

Outstanding Black Women of Yalobusha County: The Project Continues

Ruby McKie Turner – A Hidden Treasure – Shares Her Memories

A few months ago, Cleveland Joseph introduced me to his cousin, and I soon discovered one of the best resources on the history of Water Valley's black community in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Ruby Turner was born in Water Valley on October 30, 1928 and lived here until 1956. "We were known as the Mackeys," she quipped, "but our name was McKie. You know how the white folks called you what they want to call you." She said her brother and sister had to make a special effort to correct their last name when they worked for the federal government years later.

At 91, she remains active as a pianist and soloist in her church in Phoenix, Illinois. She recently played piano for the male chorus for Men's Day and is now rehearsing for the 18th annual Christmas Cantata. Her first book, *Lights*

of Another Color – Out of the Darkness of Slavery, is near completion.

While her relatives are long gone, she stays in touch with her husband's cousins who still live in Water Valley: the Turners, the Josephs, the Whites, to name a few. They are planning their 2020 family reunion in Oxford, and I hope to meet her there in person and get a copy of that book.

Two previous columns about black maids noted that the authors did not know the last names of some of these women. This upset Ruby, and she was quick to give me the last name of her cousin, Etoile Winters, in our very first conversation. I would love to share more about our long conversations, but I happily yield the space to her.



By Dottie Chapman Reed

Reed is a native of Water Valley and graduated from Davidson High School in 1970. This article is part of a project to compile and share info about women in the county who have made an impact on the African American community. Her column appears bi-monthly, with occasional exceptions. She can be reached at (678) 825-2356 or reed2318@bellsouth.net

www.blackwomenofyalobusha.com

Recollections and Reflections of Ruby M. Turner

By Ruby M. Turner

I was born in Water Valley, Mississippi to Alfred E. McKie and Genora Morgan McKie, the youngest of eight children. My paternal grandmother, Eliza Kelly McKie, was born a slave on the Kelly Plantation in rural Coffeeville, Mississippi. She and her husband, Joshua McKie, moved with their family to Water Valley in 1879. In 1883, they purchased their home adjacent to the land on which the Everdale Missionary Baptist Church later would be built. Eliza and Joshua played significant roles in founding this church, which previously had been a Bush Harbor church. This area became the center of the colored community and included the colored school and Miles CME Methodist Church.

Former slave women and their children actively engaged in social activities, especially those among the first free-born generation. The churches and various organizations sponsored musical events and trips that formed a key part of the colored community's social structure. Parents - newly freed - set a cultural standard for their children, laying the foundation for future generations. And strong, influential women from this generation influenced my life and the generations that followed.

This central community that I lived in was also the home of four women school teachers, including the principal of the Water Valley Colored School. The leading pianists also lived in this community.

My first memories of my surroundings come from the 1930s. I was enrolled in the Water Valley colored school shortly before my fifth birthday, in 1933. It was also the year my oldest sister, Eliza, began her teaching career and when I became involved in church activities. Both school and church provided the beginning of rewarding and enriching experiences.

The women who lived in the neighborhood and influenced me and the other children in the hills and valleys around town were Theresa Davidson, Ethel Curry, Minnie Nickolson and Alberta Weir.

Theresa Davidson, the wife of Principal E.C. Davidson, was a teacher at the Water Valley Colored School and had multiple duties. She taught English literature and geog-

raphy. She was also the director of the glee clubs and in charge of the extracurricular department, producing operettas, musicals, dance and plays. While doing all of this, she raised four children.

Ethel Curry was the primary teacher and later taught science and biology. The Water Valley Colored School housed both an elementary and high school, and the teachers had to work in all the grades.

Minnie Nickolson was the assistant Sunday school superintendent of the Everdale Missionary Baptist Church.

Alberta Weir was the pianist of the E.M.B. Church, and like the other women, led a life of service to young children, teenagers and adults. More than once they all went the extra mile beyond the call of duty.

As a little girl, I became involved in the extracurricular activities at school. Mrs. Davidson produced the "Tom Thumb Wedding," a pageant where children act out the marriage ceremony of the 1863 wedding of General Tom Thumb (Charles Sherwood Stratton) and Lavinia Warren.

I was six years old and played the part of the bride. Melvin Kennedy, the son of Laura Turner, was the groom. Classmates filled out the other roles. The wedding was held at the E.M.B. Church, and it was a huge success. Ethel Curry photographed the wedding cast on the school campus the following morning.

