

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Lola Stallworth

COLLECTION: 4700.1027

IDENTIFICATION: Retired teacher; retired member of the St. Helena Parish School Board; activist in civil rights in Greensburg, Louisiana

INTERVIEWER: Greta de Jong

PROJECT: Civil Rights

INTERVIEW DATES: June 24, 1998

FOCUS DATES: 1940s- 1960s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1514, Side A

Introduction; born on January 27, 1918, in Many, Louisiana; mother Lillie Mae Sibley and father Frank Dee; father killed by a white man because he wouldn't quit his "white man's job;" went to live with grandparents in Fisher, Louisiana; moved back with her mother at five or six years old; has two sisters and one brother; mother learned to do insurance work for Unity Life Insurance Company after husband died; mother started washing and ironing for white people when Lola moved back; white employers treated her mother well; passed a state teachers' examination and a state academic examination after high school and received a teaching certificate; started teaching at the age of 16; placed in an elementary vocational agriculture school; woman from New York offered to pay for Stallworth's summer school to extend her teaching certificate; attended Southern University the first summer; attended Grambling State University the second summer on same offer; received a scholarship from the Anna T. Jeanes Fund; graduated from Grambling in 1947; received a full scholarship to attend graduate school at Tuskegee Institute; teaching high school in Ville Platte, Louisiana when asked by the Tuskegee Institute to go to Greensburg in August 1947 as a supervisor; retired in Greensburg in 1980 from the St. Helena Parish School Board; currently works for the Council on Aging in Greensburg for minimum wage; receives a retirement pension because the teacher retirement system was instituted in 1936; remembers advice from mother and grandmother; father was a strong believer in what he felt was right; obstacles in setting up Head Start program in Greensburg; advice from Thurgood Marshall about integrating the Head Start program; description of CORE people; Klan incident while registering to vote in the sixties; took a long time to get black people registered to vote because they couldn't hold public meetings.

Tape 1514, Side B

Announcement for Head Start and Council on Aging came through the welfare office and they were never told about it; one high school for blacks and three for whites in St. Helena Parish; blacks went to school in churches until World War Two; believes the black people still have a long way to go in civil rights and they sometimes get too wrapped up in money and forget about

what they're really fighting for; when she first moved to St. Helena Parish, a black teacher could not go to the bank and borrow money unless she signed her check to the bank; applied to set up a credit union and Louisiana turned her down; tried federal and accepted to start up the credit union in the early sixties; married in 1937 to an orderly at Baton Rouge General Hospital; husband graduated from Southern University; went back to get his teaching certificate in math and then went to USC to become a counselor; they had three foster daughters and one adopted son, Harold; married fifty-four years; memory of Klan incident at her church; story of black man shooting Klan leader; believes blacks are not fighting hard enough presently and will lose everything; incidents of "buying the black vote;" CORE members would sit outside the head start office as protection; explanation of the tenure law; believes that there were teachers who were "paying for their jobs" because they were afraid; never fired but when they equalized salaries, they didn't equalize her salary; story of white teacher kicking black student; Regina Chile Board took over the St. Helena Head Start and provided the program a building and trained staff; currently the Head Start program has thirty-seven children in the summer program; nothing she has started has failed yet; they have their own water works system in Greensburg called Crossroads Waterworks; credit union and Head Start continue to operate.

TAPES: 1 (T1514)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 30 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 42

OTHER MATERIALS: None

RESTRICTIONS: None