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Jackson, Mississippi

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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I, Lee E. Williams, have read the above and, in
(Interviewee, please print)

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Lee E. Williams
Interviewee (Signature)

Date

Interview with Dr. Lee E. Williams
Date of Interview: 28 October 1977; Jackson, Mississippi
Interviewer: Deborah McGlothlin
Transcriber: W. M. McClendon

McGlothlin: Today is October 28, we are now in the office of Dr. Lee Williams, Vice President for Administration, the topic will be Historical Landmarks in the Farish Street Historic District.

My first question is are you a homeowner in that district?

Williams: Yes, I am a property owner in the district.

McGlothlin: Where is the property located?

Williams: That property that I own is located at 832 Dryphus Street and 209 George Street.

McGlothlin: Have you been a homeowner for many years?

Williams: I have been at 832 Dryphus Street since 1924.

McGlothlin: At that time were there many Black realtors or homeowners?

Williams: Yes, there were a number of Black homeowners in the District in 1924. It was more homeowners then than it is now. Because some of the property that was owned by individuals as homes now have become rental property. At that time there was a larger number of homeowners.

McGlothlin: You say that you've been renting for many years, what I was really trying to find out was was there a problem at that time, say with the Black Realtors as compared with the number of White Realtors that were in the area?

Williams: I don't recall if there was any problem with or between Blacks and Whites as homeowners at that particular time. Now you had Black property owners as well as White property owners, you had Black people who lived in the area and who rented property to a large extent. You had Dr. S. D. Redmond who was a medical doctor and a lawyer who lived on Church Street. He owned a considerable amount of property which exceed a hundred or more houses, for that matter. As well as property on Farish Street and there was Mr. Conic who was at the corner of Blair Street and Church Street, that owned considerable property in that area. His children still own the property in the area. So, Blacks did own property in 1924 and many of them owned individual homes in 1924 when we first moved in that area.

WILLIAMS, Lee Dr.

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McGlothlin: I understand that this area is considered a slum area.
Is it considered a slum area?

Williams: Well, to some people it may be a slum area and to others
maybe it's a little blighted but those who live there
don't consider it to be no slum area.

McGlothlin: Did the homeowners, did any of them live in the area?
Did you ever live in the area?

Williams: Yes, I lived in there from 1924 to 1954.

McGlothlin: And the homeowners were never considered like they were
in a separate class from the people who lived there?

Williams: I don't think that there was any feeling on the part of
the people, now there are some people who have been renting
in the same place for 10, 15, 20, 25 years for that matter,
but I don't know whether there were any distinct feelings,
that there was a class difference between people who
owned property over against those who did not. I know
that those who owned it appreciated and probably paid a
little bit more attention to their property, and that
kind of a thing, as opposed to those who did not own it.
But so far as a class difference, I don't know that there
was.

McGlothlin: Do you recall anything about a Black bank, The American
Bank?

Williams: Yes, there was a Black bank, but it went out of existence
before I appeared on the scene. I think that you prob-
ably may be able to find something out about that from
Mrs. Rhodes in the library. She has a book that was
published in 1912 about Negroes and their success in
business and that kind of a thing. You might be able
to find out something about that from her, but I don't
remember anything about it during the time that I was in
the area. There were Negroes who owned cafes and drug-
stores and that type of things. One of Dr. Redmond's
brothers owned a drugstore down there on Farish Street,
and of course there was Claude Hodges in the area who
was on Farish Street. He was the first Black to put
up a filling station in the State of Mississippi. The
dance halls for Blacks and that type of thing were located
on Farish Street. You had the Red Circle and we had the
Savoy, and then you had the Crystal Palace. One of those
was a dancehall and were frequented by Blacks where
W. C. Handy played, Louis Armstrong played, Andy Kirk
and the Clouds of Joy, and Sellistine from New Orleans,
just on and on. All of the big bands came down on
Farish Street and were playing down there.

McGlothin: Did you ever go to any of those dances?

Williams: Yes, I started going to them when I was in the third grade and I stopped when they stopped coming. I would go back if they came back.

McGlothin: So, it wasn't really any restrictions that you can remember, whether children could go down there at that time?

