

The Story Lady

By Carol Parker



Carol Parker a student at Beaufort County Community College Interviewing Mrs. Mima Dixon

Mima S. Dixon, (Story Lady) is a woman who has diligently spent 30 years of her life in all phases of public work, meeting her objective as Library Children's Outreach worker. She loves reading and sharing her talent with children, young and old.

Mima S. Dixon was born in Ransomville, N C, on February 24, 1947, to parents John Calvin and Frances E. Satterthwaite. Mima the younger of two girls, her sister Hattie was

eighteen years older, so Mima basically grew-up an only child. Her family moved to Washington, N.C., when Mima was still a baby. Mima has lived in North Carolina, all her life.

When Mima was growing up, things were very different, people use outhouses, some people had bathroom on the back end of there houses. Mima's family bathroom was on their back porch, and there was only a toilet and a small tub to wash up in. If you wanted to take a bath, you would use a big washtub on the back porch. They did not own a Television set, so Mima and her mother would go to their neighbor's house to watch Television. Back then most people likes to watch Gun Smoke.

When Mima was twelve years old she started working in Tobacco fields with her uncle. She would hand-off the tobacco, which meant, she was on the back of the tobacco truck, pick up three stems of the tobacco and hand it off to the tier. Then the tier would tie the tobacco up and stack it in bundles. She worked in her uncle fields until he died, and she no longer wanted to work in tobacco fields.

In the summer Mima's cousins would come to visit, and when they came they brought a friend with them name Bessie, who was Mima's age. They became very close friends. Mima says, "We use to play trick on my cousins, like this one time when our cousins were old enough to date. They had dates with some guys from our neighborhood and they wanted us younger girls to help them get ready for their dates. So my friend Bessie and I would attach bows to the back of their dresses. They were so mad, that they told my mother and boy did we get in trouble." "We were always doing crazy things like that."

Mima was raised as a Free Will Baptist, while she was growing up, she would often sing in the church chorus. Now she devotes much of her time in her church working with the youth. Mima says, "The high-light through-out my life has been my church, working especially with the

youth."

After finishing high school, she went to Durham Business School in Durham, NC where she graduated in 1969, receiving her Diploma for Secretarial Science. She then started working at Beaufort County Community College then known as (Beaufort Co. Technical Institute) as a secretary while enrolled in College Transfer Program.

In 1970 Mima was married and had two children Stacey Dixon and Dwayne Satterthwaite; and has three grandchildren Omar, Rashadda, and Shaquana Dixon.

In 1974 she graduated from Beaufort Co. Community College receiving an A.A.S. degree in Library Science, while raising two young children. Mima at that time worked as a Library Technician in Beaufort County Community College. This is when she met and became good friends with Betty Ferrell, now a Librarian at Beaufort County Community College.

Betty Ferrell, a librarian at the BCCC has known Mima for over thirty-five years, since she started working there. Mima was the Librarian then who hired her. According to Betty, "Mima is a remarkable person, kind, likeable, capable, efficient, reliable and dependable; really goes out of her way to help you if she can. We had a lot of fun times working together. "When I first met her I knew I would like her, she is just that kind of person, easy to get along with." There were many times when would get together and do something with our children, who were young at this time. Mima's children and mine hit it off real good"

Betty says, "I have had the privilege of hearing Mima read stories to the children. She is very good with children and they like her a lot. She can change her voice for the different characters in the books, like this one time around Halloween, she came in dress-up like a wicked witch and read a scary story to the children, and she really looked so funny."

According to Betty, there was never a dry or boring moment working with Mima, "There

was this one time we were going to a meeting, and there was this young woman Judy, riding with us, she was really a striking person, tall and pretty. Well, we stopped, at this little shop to get something to eat; I think it was in Selma, NC. We were coming out of the place and a guy was driving up the street, he was looking so hard at Judy that he ran his car right into the trash cans. We laughed so hard and still we laugh about it today."

Betty says, "There was another time when we were both working in the library, and it was very quiet, because no one was in here at that time. The president of the college, then came in and set down in the chairs over by the big windows looking out at the beautiful scenery, (the beautiful dogwood trees, and the flowers that were blossoming in the yard), relaxing. He fell asleep and started snoring so loud. It was so funny, that we had to go run in the back room, because we were laughing so hard."