Another production Mrs. Davidson directed included a chorus line. We wore black shorts, white blouses, and shoes with taps on the toes and heels. The program also featured solo acts.

We performed one of the more memorable dance routines to the popular "A Tisket a Tasket," which had catapulted Ella Fitzgerald to stardom. My sister Eliza played the piano for us. The plays required memorization, and the poise and confidence of acting before a large audience translated into the classroom and benefited the students tremendously.

In addition to her work as a teacher and producer, Mrs. Davidson used her talent to arrange sing-a-longs at the school on Sunday afternoons. She also introduced music appreciation featuring the glee club at the E.M.B. Church.



Ruby M. Turner, who was born in Water Valley in 1928 and lived here until 1956, shares details about the strong women who helped shape her life.

Black history was not a part of the school's curriculum, and our teachers were prohibited from including it in class. However, Mrs. Davidson believed that the students should know about their heritage, and she made sure the subject was part of English class. She also took this opportunity to teach the students how to use circumvention when interacting with white people. Certain responses to questions asked by white people, she explained, had to be answered in the correct way, meaning a simple "yes" and "no" were not tolerated. The former slave way of answering "yas-suh" and "nah-suh." "yes-sum" and "no'om," she told her students, were not proper words. She instructed the class to reply "yes" with emphasis, putting a

PUBLIC NOTICES

Title to said property is believed to be good, but I will convey only such title as is vested in me as Substitute Trustee.

WITNESS MY SIGNATURE, this the 2nd day of December, 2019.

JAMES VANCE,

Substitute Trustee

Posted: 12/02/19

Published: 12/5/19, 12/12/19, 12/19/19, and 12/26/19

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE'S NOTICE OF SALE

WHEREAS, John Beshears and Tammy W. Beshears executed a Deed of Trust to Kenneth R. Hall, Trustee for State Bank & Trust Company, Beneficiary, under the date of the 22nd day of June, 2012, filed for record on the 2nd day of July, 2012, in the Chancery Clerk's office of the First Judicial District of Yalobusha, State of Mississippi, at Book 20121 and Page 1058, conveying certain property securing the payment of indebtedness all as therein described, and,

WHEREAS, on the 12th day of November, 2019, James P. Vance was appointed Substitute Trustee by virtue of that certain instrument recorded on the 12th day of November, 2019, in the Office of the Chancery Clerk of the First Judicial District of Yalobusha, State of Mississippi in Substitution of Trustee Book 20191 at Page 2545.

WHEREAS, default having been made in the performance of the conditions and stipulations as set forth by said deed of trust and having been requested to do so by State Bank & Trust Company, the legal holder of the indebtedness secured and described by said Deed of Trust, notice is hereby given that I James P. Vance, Substitute Trustee, by virtue of the authority conferred upon me in said Deed of Trust, will offer for sale and will sell at public sale and outcry to, the highest and best bidder for cash within legal hours at the Front Entrance of the Yalobusha Courthouse at Coffeeville, Mississippi, on the 2711 day of December, 2019, A.D., the following described land and property, being the same land and property described in the said Deed of Trust situated in the First Judicial District of Yalobusha, State of Mississippi, to-wit:

A part of the Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 36, Township 25 North, Range 6 East of the First Judicial District of Yalobusha County, Mississippi, containing 1.01 acres, more or less, and being more particularly described as follows: Begin at a point located 3334 feet North and 203.2 feet East from the Southwest Corner of Section 36, Township 25 North, Range 6 East and run North 7 degrees 40 minutes 00 seconds East 210.00 feet, thence South 82 degrees, 20 minutes, 00 seconds East 210.00 feet, more or less, to the West right of way of County Road 552; thence South 7 degrees, 40 minutes, 00 seconds West 210.00 feet along the road; thence North 82 degrees, 20 minutes, 00 seconds West 210.00 feet to the Point of Beginning.

Title to said property is believed to be good, but I will convey only such title as is vested in me as Substitute Trustee.

WITNESS MY SIGNATURE, this the 2nd day of December, 2019.

JAMES P. VANCE,

Substitute Trustee

Posted: 12/02/19

Published: 12/05/19, 12/12/19, 12/19/19, and 12/26/19

NOTICE TO ALL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN YALOBUASHA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Pursuant to Section 27-105-305 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, notice is hereby given that the Board of Supervisors of Yalobusha County, Mississippi, will receive sealed bids from financial institutions until 10:00 a.m. on January 6, 2020, in the office of the Chancery Clerk in Coffeeville, Mississippi, for the privilege of keeping county funds, or any part thereof, for 2020. All bids should be submitted to the Clerk of the Board at her office in Water Valley or Coffeeville, Mississippi before the aforementioned time and date.

