

Outstanding Black Women of Yalobusha County: The Project Continues Dorothy A. Kee - Born To Teach

For such a time as this, the New York Times ran a special section in February entitled "Overlooked" - revisiting 168 years of Times history to provide obituaries for black men and women who never got them. Hard to imagine no obituary for Scott Joplin, the king of ragtime, or Granville T. Woods, an inventor who helped revolutionize modern transportation. They also have a column/newsletter called Race Related, where they are asking folks to share when they first experienced racism.

More recently a friend shared a Times article about 14-year-old Emmett Till and the store in Money, Miss. where he was accused of whistling at a white woman behind the counter in August 1955. The store and the surrounding property, privately owned, are slowly deteriorating, and the family refuses to sell or allow others to preserve the parcel for historical purposes. Money, Miss. - I always thought that name was ironic for a town with barely a 100 people. It is in Leflore County, where a song says Billy Joe McAlister jumped off the Tallahatchie bridge. Years later I remember hearing Bobby Gentry's song while in the family cotton field and thinking no song for poor little Emmett Till and being afraid.

Then I vowed I would never go to Money or to Tallahatchie County. Even when I recruited for the University of Mississippi I never went there. Only 45 miles separates Money from Coffeerville in Yalobusha County. Dorothy Ann Smith Kee hails from Coffeerville - the second largest town in the tri-cities along with Water Valley and Oakland. Her impactful teaching career is a direct outgrowth not only of her parents' significant influence but also their special place in the community.

Clemmie Smith, Dorothy's dad, was dark skinned, and her mother, Clara, could have passed for white, and for that reason alone, the Smith family was often ridiculed and ostracized by whites and even some blacks. When Dorothy, the eldest of seven, and her sisters went shopping with their mom, she recalled, they teased her that they were her maids because she was sometimes mistaken as white.

Clemmie spoke out often against racism and injustice in the late 1960s as a leader of Coffeerville NAACP volunteers. He was well respected by the black community overall, and Dorothy said, many whites viewed him as a threat because he was a civil rights activist. So much so, she recalled that one time an armed ex-con showed up at a march for school integration in Coffeerville, and attempted to break up the march and harm her dad. Fortunately, he failed. She and her family attended church with the family of the ex-con, who had been deputized and ordered to kill her father, Jimmy Matthews and J.T. Miller.

Though the Smiths were fiercely independent landowners, if they failed to sell enough produce in the fall, they had to borrow money to plant new crops and feed the livestock in the winter. Year after year they managed to prevail and hold on to their land, which was not the case for many other black farmers. Clemmie's



staples such as cotton, soybeans and corn along with truck crops, including watermelons, peanuts and cantaloupes. They picked blackberries and dewberries for extra money, and to save what they earned, Clara made clothes for their seven children. She was both a savvy homemaker and great support to her husband.

Both parents, born in Yalobusha County, completed eighth grade and never had to work for anyone else. Clemmie took classes offered for veterans after being discharged from the army. He received a diploma from the Mississippi Baptist Seminary in Jackson. Though Clara always stayed home to help her family, her sister went away to complete 12th grade because the black school only went to eighth grade. But Clara did not like to be idle, so she repeated eighth grade classes over and over until her late teens even though she had graduated. She didn't look older than her classmates and never minded that she was. Learning new things was the most important thing, a passion that lasted Clara's life time. She was an avid reader, seamstress, crafter, cook, natural remedy researcher, fashionista and game show fan who kept with modern trends until her death in 2013. Clara was also an active member of the Yalobusha County Homemakers Extension, getting her first public job as a traveling nutrition aid at nearly 50 years old.

The Smiths owned 100 plus acres of land and were as self-sustaining as much as a black family could be during the 40's and 50's in north Mississippi. These facts alone caused animosity and hostility toward the couple. The family worked every day just to live, raising animals and growing

granddaughter, Syreeta, remembers how hard her grandfather worked to overcome racial barriers - often manifested in the denial of loans or grants to black farmers.

According to Dorothy, her parents insisted that she and her six siblings adhere to certain standards. They stressed the importance of education and doing well

Dorothy Kee's (left) impactful teaching career is a direct outgrowth not only of her parents' significant influence but also their special place in the community. Kee was the first of seven children born to Clara Moody Smith (bottom, left) and Clemmie G. Smith (bottom right) in Coffeerville. According to Dorothy, her parents insisted that she and her six siblings adhere to certain standards. They stressed the importance of education and doing well in school.



By Dottie Chapman Reed

Reed is a native of Water Valley and graduated from Davidson High School in 1970. She has launched 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

went home and started teaching her siblings. She attended the all-black Central High School and graduated as valedictorian. Her english, science and history teachers solidified her decision to pursue a teaching career.

