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Interview with

ALMA CLARK

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Place of Interview: Denton, TX

Interviewer: Sherelyn Yancey

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Oral History Collection

Alma Clark

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Ms. Yancey: My name is Sherelyn Yancey. I'm from the University of North Texas Oral History Program. I'm here to interview our narrator today, who is Mrs. Alma Clark. We're doing this interview in her home at 1129 East Hickory in Denton, Texas. Today's date is September 29, 2006. For the benefit of any listeners in years to come, we are going to discuss the Quakertown legacy from the point of view of African Americans who lived [in the neighborhood] and were forced to relocate and move out of Quakertown and dismantle it to build a new African American community in Solomon Hill, east of the railroad tracks. We want to talk a little bit about how that happened and why that happened. So, do I

have your consent, Mrs. Clark to interview you for this?

Clark: **Yes, you do.**

Yancey: **Feel free to use that voice I know you've got, and I will, too. Where we always begin is: where were you born, and what is your birth date?**

Clark: **I was born in Lampasas, Texas, January 24, 1928.**

Yancey: **Who were your parents?**

Clark: **My parents were Cliff Espy and Ruby Espy.**

Yancey: **All right. What year did you graduate from high school?**

Clark: **I graduated there in 1944, but it only went to the tenth grade because it was an all-black school. Therefore, I went to Austin, Texas, and completed the eleventh and twelfth grades in Austin, Texas, and I graduated from Anderson High School.**

Yancey: **Is that an all-black high school?**

Clark: **That was an all-black high school.**

Yancey: **What was that, 1940--?**

Clark: **That would be 1945-46.**

Yancey: **Okay. Then how did you come to meet your husband?**

Clark: He was pastoring a church in the city of Austin and I met him there. He was a Methodist minister and I was a Baptist lady, but I went into a restaurant one evening and he happened to be in there and we struck up a conversation and a relationship. So after six years of courtship I married him in 1958.

Yancey: 1958?

Clark: 1958.

Yancey: Tell me about what move that you had gone through when you met and married in Austin. How did you come to Denton, Texas?

Clark: He owned a home here in Denton, and by him being a Methodist minister--at this time we had three children. So I told him, “I know Methodists move about a great deal and I said I didn’t want to be having to take my children from one place to another. Since you own a home in Denton, let’s go to Denton.” He moved us here in the summer of 1962. But then he had to go back to Austin to finish out his conference year. And his conference year was over with in November. He asked for a transfer out of the Central Texas Conference to the North Texas Conference of the

African Methodist Episcopal Church. That is how we ended [up] here in Denton.

Yancey: **Go ahead and give me his full name, if you would please.**

Clark: **His name was William McKinley Clark, and he was better known as "Willie" Clark.**

Yancey: **And what ages and names are there for your children when you moved here in 1958?**

Clark: **The oldest one was three. His name was Quentin. The girl was two. Her name was Rubylene. And the baby was six months. His name was Cletus.**

Yancey: **Are they all alive in the present? [Did] they all survive you?**

Clark: **Quentin died in 1993. Cletus lives in Brandon, Florida. Ruby lives next door at 1121 East Hickory.**

Yancey: **Your daughter lives right next door?**

Clark: **Right next door.**

Yancey: **Is this plot of land, where we are at on Hickory, the very spot that your husband brought you to in 1958?**

Clark: **Yes, and we lived in the Quakertown house that was moved from Terry Street from 1962 until**

November of 2005, when it was torn down to build the house that I am living in right now.

Yancey: **This brick home?**

Clark: **This brick home that I am living in now. It was built, and I moved into it the Saturday before Easter of this year. But from 1962 up until November of [2005], I lived in one of the Quakertown homes that was moved here, which was his mother's home. Well, his home also.**

Yancey: **That he grew up in--**

Clark: **That he grew up in.**

Yancey: **In Quakertown?**

Clark: **In Quakertown. And when they moved over here, they bought property along with his stepfather. So this side of Hickory Street was owned by the Hembrys from--let's see, there are about four houses. The house next door was my husband's property, which I deeded over to our daughter after his death. He died in 1991.**

Yancey: **I'm sorry. Did he pastor at St. James?**

Clark: **No. He never pastored at St. James. His pastorate was--when I first met him, he was pastoring a church in Austin. And from Austin we went to a town called Bartlett, Texas. Then we**

came to Denton, and they sent him to the town called--I've forgotten the name of it. Well, anyway, then he pastored in Maypearl and Dallas and then Lewisville.

