.

**Dickerson:** No, but what I meant-W.H. Jones.

**Ruffin:** W.H. Jones was there.

**Dickerson:** Mr. Washington.

**Ruffin:** You said **Mr.** Washington.

**Dickerson:** Was Miss-you told me-oh, Washburn, oh.

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** All right, well say it. On here.

**Ruffin:** Washburn.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. Anybody else?

**Ruffin:** Professor Addison.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** Edward Tademy.



**Dickerson:** Um-hm. You mentioned a W.H. Jones was the principal. Don't they have a school now named after W.H. Jones?

**Ruffin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Dickerson:** OK.

**Ruffin:** Oh, out there in the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Dickerson:** OK. Not too far from your old family home?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. Now name some of the teachers that you had.

**Ruffin:** Cora Jones.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** Mrs. Tademey, Mrs. Neal. Lou Alma Powell. Estelle Jenkins. Rosie. Rosie Hinds, I think that girl's name I've been knowing was.

**Dickerson:** Did you have Miss Washington?

**Ruffin:** No, she was one of them late years.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. And what was your famous, was it your first grade teacher, Miss Clark?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** And Ruby Henry.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** Miss Watson. Mrs. Ratliff.

**Dickerson:** Reverend Ratliff's wife, right.

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** At first she was a Billingsley when she came.

**Ruffin:** Right.



**Dickerson:** She married the preacher, Reverend Ratliff who was the preacher at Truelight Baptist Church. All right did the principals teach classes?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** Do you know what subjects they taught?

**Ruffin:** I know Professor Tademy taught geometry.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** Professor Sims, Julius Caesar Sims, was a science teacher.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** OK. Can you give us some interesting facts about school life during the early years?

**Ruffin:** Yes. There'd be a hundred in the room, and when they said no talking, you could hear a pin fall.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm. And you didn't have no parents coming out there seeing about no a teacher whipping her child.

**Dickerson:** I see. You know it's interesting, I would like to know-maybe we would like to know, well, how did they teach reading to a hundred students in a class?

**Ruffin:** Well, they taught us.

**Dickerson:** Sort of straight down the middle. Everybody had to learn everything at the same time?

**Ruffin:** Yes. She'd have different lessons.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Ruffin:** But Papa helped us with our reading and arithmetic at night.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** OK. Tell me-



**Ruffin:** You went to school with your work done. You didn't \_\_\_\_\_ no teacher or say, "I didn't have no pen." "Ain't my responsibility. It's your parents responsibility to give you a pen or pencil. And paper."

**Dickerson:** You talked about your devotion exercise in assemblies. Share that with us.

**Ruffin:** Every Tuesday and Friday everybody went to the main auditorium for assembly.

**Dickerson:** When you say everybody what do you mean? The whole school?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm. And you didn't keep all that noise, these children do going through the hall.

**Dickerson:** You know I remember that. I guess they carried it on down through the years because I remember learning church songs and what have you. And then they taught us *Lift Every Voice and Sing* by James Reverend Johnson. We knew that. We knew all three verses of that.

**Ruffin:** And these people here in New York mess it up and won't sing the whole verse for nothing.

**Dickerson:** OK. See what happened, they probably-in Mississippi you had to learn it. That was a part of your curriculum. Is that so? Is that what you're saying?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** Yeah, OK. All right.

**Ruffin:** That came out the year we-were we eleventh grade or twelfth grade?

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** But if you didn't stand up and one by one and say it you didn't pass them six weeks.

**Dickerson:** Oh, OK.

**Ruffin:** So you learned it.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. Now was the community involved in the school? Wait a minute I'm going to ask something else. That was during the early years and that's also during the Depression years. Tell us about the Depression years. Do you remember?

**Ruffin:** Well, maybe at the beginning. But everybody's father worked. And the mother was the housekeeper at home. And everybody ate greens and bread and some \_\_\_\_\_ and might be your meat you had that day. But you'd have greens and bread and potatoes, baked. And you'd have buttermilk and you'd have butter, cornbread, and everybody sat down and ate together. There was no such thing as, "Well, Bobby, what you want for supper, or what you want?" Everybody eat the same things.