Williams: Well, there were no restrictions, you see what you have to realize that in that time, Blacks and Whites were completely separated. It was no question about your going to the Edwards Hotel because you knew you weren't going there, see. That was clear. Whites understood that and Blacks understood that. So Blacks went to their respective places and Whites went to theirs. It was just in the sixties when the things began to change, but in that time there was no question about where you were going and what you were going to do and that kind of thing. That's clear.

McGlothin: Are those businesses still down there in the Farish Street area?

Williams: There are some of the businesses still in the Farish Street area. I don't know. . .there are some of the barber shops still down there. The Paramount Barber Shop and some of the places that Conic owned are still down there. Some of the Doctor's offices are still there, and Collins Funeral Home I think started there in 1911, or somewhere like that, by Miss Clarie Collins' father and it is still in operation and I think she would be a good person for you to talk to because she was born in the area and raised in the area.

McGlothin: Miss Collins

Williams: Clarie Collins Harvey, and she has received world recognition for her activities with women and various organizations and that type of thing. She would be a good person for you to talk with about the area because she was born down there and raised down there.

McGlothin: You say that you started going to those places when you were in the third grade. . .that was what I was wondering about. How old were you in the third grade or what. . . you know.

Williams: Well, I suppose in a sense that I was in the third, started

Williams: off in the 1st grade. I was ten years old when I completed the 1st grade. After that I got several double promotions that moved me up through the ranks real fast. I came from Rankin County and of course when I came to Jackson Public School System, instead of starting me off where I was suppose to be they disregarded what was done in Rankin County and started me off in the 1st grade. So, I guess I was about 13 years old.

McGlothlin: Was that practiced a lot with the public schools?

Williams: Yes, a good deal of that was practice because the public schools were assuming that they were better than the schools in the open country and they tend to put people where they thought they were fit. Same thing was true if anybody left the Jackson Public School System and went to Chicago, they were put back because they felt that they had not received the fundamental that they should have received.

McGlothlin: What school did you attend?

Williams: I went to Smith Robertson.

McGlothlin: You started there in the 1st grade?

Williams: Started there in the 1st grade. Mrs. Lanier was my teacher. Principal Lanier's wife was my 1st teacher. My next teacher was Miss Davenport, who is retired and lives here in the city now. She has been retired some 15 or 20 years. She taught at Smith Robertson. My next teacher was Miss Sally Reynolds. The Sally Reynolds' School over here is named for her. The next teacher was Miss Mary Marshall, the Marshall School is named after her. So those were some of the teachers. The next teacher that I had was Mrs. Betty Marino, that is who the Marino YWCA is named after. So those were some of the teachers that I had at Smith Robertson at that time. Professor Lanier was the Principal and of course Lanier High School was named after him.

McGlothlin: Did you attend the eight years there?

Williams: No, I attended six years at Smith Robertson School and started the 7th grade at Lanier High School, when it was on Ash Street. Lanier High School use to be located on Ash Street where the Roann School is. Then they moved it over to where it is located now.

McGlothlin: Well, at that time how many choices did you have?

Williams: What kind of choices?

McGlothlin: For schools to go to.

Williams: Well, it wasn't no choice for the school for you to go to.

Williams: You could either go to Jackson State University, they had a high school or the Catholic School, they had a high school. It wasn't but one public Black high school in Jackson and that was Lanier High School. It was not more than 3 public Black high schools in the State of Mississippi at that time in 1920.

McGlothlin: What type of activities did you all carry on at school?

Williams: The same type of activities that you carry on now. (laughter) We had a football team, a basketball team, we had a debating society, and we had distinguished visitors and lectures to listen to like Roscoe C. Simmons and so on and Bishop S. L. Green. All of those people came and we had Chaplain and assembly programs and some unusually good teachers, dedicated teachers. That's the reason I said that they were unusual because they were dedicated to the subject they were teaching and dedicated to moving their students forward.

McGlothlin: Well, at that time, you say the instructors are, that all of them did have degrees or did they have their same level of education that they were self taught.?