Yancey: **He would then go there from your Denton home?**

Clark: **Yes. And we would accompany him when it was necessary.**

Yancey: **But was your home base this transferred [Quakertown house]? This was the home where the kids went to school?**

Clark: **This is where the children grew up and went to school, and all they know is Denton.**

Yancey: **So you wanted, it sounds like, stability.**

Clark: **Yes.**

Yancey: **He went out to pastor.**

Clark: **He went out to pastor. He would come back--and we would go with him sometimes when he would go to pastor.**

Yancey: **Tell me a little bit more about what it was like to live in the Quakertown house. Describe your home to me: the kitchen, the living room, how many bedrooms?**

Clark: **When we lived in it we only had two bedrooms, one bath, but we had a large porch that was on the**

east side of the house. Since we had two boys we took this large porch and boxed it in and made a room for the boys so that the boys could have a bedroom. Our rooms were large; they had twelve-foot or ten-foot ceilings and the rooms were fourteen-by-fourteen [feet], most of them, the living room and the dining room were fourteen-by-fourteen and the bedrooms were ten-by-twelve and [it] had a long hall.

After the house was moved from Quakertown over here, in later years when his mother was living, she had an addition built onto it next to the kitchen and that was our laundry room. The kitchen and dining room was on the west side of the house. The house faced Hickory Street, which would be facing south, and it was on the corner of Hickory and Wood Street. When I met and married him we had the property; we had 150 feet one way and 135 feet another way. This is what we boxed in, this part here [See Photograph 1 in Appendix].

Yancey: **I was wondering, yes, so I am going to go ahead and label this while we are talking about it. If**

you want to view that picture, you can tell me a little more about it.

Clark: **This was the screened-in porch right here. The porch went here. This was the front porch here [See Photograph 2 in Appendix].**

Yancey: **Let's put what year this picture was taken.**

Clark: **I don't know.**

Yancey: **Approximately?**

Clark: **I don't have the least idea. I don't know.**

Yancey: **Is this in the Quakertown time or here on East Hickory with us at your lot right now?**

Clark: **To me it looks like it was in the Quakertown time, so I don't know.**

Yancey: **Looks like a dirt road, right here.**

Clark: **Yes, well the roads were dirt when we came here in 1962. Because I helped form a committee along with some of the ladies from the white churches, once they integrated the schools. We formed what we called the Christian Women's Fellowship. And the streets down here in 1962, 1963, and 1964 were not paved. So--**

Yancey: **Still dirt after--**

Clark: **There was still dirt after all those years.**

Yancey: **Wow, 1920.**

Clark: After forming this Christian Women's Fellowship, a group of us--some of us went and integrated--some of us went and got the streets paved. I walked with a lady by the name of Trudy Foster. We got signatures down here and Trudy went before the city council and insisted that they come down here and pave these streets. So I don't know what [year] that house, in the picture, was made out after it came here or when it was over in Quakertown, but it was the Quakertown house.

Yancey: Let me put down who lived in it before you did. This was your husband's mother and father?

Clark: Stepfather.

Yancey: Please give me their names.

Clark: Her name was Maude.

Yancey: M-A-U-D-E?

Clark: Yes.

Yancey: Maude?

Clark: And all I know is C.R. Hembry. He was always referred to as Mr. Hembry.

Yancey: H-E-M--?

Clark: -M-B-R-Y.

Yancey: Okay.

Clark: Hembry.

Yancey: And then this is the parents [See Photograph 3 in Appendix]. This is his stepfather. Parents of--can you give me your husband's name once again?

Clark: Willie.

Yancey: Willie.

Clark: And Walter; he had a brother named Walter.

Yancey: Willie and Walter.

Clark: Clark.

Yancey: Clark.

Clark: Yes.

Yancey: I think you are right. I am going to put that this is--I will just put that is circa 1921, because it is probably before the move, it looks like.

Clark: Could be.

Yancey: There is the yard surrounding and this back here.

Clark: That back there, it looks like it was before they moved.

Yancey: Okay, and then, Alma Clark, that is you. You moved into this house in--?

Clark: 1962.

Yancey: Moved into this house in 1962.