**Dickerson:** OK. Did you have hot lunch or you had to carry your lunch to school?

**Ruffin:** You carried your lunch.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. Some of the things that you had in your lunch.

**Ruffin:** On Monday everybody had a good lunch because the roast or a chicken [leftover from Sunday dinner], you could have that. And light bread wasn't so stylish so you had chicken and biscuits.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** And if your mother made tea cakes or a regular cake, you had a piece of cake in your lunch.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. Did you ever have sausage and biscuits?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. So that's famous now with some of your fast food chains.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** It came back that way, during the Depression when things were very tight.

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** OK. Now was the community involved in the school?

**Ruffin:** Like what?

**Dickerson:** Well, did your parents, did they come? Did they belong to the PTA? Did they have cake sales? Name some of the activities for the parents.

**Ruffin:** Yeah, they'd have-I don't know how often they had that PTA meeting but everybody's parents would be up there. Um-hm. And they'd have it around two or three o'clock so they could get home and give you a good whipping if the teacher told you something was wrong or do your child act up.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** Did they have cake sales to raise money?

**Ruffin:** Every now and then.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.



**Ruffin:** They didn't have athletics going on every day or every week, but maybe once a month. And they would sell cakes or pies, a slice of cake or a slice of pie.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** What were some of the major events in the school? You had sports.

**Ruffin:** Just about-major events. Like what?

**Dickerson:** Well did you have king and I mean-did you have the May Day? Did you wrap the May pole?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** All right. What about-name the sports you had and what activities were connected with the sport? Did they have the queens then?

**Ruffin:** They had the baseball every spring. They had the football every fall. And they had volleyball and there was another ball they had.

**Dickerson:** Basketball?

**Ruffin:** Yeah, basketball, uh-huh.

**Dickerson:** OK.

**Ruffin:** They don't have-I haven't seen it around here, the girls into sports, but it used to be a basketball team of girls.

**Dickerson:** A girls' basketball team.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** Did they have a pep squad?

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** Tell them about the pep squad, that's the cheerleaders-cheering part that we had.

**Ruffin:** Yeah, um-hm.

**Dickerson:** Did Eureka have a band?

**Ruffin:** Yeah. Mr. Rod [?] was over that band.



**Dickerson:** At the time you were going to school?

**Ruffin:** Um-hm. He was in our high school and he played football. His mama was a janitor; he had to help his mama clean that building.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. Oh, very good.

**Ruffin:** He played football.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh, uh-huh. OK. So actually Eureka has always had-has been a very resourceful school for education and for sports and for other activities.

**Ruffin:** Yeah. And I just imagine that's why Roy and them, \_\_\_\_\_ and them all went to Alcorn.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** Because they played the different sports and they'd get so much off from their tuition.

**Dickerson:** So you'd get scholarships. OK. All right. Can you tell us about some of your outstanding students and their accomplishments? Now this is where you can name Oseola-what was her name?

**Ruffin:** Oseola McCarty?

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Ruffin:** Now that's the first I've ever heard of her.

**Dickerson:** Since-

**Ruffin:** Since we were in school.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh, OK.

**Ruffin:** I know she's in my class up until we got fifth grade. And I don't think they came back to school from out that way when we got sixth grade. Now Leola continued to come. And Johnny Mae Olden and her brother Atwood Olden was in my class. She was with Susan and Thelma and Edith Brown. But the people they stayed with, I don't know whether that lady passed or what, but they just had to work.

**Dickerson:** Now Oseola-what was her name?

**Ruffin:** Oseola McCarty.

**Dickerson:** Oseola McCarty. OK, now. There was something in the paper throughout the United States and all concerning the good deed that she did. Would you like to share with us on tape what was it that she donated?

