

# Readers Weigh In On Project Featuring Black Women Of Yalobusha County

As we say so long to an almost indescribable year, I had no idea that this project would be born and survive for six months, birthing 11 articles featuring ordinary yet outstanding black women of Yalobusha County. Moving into 2019, a university has offered to support this project, and I will share about the partnership as it evolves. The goal is to archive, document, and discover more wonderful history about women who continue to positively impact our lives and community.

Thanks to all the contributors, subscribers and readers. I appreciate your recommendations and continued support, which has been so gratifying. Article five featured comments and further insights about the lives of outstanding women such as, Mrs. Sallie Ann Polk, Mrs. Emma Gooch and Mrs. Juanita Cox. While the editors and staff have captured some of the positive local comments, I am sharing here more of those that I have received from across the country.

## Comments on Article # 1:

Hello Mrs. Dottie, I hope this message finds you smiling because after reading today's newspaper, it brought a few tears and a big smile reading about my favorite uncle George. These are the words I heard from you at the homegoing service. Oh, how I miss Uncle George and I just want to say thanks for writing this.

V. Adams, Oakland, MS

Hi! Another news breaking and informative article. Thank you for answering the call to bring forth history and heritage that has gone untold.

Thomas B. – Stone Mountain, GA

I love what you are doing? Now this is history! I live in Oakland MS and I get the paper delivered every week. I told my mama and sisters about what you are doing, and some people only buy the newspaper when it's something happening or big going on. My husband reads it constantly. I see your work every week. We are loving what you do.

V. Adams, Oakland, MS

## Comments about the Tribute to Veterans # 7:

Very nice touch, Vietnam... couple of thoughts: Your mother like thousands of black mothers agonized over their sons being there. Proportionately black mothers worried in greater numbers because their sons were on the front lines in greater numbers proportionately. Meanwhile: back in the states black mothers - most mothers - were torn between supporting their sons and not supporting a war they disagree with...

Just some first blush impressions... I really love the column...I'm infatuated with all things Vietnam.

Good work....,

James H., Tupelo, MS



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

I remember Mrs. Annie Givens, she was the Dean of the (Baptist) Association and a good friend of Cousin Elgenia Hervey, whose son stayed around Mrs. Givens all the time; Roy Hervey, who has passed away. Mt. Moriah Association is our District. I had one of the Christian Education cards that she signed as a Dean somewhere, I had not finished High School.

A. Westmoreland, Buckeye, AZ

## Comments about the Overall Project

I absolutely LOVE your project! Reading about the strong, "pioneering" Black Women of Yalobusha County is so inspiring. And you, you are quite a writer. This has to become a book Dottie. I enjoyed the reading, the education, and then, the "unspoken" questions that creep through...like, Emma Faye's piece about ....'What ever happened to the Gooch's land that was so-called 'leased' to the County? Huh?' Ain't somebody due for some restitution, or compensation, or something?' ... Keep on writing.

..... recognizing these articles for the historic jewels that they are. Not only to honor the strong, courageous Women, but the brief stories of their lives give insight into some telling timelines of history in Yalobusha County that may otherwise never be given. This project is remarkable. I've always wanted to do something similar, across genders, in my home of Tunica County. So, as you publish more, let me know. I love reading them.

It appears the university has recognized these articles for the historic jewels that they are.

Ken Weeden, Ole Miss '73

I'm so happy you decided to write these articles about these amazing women. What can I say but Wow! Excellent! History at its finest. I feel inspired and empowered. These remarkable women's stories do deserve to be told. In addition, acknowledged for their strength and courage. Thank you for sharing Gabby and Ronnie with us. So many served in Vietnam and never made it back home. I'm so proud of you and please send me Article 10.

Warm regards,

Phyllis P, South Fulton, GA

Dottie,

Thank you for your articles on the Outstanding Black Women of Yalobusha County. I enjoyed reading them. The women mentioned in your articles had strong faith, courage, determination and the will to succeed. I salute and applaud you for the hard work you have done to share their stories. I look forward to reading your upcoming articles.

Eddie G. Sanders

Hey Dottie, I have sincerely enjoyed all the articles, especially the one about the first black person to register to vote in Water Valley, Mrs. Lillian Roberts. I had heard about her from her cousin, James Wilson, another Water Valley native. When he told me about her being featured in a book, I ordered it right away. And then Annette Hervey, Dorothy Boston and Dorothy Neely were brave indeed to be the first to do something so special as integrating Water Valley High School in their senior year when they could have just stayed put. They broke the ice and made it easier for those who came behind them. I enjoyed the article about Mrs. Rosa Wright, having known her sons quite well. Lastly, your brother Floyd was my Davidson classmate, Class of 66, so it was nice to hear, in his own words, about his Vietnam experience and to appreciate his courage and bravery.