Williams: All of them, more or less, had degrees. Now every body at that time people who could finish the eight grade, then they could start teaching. Then the Bachelor's Degree was rarer than the Doctorate's Degree now. Most people started teaching when they finished the 8th grade. You could be certified by the County Superintendent and you could teach if you finished the 12th grade you were in a very good position to get a job as a teacher. It's just since 1954 that they began to require that everybody who taught in the public schools would have a Bachelor's Degree. Most of the people who taught in the colleges at that time only had a Bachelor's Degree and anybody teaching in college who had a Master's Degree was an unusual person.

McGlothlin: Were the courses standard? Did they have the standard system and the same books as the White schools?

Williams: They had the standard system. Now they started giving free textbooks during the time of Governor Paul B. Johnson's Administration and of course, all of the students had free books. Now there might have been a few cases when all of them didn't have enough books, but all of them had free books and had the same books. Some few isolated situations the white folks would take all the new books and give the Negroes the used books. But that did not obtain in too many places but that did obtain in some places.

McGlothlin: Well did you all study any Black History?

Williams: We have always had Black History Week since the very beginning. We had to study Black History because we had Black History Week, of course during that time of course, emphasis would be placed on outstanding Negroes like Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver. I personally had the opportunity to meet Dr. George Washington Carver, at that time he was experimenting on some extractions that he had made from peanuts to cure athletic feet. You know when you get your feet infected with athletic fungus. . . and he had made something from peanuts which he gave to me to see if it would do my feet any good.

McGlothlin: Did it work?

Williams: I don't think it worked. It was a rich experience to meet him and talk with him about this. It may be that I didn't do what I was suppose to have done, but he did. . .

McGlothlin: Do you remember a baker that was influential in the area?

Williams: Baker?

McGlothlin: A baker, like it was a donut shop that was involved in politics?

Williams: I don't know anything about a. . .I do, I can't think of the man's name. There were some fellows there on Farish Street that had a bakery shop between Farish Street and on Farish Street between Church Street and Monument Street, but I can't think of their names. It was right across the street there from Crescent Laundry. There were two men who had a bakery shop there and sold candy and that kind of thing. Their names do not come to me at this time. Now you might talk to Dr. Funchess and he has lived in the area and his mother still lives in the area. He lived in the area from 1924 up until now. He lived next door. You know Doctor Funchess?

McGlothlin: Yes.

Williams: That's his mother that live next door to where you. . .

McGlothlin: Miss Martha.

Williams: Yes. He might be able to help you with some of those things because he lived in the area for a long time. But I can't think of the man's name. I think they called it Candy Kitchen or something like that down there on Farish Street.

Williams: I don't know, the only person that were involved in politics in that area was Dr. Redmond. He was involved in that district. Willie Roy Patton whose in the Industrial Arts Shop, he was born on McKee Street in that area. Mr. Lawrence Campbell, who works in Industrial Arts was born in that area, he lived in that area on Dryphus Hill.

McGlothin: Did any of those people attend Smith Robertson also?

Williams: Yes. They all attended Smith Robertson and Lanier High School. Mr. Patton and Mr. Campbell, they were my high school graduates. We were finishing Lanier High School at the same time.

McGlothin: Do you remember when the Smith Robertson School was burned?

Williams: Burned, I don't remember when it was burned, no, I don't recall. When it burned? What year?

McGlothin: I can't recall the year myself now.

Williams: I don't remember anything about Smith Robertson being burned.

McGlothin: The structure that is there now was rebuilt since the first structure.

Williams: Yes, it has been modified two or three times, it is essentially the same structure but it has been modified. I don't know how exactly how it has been modified. You probably will have to go to the City of Jackson where they would have records of whatever changes they made in that building. See that's the first building for Blacks to go to school in the City of Jackson. That was the building for Blacks. After that then they had Jim Hill down here next door to the Masonic Temple, where the City has that property down there. That Jim Hill that was the next school that was built in the City of Jackson and then following that the Martin School down here in South Jackson. So those were the three principal schools for Blacks in the City of Jackson.

McGlothin: Did you ever teach at any of those schools?

Williams: No, I never taught at any of those schools. I have not taught any place except Jackson State University. I received my diploma in May and was hired to work here in July, and I haven't been anywhere else. All of my teaching has been at Jackson State University.

