

“African American Women’s Health Activism in Rural Arkansas, 1915-1965”

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In multifarious ways, African American women engaged in rural community health activism throughout the Jim Crow South. Focusing specifically on Arkansas, Dr. Cherisse Jones-Branch will discuss their health initiatives as they confronted the myriad ills that deeply impacted African American communities in the Arkansas Delta. African American women utilized their connections to local and national organizations and often reached across the racial divide to procure resources and to implement the measures they deemed necessary to improve rural black health when few other options were available. Such endeavors were also further understood as a critical tool to augment racial advancement in the segregated South.

Dr. Jones-Branch is the James and Wanda Lee Vaughn Endowed Professor of History and Dean of the Graduate School at Arkansas State University. She teaches U.S., Women's, Civil Rights, Rural, and African American History, and Heritage Studies. Dr. Jones-Branch received her Bachelors and Master degrees from the College of Charleston, South Carolina, and a doctorate in History from The Ohio State University. She has been teaching at Arkansas State University since 2003 and has authored numerous articles on women’s Civil Rights and rural activism. In 2014, she published *Crossing the Line: Women and Interracial Activism in South Carolina during and after World War II*, and is the co-editor of *Arkansas Women: Their Lives and Times*, published in 2018. She has a second monograph forthcoming, *Better Living By Their Own Bootstraps: Rural Black Women’s Activism in Arkansas, 1913-1965*, from the University of Arkansas Press and a third monograph in progress titled *African Americans and the American Farm Bureau Federation*.