

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

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** Reverend Nathaniel P. Perry

**COLLECTION:** 4700.0616

**IDENTIFICATION:** McKinley High graduate, Class of 1930

**INTERVIEWERS:** Petra Munro, Shanta Jenkins, Shawnda Hollins, Carmen Posey,  
Derek Vaughn

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

**INTERVIEW DATES:** June 14, 1995

**FOCUS DATES:** 1920-1930s

**ABSTRACT:**

**Tape 900, Side A**

Perry born March 17, 1912 in New Orleans; grew up in Baton Rouge; mother was a cook from Baton Rouge; father lived in Maringouin, Louisiana; mother born September 17, 1895; mother had little education but wanted her only child to be educated; attended Baton Rouge Colored High School for seventh and eighth grades; entered McKinley High School in ninth grade; studied English, math, Latin and geography at McKinley; math was favorite subject; majored in math at New Orleans University, an earlier incarnation of Dillard; attended college from 1930-1935; played football under Coach J. Kraft; played against Xavier University and Leland College; memorable game against a Texas high school team; also on track team; sang spirituals with school chorus; sings "Swing Low Sweet Chariot"; seventy-eight students started and graduated together in his graduating class; was a good student with at least a B average; Leola Young, who taught history, was his favorite teacher; presented on Sojourner Truth at Negro History Week; after graduation, headed a two-teacher school in Lobdell, Louisiana, for a year; set up adult night schools with the WPA; division of labor at the two-teacher school; they try to locate Perry's pictures in 1928 high school yearbook; Harrison "Diddy" Lawless, football player; memories of attractive girls; describes high school dress codes for boys and girls; wonders where some of his schoolmates are now; calling on young ladies; took dates to Temple Roof Garden on North Boulevard; when the band closed with "Home Sweet Home," everybody went home; changes in street names; left teaching for the ministry; time spent working on literacy programs; entered Howard University divinity school in 1937; completed master's degree in social work; has been married for fifty-eight years; wife from Alexandria; no children; importance of McKinley to East Baton Rouge Parish and all the outlying parishes; in the days of segregation, Perry was annoyed that black children living across the street from Baton Rouge High had to go all the way to McKinley; also glad to see segregation leave the churches; suggests other interviewees; recalls what became of McKinley footballers; after divinity school, assigned to Washington Majestic College in Western Pennsylvania.

**Tape 900, Side B**

Since retirement, Perry is associate to the minister at Hughes United Methodist Church; still fills in for ministers in other cities, but not traveling as far as he used to; serves as chaplain in McKinley Alumni Association; Munro solicits contributions from alumni; Hollins explains oral history project; old high school building is in bad shape; McKinley Alumni Association raised thirty-three thousand dollars to buy old high school building from the school board; advice for young McKinley graduates.

**TAPES:** 1 (T900)**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 55 minutes**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 42 pages**OTHER MATERIALS:** Obituary**RESTRICTIONS:** None