McGlothin: In that area over there by Lamar do you remember there ever being anything there other than that (you know where that

McGlothin: grave yard is on the other side of Lamar)?

Williams: Nothing that I know of has ever been there except the cemetery. It was there when I got here, that cemetery goes way back to the Civil War. Blacks and Whites were buried over there. On the South end of it, Practically all those grave sites are Black and the Whites are on the North end.

McGlothin: Do you remember that intersection always being like that where the street curves back in to go to the George Street area?

Williams: No, that hasn't always been there. The street, George Street, ran all the way through and it's just in recent years that, see that street use to be named Grayson Street, but when they decided to extend Lamar Street from downtown, they brought it through there and replaced Grayson Street with Lamar Street, but it didn't connect. / See Lamar Street did not connect with Grayson Street but they moved out a lot of. . . where the Sun-N-Sand is, all that use to be Black residential property, rental property and that was Grayson Street all the way down to Hamilton Street and there was no street between Hamilton Street and Griffin Street that led into Lamar Street. The City made the move. . . when they got ready to build the Wofork State Office Building they made the street to go all the way through. *slow here*

McGlothin: So it was just a part of expanding the City when they changed it?

Williams: As far as expansion. . .

McGlothin: I understand that High Street at one time wasn't there either, do you recall?

Williams: No, High Street was not there. You see after they developed the Wofork Office Building, State Office Building, the people had to come down North West Street to George Street and then they had to turn to the right on Lamar Street, come on George Street turn right on Lamar Street by the cemetery, go up to Monument Street and then turn to the left in order to get out of the City. In order to speed up the traffic and getting it out of the City, they decided to come through that section and curve around there to make it comfortable for people who worked at the Wofork Office Building to get out of the City quickly. So, that was relatively recent. That was done in conjunction with the Wofork State Office Building and the employees. They found so much difficulties working around streets and around corners trying to get out of there until the State and City made the adjustment and brought High Street all the way from over there. See High Street, stopped at North West Street, but they expanded it and brought it by the State

Williams: Office Building, Wolfork State Office Building and moved houses out of that and cut the street around there.

McGlothin: Do you remember the streets always being paved?

Williams: No. The streets haven't always been paved.

McGlothin: Around. . .not since you were living in the area. . .

Williams: No, when we first moved in that area, none of the streets were paved when I moved in the area in 1924, none of the streets were paved, we did not have gas and not all people had lights for that matter, and water, there was no water inside of the buildings. There were common hydrants that people went to to get water from, the people didn't have individual hydrants. You just had one out there in the neighborhood and everybody drew their water from that individual hydrant in that area. Later on they fixed the hydrants so that they could have them inside of the house, or on the back porch of the individual. Then after that it has just been since Leland Speed was Mayor of the City of Jackson that they eliminated outside toliets which people either dug holes and put the excretion in the ground or you had men who specialized in moving excretions from the toliets, and were paid a sum of money to come around and clean the toliets out. That's an unusual individual.

McGlothin: During this time, you say you also attended Mt. Helm Church, was that Church there when you were a kid?

Williams: That church has been there since 1867. It was originally a part of the First Baptist Church and the Blacks worshipped in the basement and the White people worshipped upstairs. When the Negroes were set free they made so much noise around there shouting and going until they put them out, and they came down to the corner of Church and Lamar Street, Grayson Street then and a Mr. Helm, I don't know who he was, gave them a piece of property there to build themselves a church.

McGlothin: So you are saying that church was integrated, I mean not integrated but Blacks and Whites used the same facility, just different parts.

Williams: Blacks used the same facility, but you understand now that in slavery time, Blacks could not hold any kind of church service except that there were some White person of standing at least three of some kind of a standing in the community that was with them when they had their worship service.

Williams: They weren't down there by themselves. They were down there and they carried on their services under the supervision of Whites until after the Civil War, they were set free and then they could do what they want, but the church had its beginning in 1835 where services were conducted under the supervision of Whites and then in 1867 they started operating on its own.

McGlothlin: Well how do you recall it being when you were there as a child?

