

**T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection**

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** Leonard Brown

**COLLECTION:** 4700.0632

**IDENTIFICATION:** McKinley High School graduate

**INTERVIEWER:** Shawnda Hollins

**SERIES:** McKinley High School Oral History Project – History of McKinley High School

**INTERVIEW DATE:** June 21, 1995

**FOCUS DATES:** 1940s-present

**ABSTRACT:**

**Tape 916, Side A**

Brown born in Prairieville, Louisiana, December 4, 1927; parents' names; father went to eighth grade, mother to sixth; mother was housewife; father was farmer, then went into wood yard business; father went to California to work on war planes during World War II; mother opened a grocery store in 1947; father switched to road construction; both retired in 1960s and moved back to farm; Brown attended McKinley from 1941-1945; high school job parking cars; currently in school and charter bus business; got interested in bus business while riding bus to Southern University; got friendly with driver Reuben Hayes; didn't belong to clubs during high school; was an average student; parents were his role models; favorite teacher was Mrs. Black, civics teacher; got in trouble once for failing to follow instructions; after school job parking cars; J.M. Frazier was a down-to-earth principal, nicknamed "Tank"; most students were afraid of Frazier and his paddle; students came from forty miles away to attend McKinley; names towns they came from; graduated May 28, 1945; had cake and ice cream at classmate's house to celebrate graduation; McKinley was number one sports team in state; names other towns with black schools they played against; thinks McKinley once played against Grambling; while in high school, Brown's goal was to be in business; current goal is to live a long time; has no hobbies, work is everything; describes himself as easygoing and down-to-earth; setbacks for black students since his time in school; teachers were almost like parents; now teachers put more emphasis on pay; not sure if integration is helping black students or not; whole black community in Baton Rouge was involved with McKinley; many incidents during his bus career, including on-board fights, riots and shoot-outs; almost getting shot during incident on his bus; encouraging words about McKinley High Oral History Project; plans to present the history project; Brown thinks the history project will help current McKinley students know more about the school's past; in Brown's time at McKinley, the school set students on a straight path in life; not sure that's still the case; Field Day at City Park; March Rhetorical program; was at McKinley during wartime; working through high school; spent whole life working; encourages students to further

their education; people are more specialized these days; got to go further than high school to make it now; recommends more people to interview, including teachers; more about longevity of his bus business; started Head Start transportation; has had many experiences driving buses.

**TAPE:** 1 (T916)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 37 minutes

**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 20 pages

**OTHER MATERIALS:** Copy of McKinley High School Diploma; Interviewer's Notes and Words List; Potential Interview List; Correspondence

**RESTRICTIONS:** None