

SEPTEMBER 2025



The Sobriety Gazette

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-MISSISSIPPI INTERGROUP

Let's begin with a moment of silence for the alcoholics/addicts still suffering, followed by the Serenity Prayer... God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

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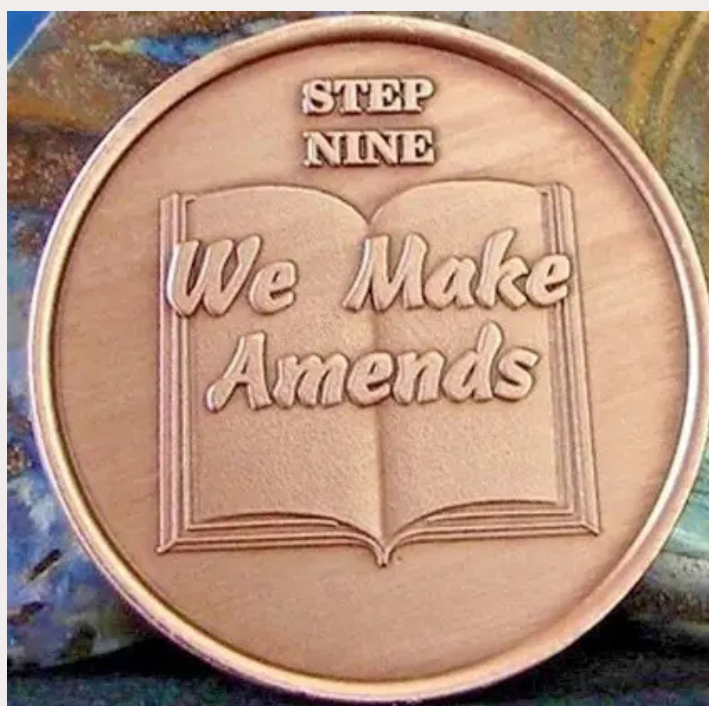
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Tradition Nine

A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Responsibility Statement

I am responsible... When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there.
And for that:
I am responsible.

The Ninth Step Prayer...

"GOD, give me the strength and direction to do the right thing no matter what the consequences may be. Help me to consider others and not harm them in any way. Help me to consult with others before I take any actions that would cause me to be sorry. Help me to not repeat such behaviors. Show me the way of Patience, Tolerance, Kindliness, and Love and help me live the spiritual life. AMEN"

The Sobriety Gazette is a publication of the Mid-Mississippi Intergroup. The purpose of this publication is to improve communication between local AA groups, inform and encourage participation in service opportunities and events that promote sobriety. Opinions expressed do not necessarily indicate endorsement by the central office or Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Love, Empathy & Compassion

No Criticism or Character Assassination

Hanging on to resentments and criticizing the behavior of others is often a noticeable characteristic of some members of the program that never find the serenity and peace that is mentioned in the promises. For some people it seems impossible to let their guard down. I think that most of us can understand this, simply because we have all had to face this issue and deal with it as we went through the Twelve Step process.

One of the things that I learned when I was faced with this matter was that I had a self-esteem issue and I overcorrected, by pointing the faults of others, to somehow make myself seem normal. This never worked for me as I could not fool my conscience. Things only got worse.

I still worked through the steps and did what I could at the time. No one gets it perfect the first time, but we can make a second effort at it when we have established a record of living by principles.

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are a training ground for how we treat others and if we cannot accept the people there, it is a cinch we will not do it outside of the rooms.

Everyone that comes to A.A. brings with them, their own assortment of mental, emotional, spiritual, and material problems, and none of us are without these concerns. If we did not have them, we would not need this program. We all feel vulnerable and establish our own firewalls, with the help of our ego's, to protect ourselves from our perception of what those other people are doing, saying, and thinking.

We each might establish hard and fast protective reactions, mentally and verbally to protect our own turf. With so many different personalities brought together in one group, it is extremely hard to let down our guards. We all feel justified when pointing out the faults of others. This is what the alcoholic personality does.