Dorothy earned a bachelor of science degree in social science with an emphasis in history from Alcorn State University. She chose Alcorn, she said, because a cousin had gone there, and she did not apply anywhere else. Five of her siblings also graduated from Alcorn. The youngest of the seven Smith siblings graduated from Mississippi State University. Dorothy also completed masters' degrees in education and social work from Mississippi State.

She began teaching at 21, just as mandatory integration was taking place in Mississippi. The impending change initially did not faze her, she said. She had learned to accept things as they were and did not "anticipate any animosity from my fellow white associates."

However, she would soon face a new reality. She was married now and expecting her first child. She was out on leave the first few months of 1970, as integration was starting. When she was ready to return to work, school officials told her they were in no hurry for her to come back. She accepted the news at first, but after a couple more

trips to see school personnel and then no follow-up, she and her father believed her job was imperiled because of his political activism.

Dorothy and her dad sought counsel with an NAACP attorney, and by February 1971 she returned to teaching, undeterred by the new era of integration. However, she did not return to her previous position but rather was sent to Oakland. Dorothy and her family at first considered this punishment, but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The principals she worked under, Buford Sellers and Clinton Jenkins, the faculty, staff and students were some of the best people, in her view, she encountered. She stayed in Oakland for five years before returning to Coffeerville.

By coincidence, six Coffeerville teachers - including my late sister Alma Faye Chapman - lost their jobs in the town as two school systems merged. They sued to get their positions back, claiming the school authorities acted improperly in the way they made teacher selections. In October 1973 four of the teachers - including my sister - were ordered reinstated with back pay. (For details on this case see: <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/365/990/1414480>) Dorothy taught 7 - 12th grade social studies, his- Continued On Page 13

PUBLIC NOTICES

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF THE SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF YALOBUSHA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

ESTATE OF CHARLES LYNN POTTS, SR., DECEASED NO: 19-CV-21
CHARLES LYNN POTTS, JR., EXECUTOR

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Letters Testamentary having been granted on the 18th day of March, 2019, by the Chancery Court of the Second Judicial District of Yalobusha County, Mississippi to the undersigned Executor of the Estate of Charles Lynn Potts, Sr., deceased, notice is hereby given to all persons having claims against said estate to present the same to the Clerk of this Court for probate and registration according to law, within ninety (90) days from the first publication of this notice, or they will be forever barred.

THIS THE 22nd day of March, 2019.

/s/ Charles Lynn Potts, Jr.
CHARLES LYNN POTTS, JR.
Executor of the Estate of
Charles Lynn Potts, Sr., Deceased

AMY F. MCMINN
Chancery Clerk

TRENT L. HOWELL, PLLC
P. O. Box 947
109 N. Court Street
Water Valley, MS 38965
(662) 473-3307
Miss. Bar No. 2751

PUBLISH: March 28, April 4 & 11, 2019

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Yalobusha County Board of Supervisors
Owner
P.O. Box 664, Water Valley, MS 38965
Address

sealed BIDS for **EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION (NRCS AWARD IDENTIFYING NO. NR194423XXXXC012) CR 114, CR 121, AND CR 227** will be received by the Yalobusha County Board of Supervisors in the office of the Chancery Clerk, at Yalobusha County Courthouse, in Water Valley, MS until **APRIL 29, 2019 @ 10:00AM**, and then at said office publicly opened and read aloud.

The CONTRACT DOCUMENTS, consisting of the Advertisement for Bids, Information for Bidders, Bid, Bid Bond, Agreement, Payment Bonds, Performance Bond, Notice of Award, Notice to Proceed, Change Order, General Conditions, Supplemental General Conditions, Drawings, Specifications and Addenda may be examined at the following locations.

- (1) Willis Engineering, Inc. 133 South Mound St., Grenada, MS, 38901
- (2) Plan House Printing Tupelo, 605 West Main Street, Tupelo, MS 38804
- (3) Plan House Printing Hattisburg, 1A Churchill Street, Hattisburg, MS 39402
- (4) Plan House Printing Gulfport, 14231 Seaway Road, Ste E-7, Gulfport, MS 39503

Bid documents are being made available via paper or digital copy. Plan holders are required to log-in or register for an account at www.weiplanroom.com to view and order Bid Documents. All plan holders are required to have a valid email address for registration. Bid documents are \$100.00 non-refundable and must be purchased through the website. Questions regarding website registration and online orders please contact Plan House Printing at (662) 407-0193. Electronic bids may be submitted at www.weiplanroom.com. For any questions to the electronic bidding process contact Plan House Printing at (662) 407-0193.