Clark: July 1962.

Yancey: Thank you. This home, you can remember that, even July 1962. And this house was at least--I just was wondering how old it was?

Clark: It was about 100 years old, because I think it was built by 1905 and we tore it down in 2005.

Yancey: 2005. A 100-year-old house. You know, this is a nice looking house.

Clark: Yes. But the foundation was so old that we had to tear it down--I will show you some pictures of it afterwards when we had it all--

Yancey: Okay, we are going to take a pause for a moment to look at a couple of different other pictures.

[Tape Interruption]

Yancey: Okay, let’s just [go over] what you told me here. We are looking at picture number one of the photo memory album [Photograph 1 in Appendix] and we were talking about this older picture of your home when it was in Quakertown [Photograph 2 in Appendix] and then July 1962 is when you came and moved into this home. Go ahead and tell me about the first picture that we are looking at here.

Clark: This is Ruby and I. We are standing in the south entrance of the house which faces Hickory Street. And if you notice, you can see the address.

Yancey: Oh, 1129.

Clark: This was the entrance to the house.

Yancey: Did it have those columns on it when it was in Quakertown?

Clark: Yes.

Yancey: Did they have to move that too?

Clark: Yes, [pointing to photo] there they are.

Yancey: There it is.

Clark: The only alteration from this picture to this picture is that we had them put the aluminum siding onto it. This picture--where the porch was is where we boxed it in to make it a room for the boys.

Yancey: It was a screened--

Clark: It was a screened-in porch.

Yancey: In Quakertown.

Clark: In Quakertown. It was a screened-in porch until we came here in 1962 and when the boys began to grow, then we needed an extra bedroom because it only had two bedrooms and so, therefore--my husband and I had a bedroom. Ruby had a bedroom.

We took this porch and converted it into the bedroom for the two boys, which [were] Quentin and Cletus. This was their bedroom.

Yancey: **And it was the home of their father, Willie and Walter Clark.**

Clark: **Right, right.**

Yancey: **Go ahead. This is [Photograph 2] that we are talking about. Compare the before and after move of the actual home from Quakertown to here on East Hickory and this looks like this is your daughter, Ruby, standing on the left and you are standing on the right to show that you are looking at the window. It that the same?**

Clark: **That is the same window.**

Yancey: **As in the 1921 house?**

Clark: **Yes.**

Yancey: **That is quite a work of art. Now it does surprise me that this is so big and fancy.**

Clark: **Once it came over here and when they put utilities down here, as you can see it has the utilities, when they first moved over here they didn’t have water and lights you know. So they had to--**

Yancey: **What did they do?**

Clark: They had the outside toilet and I forgot the year, but he said that they brought the utilities down here.

Yancey: But his mom and dad, Maude and C.R. Hembry, and Willie and Walter, they all lived here without electricity and without water?

Clark: [Without] running water for a while, yes.

Yancey: Did they have running water when they lived in Quakertown? Do you know?

Clark: I don’t know.

Yancey: Okay.

Clark: He never said, so you’d have to ask someone, maybe Norvell [Hill Williams Reed] or Irma could tell you. I don’t remember--he didn’t say and I don’t recall him saying anything.

Yancey: But you did tell me that as far as when this house was in Quakertown, it was dirt streets, which much of Denton was at that time.

Clark: Sure.

Yancey: But then when this was forced to be moved here on the east side, you continued with dirt streets?

Clark: Until about 1964-65. 1962, 1964 or 1965. Because we came here in 1962 and it was still dirt roads. Yes.

Yancey: But you made a difference somehow with that?

Clark: Well, integration was going to come about. Then there was a group of the white ladies along with the black ladies and they said--we were called the Christian Women's Fellowship--and they said that since our children were going to be going to school we need to get together and get better acquainted. So we did, and some of us went with the ladies to help integrate downtown. Once we met, after a while, then we said we needed the streets paved down here. There was a lady that was in real estate, her name [was Trudy Foster], that helped us sign and get petitions to get the streets signing [done]. She went before the city council and the city council came and paved our streets.

Yancey: And she was a white woman.

Clark: She was a white woman. Her name was Trudy Foster, [that is] who she [was]. I walked with her. We walked and got signatures from the homeowners down here and then she went before the city council to help us get the streets paved. The other ladies, black ladies and white ladies

went to integrate the downtown stores and restaurants.

