

StoryCorps Interview at the Delta Blues Museum

Charles Reid and Yvonne Stanford

CR: Yvonne, I kind of remember the beginning of the museum back in 1975 when Sid Graves first came to Clarksdale from Tunica County with the idea of forming a museum. He thought that with the history of the blues here that we should have a museum and he began working on that idea. And even back when Sid was trying to get it really going, he had problems really getting it going. But I think the turning point was in 1988, when ZZ Top and their band came to Clarksdale as their fundraiser. Here's a white group coming to support the blues, and that's when it began to become really become accepted—this was 1988—and it began to be known not only nationally, but internationally at that time. So it began to really blossom.

YS: One thing that happened to me in Paris, one of my tour guides, he was talking to us and he wanted to know where we were from. I said, "I'm from Mississippi." He said, "Well, What part?" I said, "I'm from Clarksdale." He goes, "Ohhh, Muddy Waters!" You know I'm going, "You know Muddy Waters?" He said yes. I said, "Well how do you know him?" He said, "Well I work in a bookstore and I love the blues." And he could just tell me all kinds of history about the blues, and I was going *okay, well I have found a kindred spirit.* (laughs)

CR: But I wish we could get more younger people involved because it's a dead culture. They need to be more involved. I remember one festival, my little granddaughter was about five years old, was given a little harmonica out on the street and she started playing it and started singing the blues!

YS: It is a part of our heritage and it's something that does need to be preserved. I think that the museum is doing a good job of preserving the heritage, but we've got to get our young people more involved.

CR: And to really let them know that this is part of their culture.

YS: Mhmm.