**Ruffin:** She donated her life savings. Now Oseola was an only child.



**Dickerson:** Donated her life savings. What did she donate her life savings to?

**Ruffin:** Education.

**Dickerson:** Education and what college? At the time, Mississippi Southern.

**Ruffin:** Was it Mississippi Southern or was it-

**Dickerson:** Well, now it's called-we knew it as Mississippi Southern. Now it's called Southern University.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** Mississippi-wait a minute. Southern University, University of Southern Mississippi.

**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** OK. That's what she donated it to and that was your classmate?

**Ruffin:** Yeah. Now those girls out there on Lake Street and-it was some streets out there off from Fourth Street and Fifth Street but back in there somewhere where they lived. Out of all of those girls out there-now Atwood Olden-I think their grandmother kept them. But they died. They used to come to Mount Carmel every Sunday Atwood and Johnnie Mae, his sister. But after we got to the tenth grade or so, Atwood stopped coming to school, and his sister was two or three grades ahead of us. I don't know whether she worked or left Hattiesburg and went to New Orleans and got a job and sent back by Atwood or what. But Reola-the only one I know from out there that finished twelfth grade.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. OK, now do you know other people, other students beginning with your sister, you tell that went to college and came back to teach at that time?

**Ruffin:** Myrtis Brumfield.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. What about Leola?

**Ruffin:** Huh?

**Dickerson:** What about your sister?

**Ruffin:** No, you said other than my sister.

**Dickerson:** No, I didn't. I said other people-oh, all right. Just tell us about some other students-and I said name your sister that did-you know outstanding students and their accomplishments. They came back and they taught school either in the town or around.

**Ruffin:** Thelma Brown taught school a while. Myrtis Brum-

**Dickerson:** Your sister Leola.



**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** Well, say it, "My sister" -

**Ruffin:** My sister, Leola.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh. And Eretta Breland.

**Ruffin:** Eretta.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Ruffin:** Yes.

**Dickerson:** Ruth House.

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** You have to say it.

**Ruffin:** Ruth House. Margaret \_\_\_\_\_. D.W. Farnsworth, Margaret \_\_\_\_\_'s cousin. He went to \_\_\_\_\_. Is it \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm.

**Ruffin:** I think it's \_\_\_\_\_.

**Dickerson:** \_\_\_\_\_. Anybody else? Did we have any doctors at that time from Eureka? I mean, you know, that went to school with you?

**Ruffin:** No.

**Dickerson:** Any lawyers or anyone?

**Ruffin:** Unh-uh.

**Dickerson:** OK.

**Ruffin:** \_\_\_\_\_'s son is the only lawyer I know.

**Dickerson:** But he's much, much younger.

**Ruffin:** Yeah.

**Dickerson:** OK.



**Ruffin:** Um-hm.

**Dickerson:** All right. Now-

**Ruffin:** I'm not sure where Louie Pittman is, but Louie and Wayne Pittman painted. Wayne-was it Wayne? No, Louie is the one that painted these murals and things.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. All right this ends our interview our oral history of Sarah Harris Ruffin and this is for EURO. Sarah is there something that you would like to add or to say before we end this tape, end this session? Would you like to say something about Hattiesburg and about EURO? Did you enjoy your high school life?

**Ruffin:** Yes. I won't forget what Reverend Wilson-Lillian Wilson was a classmate of mine. Her father was pastor of St. Paul AME Church, ME Church. And his subject was climb higher.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. Now what does that mean to you?

**Ruffin:** Huh?

**Dickerson:** And what does that mean to you?

**Ruffin:** Just what it meant, it said. Try to raise yourself above where you are now.

**Dickerson:** Um-hm. As I said earlier this is the end of the interview with Sarah Harris Ruffin. Thank you.

**Unident. Voice:** Now you want to go from the beginning?

(The interview continues on tape two, side one)