Williams: It . . . as a child it was, you have to keep . . . separate slavery from freedom. I went there first in 1924 and in 1924 it was like it is now except you had far more members. You had about 800 members. But people who lived in that area had moved out of there all over the City of Jackson. That was essentially the Black neighborhood except there were some people who lived on the West side of Jackson and some who lived in Washington Addition but that was essentially the neighborhood when I went there in 1924. But people have moved out from there all over the City of Jackson. Mt. Helm is more or less the mother church for a number of churches. Pearlie Grove Baptist Church was a mission out of Mt. Helm Church, Cade Chapel was a mission out of Mt. Helm Church, and Greater Clark Street Church was a mission out of Mt. Helm Baptist Church and Farish Street Church is a split out of Mt. Helm Church. The Temple, the Holiness people split out of Mt. Helm Church and the sanctified people, the Church of God is a split out of Mt. Helm Church, so that was "the" Church. You had in there C. P. Jones who was the one that moved the Holiness group. . . he was gonna make Mt. Helm Church into a Holiness Church, and then of course they took him to Court and the judge ruled that that section of the land was given to them for a Baptist Church and therefore it had to remain a Baptist Church. So therefore, he went over on the next corner and put up a brushhopper and built the Temple Church up there, which the movement had spreaded all over the United States. He was a powerful leader, charismatic. He had charisma. He heard people talking about charisma. Well he had it. He walked, he would be out on the . . . people could be in church and they would be singing and praying and he would walk out on the yard and you would hear him laugh, and he said he was walking and talking with Christ, and the people believed him.

McGlothlin: Well did you believe it?

Williams: I don't know whether. . . I have seen him do it but I didn't necessarily believe it but I was there, I saw him do that

Williams: and I would see him when he came in the church the first thing he would do was fall to his knees and pray and you would think that, if you ever seen the President come in at the Republican or Democratic Convention, that's the kind of reception that he would get, from those who believed in him.

McGlothin: So he was sort of a leader.

Williams: He wasn't sort of a leader. He was a leader. He had charisma and people, thousands of people, quit other churches to join him.

McGlothin: Well did he do anything to organize the church on a different structure?

Williams: Well he organized, you'd have to get the history of the Holiness movement to know what he did. Now I think if you see Mr. Frank Moore, he can give you a book, I don't say that he would sell you one, which will tell you the history of the Holiness movement that was associated with the Temple Church. It's a national thing now, but they had a history of the church and if you read the history of the church then you can see what he did in terms of organizing the church.

McGlothin: Did you ever involve yourself in any of these organizations?

Williams: Not in that organization because I was a member of Mt. Helm Church.

McGlothin: I'm talking about organizations like maybe to led, the people, like maybe take a leadership role.

Williams: Well my leadership role in that area has been in relationship with Mt. Helm Baptist Church. Of course I have been associated with Mt. Helm Baptist Church since 1935. I have been a member of the Brotherhood Bible Class since that time. I have served as the President of the Brotherhood Bible Class since 1954. I have served as a Trustee of Mt. Helm Baptist Church and I have served on the pulpit committee and I was instrumental in selecting Reverend T. B. Brown to be the pastor of Mt. Helm Baptist Church some 18 or 19 years ago. Now of course we didn't have any organizations as such but there were some of us who lived in the area, like Mr. Duke Williams over here, who is the President of Security Life Insurance Company. Now he just moved out from there. . .

McGlothin: That's across the street?

Williams: Right across the street. Now he lived in the area until about three years ago. No he can tell you something about it. There is a Mr. Carsie A. Hall, who has lived in the area for oh; 15, 20, or 30 years and he's living down there now. . . . What I started to say was that at the time that Senator Bilbo was running for the Senate at the last time, he was talking about tar and feathering and shooting all Negroes who went to the polls to vote. There were some of us who organized ourselves in the area, determined that we were going to vote.

McGlothin: Is this Bilbo the same one that has the statue in. . . and who did you say he was?

Williams: Senator Theodore G. Bilbo? Who was the Governor of the State on two occasions, and for several years he was a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

McGlothin: What was the controversy with him with the Black community?

