

JACKSON Y. W. C. A.
and
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT of ARCHIVES and HISTORY
and
JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
THE FARISH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

RESIDENT IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

O. H. 81.59

IDELLA FOOTE

Interviewed
by

Ernest Lockett

on

September 23, 1981

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 used for purposes of research, for instructional use, for publication, or for other related purposes.

I, _____ 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 known, recognized, or contemplated, to Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi.

Mrs Idella Fote
Interviewee (Signature)

12-8-82
Date

June 30, 1905
Date of Birth

O.H. 81.59
Oral History Number Assigned

*sorry I dont no this
oral.H. Number at present*

Introduction

Mrs. Idella Foote was born June 30, 1905 in Raymond, Mississippi. She finished high school in Raymond, Mississippi. Mrs. Foote moved to the Historic Farish Street District in 1931.

Mrs. Foote discussed various places she has lived in the Farish Street Historic District since 1931. She talks about her children and their education. She discusses her church affiliations.

Mrs. Foote recalls the occasions she went to Farish Street. She also discusses some of the changes that have taken place in the District since she move there in 1931.

INTERVIEWEE: Idella Foote
INTERVIEWER: Ernest Lockett
DATE OF INTERVIEW: September 23, 1981
Transcriber: Terry McDonald
O. V. 81.59

Lockett: This is an interview with Idella Foote for Jackson State University Oral History study of the Farish Street Historic District by Ernest Lockett. This interview was in the home of Mrs. Foote, 318 East Church Street on September 28, 1981.

I am happy that you gave me the opportunity to have this interview with you. This interview will be vital in the formation of the history of this famous District. You may feel free to talk at will and relate events that happened in your own way. So, relax and tell me all you know about the events in this District starting with the time you came here.

Foote: I came to Jackson, Mississippi in 1930 to Hamilton Street. I moved from Hamilton Street in 1931 to Monument Court. I moved from Monument Court to Whitfield Street. From Whitfield Street, I moved to George Street. I lived on George Street for nine years, I later moved to 318 East Church Street. I lived there for about twenty-four or twenty-five years. When I first moved here it was a very nice-happy place to live. People were very nice. Quite a few of the people who lived around here have passed away.

Mrs. Ollie Bass and I moved from George Street at the same time and we have been here every since. Things are much different now than they use to be. Things are very nice at times, but at times they are not. When the older ones passed away, it left just the younger ones along in here. There is a big difference when there are younger people living in the settlement. Dr. Williams was here when I came. Dr. Williams use to be my doctor.

My children, Ethel Lee Foote, and Elihue Foote, attended Smith Robertson School. Their teacher was Professor Woods. I think he was the last Principal at that school under the leadership of R. McLaurin. I think he was the Professor when my children were going to school. My son went to Smith Robertson and Lanier High School. He won a scholarship from Lanier High School. He could

have gone to any college that he wanted to, but he didn't go to any college. Later on he got married and lived at 1344 Alamo Street. They later moved to Chicago, Illinois and have been there every since.

My husband worked for a number of years at the Heildelberg Hotel and Edward's Hotel. He was the butcher there for a number of years. First he worked at the Heildelberg and later left and went to the Edward's Hotel. That is where he has worked every since.

He didn't finish school?

No. He didn't finish high school, but my son did.

After your son and daughter finished school, did they do any kind of work?

My daughter worked at Moore's Cafe. My son worked for Western Union.

Tell me something about your schooling.

I went to school at Thigpen.

Where is that?

Raymond, Mississippi. That was the last school I went to. I use to go to school at Cottondale, Mississippi. We moved from the Delta and the last school I went to was Thighpen School in Raymond, Mississippi, under the teacher, Mrs. Cora Marshall.

How high did you go in school?

Twelfth grade.

Will you tell us something about your religious affiliation with the churches here in Jackson.

I am a member of the present housing of True Light Church, 224 East Bell Street. I worked for twenty-two years as President of the Usher Department of the Jackson Usher Department Society. I am the helper of the second location for our church. I was the president for a number of years for the Usher Department at True Light Church. The churches I have worked with and visited a number of churches, I can't name them all because it is just about all of them.

Just name a few?

Foote: Morning Star, New Hope, Spring Hillis, Mt. Nebo, Truevine, St. Peter, Mt. Zion, St. James, Johnson Chapel, and Shady Grove. I can't name them all.

Luckett: Have you visited any churches in this neighborhood?

Foote: Christ Temple, Mt. Helm, Farish Street, and the Central Methodist Church.

Luckett: It sounds like you have had a very religious life and that you have been very active in the religious field.

Foote: I am still an usher at True Light.

Luckett: Did you ever go into the Farish Street area for anything? If so, tell us why you were there.

Foote: I went to Farish Street to go to the drug store and for shopping. I went there for lunch at the Home Dining Room and Shepherd's Cafe. On occasion I went there to the Crystal Palace, that was a long time ago. That is about the only time I went on Farish Street. I would sometime go to the show.