**Ruffin:** I give Fannie Cole Dickerson my permission to read and run off the oral history for EURO.

**Dickerson:** I'm reading the EURO, Eureka, Royal Street, Rowan contract for Sarah Harris Ruffin. 1. For and in consideration of the participation by EURO and any program involving the dissemination of tape recorded memoirs and oral history material for publication, copyright, and other uses, I hereby release all right, title or interest in and to all of my tape recorded memoirs to EURO and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and published by the said EURO which may also assign said copyright and publication rights to serious research scholars. In addition to the rights and authority given to you under their preceeding paragraphs I hereby authorize you to edit, publish, sell and/or license the use of my oral memoirs in order in any other manner which the organization considered to be desirable and I waiver any claim to any payments which may be received as a consequence by the organization. And this was given permission by Sarah Harris Ruffin on November twenty-third, 1995, in her home at 487 Carlton Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

2. The Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi gift of personal statement to The University of Southern Mississippi. I, Sarah Harris Ruffin, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the Mississippi Oral History Program for eventual deposit in The University of Southern Mississippi University Libraries and for administration therein by the



authorities thereof, a taped interview. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to The University of Southern Mississippi. In consideration of this gift, upon deposit in The University of Southern Mississippi University Libraries, the donor will receive a duplicate tape or transcription of the interview.
2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to The University of Southern Mississippi by terms of this instrument available for research and such public programming as the program may determine. Public programming includes the use of interview material in live or recorded programs for radio, television, cable, multimedia and any other forms of electronic publishing that is not for profit.
3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of The University of Southern Mississippi, or his designee, if it appears desirable.
4. The material donated to The University of Southern Mississippi pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in The University of Southern Mississippi University Libraries.

This is given this statement and signed by Sarah Harris Ruffin, November twenty-third, 1995, in Brooklyn, New York. And her telephone number is (718) 857-8681.

OK I would read the agreement to hire. This is the one by Fannie Cole Dickerson. This agreement entered into effective as of the twenty-third day of November, 1995, by and between the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi (hereinafter referred to as assignee), and Fannie Cole Dickerson (herein referred to as interviewer assignor.)

Whereas assignee has commissioned interviewer-assignor to conduct oral history interviews according to assignee's specification and control;

Whereas interviewer-assignee intended that the copyright to the interview that assignor prepared, as indicated above, would be owned by assignee, whether by acknowledged assignee and interviewer signs and agrees as following:

1. The interviewer-assignor hereby assigns to assignee, his legal representatives, successors, and assigns, all of interviewer-assignor's right, title, interest and ownership in the above indicated interviews, including the right to procure the copyright thereon and the right to secure any renewals, reissues, and extensions of any such copyright.
2. Whenever required by assignee, interviewer-assignor will at assignee's cost execute and do all other documents of assignment for vesting the interviews and the copyright thereof in assignee.

In witness thereof the parties have executed this agreement effective as of the date first written above.

Thank you.

DEPRESSION YEARS



As I remember during the depression, my father worked part-time at least two or three days a week. There was very little money in the home for food and clothes. My father planted a garden in the back yard and in the field on Mobile Street about four blocks from the house. We always had plenty of vegetables and potatoes. As I remember there was plenty of love in the home.

I took my lunch to school. Since we did not have "light bread" my lunch was made with biscuits and sausage, chicken, beef or whatever meat that was available.

School life was fun and serious. There were 65 - 100 students in the class. We did our work or we would be whipped by the teacher and our parents. We used Farmer's Seed cloth bags to make our shirts and dresses. We used our sewing skills to make our own clothes.

I was not involved in extra-curricular activities after school because I had to come home and do my homework and chores around the house.

#### ATTACHMENT A

##### Career Record

##### What - Where - When

1,2) Camp Shelby Laundry & Clothing Supply House - Hattiesburg, MS -1941-1945

3) Domestic worker - Miami, FL - 1945-1948

4) Warehouse Worker - Brooklyn Army Base, Brooklyn, New York - 1948-1949

5) Nurses Aide - Brooklyn Jewish Hosp., Brooklyn, New York - 1949-1952 6) Practical Nurse Green Point Hospital, Brooklyn, New York 1953-1958

7) New York City, Health Department - Practical Nurse, Flatbush Health Station, St. John's Health Station, Brooklyn, New York - 1958-1976

8) Practical Nurse - Hebrew Home for the Aged - 1960-1969

#### ATTACHMENT B

##### Principal activities and interests other than livelihood

I am active in my church, Zion Baptist Church in various organizations. I have been a Girl Scout leader for over twenty years.