Yancey: Did you do that? Did you help integrate the restaurants downtown?

Clark: No, I helped with the streets.

Yancey: The streets; that was your part?

Clark: That was my part. We divided up. My part was to help with the streets and some of the other ladies helped with the downtown, integrating the restaurants, and it went by smoothly.

Yancey: They passed it no problems, to get the roads paved here over on the east side?

Clark: On the east side. They added on to your taxes. That is why it was necessary for us to walk and get the signatures from the homeowners. Then it was--and since we lived on the corner, we had to pay for two streets, portion of Woods Street and a portion of Hickory Street. That if you had the cash you could go ahead and pay whatever it was--I've forgotten what it was--or they added it on to your taxes until you paid got it off.

Yancey: But you [lived] in this Quakertown house, your husband did anyway, for over forty years.

Clark: Yes, about forty-four.

Yancey: From 1921 to at least we are talking 1962; 1921 [from] 1962 that is about forty-some years that there were no roads paved over here where you all were forced to move on the Solomon Hills side, the east side. You were kind of a mover and shaker there to help.

Clark: You see, once they had to leave Quakertown--my husband said that he and his brother came and they helped clear this land off. This was farm land over here and the man that they bought it from, his name was Miles. He owned all this property but things weren't going well and I think he was about to lose his farm. So he saw an opportunity to sell it. So he sold it because, from what my husband said, the intention was for them to go further out [from downtown Denton, rather than] to relocate to the KATY [railroad] and in Solomon Hills. They were to go out [to] what is now called Mingo Road. That was the designated places, he said.

Yancey: As far as the segregation?

Clark: As far as the segregation. But Mr. Miles--

Yancey: --was white?

Clark: Was white, and he owned the farmland and he began to sell lots and things to the blacks that were dislocated from the move of Quakertown. My husband and his brother, Walter, came and helped clear this particular area, because all of this was all farming over here. Once they bought, they made this purchase.

Yancey: Was there any cost to that as far as Mr. Miles. Did the white citizens get mad at him for selling?

Clark: Yes, Yes.

Yancey: Tell me what you heard about that.

Clark: They were most unhappy, according to what my husband said. He said one evening, when Mr. Miles, his brother Walter, and they were down here clearing off the land, three Klansmen came up on horseback and Mr. Miles recognized [them]. Well, he knew who [the Klansmen] were and he just said to Willie and to Walter, “Get behind this log and don’t shoot unless I tell you to.” So the three Klansmen came, but they went away without any shots being fired.

Yancey: Were words exchanged?

Clark: No, no. My husband said there weren't any words exchanged.

Yancey: Do you remember if he said that they were wearing their white--

Clark: They were wearing their hoods--

Yancey: Hoods, their white gowns?

Clark: They had their white hoods on.

Yancey: Their masquerade [laughter]--

Clark: Their masquerade and they came up on horseback.

Yancey: On horseback. How did your husband say he felt and experienced when he said that happened?

Clark: He was saddened by it. What hurt him most of all is having to move from Quakertown and the way that the move was brought about, because they really didn't give them a fair price for the property that they owned. He was a young man. My husband was born in 1900, so therefore, when they moved down here he was twenty-one, twenty-two years old. So he knew quite well what was going on.

Yancey: Tell me more about that. What impact did that have on him looking at the white community?

Clark: For a long time he had distrust towards them. He just did not trust them. It took him a long,

long time and he married and went to Detroit and stayed there for a long time.

Yancey: **So he left Denton.**

Clark: **He left Denton. He and his first wife. They went to Detroit, and they stayed there until his mother became ill and he came back to Texas in the 1940s, I think the middle 1940s. After the death of his mother, that is when he--after we were married and he brought us back. These are the things that--many places that we would go, he didn’t even want to go down into the Civic Center Park or go near it, because he did not like the memories that it brought about.**

Yancey: **Could you talk to me--I know it’s painful to discuss that--but to help future generations to understand the pain and the loss. I want to read something to you that comes out of the history books that--how it is being phrased, or how it was phrased in this history of Denton. Because what I am really wanting to find out is the black perspective of individuals like yourself, families, and churches that were on the receiving end of this forced move. And why that park was so important to the whites to do--**

Clark: Well, it really wasn't the park but how it came about being a park, according to my husband. The Texas Woman's University [TWU], now, but then it was known then as the CIA [College of Industrial Arts], which was an all-girls white school. And it was necessary for them to come through Quakertown to get to downtown Denton. Quakertown had--

Yancey: To walk?