Cayce Washington
President

ADVERTISE: March 28, 2019 & April 4, 2019

SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE'S NOTICE OF SALE

WHEREAS, on July 1, 2015, Donald S. Dingler and wife, Priscilla M. Dingler, executed a Deed of Trust to TRENT HOWELL, PLLC, as trustee for the use and benefit of MECHANICS BANK, beneficiary, which Deed of Trust is recorded in Deed of Trust Book 20152 at pages 2426-2437 in the office of the Chancery Clerk of the Second Judicial District of Yalobusha County, at Water Valley, Mississippi; and,

WHEREAS, by deed dated June 15, 2017 and recorded in Deed Book 20172 at pages 934-936, Donald S. Dingler and Priscilla M. Dingler conveyed the property that is described in the aforementioned Deed of Trust, which is also described in this Notice, to William Chinault, Jr.; and,

WHEREAS, said Deed of Trust authorized the appointment and substitution of another trustee in the place of the trustee named in said Deed of Trust and MECHANICS BANK, pursuant to said Deed of Trust, substituted Trent L. Howell as trustee in the place of TRENT HOWELL, PLLC by written instrument dated February 21, 2019, and duly recorded in Book 20192 at page 649-650, in the office of the Chancery Clerk of the Second Judicial District of Yalobusha County, at Water Valley, Mississippi; and,

WHEREAS, default having been made in the performance of the conditions and stipulations set out in the Deed of Trust and the said substitute trustee having been requested and directed by said MECHANICS BANK to execute the trust; and in strict accordance with the Deed of Trust aforesaid and the laws of the State of Mississippi, the dates for publication of this Substitute Trustee's Notice of Sale in the North Mississippi Herald, a newspaper published in the City of Water Valley, Yalobusha County, Mississippi, having been set at the following, to wit: the 7th day of March, 2019; the 14th day of March, 2019; the 21st day of March, 2019; and the 28th day of March, 2019; I will on Friday, the 29th day of March, 2019, during legal hours, being between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., before the main entrance on the south side of the courthouse for the Second Judicial District of Yalobusha County, in Water Valley, Mississippi, offer for sale, at public auction and sell to the highest and best bidder for cash, the following described real property situated in the Second Judicial District of Yalobusha County, Mississippi, to-wit:

A fraction of Section 15, Township 11 South, Range 4 West, Yalobusha County, Mississippi. This fraction contains 19.761 acres, more or less, and is described in more detail as follows:

Beginning at a point on the South line of Mississippi Highway No. 32 at the intersection of said right of way and the center of a creek, said point being located 2502.09 feet North of and 1334.30 feet East of the accepted Southwest corner of said Section 15, run thence along said right of way as follows: run S 72° 31' 02" E for a distance of 46.92 feet to a 1/2" iron pin set; run thence S 16° 53' 54" W for a distance of 20.00 feet to a 1/2" iron pin set at the PC of a 340.00 foot radius curve to the right; run thence along said curve for a distance of 467.33 feet said curve having a chord bearing of S 35° 05' 10" E and a chord distance of 431.40 feet to a 1/2" iron pin set; run thence N 84° 05' 08" E for a distance of 20.00 feet to a 1/2" iron pin set; run thence S 00° 08' 08" W for a distance of 402.81 feet to a point at the PC of a 1040.00 foot radius curve to the left; run thence along said curve for a distance of 283.78 feet said curve having a chord bearing of S 07° 40' 53" E and a chord distance of 282.90 feet to a point; run thence S 15° 29' 54" E for a distance of 1502.53 feet to a 1/2" iron pin set; run thence N 89° 59' 59" W leaving said right of way for a distance of 545.28 feet to a point at the center of an existing creek; run thence generally along said creek as follows: run N 02° 28' 35" W for a distance of 237.30 feet to a point; run thence N 12° 32' 31" W for a distance of 116.96 feet to a point; run thence N 00° 18' 33" E for a distance of 51.72 feet to a point; run thence N 10° 37' 11" E for a distance of 81.39 feet to a point; run thence N 63° 52' 24" W for a distance of 86.82 feet to a point; run thence N 04° 18' 33" W for a distance of 236.09 feet to a point; run thence N 12° 23' 33" W for a distance of 180.53 feet to a point; run thence N 11° 24' 42" W for a distance of 273.81 feet to a point; run thence N 01° 57' 08" E for a distance of 187.42 feet to a point; run thence N 03° 14' 23" W for a distance of 366.19 feet to a point; run thence N 03° 13' 51" W for a distance of 334.19 feet to a point; run thence N 02° 10' 59" W for a distance of 191.69 feet to a point; run thence N 06° 45' 19" W for a distance of 237.43 feet to the point of beginning.

LESS AND EXCEPT:

Approximately 3.31 acres that was conveyed to the Mississippi Transportation Commission by deed dated April 10, 2008 and recorded in Book 20082 at page 558 in the office of the Chancery Clerk of Yalobusha County, in Water Valley, Mississippi and to which referenced is made in aid of the description to this excepted parcel.

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 26th day of February, 2019.
/s/ Trent L. Howell
TRENT L. HOWELL
Substitute Trustee

TRENT L. HOWELL
P. O. BOX 947, WATER VALLEY, MS 38965 (662) 473-3307
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