With the understanding that most forms of criticism and character assassination stem from low self esteem, it occurred to me that I was just as guilty of the very things that I was accusing them of. I likened it to two old men in a convalescent home hitting each other with their canes because one was not walking fast enough for the other.

I had to step up to the plate and become strong enough to look deeper into their motives and understand what caused them to behave the way they did, and not be threatened by their outside behavior. I cannot express in words the mental freedom that this principle has produced in me. When I see someone acting out, my first thought is not judgmental in nature but of empathy and compassion. My next thought is "what I can do to help him or her."

In time, I have come to terms with all the people that I interact with on a day-to-day basis and I conflict with no one. To me, they are all like kids just learning how to do life. They all have problems, and I am not going to be one of their problems.

I need to be strong enough to replace words like resentment, judgment, and criticism with empathy, understanding and compassion. Today I have no adversaries that I can think of, and peace of mind is the natural result of this approach.

I find no exceptions to this principle, and I cannot be selective about who I apply it to. Everyone gets amnesty in my book. All those mental gymnastics about "those other people" are a distant memory and I cannot think of a single time that practicing this principle did not serve me well. The only one that is sorry for this profound and life changing transition is my ego, but about that; who am I to criticize?

By Rick R.

Breaking Down Step Nine of Alcoholics Anonymous

“Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others ”

So what is Step Nine of AA Alcoholics Anonymous? Step Nine is that biggie step, the one we likely have created some anxiety over because it involves making amends. It is suggested that we make direct amends to people whenever possible. What does that mean? There are three kinds of amends:

Direct Amends – taking personal responsibility for your actions and confronting the person who you would like to reconcile with.

Indirect Amends – finding ways to repair damage that cannot be reversed or undone by doing things like volunteering and helping others.

Living Amends – when you show others as well as yourself that you have made a genuine lifestyle change and are making a commitment to yourself and those that you have hurt that you will & have discarded your previous destructive behaviors.

We have already begun making amends to ourselves by changing some of our behaviors, attitudes and beliefs. The part of the amends process whereby we change ourselves has an effect on everyone around us and goes on long after we’ve spoken directly to someone we have harmed.

When it comes to making amends to others, there are usually a lot of fears and expectations involved. We may be afraid about making financial amends, or afraid of rejection, retaliation and a host of other doubtful outcomes. However, making amends doesn’t always have to be a nerve-racking, dreadful or joyless experience. In fact, maybe you’ll find that you feel excited about the possibility of healing a relationship or happily anticipating the relief you will feel after having made a particularly scary amends or even paying off a debt. There is freedom that is gained by cleaning up the past, a freedom to live peacefully in the present.

To keep things as simple as possible, you can get your head in the game by focusing on the purpose of the Ninth Step. Keep in mind the three concepts or “The Three R’s” of the Ninth Step that are associated with making amends: Restoration, Resolution and Restitution.

Restoration means bringing something back to its former state, usually things that have been damaged. This can mean restoring our reputations, and even restoring trust in a relationship.

Resolution as recovering addicts, means we likely have past experiences that plague us or disturb us in some way. Finding a resolution to these problems means coming up with answers and solutions and laying them to rest.

Restitution as it relates to the Ninth Step is the act of returning something material (or abstract) to its rightful owner.

Our sponsors can help us explore each of these concepts so that we gain perspective on the nature of our specific amends and stay focused on what we’re supposed to be doing. The key is that we keep the focus on ourselves and our “side of the street,” so to speak. Even though we may be eager to rip the Band-Aid off and get an amend over and done with, it’s important that we are not impulsive or careless as we attempt to make amends! Some thought and planning needs to go into it for the best possible outcome. On the flipside of the same AA coin, it is equally important that you don’t procrastinate making amends. Why? Because, based on experience, many recovering individuals have relapsed when they allowed their fears to keep them from doing Step Nine. Dr. Bob, one of our original founders could not stay sober until he went around town and made amends to all those he had hurt.