Clark: To walk from the CIA college to come to downtown Denton--because between downtown Denton and where the CIA college is, which is now TWU, that is where Quakertown was situated, between those two. So those young girls--as the college began to grow, according to what my husband said, the president of CIA college at the time was saying and it was brought to his attention that more girls would come and enroll in the college if they didn't have to pass through the black community.

Quakertown was a town within the city of Denton because it had churches, it had schools, it had restaurants, it had a barbershop, it had a doctor, it had two large halls. Anything that

the town of Denton had, it was right there in the Quakertown community. They had a grocery store. It had all of that. There were two brothers; they were called Crawfords. One had a boarding house, which now is called a hotel, but it was back then called a boarding house.

Quakertown was established long before TWU or the CIA college was, but the enrollment began to grow. So they talked to the city council. The city council got together with the president of the college along with the women of the--

Yancey: **The women's club?**

Clark: **Not the women's club, there wasn't a women's club.**

Yancey: **Civic club?**

Clark: **The civic club, and they had a bond election and they designated that plot of ground--**

Yancey: **Where your homes--**

Clark: **Where the homes and the restaurants and the churches, the school and everything, where the whole community was. They voted that particular plot of ground to become a city park, and when the vote came about, it won. Now Mr. Hill, Norvell's father [See Norvell Hill Reed**

transcript], which was told by my husband, he sued the city. He was the only black man that stood up to the city and had nerve enough to sue the city because they felt like, that it was wrong, which it was. Many of the [residents] after that came about, many of the citizens left Denton altogether.

Yancey: **African Americans?**

Clark: **African American citizens left Denton.**

Yancey: **When, go ahead--**

Clark: **Those that stayed as you said, scattered about here. His family chose to come to Solomon Hill along with some of the others.**

Yancey: **When he was said to be the only one to sue the city for loss of property, even though it was being "legally" done, and sold, do you know what he sued them for? If it was fraud or--**

Clark: **I don’t have any idea. My husband just said that he was the only one.**

Yancey: **Did he know?**

Clark: **If he did, I didn’t. If he told me I don’t remember him telling me. I am only saying what he told me.**

Yancey: Are you telling me also that when that vote was taken, was that all, only white citizens voting, or could any of the African American citizens who were property owners in Quakertown vote?

Clark: I don't know. He didn't say. Probably back then, I doubt it. If any of them were registered back then--because it was just for a long time before a lot of the blacks were eligible to vote, so I am sure that it was just whites.

Yancey: Late 1910s, 1920s--

Clark: Remember, now, this is in the 1920s, 1921, or so.

Yancey: The height of the--

Clark: The height of the--

Yancey: What else was going on racially in the community? I mean, this is a huge ordeal. How did your in-laws and your husband find out about--did the bond, getting the bond for the park, represent the money they used to buy out your husband's family?

Clark: He didn't go on to all those particulars. I don't know whether he knew, and if so, he just failed to tell me.

Yancey: Do you think--

Clark: He was just devastated by the move and as I said, once we came back, often times when the children would want to go to the park to swim, it would be very--as I said he just, he was heartbroken about it. It hurt him very often. Often times, even when we had to go pay the utility bills down there.

Yancey: And why is that?

Clark: Because--at this present time, they have moved the utilities company. But where City Hall is now on east McKinney Street there, that was where you went and paid your utilities bills. The city hall, the civic center building, the senior building, the women's building, the library--all of that was homeowners and that is where the people [were] in Quakertown. All of that was a part of Quakertown, and the park. So this is--every time we came that way, it would bring back memories that he said--I am just saying his words--put a bad taste in his mouth.

Yancey: Almost like a scab.

Clark: Like an old scab that you keep scratching off, and it comes back again.

Yancey: I wonder, was he born there?

Clark: No, he was born in Argyle, [Texas].

Yancey: Okay, Argyle.

Clark: When his father died and his mother remarried, then that is when they moved into Denton.

Yancey: Okay, and can you help me out; just approximately about what year that might have been? Was it when they first moved to Quakertown? It would have to be before 1921.

Clark: Well, it was before he was old enough to go to school.

