

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Frankie B. Chrisentery

COLLECTION: 4700.0685

IDENTIFICATION: McKinley High School graduate, class of 1944

INTERVIEWER: Shawnda Hollins

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

INTERVIEW DATES: June 17, 1995

FOCUS DATES: 1940s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1012, Side A.

Introduction; born in East Baton Rouge Parish; mother attended McKinley, father went through eighth grade; father was a carpenter, mother a beautician; Chrisentery was McKinley class of 1944; back then, teachers were more personal with students; academics were the primary role; she played basketball, enjoyed taking busses to New Orleans for tournaments; role models were McKinley teachers Eloise Smith Powell and Lena Cooper; most memorable moment was making drapes in home economics class; education after McKinley included Grambling, Southern and a master's degree from Indiana University; she has taught in several East Baton Rouge Parish schools; she had a burst appendix around the time of high school graduation; made her own clothes starting in eighth grade, popular clothing styles and hairstyles she learned from her mother's time in beauty school; McKinley had no rivalries because they were the only school in the area for African Americans, students came from the surrounding 150-mile radius; everybody knew each other or was related in some way; there was just something about McKinley at that time; her first principal was J.M. Frazier then later C.B. Piper; Frazier was highly respected as an educator, a very stern and dignified man; she wanted to be a physical education teacher but that was impractical so she went into elementary education instead; today she enjoys recreational vehicles and camping; only dislike about McKinley was lack of campus facilities like a gym, basketball games held on roof of Temple Theater; McKinley's past is important and fantastic people attended the school; talent programs like the March Rhetorical involved all the local elementary schools for African American children; McKinley should recognize some of its outstanding graduates somewhere in the school building; no bus service so many students walked for miles, Reverend W.M. Pitcher was responsible for driving many students to school; alma mater; routine in her home to do homework at the round table; textbooks were discarded from white schools, often in poor shape; her grandmother was like a community tutor; unsure why the school was called McKinley, probably after the president; thinks the interview project will be a success because it has a positive message and purpose; McKinley is vital to the history of Baton Rouge; McKinley today is much improved in terms of facilities; advice to recent graduates, if you're willing to work at it, you can do anything; in her day, there were very few

career opportunities, only nursing, teaching, or housekeeping; after experiencing segregation, she never wants to live that way again; advice to use your time wisely, don't watch trashy TV shows; suggestions for other people to interview like Louberta "Sweetie" Hebert, Willie Phillips, Alex Pitcher; interview conclusion.

TAPES: 1 (T1012)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 33 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 22 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Correspondence; interviewer's notes; additional materials form;
index (2 pgs)

RESTRICTIONS: None