Betty says, "We really had so many good times working together. We often play tricks on each other, I remember this one time when Mima had hid my favorite coffee cup from me, and then she could not remember where she had hid it. So we searched the library over and over again looking for my coffee cup, and finally we found it hidden behind some pile of books on the shelf. We just laughed about that too. I think Mima will always be young, because she loves to be around young people. I remember when she was working here, and she went back to school part-time, while also raising her two children, by then she was no longer married. She is a very strong person".

In 1980, Mima transferred to East Carolina University to be a part-time student in Library Science. She later purchased a home for her family. Mima then became interested in reading to children. In 1982, she organized a neighborhood summer Tutorial Program for grades kindergarten to High school. The Tutorial Program is a program set up to help children in grades

kindergarten to High school to improve their reading skills.

Mima says, “When I was a young girl, I always like to play school and be the teacher. I the idea of helping children, getting them motivated to read. I think that’s why I started the Tutorial Program to help children kindergarten to high school to improve their reading skills. I only work three days a week and I love what I am doing.”

Also in 1982, Mima, has received the Scottie Cox Library Award and also joined The Library Science Society, she became their treasurer. Mima has served on the program for Boston Avenue Community Association Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. She still set aside time out of her busy life, for hobbies and other interest. Mima likes collecting unusual Roosters coffee mugs, cross-stitching, and reading; while she is attending college, at ECU and working at Beaufort Co. Community College as a Librarian.

Mima says, “I began to realize at the end of 1985, that I was long overdue and burn-out as an employee of fifteen and a half years at Beaufort Co. Community College and five- years as a student at ECU, and raising two teenagers”.

So in 1986 Mima Dixon graduated from ECU with a B.S. degree in Librarian, Minor: Elementary Education, and Concentration: Reading.

Mima says, "I have worked as a Girl Scout Leader, served on the Service Unit Team as Troop Organizer and Trainer, and I have Conducted numerous Workshop in the following areas: Introduction to Junior Age Level, and Song& Games”.

In1989, Mima became Media Coordinator for Vanceboro Farm Life Elementary School in Vanceboro, NC. Mima was working a part-time job as Instructor for Introduction to Library for Edu students at Craven Co. Community College, fall quarters of 1996, in New Bern, NC, until she retired in 1999.

Mima however spends much of her time in public work with youth, reading bible stories at her church to children in Sunday school, and doing puppet shows with varieties group of children. Mima does puppet show for many of her storybooks especially when the puppet characters fit the book she is reading to the children at that time.

In 2000, She began using her talents of reading and doing puppets show for children when she became Activity Coordinator for BHM Regional Library & Beaufort County Partnership. Traveling to different school, childcare center, libraries, and some church day care center, loving to read stories' while getting the children involve and having many chances to use her puppets.

According to Mima Dixon," I have three favorite books: One Hundred Hungry Ants; by Elinor J. Pinczes, Hattie and the Fox; By Mem Fox, and The Corduroy; by Don Freeman, but my favorite puppet is Omar, because my grandson Omar gave him to me, "but I do have many other puppets and hundredths of books that I use with the children.

Carol, a student at Beaufort County Community College has had the opportunity to be in a class with Mima Dixon. She says, "Mima is a joy to be around. She makes you feel like you can do more. We had the opportunity to see Mima talent at work when Mrs. Beeman asks her to read a story for our class; she read in such a way that it draws you into the story."

Carol says, "One time I was watching this movie that came on TV called the Story Lady. Jessica Tandy played the Story Lady in that movie. The movie was about this lonely old Lady who came to live with her daughter and son in-law. They had busy lives, but Jessica was lonely and bored so she would prepare big meals for their dinner. When they came home and they did not eat, saying," We don't eat big meals." One day Jessica went out and she saw this sign

advertising Purchasing TV time. So she purchased Television time and would read Mother Goose stories on air, and dress like Mother Goose. The show became a hit, and school children would run home from school to watch it. A top TV stations offer her a contract to sign to do her show on their station. The person in charged of the TV station had a daughter who was left home alone, and Jessica was ask to stay with her. She could read and tell stories so wonderful that it made the children and parents stop whatever they were doing and listen to her tell or read a story. Mima reminds me so much of the woman who played the Story Lady in that movie, because she has that talent to read and draw the children into the story. In fact, I went out and purchased the movie from Wal-Mart because I liked it so much.”

Mima Dixon, (The Story Lady) has filled her life with many opportunities to help and encourage Young children to love reading, and improve their reading skills. Such programs as Library Children’s Outreach worker; devoting time in her church working with the youth, neighborhood summer Tutorial Program, and as a Girl Scout Leader, serving on the Service Unit Team as Troop organizer and trainer. I think we all can learn much from her.