As with all of our previous step work, it’s important to be realistic: Completing your Ninth Step cannot be neatly contained within a particular time frame. We don’t finish our Eighth Step list and then immediately start crossing off “completed” amends like we would for items on a shopping list. In fact, some of our amends may never be done and our efforts may continue throughout our recovery. The truth is, that every day that we make an effort to refrain from hurting our families, friends, co-workers and even strangers- and try to practice loving behavior with them, is a day when we’ve continued our amends. Even such seemingly concrete amends as paying a past-due debt aren’t necessarily done once and for all when the debt is paid off. Continuing to pay off debts, refraining from lying, stealing or cheating will be an ongoing Ninth Step practice in our lives.

The Ninth Step: When To Do So Would Cause Harm

Life is complicated and not always straightforward or black and white. Therefore some Step Nine amends may take a little creativity and patience. Working this step should never lead to the further harm of others.

There may be times when approaching another person directly or seeking to provide restitution could be painful or harmful for that person. For example, there may be a situation where the person (or people) we’ve harmed are not aware of what we did, and learning about it might possibly harm them even more. Or there could be situations that were complicated by other addicts, or accusations of stealing more than just money. There are so many kinds of situations and they all need to be taken into consideration on an individual basis.

Again, our sponsor can help us decide how best to handle each one. They can help us check our motives for wanting to tell people about our addiction or for apologizing. You may want to ask yourself if that person really needs to know? And if so, what good purpose would be served by sharing such information?

When discussing our amends list with our sponsors, if we are open-minded, we can start to think about these kinds of situations in ways we haven’t thought about them before. In fact we usually discover that what we first thought was the obvious method of making amends, might not be right after all.

Continued →



Step Nine Spiritual Principles: Always A Good Day For Humble Pie

“Humility leads to strength and not to weakness. It is the highest form of self-respect to admit mistakes and make amends for them.”— John. J. McCloy

Humility is the freedom from pride or arrogance and having the quality or state of being humble. In the Ninth Step, we will focus on the spiritual principles of humility, forgiveness and love. We gain humility as a result of taking a good look at the damage we did to others (and ourselves) and accepting responsibility for it. After acknowledging to ourselves what we’ve done, we take responsibility for making it right. There is nothing quite like experiencing increased humility while making amends in your Ninth Step and recognizing the self-empowerment and self-love that comes with it. While doing our amends and experiencing being forgiven, we begin to see the value in extending it to others. It feels good to practice forgiveness and just let go of resentment! Positive reinforcement is a great motivator to practice the spiritual principle of forgiveness as much as possible. By forgiving others we start to recognize our own humanness, and it gives us the capacity to be less judgmental than we were in the past. We become aware that since we usually mean well, we can extend that belief to others. It’s interesting to note, that when someone does actually harm us, we’ve learned that holding resentments only serves to rob us of our own peace and serenity, so we tend to forgive them sooner rather than later. It’s good stuff.

Practicing the spiritual principle of love is something we’ve been doing throughout our recovery just by staying clean and sober. By Step Nine, we’ve eliminated many of the destructive attitudes, perspectives and feelings we used to have, which makes room for love in our lives. As we become filled with love, we find the need to share it in the form of nurturing our relationships, building new ones and by selflessly sharing our recovery, our time and our resources with others in need.

Guilt and shame are the unnecessary chains that bind us to our past. By practicing these spiritual principles we can break those chains and achieve the freedom from our addiction that we have yearned for. I’m sure you’ve heard that the steps are written in a specific order for a reason. That reason is that each step provides the spiritual preparation we’ll need for the following steps. This is so blatantly apparent in the Ninth Step. Never in a million years would we ever have imagined during our using days that we would one day be able to sit down with the people we’ve harmed and make direct amends! This would not be possible without the spiritual preparation we received from the previous steps.

If we had not done the work in the first eight steps, we wouldn’t now have a foundation on which to stand while we make our amends. If we had not developed a relationship with a Higher Power, we wouldn’t now have the faith and trust that we definitely need to work Step Nine! If we had not done our Fourth and Fifth Steps, we would probably still be so confused about our own personal responsibility, we wouldn’t know specifically what we’re making amends for. If we hadn’t developed humility in the Sixth and Seventh Steps we’d likely approach our amends with self-righteousness, blame or anger. Our Eighth Step list was our practical preparation for working Step Nine. As we go into this step we must remember to stay connected to a higher power and have faith that the previous eight steps have prepared us to work the Ninth Step.