Yancey: Oh, okay.

Clark: Or maybe he was just old enough to go to school, because he went to school in Quakertown. So if he was born in 1900 he had to have been six years old at least, when he started the school there.

Yancey: His whole life was growing up there.

Clark: Yes.

Yancey: No wonder it hurt him so bad. The white citizens usually just look at, "Oh boy, we got a city park."

I want to ask you a couple of things. I found in this book here, in ***The History of Denton from its Beginning to 1960*** by C. A. Bridges [Waco: Texian Press, 1978]. He has Quakertown mentioned

in two sentences in this whole book of Denton--and it is Denton County, so it is spread out. But what I found when I looked up "Quakertown," I am going to quote from this book. He talks about the years prior to 1900 where the elite portion of town lived, and he named the city blocks and then he describes, he says, “Most of the colored people of Denton lived in what was then called Quakertown, a portion of the town now included in the city park.”

Clark: **Okay.**

Yancey: **That is one sentence, and the other sentence for [his] history is on page 337 and it is put in this framework. The paragraph starts out: In January of 1921, a movement got underway toward the creation of a city park. So then it talks about raising bonds and there was one sentence that says, “This area was occupied in 1921 chiefly by Negro families and was known as Quakertown.” That is it. The next sentence says, “After the bond election came about these people got on the board for the park, but the first necessary step was that of buying the several pieces of property from the owners--” it does not**

say the Negro owners. But then it just said, "The project required several months. But most of the former residents in the area soon had newer and better homes about half a mile east of the railroad depot. This newly settled area"--where we are sitting right now--"was called Solomon Hill." Do you think there is something missing?

Clark: **Well, yes, because if you did not know what he was talking about, he left out that it uprooted a whole community and that they were blacks. I mean, in reading it. Which it was. And as I before stated, it was a thriving community as you can see, as I said. It was a city within a city and those people owned their homes down there.**

Yancey: **I struggle with trying to understand how [the] African American community, which was formed in 1865, way before the white woman's college--**

Clark: **Definitely.**

Yancey: **--why the college was placed up there and Quakertown was--Quakertown grew for what twenty-five, thirty, forty years before the college came to that point that they made this meeting up about--and that was never really revealed to the African American community, was it? That the**

real reason--do you think that was? Don't let me put words in your mouth.

Clark: **According to my husband, he was aware of it. This is what he said: that the president of the college along with, I said the community leaders of the city--**

Yancey: **--the mayor--**

Clark: **--the mayor, the community leaders, we will just say the community leaders.**

Yancey: **That were white--**

Clark: **That were white. It had been indicated to the president, since the enrollment had begun to increase at the college for the white girls, that more would come if they didn't have to pass through the black community. And, therefore, that is how the bond election came about, because mind you, some of the blacks were already working up there at the CIA, at the college. You know, they could hear by word of mouth, of different ones talking.**

Yancey: **Kind of through the grapevine?**

Clark: **Through the grapevine, and they didn't realize, I think according to what my husband said, that it was going to be as quickly as it was. They**

thought maybe that they could come and try to negotiate with the people, but they weren't given that opportunity.

Yancey: **To negotiate for keeping Quakertown intact?**

Clark: **Intact.**

Yancey: **To find another way?**

Clark: **To find another way.**

Yancey: **Was it racism then?**

Clark: **Sure. I mean, it wasn't spoken but you could--actions say that it was, and like I said, by him being a young man he really understood. Mind you, he had gone off to college and come back. He spent two years at Prairie View after he graduated from the high school.**

Yancey: **This news, how was it communicated to the black community? When things got really serious, I mean you heard bits and pieces, black workers did.**

Clark: **At the time the blacks had--mostly what they had was their churches--through the churches and through the lodges. The lodges at that time were very strong, so when they would have their lodge meetings, when they would come to their church services, this is how it was all brought up,**

brought about. Because those were the strongest and the most gathering of the people and most of the people were either church members or belonged to the lodges or both. They had two strong lodges that were, at that particular time, very active with the people.

Yancey: Did your husband tell you how his parents and he were informed--what kind of situation, did the white people go to the churches and make this announcement?

Clark: No, he didn't say.

Yancey: How that came about, that he found out that-- So everyone was waiting to see if this bond was going to pass, would that be the signal, whether or not Quakertown would be destroyed?