All bids must designate the kind of security as authorized by law, which the financial institution proposes to give as security for such funds.

It is specifically stated that the Board will take into consideration the financial institution which proposes the best terms and highest interest rate on the monies to be held by said depository.

Done by Order of the Board of Supervisors, this the 2nd day of December, 2019.

Published: 12/05/19 and 12/12/19

Advertisement for Bids

Sale of 2001 and 2002 Ford F-350 Ambulances

Sealed bids will be taken for the sale of a 2001 Ford F-350 Ambulance and 2002 Ford F-350 Ambulance by Yalobusha General Hospital and Nursing Home. For more information, contact Todd Hughes @ 662-473-5925.

Bids will be received until 10:00 AM on December 16, 2019 in the office of the Administrator, Yalobusha General Hospital and Nursing Home, 630 South Main, Water Valley, MS 38965. Yalobusha General reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

Publish: November 28, December 5 & 12, 2019

Notice for Bids

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Supervisors of Yalobusha County, Mississippi will receive sealed competitive bids beginning an ending at the times set below on Monday, January 6, 2020 in the office of the Chancery Clerk located at the Yalobusha County Courthouse in the town of Coffeeville, Mississippi (14400 Main Street, Coffeeville, MS 38922) (both mailed and delivered), for the sale to said County, from February 1, 2020 to January 31, 2021, for the following materials and supplies, to-wit:

All commodities are to be delivered within a reasonable time period for each particular type of commodity. All delivery locations are to be made as requested according to purchase order. County bid sheets are specified for only certain commodities and must be used for those commodities. Request for bid sheets can be made to the Office of Purchasing, 201 Blackmur Drive, Water Valley, Ms. 38965, by phone at 662-473-2042 or by e-mail to ycpo@yalobushaounty.net.

1. All types of asphalt cement and asphalt emulsions to be delivered by truck to any point in Yalobusha County. Bid must include minimum freight (gal) and charges per gal, and return freight charges, as well as demurrage time and charges. (Reverse auction beginning at 1:00 p.m. and ending at 10 p.m.)

2. Crushed and washed gravel Meeting State Aid Specs. County bid sheet required. (Reverse auction beginning at 1:10 p.m. and ending at 1:20 p.m.).

3. Hot mix and cold mix asphalt. Specify size material used in mix (Reverse auction beginning at 1:20 p.m. and ending at 1:30 p.m.).

a. State aid specifications for surface mix

4. Limestone seal aggregate, cover aggregate and rip rap (per ton) hauled. (reverse auction beginning at 1:30 p.m. and ending at 1:40 p.m.).

a. Limestone seal and cover aggregates and rip rap to be hauled by county trucks, price per ton from quarry

All bidders must certify, by signature on business letterhead, that their bid meets requirements in full (or state variance). Any price adjustment clauses must be stated and the formula used for adjustment shown in bid.

Please provide contact information for ordering including address, phone and fax, and email.

The board reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to further consider said bids on an item by item basis.

Alternate bids will be accepted for situations where the low bidder is unable or unwilling to supply the materials or supplies ordered within the time specified.

Published by Order of the Board of Supervisors, this the 2nd day of December 2019.

/s/ Amy F. McMinn

Clerk of the Board

Publish Dec. 12 and 19

NOTICE FOR BIDS

Notice is hereby given by the Board of Supervisors of Yalobusha County, Mississippi that Yalobusha County shall receive sealed competitive bids for the lease of certain real property owned by Yalobusha County located at Ajinomoto-Windsor Foods Plant near Oakland, Mississippi until 10:00 a.m. on January 6, 2020, in the office of the Chancery Clerk at the Yalobusha County Courthouse in Coffeeville, Mississippi.

The term of the lease shall be for three (3) years commencing on the acceptance of the bid. The purpose of the lease shall be for growing of hay. Other terms of the lease are on file in the Chancery Clerk's office at Water Valley, Mississippi.

This the 2nd day of December, 2019.

/s/ Amy F. McMinn

AMY F. McMILLIN, CHANCERY CLERK

and CLERK of The BOARD

Publish Dec. 12, Dec. 19, and Dec. 26, 2019