Step Nine Questions And Guidelines

There are a lot of fearful feelings before, during and after making amends in the ninth step. While working step nine it’s really important to understand that the way things feel is not necessarily the way things are. Because we are feeling afraid we assume that this means we truly have something to fear. But this is not fact. To prepare for this step it’s a good idea to let go of all our expectations about how our amends will or should turn out.

Here are some questions to help guide you through working Step Nine:

- How is ‘making amends’ committing to a continuous process of change?
- Do I have fears about making amends? Am I worried that someone will take revenge or reject me?
- How does the Ninth Step require a new level of surrender to the program?
- What about my financial amends? Do I have faith that the God of my understanding will ensure I have what I need even though I am sacrificing to make amends?
- Why doesn’t it matter how my amends are received?
- How will other addicts, my sponsor, and my Higher Power be sources of strength in this process?
- Which names on my Eighth Step list are complicated by circumstances? Do I owe any amends that might have serious consequences if I made them? What are they?
- What behaviors do I need to amend?
- What are my immediate plans for making amends to myself? Do I have any long-range goals that might also fit as amends to myself? What are they? What can I do to follow through?
- Have I accepted responsibility for the harm I caused and for repairing that harm?
- What experiences have I had that led me to see the harm I caused more clearly? How has that contributed to an increase in my humility?
- What are the benefits to me of practicing the principle of forgiveness? What are some situations in which I’ve been able to practice this principle?

Freedom: Moving On From Step Nine Of AA Alcoholics Anonymous

Do you want to be free? Well, there are no half measures, and it ain’t easy... if it were easy, everyone would be doing it! It takes strength and courage to own up to our mistakes, and when necessary, make restitutions. It is another rewarding part of our recovery journey and brings us closer to the gift of freedom.

Many of us find it helpful to reflect on our amends after making each one. Some of us do this by writing about how it felt to make the amends and what we learned from the experience. Living our Ninth Step requires that we try not to incur new debts, new wrongdoings or misdeeds. Avoiding such future liabilities is just as much a part of our amends process as making regular payments on past-due debts. This actually means we’re ready for the Tenth Step!

“Freedom” seems to be the word that most clearly describes the essence of Step Nine. It seems to sum up the relief from guilt and shame, the lessening of our obsession with “self”, and the increased ability to appreciate what’s really going on all around us. We may even start to think of our past as a gold mine of experiences to share with other people we’re trying to help in recovery, instead of as a period of darkness that we regret. We stop thinking about our lives in terms of what we don’t have and begin to appreciate the gifts that we receive every single day. And finally, we are very aware that in order to keep this feeling of freedom, we’ll need to keep on applying what we’ve learned while working the steps. One day at a time. When we do this this we gain a new perspective and the promises of the Ninth Step come true in our lives. Sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly.

Guilt for our wrongs can be one of the most deceptive recovery demons to bear because it damages us from the inside, where it happily hides. Get rid of that guilt; apologize, make your amends and let go of them.

Breathe Free.

Tradition 9

“A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

In the beginning, our founders really felt like we didn't need much organization and structure in the Fellowship, and then they went and created a bunch of it. “It is clear that we ought never to name boards to govern us, but it is equally clear that we shall always need to authorize workers to serve us. It is the difference between the spirit of vested authority and the spirit of service.” (12×12, Page 174)

One of the best examples of this is if you should ever find yourself needing to reach out to GSO for their ideas on a specific issue that your group, District or Area may be having; you can be relatively sure regardless of what you are asking about will garner a response that generally starts off with something like, “That’s a great question. Our shared experience in A.A. is....” and they will offer suggestions of solutions from those that have gone before us to help you with your concern. They cannot tell us what to do, but they can help us.

The organization of our Fellowship is crucial to our being able to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic, but that structure is not there to govern, but to serve.