Clark: I don't know, he didn't say. He was just saying--those were the words that he was saying--that is how most of the information was conveyed. They got it though the people that were the leaders of their community, like the worshipful masters of the lodges and the ministers of the congregations of the churches. That is how it was communicated overall, when they would come together.

Yancey: **Okay, but as far as the white leadership of this town, the citizen's council communicating that to the black community, they called a meeting of some sort then and--**

Clark: **--if so, he didn't tell me.**

Yancey: **Because you told me they tried to negotiate, to stay--**

Clark: **Well, my understanding is they were thinking that probably would come about--but what he was saying--I don't know, he did not say that they tried to. As I said, the only thing he told me was about Mr. Hill suing the city. I am sure that it was, that they must have discussed it in probably some large meeting or at church and he was strong enough and bold enough to bring the suit against the city. How the suit [was brought] and what it said, I do not know; he didn't say, and so I don't know.**

Yancey: **Did your family--how did your family react to the bringing the suit, having to move, how did they feel, what did they experience? You've talked about the hurt--what that did to the heart of the community, did the--**

Clark: It tore the community apart and there was no longer a community. Because many of them, according to my husband, left the city of Denton and relocated to various other places, towns, and some even left the state where they had family members and just left. And, you know, they never really-- from what he said, they never really got over it, those that remained; the older folks. And the younger folks were able to graduate and go on off to school--some of them were.

Yancey: They were still, the younger folks--did they go to segregated schools?

Clark: Oh, they went to segregated schools.

Yancey: Fred Moore [High School]?

Clark: Well, it was Fred Douglass and then when they relocated they named it Fred Moore.

Yancey: That is located over here on this east side of the tracks--

Clark: Yes--

Yancey: --to Solomon Hill. For the record, I don't know if we touched on this, but when the white citizens in charge, the leaders, were choosing where to segregate the black community, you said

it was completely way over on Mingo Road and what--

Clark: **Well at that time, he said that that particular settlement was called Peach Orchard Hill and that was--which is now Mingo Road. That was the intent for them. That was the purpose, for them to go there but, once again, it would have been several miles, at that time. That's closer now, it is different but--**

Yancey: **Several miles instead of just a mile [away from downtown Denton] where you are now?**

Clark: **It would have been at least another mile or another mile and a half.**

Yancey: **What do you think the social and economic impact was for the folks that did go that far away? As well as folks that kind of--was it catching a break to be able to move here closer to the facilities and town and work?**

Clark: **I am sure it was because, mind you now, if they didn't work at the college, they worked up in the elite part of Denton where most of them were. Oak Street, and all around. Most of them didn't have automobiles, so they would have to walk and**

so the biggest employer at that time would be the college and--

Yancey: **The CIA.**

Clark: **The CIA.**

Yancey: **Not UNT.**

Clark: **Well, UNT was an employer, too, but this particular one--I think some did work at North Texas but most of them worked [at CIA] at that particular time. Because it was close to where they were and they could walk to work or they could walk up on Oak Street to work in the homes of the people in the white community.**

Yancey: **The elite of the time.**

Clark: **The elite of the community.**

Yancey: **Can you tell me, from your point of view, as well as how your in-laws and your husband survived forced segregation like this, how did you not only cope but-- Just a minute, my mind is going blank.**

Clark: **Well, surely, as I was saying, after they came over here and got situated--my husband married and moved away and went to Detroit.**

Yancey: **Because of the bad taste.**

Clark: And spent a lot of his adulthood there and then, as I said, he did not come back to Texas until in the 1940s. Still, there was still segregation but it had given him an opportunity to overcome some of the things that had occurred. But even still, as I said, often when we'd go that way, he would bring about--and that is why I can tell it, because he would tell it to me often. Every time we had to go into the vicinity, like I said, to city hall or the children wanted to go to the park, then he would bring it up fresh in his memory and he would begin to relate to me the things that had occurred and all the places--he could almost show me where each of the church was, where the school, where the restaurants, the boarding house, and all those places were in that particular area.

Yancey: You two would walk together, and he would point those out to you?

Clark: He would point it out.

Yancey: It would kind of recreate--

Clark: --it would recreate what it looked like at that particular time.

Yancey: How did you feel about that, learning the true story behind how the black community got on the other side of the tracks? When you learned about Quakertown, how did that touch you?