Williams: Well there was no controversy with him and the Black community it was just that the people who had authority, he was their spokesman about what should be the relationship between Blacks and Whites. He was a pupil of _____, who was the Governor of the State. _____ was the man who did not want anything Black around him. He wore white clothes and drove white oxens, so that nothing in his presence would be black. But Bilbo was simply one of his pupils. So he was a spokesman for Whites in terms of their relationship to Negroes and of course what he had to say about Negroes was not complimentary, wasn't good, was not helpful. White folks were in absolute control and of course Bilbo was their spokesman.

McGlothin: How did you all's campaign against him come out?

Williams: Well, he had things operating. . . .at a funny kind of a way, of course many Blacks left the State of Mississippi, because they were unhappy and as a result of their going to Chicago and their going to New York and their going to California, they were able to vote for Congressmen and Representatives who would speak up for Blacks in the area that were oppressed, just like people are speaking out against South Africa now. Of course the situation in the South was never as bad as it is in South Africa, but it was not a good situation. So, through the Representatives and Congress and that type of thing continuously pressure brought the change. That was just one area. Of course you had the NAACP, the boy in the chain situation, and you had a lot of other groups and people who were working for change.

McGlothin: Do you remember involving yourself in any other type of movement with the Black people at that time?

Williams: No, in the sense of being an activist, no I was not involved in politics. My thought has primarily been that of an educator.

McGlothin: Well the people in the district around Farish Street area, would you say it was many of them who were illiterate or most of them at least attended some type of school?

Williams: Well I think most of them had attended school but many of them were people who dropped out when they were 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, but the grade level for the State of Mississippi. So, I would think that most people were dropping out of school, they would go until they finished the 6th grade, some of them would complete the 7th grade, and maybe some of them would complete the 8th grade and before they completed the 9th grade, the majority of them would perhaps go on and finish high school and then there is a great drop between high school and college, and then after you get in college, you know 50% of the people who enter as freshmen are gone the next year and that kind of thing.

McGlothin: Do you remember Mt. Helm Church having any type of relationship with Jackson State?

Williams: Yes. Mt. Helm Church, you know, I was not there this was in 1883-1885 or somewhere along in there, Mt. Helm Church was the campus for Jackson State University for two years. So, there has always been a close working relationship between Jackson State University and Mt. Helm Church, because a number of situations, the person who were Chaplain at Jackson State were the Pastor of Mt. Helm Baptist Church. A. L. Rice, of course there's a last example. . .of course there were others who had served as Chaplain down here and were Pastors of Mt. Helm Baptist Church.

McGlothin: Do you remember Dr. Reddix at all?

Williams: Yes, I was here when he came here.

McGlothin: Did he attend Mt. Helm?

Williams: No, he came from a different. . .President Reddix was born in Van Cleave in South Mississippi, then he left there and went to Alabama and from there he went to Gary, Indiana and from Gary, Indiana he came down here. So I didn't know anything about him. . .you see the last person who had any relationship with Jackson State in terms of Chaplain and that kind of thing was Reverend Rice. Now Reverend Rice

Williams: became the pastor of Mt. Helm Baptist Church in 1927 and he passed in 1958, but he was working at Jackson State at that particular time. But President Reddix came to Jackson State in 1940 and he stayed here until he retired in 1967. So I wasn't here during that time that he was the President of the University.

McGlothin: You say you had attended, I mean that you had gone to a lot of those clubs like the Crystal Palace and other places in the Farish Street area, do you remember a place called the red light district?

Williams: Yes, I recall the red light district, it was right along there in the same area as the Alamo Theatre. I think it's still red. It is right across the street from Myers peanut place and that whole section back in there between Farish Street and Amite I mean Mill Street between Hamilton Street and Amite Street was generally considered the red light district.

McGlothin: Why did they really first began calling it that?

Williams: I don't know. They were called red light districts all over, you know. The type of activity that was going on there, it was generally an area where prostitutes operating out of was called the red light district. I think in most countries they were called the red light district.

McGlothin: What the Black and Whites didn't have good relationships, did the Whites ever come down there in the red light district?

Williams: I don't know whether you would call it good relations or nor, yet you have always had White people down there searching for Black women. I don't necessarily call it good relations but that went on.

McGlothin: Did they just hang in the red light district or did they ever go to any of those clubs?

