

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

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** Avis Baker-White

**COLLECTION:** 4700.0641

**IDENTIFICATION:** 1943 graduate and longtime teacher at McKinley High School

**INTERVIEWER:** Carmen Posey

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

**INTERVIEW DATE:** June 22, 1995

**FOCUS DATES:** 1939-1970s

**ABSTRACT:**

**Tape 931, Side A**

Introduction; born in Baton Rouge; parents' education; mother was a domestic worker; father was janitor at bank; father started the building fund at Mount Zion Church; Baker-White is retired teacher; post-World War II school overcrowding; was the first black business education teacher; attended McKinley from 1939-43; fear of her fellow high school students; memories of athletic coaches; principal James Frazier was strong disciplinarian; dedicated teachers; was in home-ec club; performed in March Rhetorical variety show fundraiser; parents were role models; mother always knew when she misbehaved; Mr. Frazier's three sons all had wives named Gladys; Mr. J.D. Young, math teacher, was her favorite; spent afternoons doing chores and homework; went to movies on Saturdays; McKinley had huge influence on African Americans in Baton Rouge; moving story of her grandfather registering to vote; she ran for school board; actively participated in Civil Rights Movement; regrets sending black students to hostile white schools during desegregation; integration strategy of sending students to white schools for courses not offered at McKinley; she was first distributive education teacher at McKinley; McKinley teachers lived in the neighborhood; names graduates who have gone on to successful careers; since retirement, feels that McKinley has not taken advantage of what she could give as a volunteer; taught at McKinley when first white teachers came; retired before student body integrated; music teacher A.E. Carter; integration of black and white teachers, called "crossover"; Baker-White preferred McKinley, never opted to teach at another school; watched thirty-plus years of McKinley basketball games; fondly remembers integration of athletics; education was her major goal as a young person; glad the oral history of McKinley is finally being recorded; lists principals she taught under; suggests other people to interview.

**TAPES:** 1 (T931)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 39 minutes

**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 20 pages

**OTHER MATERIALS:** Correspondence

**RESTRICTIONS:** None