

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Estelle Skolfield Williams

COLLECTION: 4700.0505

IDENTIFICATION: [1908-1999] LSU alumna; LSU English instructor; widow of T. Harry Williams

INTERVIEWER: Pamela Dean

SERIES: University History – Distinguished Alumni

INTERVIEW DATES: 3 August, 1994; 12 August 1994

FOCUS DATES: 1900-1994

ABSTRACT:

Tape 723

Williams born in Baton Rouge in 1908; family lived on Convention Street; industry comes to Baton Rouge; father worked as warden at local jail; family lived at penitentiary in Baton Rouge; father Jessie Skolfield; mother Grace Lane; background of mother's family; Michael Henry Lane; Gracelane Plantation; Kleinpeter family and land; father's family; Civil War; Skolfield family; grandmother's history; W.H. Lane Sash and Door Shop; plantation schooling at Gracelane; Sammy; crops and animals raised at Gracelane; penitentiary; stable on Third Street; sisters Nan and Cheatie; biscuit at gate house to penitentiary on Laurel Street; Chism a favorite inmate who worked in the home; Chism found and gave beautiful pin to Estelle when she was a child; horse and buggy; Edward Picou; St. Joseph's Academy; curriculum; Norman Benton's dancing school; house on Convention Street; house on Florida Street; World War I; flu epidemic; cemetery; streetcar line; St. Joseph's Cathedral; mother never went to the grocery until Piggly Wiggly opened in about 1930; ice box; athletics at St Joseph's Academy; nuns as teachers; Estelle questions the catechism; Estelle transfers to the public Baton Rouge High because of her marriage; LSU in midst of move from old to new campus in 1927; female students the last to be moved; quarter system; Estelle has Mai Frances during college, then returns to school; attends college of commerce and teacher's college; Dean Pipkin; Dr. Uhler; scholarship; Dr. Reed; begins teaching English in 1934; all of Estelle's sister also went to college; Josie Cangelosi; secretarial courses; education courses; brief marriage to Mai Frances's father, Frank Lower; the Depression; Dorothy St. Dizier; teaching freshman English at LSU.

Tape 724

Scandals at LSU; President Smith; Huey Long chartering trains for football games; Major Pryor; pro- and anti-Longs; J.Y. Sanders; George Herlitz, Cheatie's husband; Clyde Warwick, oldest sister's husband; G.I.s enroll in LSU following World War II; Miss Miller and Miss Beale; Dr. Bradshair; Cleanth Brooks; Harris Downey; numerous LSU faculty mentioned; Brechtel's; Walton Patrick; T. Harry Williams arrives at LSU sometime around 1942; Harry and Estelle travel in same social circles, but do not date; Harry gets offer from Knopf to write Lincoln and

his Generals and begins to date Estelle; does research in D.C.; Harry writes longhand and has to have a graduate student type the rough draft because Estelle cannot read his handwriting; Estelle types final copy; Estelle reluctant to marry because her mother was an invalid; begins to talk marriage after daughter becomes engaged; Book of the Month selects Harry's book; they become engaged and marry in December 1952; Harry's personality; Wisconsin; Estelle helped with technical aspects of writing;

Tape 725

T. Harry Williams in the classroom; Ulysses S. Grant; Ben Butler; chamber pot incident (funny story); antics in class; Civil War uniforms; Civil War Roundtable from Chicago meets at Port Hudson; Historical Society gathering at cemetery; Harry's Confederate uniform; Springfield rifle; Harry's last lecture well attended; Mai Frances in Harry's class; Harry's first wife; graduate seminar met at his home; Christmas party for graduate students; folder of letters of recommendation; Civil War books; Alfred Knopf; Lincoln and His Generals; Beauregard book; Harry's research methods; Harry's writing process; textbook writing; Alan Brinkley; Dick Current; Fred Freidel; Professor Hesseltine; Huey Long book; Professor Fish; choice of publisher for Long book; Parker papers at Chapel Hill; Russell Long; Winnfield; Cat Ducet of Opelousas; the deduct box; Seymour Weiss; Roosevelt Hotel; Mr. Perez and his monument to Beauregard; use of tape machine for interviews; file cards; travel to England; Lyndon B. Johnson book; Cambridge Modern History; use of oral history controversial; David Donald; Eisenhower; Nixon; Jess Nugent, whom Huey Long called Cousin Jess; tape from Nugent interview blank because Estelle had not yet learned to use machine properly; portable machine; Nan and George Kirby; Robert Caro; Mr. Brown of Texas; Harry's "bread and butter" Civil War speech; Hodding Carter.

TAPES: 3 (T723, T724, T725)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 3 hours, 30 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 160 pages

RESTRICTIONS: None