

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Michael Kwa Saah-Buckman

COLLECTION: 4700.0848

IDENTIFICATION: Pastor of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church and Private School

INTERVIEWER: S. Green, P. Jacobi

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

INTERVIEW DATE: June 12, 1997

FOCUS DATES: 1918 - 1997

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1222, Side A

Introduction; St. Francis Xavier founded in 1918 exclusively for African Americans by Diocese of New Orleans; also established a school at that time by closing orphanage; lost high school with the construction of I-10 and I-110; is administered by the Josephite fathers and Holy Family of Nuns; family church without territorial boundaries, encourages talents to be exhibited; located on the 1100 block of 11th Street in Baton Rouge; described as a young, African American, gifted, spiritual, and active congregation of about 650 families; 75th Anniversary and an African Pastor are significant events; St. Francis' location and being the only African American Catholic Church with a school makes it unique; typical Sunday includes choir, acknowledgement of visitors, announcements, "From the Pastor's Desk," service, remarks, social gatherings before everybody goes home; has a partnership with St. Thomas More to deal with racism; St. Francis' African American spirituality makes worship unique; Saah-Buckman is a spiritual leader, administrator, and community minister to St. Francis; he also has a passion for education; father, John Benjamin Buckman; mother, Elizabeth Nyankah; was educated in Catholic schools; degree of philosophy and theology from St. Peter's Regional Seminary in Ghana; came to United States in 1987; ordained in 1993; attended University of New Orleans and DeSalis School of Theology; assigned to St. Francis in 1996 as Father Norvel left; St. Francis Xavier school ended the year with 295 students in pre-K to 8th grade and 65 % are catholic; 24 children in the daycare; 98% of students are African American; community outreach of Alcoholics Anonymous, St. Vincent DePaul, and Boy Scouts; helped the community through worshiping community and family; will provide list of potential interviews and booklet for the St. Francis Xavier 75th Anniversary.

TAPES: 1 (T1222)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 34 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 16 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Index, Notes and Words list, Interview Comments, Interview Data Sheet, Correspondence

RESTRICTIONS: None