Fred (Pee Wee) Harris, Seattle WA

Happy Thanksgiving to you and the family. Your articles are talked about all over the Valley. Keep up the good work.

E. Gooch, Water Valley

Dear Ms. Reed,

I have been reading your recent contributions to the North Mississippi Herald with great interest, both as a new Vallian (I moved to WV five years ago) and as a historian. While the paper does discuss history through old headlines, none of it feels as alive as the profiles you present. More generally, I fully agree with your assessment that the people you discuss deserve a lot more public attention than they have received up to now.

Nicolas T., Water Valley

In closing, I have included a picture of my grandmother, Jane Ophelia Williams (Taliaferro Pritchard) in the white bonnet on the second row, standing on the steps of the Water Valley courthouse. I hope that someone can identify the other women or the occasion that appears to have been some type of giveaway seeing that they are holding bags in their hands. Please keep your comments, recommendations and stories coming.

With Great Expectations, Happy 2019 to ALL!



Do you recognize any of these ladies? Dottie Reed's grandmother, Jane Ophelia Williams (second row with the white bonnet) and the others in the picture are shown on the courthouse steps in Water Valley.

## Comments about the Sallie Polk Article:

This is awesome. There are so many untold stories that need to be documented. Looking forward to more of your discoveries.

Pam S., Tucker, GA

## Comments following Article # 5:

Thank you for your great work and sharing this marvelous enterprise with me. I am yet pursuing information on Annie K. Montgomery. In addition to Mrs. Montgomery, there are several other women I hope to share with you. Keep up the good work. You make us all proud and grateful.

Your brother in the continuing cause of freedom and destiny of people of color!

Thomas B, Stone Mountain, GA

I love your articles. This is so amazing, and I am working on something right now. I would love to write about how my grandma, Cleala Mae Adams, impacted my life. She was so precious to us. I wish she was still here with us. She taught me to follow my dreams and with me being a hair dresser she would often tell me, "Don't you mess these people heads up because they will have my name all over town". There were so many special things she told me, and they stick with me every day of my life. Another beautiful memory of my grandma is when she would tell us, "The Early Bird gets the worm." I didn't really know what that meant at the time. Thank you for everything you said about my uncle George, if he was here I know he would drive all the way to Mississippi to get a paper. He had a good impact on everyone. I miss my dad, Lester, a lot and I can't leave him out as he made me who I am today. Again, thanks for all you are doing! You are a blessing.

V. Adams, Oakland MS

## Comments about Lillie Roberts # 6:

After re-reading my comments below I just wanted to say that I also love the positive strength, and actions and accomplishments covered in your article!

Once again, a fantastic and real life informative story of the prejudice and struggles which still exist today! I grew up in NJ for 27 years before being transferred to Florida by DJ in the early 70's to cover Florida, Georgia and Alabama. I really was stupefied to see the signs and ways prejudice still existed in the Deep South. Just another great article!

Jim B., Deltona, FL

## Comments about the Rosa Wright Story # 8:

I got so caught up in Thanksgiving preparations and having lots of family visiting, that I've just had a chance to enjoy your latest article. I think it's extremely inspirational to focus on the strong women who have pushed our society forward and made the world a better place. I think it focuses people on what is most important in life—not just chasing wealth and fame for yourself.

I thought of this story as I voted today in the early voting session in the runoff for the Secretary of State. There were strong women—black and white—serving as volunteers at the polls, making sure things are done right. There are still good, strong women making the world work.

Maryann M., Atlanta

Thanks for the article on Ms. Rosa. I always made it a point to visit her when I went to Water Valley. Leon and William are two of my best friends still. Leon was in my wedding when I got married in Jackson. Keep up the awesome work you are doing!

You bring back memories and knowledge.

Happy Thanksgiving

Eddie G. Sanders, Davidson High School

Graduate 1968 - Southfield Michigan

## Comments about the Herveys and Integration of WVHS # 9

Thanks for your article on Annette, Dorothy and Dorothy. I know it took a lot of courage and faith for them to make the decision to be the first to integrate Water Valley High School. Later, two of my classmates at Davidson High School, Martha Hoskins and Carolyn Cook transferred to Water Valley High. Racial tensions were high in the 60s and early 70s. I was a student at Jackson State University when on May 15, 1970 the Mississippi State Police and Jackson City police killed two students on Jackson State University.

Eddie G. Sanders

Annette, thanks for sharing! The article was well written. I would love to have a copy of the paper.....Love it! Again, special thanks to you all.

Dorothy Middleton, Dorothy N (Neely) Middleton Realty

## Comments about the Annie Givens – Joann Bratton Article # 10

Outstanding job of capturing a valuable part of the country's history for future generations, of all races and gender, to both learn and build from.

Mitch P., Louisville, KY

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