

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Charles T. Smith

COLLECTION: 4700.0714

IDENTIFICATION: Charles Smith is the pastor of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. He is a McKinley High School graduate (1948) who grew up in South Baton Rouge.

INTERVIEWER: Michael Goods and Rudolph Henry

PROJECT: McKinley High School Oral History Project: African American Businesses

INTERVIEW DATES: July 15, 1996

FOCUS DATES: 1940s - 1996

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1041

Born May 26, 1932; moved to South Baton Rouge at age two; parents Dudley and Hattie, brother who died in 1956; south and center areas of Baton Rouge; lists businesses in the community in the 1940s and 1950s, drug stores, restaurants, grocery stores, barbershops, department stores; eating out at Delpit's Chicken Shack; remembers businesses sponsoring youth sports teams; explains how African American businesses could not compete after integration because white businesses were better financed; best times for business in South Baton Rouge was the mid-forties to late fifties; loss of businesses led to blight; many closed business of Government Street; minority-owned businesses must be well financed to compete; describes a typical day in the neighborhood; recreational activities and entertainment; explains how African American businesses sustained an independent middle class of African Americans who did not depend on whites; believes the church is the most independent organization of African Americans in existence; as pastor, he employs over thirty African Americans, more than the national average for African American-owned businesses; lists businesses on East Boulevard near old McKinley.

TAPES: 1 (T1041)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 19 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 9 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Correspondence, Excerpt list

RESTRICTIONS: None