Luckett: What show is that?

Foote: The Alamo Theatre.

Luckett: You spoke about the Crystal Palace, what was this Crystal like?

Foote: The Crystal Palace was very nice. When I was going, I would be going to the Chauffeur's Dance. They use to have a Chauffeur's Club, all chauffeurs. It was the men who would chauffeur the white folks around. They would call it the Chauffeur's Dance.

Luckett: The chauffeurs that use to drive the limousine, like priveles home?

Foote: Right, priveles homes.

Luckett: They use to have parties?

Foote: Yes. I would be invited to the Crystal Palace and I would go.

Luckett: I bet you enjoyed yourself.

Foote: Every Thursday.

Luckett: Have you ever been down here at night?

Footo: I worked as a maid for Mrs. Corley Dodd. I worked for her a number of years. I also worked for the Deposit Guaranty Bank for nineteen years.

Luckett: What were you doing?

Footo: I was the maid at Deposit Guaranty Bank.

Luckett: Did you work at any other places?

Footo: I worked for Mrs. R. F. Avery for a number of years. Before I worked for Mrs. Avery, I worked for Mr. Robert Miller for six years. He lived at 1723 Buena Vista off Robinson Street. When I left him, I worked for Mrs. R. F. Avery at 183 Road of Remembrance. I have been working for her around twenty-eight or twenty-nine years.

Luckett: In talking about your field of employment, you spoke about one job that you have worked for about twenty some years.

Footo: Yes, I worked at the bank for nineteen years.

Luckett: This is the plaque you received?

Footo: Yes.

Luckett: From the Senior Usher?

Footo: No, I received that from the usher department.

Luckett: This is from the usher department?

Footo: I was leader there. I wasn't certain of how many years that I was the leader, so they guessed at it. I was the leader there for about twenty-two years.

Luckett: Will you read the plaque?

Footo: To Mrs. Idella Foote for twenty years of faithful service as president of JMB Missison Baptist District Usher Department of Jackson, Mississippi. *missionary*

Luckett: That is very nice. It shows that you were a good leader.

Footo: I have another one.

Luckett: Read the inscription on that.

Footte: The usher department gave me this. I worked my way up to become the secretary. It says: Mrs. Idella Foote, August 25, 1974 from the Jr. Greater M. B. District. I also attended the state conference. I never will forget that. I have about five or six certificates from the Jackson District State Conference that I attended.

Luckett: I can tell you have had a good life.

Foote: Yes.

Luckett: Will you tell us more about yourself and your activities in the area?

Foote: I am willing and I am always ready. If somebody was sick or somebody needed help, I was always willing to give a helping hand. If you are sick and I can help you, I'll cook your food and bring it to you. I'll come to your house and feed you, I'll do anything I can to help. If you accept it, I will do it.

Luckett: Have you ever belonged to any kind of club or organization?

Foote: I belong to the Secret Pal Club.

Luckett: Tell us about the club.

Foote: The Secret Pal Club is not only just for one church, it is for anybody that wants to join. Anyone can come in with us if they belong to a church. May I say this? I am a person who likes to do things, whatever it is. I like to give a helping hand to other people whenever I can. I like to live and let live.

Luckett: Mrs. Foote, is there anything else that you would like to tell us?

Foote: I don't think so.

Luckett: I would like you to tell us something about your parents.

Foote: My mother was named Rose Allen. She married John Allen. She lived to be fifty-two years old. She died at an early age. She was living with me on George Street until she passed away. She was born in Raymond, Mississippi. She lived there until she moved here with me in Jackson.

Luckett: Will you tell us about your father.

Foote: My father didn't live here. My father hadn't seen me

Footte: since I was a baby. When he saw me, he didn't know who I was. He was looking for Idella to come visit and when I did go, he didn't know me.

Luckett: You went to visit him?

Footte: I went to see him and he didn't know me.

Luckett: How did he recognize you?

Footte: My sister-in-law, Estella was living there. She told us to go to the mirror and see who you will favor. So, he said to me, "My daughter." I asked him what was his daughter's name. He said, "I haven't seen my daughter since she was a baby. Her name is Idella." I told him that my name was Idella. All I could do was get out from under him to keep him from hurting me.

Luckett: I bet that was a happy day.

Footte: Yes. Estella knew that I was his daughter, but she wouldn't tell either one of us who the other one was. She told us to get up to the mirror and see if we favored each other. Instead of him doing that, he said that he was looking for his daughter. I promise you that I had to get away because he was just going to beat me to death with joy.

Luckett: I know he was. You have given me a good run down. Is there anything that you would like to talk about? Do you know of any incident that happen in this area that you would like to tell us about since you have been living there?

Footte: No.

Luckett: I must say I have enjoyed talking with you. It has given me some enlightenment in some of the things I did not know about. We are glad to know something about this area and something about you.