Step-Tradition Parallel

The first nine steps delivered us from the bondage of our past experiences with alcohol. We finally arrived at the place where we could say to ourselves, “I have totally faced my past. And there is nothing left in my past that I’m ashamed of. There’s nothing left that hurts anymore. There’s nothing left in my past that’s painful. There’s nothing left in my past I need to forgive or need to be forgiven for. I’m at total oneness and peace with my past.” Well, that’s a tremendous statement to be able to say. That’s an enormous statement for any person to be able to say about their life. And that’s what the first nine steps give us. And the ninth tradition assures me that once my ninth step amends have been made, I will be led to that profound place of peace I have always sought in my life: divine order.

The ninth tradition not only contains the secret of divine order but also contains the personal principle that will keep an alcoholic like me in divine order. It is so simple. I give up control. I stop organizing myself. I stop trying to organize God into my limited ideas of order.

How does this ninth tradition relate to the ninth step? My life gets unimpeded flow of divine love in a triangle consisting of you, myself and God. Whenever the divine order of that relationship is disturbed, I can restore order by making the unmade amend that put my life out of order. The ninth step poses the question, “After making amends, how do I stay reconciled with you today?” The ninth tradition answers that question by implying that I remain in the divine order by not organizing you, myself or God and spontaneously being of service to you and God.

takethe12.org

Tradition Nine Checklist

1. Do I try to “boss” things in AA?
2. Do I ever resist formal aspects of AA because I see them as authoritative?
3. Do I try to understand and use all elements of the AA program—even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal responsibility?
4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any AA job?
6. Why doesn't every AA group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully—and profit thereby—when the time comes?
8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

aagrapevine.org

The Unconditional Love of Tradition Nine

By: Kimberly C.

“A.A., as such, ought never be organized...” begins the section on the 9th Tradition in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book. This simple phrase is exactly the reason I am in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, and in fact the reason that out of all the designs for healing I have stepped my big toe in over the last thirty years, I have stayed and been able to maintain my sobriety.

In essence, the 9th Tradition reminds members that while A.A. needs some practical structure—like groups, intergroups, and committees to carry out tasks such as publishing literature or organizing meetings—its spiritual heart is a fellowship of equals, not a hierarchy. Authority remains with the group conscience, not with individuals or offices, ensuring that any service bodies exist only to support sobriety and carry out the will of the members, never to govern them.

For me, rules have always spurred a natural response toward rebellion. I got thrown out of Catholic School in the 7th grade because I was a perpetual rule breaker. We weren’t allowed to wear make-up, which Sister Rita called “war paint,” so I made sure to wear an extra coat of Wet and Wild hot pink to her religious studies class. We wore uniforms, blue and black and white plaid with quaint ankle socks that I oftentimes exchanged for rainbow hued knee highs—many bouts in detention ensued from those creative accentuations. I had a pop-up hair cutting and piercing shop in the bathrooms in the morning where I would simply poke an earring through a girl’s ear in a few seconds and spread rubbing alcohol over the newly adorned lobe. Mother and fathers would call the principal and tell on me, and I would garner more detention hours. I was thoroughly disciplined for just being myself until the school finally had enough of me and I entered the realms of public school. What finally happened to me for the first time in my life when I entered A.A. was that I was seen for the complicated human being I was – a mixed bag of life circumstance, family of origin influence, and confusion about how to operate in the “real world” without my self-medication crutch of booze. After living a life of feeling inherently different from everyone else, I was thrown into a Petri dish of human beings (in meetings and fellowship) who were exactly like me, and That Was Suddenly Okay. I didn’t have to look a certain way, make a specific amount of money, hold a particular political belief—I could just show up and be me without worrying about being thrown out. And I have the 9th tradition to thank for this. No other human ego would rain on my parade because this tradition espoused that we were all in this together, and being all in this together meant to put my judgment, interests, inclinations, and ambitions aside to just let the chips fall where they may as long as I was doing the first step perfectly — admitting that my life had become unmanageable, that I was powerless, and being willing to never drink again.

The ninth tradition exemplifies what we learn in steps two and three— to let go and let our higher power take the wheel, spending less time on how we need to manipulate, control, or strategize for outcome within the groups we choose to acquaint with and just trust in the process of using the twelve steps to lead us to a new design for living.

