

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Claryce Jordan Minor

COLLECTION: 4700.0872

IDENTIFICATION: Longtime member of Shiloh Baptist Church and president of the church sisterhood; Retired teacher at the Louisiana School for the Deaf

INTERVIEWER: Tayari Kwa Salaam

SERIES: McKinley High School Oral History Project - African American Churches

INTERVIEW DATE: June 21, 1997

FOCUS DATES: 1950s – 1990s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1250, Side A

Introduction by graduate student Salaam; agreement to sign release form; Claryce Jordan Minor born on February 7, 1932, in Jonesboro, Louisiana; attended Grambling University; went to California to get far away because of romantic problems; returned to Louisiana and Grambling professor sent her to work at the Louisiana School for the Deaf in Baton Rouge; got her masters in deaf education, began a thirty-two-year career; studied deaf education, supervision, and administration at Gallaudet College, Southern University, and University of California, Berkeley; now living a comfortable retirement; father was Baptist minister, mother was a housewife; parents' education included elementary school and some Bible classes for her father; father's rotating ministry at several small churches in communities surrounding Jonesboro; she attended Brownville Baptist Church; socioeconomic background as child: "poor but not deprived"; enjoyment of Sunday school and church services; preference for black Baptist church and their doctrine over other churches and denominations; Shiloh Baptist Church's outreach into the entire Baton Rouge community; Shiloh's pastor has the ability to connect with diverse members of his congregation; Shiloh has a large congregation, retention of members; "church jumpers" versus longtime members; Minor joined Shiloh close to forty years ago upon moving to Baton Rouge; speculation on name of church, Shiloh is a biblical name; democratic element of Baptist church, members have the right to vote on decisions; annual Shiloh anniversary celebration; other annual events: revivals, Christmas dinner, women's retreat, annual conference; aims of annual revival, a week-long preaching service; warmth and friendliness of Shiloh community; opportunities for people to use life and career skills to help other church members; information on members is collected when they join the church; role of religion in the lives of Shiloh members, "it's supposed to be a part of you that can be seen"; history of Shiloh Baptist Church, there have only been four pastors and the congregation never splintered; current building program to expand Shiloh; changes at Shiloh over her years there include services being more jubilant and expressive now; increase in ministries and social work; paid positions at Shiloh; origins of sisterhood group at Shiloh, Estelle Beachamp got the idea for the sisterhood at a national or

state convention; sisterhood group died out for a while then restarted, Minor elected president several years ago; popular book study group; fifty to sixty-five women now attend monthly sisterhood meetings; efforts to involve people in committees; worship services at area nursing homes; efforts to make people more comfortable with prayer, formation of cluster prayer groups; retreats at Judson Retreat Center; strengthening bonds of sisterly love by getting to know each other outside of church, circle of women acquaintances at Shiloh has expanded; sisterhood members range in age; Mrs. Beachamp is the eldest member; books read in book study group have led them to read the Bible more and study God's word; committees within sisterhood include education and recruitment; the overall function of the church is as an agent of salvation, that should be its legacy; welcoming, egalitarian attitude of Shiloh, "we don't look down or up because of your status in life";

Tape 1250, Side B

Guesses that changes at Shiloh are due to new members and Reverend Smith bringing in new ideas; the church wants to meet the needs of the people and keep them there; discussion and recommendations of other people from Shiloh for Salaam to interview, like Estelle Beachamp, John Gray, Boyd Remo, Mary Moss, Jerry Alice; interview conclusion.

TAPES: 1 (T1250)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 50 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 27 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Correspondence (3 pgs); Index (6 pgs); Interviewee info sheet; Interview data sheet; Interviewer's comments; Handwritten excerpt

RESTRICTIONS: None