Williams: The number who attended the clubs were few and far apart. They were not clubs in the sense that you have clubs now. They were dance halls, and no drinks or anything like that was sold, but you had a dance hall that was public dance halls that bands came to play in. People paid a fee to go into the dance halls.

McGlothin: What I was wondering is, you know in the area on the corner of Farish and Monument, do you recall there ever being anything else there other than where the "Y" is now?

Williams: Farish and Monument where the "Y" is. I don't recall exactly what was there, I know the cleaners was there, it use to be a residential home. Somebody had a home there but I don't recall, it's been so long ago until I don't recall what it looked like but it was a home there.

McGlothin: The swimming pool was always there?

Williams: No, the swimming pool was built in conjunction with the "YMCA" and that of course was something that was built down there since 1940 I suppose.

McGlothin: But you recall it being there for you to swim in, did you go swimming there?

Williams: No. That was put there somewhere around 1950. The "Y" was built there first, then the swimming pool was added to that later. The swimming pool hadn't been there no more than 10 years.

McGlothin: Well what did you do about swimming when you were a kid?

Williams: When I was swimming in the country, we always had swimming holes. They were holes that we went to to swim in in the open country.

McGlothin: Well you had to leave the area that you lived in. . .

Williams: You have to understand now when I was in the country, I came to Jackson when I was 10 years old. I didn't go swimming anywhere after I came to Jackson. There was only one swimming hole in the City of Jackson and that was the one out here near the Zoo and the White people had that one. The Negroes didn't go in that one. You see there was no place for Negroes to go to swim until they built this place over here that was in back of College Park Auditorium. That's the first City facility for Blacks to swim. Then of course in the last two or three years, they rebuilt these swimming places over and around about here in the City.

McGlothin: Well before then, what did the Blacks do besides go maybe in the pool hall area?

Williams: Well, some of them. . .you talking about what did they do for recreation?

McGlothin: Right.

Williams: Well, there were some of them who went to dance halls and some of them a great number of people did, they use to have those house parties. A lot of people had house parties.

Williams: People went from house to house and had parties and enjoyed themselves that way. A lot of people had picnics. Practically all of the churches and that kind of thing had a picnic. A lot of people played baseball. There were a lot of things going on.

McGlothin: Did you ever play baseball?

Williams: I played some.

McGlothin: What is one of the most important things that maybe influenced you or that you remember about living over in that area?

Williams: I suppose the Church is perhaps is the thing that influenced me more than anything else so far as living in the area is concerned.

McGlothin: Do you ever think about any plans of preservation in that area? Is there anything worth preserving?

Williams: You said is there anything worth preserving?

McGlothin: That you feel that is worth preserving in the area over there?

Williams: Well there are a lot of things over there that I think would be worth preserving. There's Dr. Redmond's home over there that I think would be worth preserving because he was a leading citizen in the City of Jackson during that time and he was the first man in the City of Jackson to have an automobile. He had to get special permission from the Mayor and the Commissioners to take it off the railroad track to drive it on the streets. So, I think that his home is worthy of preservation. You have a club here on campus named for him the Sidney Redmond Law Club or something like that. So I think that would be worth preserving, there's a building down there on Farish Street that was built by the Scotts, who published the Newspaper The Atlanta World, or something like that. They started off down there on Farish Street, that building would be worth preserving. I think there are some other buildings down there Dr. Miller I think down there on Farish Street, Dr. Miller. . .physician over there.

McGlothin: Is that the same one that owns property in this area?

Williams: Yes. His mother and father were doctors and I think they had offices down there on Farish Street.

McGlothlin: Were there any jobs for children at that time?

Williams: Yes, there were jobs for children but they were not the kind you have. You see, my job was. . .I was more or less a yard boy/house boy. I had the responsibility of cutting the grass for a family on North State Street, you know where the Admiral Bimbo is?

McGlothlin: Yes.

Williams: Right across the street from there. My job was to cut the grass on the yard and trim the hedges and cultivate the flowers, to clean up the house, the bathtub and that kind of thing. In the winter time it was my responsibility to make fires. You didn't have gas then. We made fires from coal. It was my responsibility to make fires for this family to get up and get warm by. I had to leave Dryphus Street and walk in the cold, rain, and sleet and all of that and go over there and make the fire so that they could get up and be warmed by it.