Another key point of the 9th tradition falls in line with this quote for the 12 and 12: “His drunkenness and dissolution are not penalties inflicted by people in authority; they result from his personal disobedience to spiritual principles.”

I heard in a meeting the other day that one of the greatest gifts of A.A. participation is that “We do what we need to do when we need to do it so that we can do what we want when we want to.”

This is something that I can, with ultimate personal resonance and authority, attribute to the 9th tradition as well because in the old days, for me, if I was doing something someone told me to do because it was simply a “rule,” my character would not become as enriched as when I decided to do something on my own to abide by said rule because I had seen and felt it with my own eyes through experience. In A.A.— with its absence of puritanical rules in the 9th tradition, its lack of board regulated terms, and the lightly unconventional faith that controlled chaos brings, I am made well aware that my compulsion to live better is self-motivated and that makes for grand fruition and longevity in the sober world. Making a personally empowered right choice and next action becomes my gold star and builds my character in richer ways than simply obeying or toeing the line.

I try to only speak for myself in my recovery journey, but every day I continue to encounter others who are highly intelligent, highly thoughtful, and highly sensitive who speak about their feelings of “difference” within our shared world. The fact that tradition nine cheerleads this difference and doesn’t create a code for inclusion or a checklist to follow for membership has been the redeeming quality for us alcoholics struggling to both find a community of unity while also trying to keep our rebel souls intact. The proof is in the pudding— I am still here, as are you, and the funky junk of our mixed bag of humanity continues to fuel this ever so special fire, in which we can say loudly and proud, “It works if you work it!” And We Are Worth It!

Announcements

Want to be updated about AA Announcements, Events, and the Sobriety Gazette?

Contact midmissintergroup@gmail.com to get involved!

You can also contact the editor at nntillingane@gmail.com for comments or questions!

Your Trusted Servants

Chair -	Sam C.
Treasurer -	Karen M.
Secretary -	Kelli P.
Corrections -	Daryl R.
Treatment -	Natalie F.
Intergroup Liaison -	Kurt J.
IT/WEB -	Bruce M.
Newsletter Editor -	Natalie F.

Community Resources

NA -	mrscna.net
Al-Anon -	msafg.org
SLAA -	www.slaa@gmail.com
Ms. Dept. of Mental Health -	dmh.ms.gov

Feel free to contact Mid Mississippi
Intergroup if you have any questions!

Intergroup meets on the
first Thursday of each
month at
6:30 pm.
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The Intergroup Central Office wants to
extend a deep thanks to some of our long
standing contributors and our excited
welcome to others!

James S.	Kurt J.	Henry A.
Al & Donna H.	Susan L.	Jessica L.
Jeff W.	James S.	Brittany D.
Bruce M.	Tommy L.	Sam C.
Will W.	Joe G.	Andy D.
Anonymous 1		Anonymous 2

Quote of the Month

"It's worth it to stay alive. Because
life is hard in the moment, it's hard
to see what can be down the road.
You get tunnel vision and think that
the current moment is all you have
left. But that's not it. There can be
more. Please let there be more.

Please stay alive."

- Josh Dun

Shout out to these AA groups for
contributions to our Book Fund
over the last two years!

Unlimited	Southgate
Traditions	Serenity
Quest	
Primary Purpose	Way Out
Serenity of	
Purpose	

Yes! I Want to Be a Faithful Fiver

Date _____
Here is my contribution of \$ _____ for _____ Months _____
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Group _____
Sobriety Date: Month _____ Date _____ Year _____

Remembering Those We've Lost This Month

Edwin J. - 9/3/25
Leslie J. - 9/24/25

Faithful Fivers

Faithful Fivers are AA members who pledge at least five dollars each month to support their Central Office. This idea is catching on around the country. The plan came about when we remembered that many of us had spent far more than \$5.00 a month on alcohol during our drinking days.

As a Faithful Fiver, you support the effects of
Mis-Mississippi Intergroup: to carry the message of hope to still-suffering alcoholics.

To become a Faithful Fiver simply send monthly contributions to
Central Office
Post Office Box 16228
Jackson, Mississippi 39236