To keep active, I have taken courses in arts and crafts offered to seniors.

Each year, I have traveled to many conferences with New York State Practical Nurses Association. This last summer 1995, we held our state conference on a cruise ship to the Bahamas.



Each summer I travel to places in addition to vacationing in Hattiesburg. I have been to New Orleans, Miami, Florida; Mobile, Alabama; Chicago, Illinois; Washington, D.C.; Seattle, Washington; Pennsylvania, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Nassau, Paradise Island and many other places.

#### Principal activities

Each year I traveled to Albany, New York, and Washington, D.C., as a lobbyist to meet with my state and federal politicians as an advocate for seniors and children.

Previously, I have been taking needy children to Macy's Department Store for Christmas parties with free gifts. These activities were sponsored by New York Lion's Club.

There are just a few of my many and varied activities. I feel it is important to keep busy, stay active and keep involved in different activities.

Family in Brooklyn, New York: Niece Fannie Cole Dickerson retired New York City administration. Her husband, Bennett H. Dickerson and their two children. Tracy Dickerson who graduated from Howard University and Matthew Dickerson who graduated from Wesleyan University, New York, New York. My deceased nephew. His wife: Frances Cole, teacher.

In Hattiesburg, I used to visit and [?] and speak with my deceased sister on the phone each week. (Leola H. Sipp Watts)

Now, I'm in contact monthly with my niece, Vivian Sue Cole Ronte Dyess and her two sons Jeffrey Paul Ronte and Jesse Eugene Ronte. Sue as we call my niece is a retired school teacher from the Hattiesburg Public Schools. She does substitute work at least two days a week.

#### ATTACHMENT C

##### Professional Organizations/Civic Activities

- 1) New York State Practical Nurses Association
- 2) St. George Association of Practical Nurses - Dept. Of Health
- 3) Former Community Board Member - Brooklyn Jewish Hospital and Medical Center
- 4) Former treasurer Community Board for \_\_\_\_\_, Inc. (Health Organization)
- 5) Borough-Wide (Brooklyn-wide) Interagency Council of the Aging, Inc.
- 6) Secretary Atlantic Terminal Housing Executive Board
- 7) Member Atlantic Terminal Senior Citizens Organization (Organized group)
- 8) Girl Scout Leader



- 9) Board member Atlantic Terminal Adult Advisory Board
- 10) Member of the Nurses' Unit and Missionary Board at Zion Baptist Church

#### ATTACHMENT D

##### Awards

- 1) Outstanding Community Leadership Award from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, May 1995
- 2) Outstanding Health Services' Award, Brooklyn Jewish Hospital (1970-87)
- 3) Outstanding Recognition Award, Interfaith Medical Center Advisory Board, March 30, 1990
- 4) Community Service Recognition Award YMCA of Brooklyn
- 5) Recognition of Achievement Award, Crown Heights Community Advisory Council, September 23, 1989
- 6) Certificate of Merit Award Outstanding Community Service, Brooklyn-wide Interagency Council of the Aging, Inc.
- 7) Certificate of Attendance in Recognition of Participation at the 51st Licensed Practical Nurses Convention on the SeaBreeze Cruise Ship May 31 - June 7, 1992
- 8) Order of the Gavel. Certificate of Merit in Recognition of Achievement as a participant in the Parliamentary Procedures Workshop, Practical nurses' convention SeaBreeze Cruise Ship May 31 - June 7, 1992
- 9) Controller's Award for Lifelong Commitment as an advocate for Senior Citizens - March 26, 1993. Elizabeth Holtzman, New York City, Controller
- 10) Certificate of appreciation in Recognition of Outstanding Service to the Community Association of Retired Persons June 15, 1990