McGlothlin: And how much did they pay you for this?

Williams: Oh, I think the highest amount was, if I added it up, was about \$3 per day.

McGlothlin: Was this the average for other young boys that did this type of work?

Williams: I would think so. Course I got extra money because the woman that was the head of the house, she always saw to it that I got plenty to eat. She always saw to it that I got extra money. She always gave me extra money. Before they adopted the State about textbooks, she always bought my books. She always kept money under her apron that the rest of them didn't know nothing about.

McGlothlin: Did many boys in the area have a job doing similar things?

Williams: Every White family on North State Street had Black yard boys, they'd clean yards and they had a maid and a cook.

McGlothlin: Well a maid and cook were these more or less parents or did they have. . .

Williams: Most of them were parents who lived in the area that you are talking about. You see before you had the Crescent Laundry, and all of that area there practically everybody, the women were either doing one of two things, three things. She was either a maid in the house or either she

Williams: was wash woman or she was just cook in some of the homes of the White family.

McGlothin: Were the only skilled jobs teaching jobs?

Williams: The only skilled jobs to any extent were teaching jobs. Now there were a lot of people who had jobs as Porters, what you call Porters, those people who drove trucks and that kind of thing for companies and so on.

McGlothin: Did your family own a car at that time?

Williams: No, they didn't. When we came to Jackson we had a horse and buggy.

McGlothin: How was it considered at that time, was it common for people to have a horse and buggy or was this sort of considered an advantage?

Williams: Most people had horse and buggy. There were a few people who had cars.

McGlothin: Blacks?

Williams: Blacks and Whites.

McGlothin: Did any Blacks have. . .

Williams: Yes, there were ones that had cars. There were a good number of Blacks that had cars. We just happen not to be one of the first ones to have one. I think Dr. Redmond and Dr. Johnson and a number of other families of course had cars. We didn't have one.

McGlothin: The other thing I want to ask you about business is about being a businessman, do you consider yourself a businessman like in that area would you consider selling those houses, in that area to someone else or consider just redoing them?

Williams: I am not a businessman in the sense of renting, buying and selling rental property. Not in that sense. The property that I have in that area is family property. I simply keep it because my mother built that house and the whold family, you have so much of inheritance tied up in it, and that's the only reason that I keep it.

McGlothin: Did the White realtors still out number the amount of Black renters and home owners?

Williams: I would think that the number of Whites who owned property in there, I don't know whether the White property owners would out number the Black property owners in that area or not. I know that they have a great deal of holdings in there, but so far as rental property I think that Whites might own more of that than Blacks. That's to say that the rental property that they own out distants that of the ownership, it may be so now, but at one time it didn't.

McGlothin: Do you have any thoughts of buying any more property in the area if they are willing to sell?

Williams: No, because I'm not in the business of Real Estate. If you want to talk to somebody that owns Real Estate in the area, you need to talk to Mr. E. W. Banks and People's Funeral Home. He owns considerable property in the area. You would need to talk to Mr. Stewart, I can't think of his first name now, he's an associate of. . .

McGlothin: Is it Peter?

Williams: Not Peter Stewart. I'm talking about Stewart that's associated with the People's Funeral Home, Walter Stewart. He owns a considerable amount of property in the area, and all over the City of Jackson. So you need to talk with somebody like him about property ownership and investments and that kind of thing because he's heavily involved in that kind of thing. Walter Stewart at People's Funeral Home and Mr. E. W. Banks, at Peoples's Funeral Home.

McGlothin: Since you moved out of the area, I sense that you have no reason to want to go back in that area and live again.

Williams: I don't know how you sense that. No, I don't have any plans to go back in that area and live, but I could. It would be no great problem for me to adjust to live in the area.

McGlothin: Where are you living at now?

Williams: I live at 6325 Whitestone Road.

McGlothin: Is that a house, you are now a homeowner?

Williams: Yes.

McGlothin: Well I think that will be all and I really appreciate this interview with you.

Williams: Okay, thank you very much. . .

McGlothin: I think that it will be valuable. . .

WILLIAMS, Lee Dr.

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Williams: I appreciate your coming in.

END OF TAPE