

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Mary L. Johnson

COLLECTION: 4700.0718

IDENTIFICATION: Mary L. Johnson is a lifelong resident of the South Baton Rouge neighborhood.

INTERVIEWER: Khary Carrel

PROJECT: McKinley High School: African American Businesses

INTERVIEW DATES: July 16, 1996

FOCUS DATES: 1942 - 1996

ABSTRACT:

T1045, Side A

Introduction; born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on January 13, 1942; mother was Rosa L. Robinson, mother of seven and custodial worker for McKinley High School; oldest sister, Zam Bertha Anderson, was a teacher at McKinley; lived in the neighborhood all her life; recalls Peter Nascker, Charlie Salemi, Streamline Grocery, Chicken Shack, and Kraft's Grocery Store in the neighborhood while she was growing up; Dr. Valerian Smith, Dr. Leo Butler, Theodus White's Paint Shop, Chicken Shack, and Scott Tailor were located on East Boulevard; her family's doctor was Dr. Louis James; she often went to the Chicken Shack and the Butler building to hang out; went to Butler building after school with classmates for milkshakes and hamburgers; businesses closed due to the economy or death of the owners, such as Levi's Barber Shop and Theodus White's Paint Store; business high times were the fifties and sixties, while low times were the seventies and eighties; thinks the community has an increasing problem of drugs and gang violence; businesses of the past were family oriented compared to today's faster pace; recalls a typical day in the neighborhood as kids out in the yards and being comfortable with nothing to fear; remembers the Chicken Shack as the notable place to eat; lists Percy's BBQ, Levi's Barber Shop, McKinley Theatre, Wick's Taxi Service as businesses in the community; reflects on neighbors helping one another and kids being taught by neighbors without hard feels between neighbors; thinks the community can be brought back if it comes together as Christians; end of interview.

TAPES: T1045

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 11 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 7 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Index, correspondence

RESTRICTIONS: Copyright is retained by interviewer and/or their heirs.