Clark: Well, I just I accepted it, because if you remember, I grew up in a segregated town also but we weren't dispersed or anything. Even though I grew up in a mixed neighborhood--there were whites and Spanish in the neighborhood when I was growing up in Lampasas--but I know that I took for granted that I knew my limitations. If I went to the show, I had a certain place where I could sit. If I went to the black school, or I went to the black church--it was just the norm for me at that particular time.

Yancey: That was the structure of segregation, to put you--I hate to say this--"in your place." Being over here, I was just wondering how do you think the families, your family, survived the--

Clark: They survived because I think over there [in Quakertown] they had a restaurant and when they came over here, they bought property. Down the street from where we are in the next block, there

was a restaurant there. So they were able to survive because of, I guess, of their--

Yancey: Did they re-open their restaurant over here?

Clark: Yes. I don't know how soon afterwards, but they did have a restaurant over here. When we came it was no longer here due to the fact that his mother had passed on.

Yancey: Okay, but that was the Clarks--

Clark: That was the Hembrys--

Yancey: --the Hembrys, excuse me, who reopened the restaurant—

[End of Tape 1, Side A. Begin Tape 1, Side B]

Yancey: Okay this is tape one, side two. We are going to continue with speaking with Alma Clark regarding the Quakertown era at--

Clark: I am told by my husband--I think his stepfather was a good chili maker, and often I think made chili and sold [it] somewhere. But once they came over here, well, then they had a restaurant. I don't even know the name of the restaurant, if it had a name.

Yancey: What kind of social impact did that have on the black community, to be forced out of a well-established town? You said people dispersed, but socially, what happened between [one another] in the black community, as well as between blacks and whites?

Clark: Well, according to my husband, he said they didn't think highly of the white people but they knew they had to be cordial because they had to; they are the ones that provided livelihood, you know. They worked for them at the college and in their homes. Not all whites were for it, so a lot of them were against it and--

Yancey: They would have voted against the bond?

Clark: Some of them, a goodly number, did vote against the bond. But [there] was more for it than against it, and so, we can't say that all of those--some of them still had a good relationship in spite of the circumstances.

Yancey: I am just going to call it like I see it as far as what I have learned from you. This was social injustice and economic injustice, to tear apart a thriving community and then have--

Clark: For the benefit of one particular entity of the--

Yancey: For the benefit of, let's say--

Clark: For the college.

Yancey: For the benefit of the white women's college and also the white citizens of Denton.

Clark: Yes.

Yancey: Do you think money was a driving force, then, to force Quakertown out?

Clark: Sure, because the more students that they would have attending CIA, that is TWU, the more they would help the economy as a whole because they would come here and live here, spend their money here. Eventually some of them would stay here, and I am sure some of them did after graduation. So they could see the potential of the college expanding and expanding, and naturally it would bring more students in and increase the economic part of the city.

Yancey: As far as increasing that economically, it benefited the white community; but what happened to the black community, economically? Did people get poorer or richer by moving over here?

Clark: I don't know. He didn't say, he didn't say.

Yancey: Do you think that people lost out by having to start all over again and leave?

Clark: I know some of them did. Like I said, I think those that really, really wanted to do it, they just left all together. I said “relocated,” because they had family members elsewhere and they just took roots somewhere else.

Yancey: Do you think they felt forced--run out of town, so to speak?

Clark: I would have, if it would have been me. I can only speak for me. If that would have happened to me, I know I would have, because I have been here for all of these years and helped make what it was. Here I am coming and being pushed aside and not being given a fair price for the property that was mine. Just barely enough to relocate, which I don’t know how the property would have been assessed at that particular time; but, I don’t know the conditions of the homes at that time. But still--

Yancey: Your in-laws and your husband’s home looks like a beautiful home.

Clark: It was one of the better homes at that particular time. It was well kept.

Yancey: Well kept.

Clark: Well kept.

Yancey: Then, who had to pay? Who paid to move it physically from Terry Street to over here?

Clark: I guess they did; he didn't say.

Yancey: If he had to, was that done on horse and wagons? Do you have any idea--

Clark: --and railroad ties.

Yancey: --and railroad ties?

Clark: They'd take a team of mules and horses and railroad ties and put it down. Mind you, the majority of the streets were dirt anyway, so they didn't have any problems getting that done.

Yancey: So they rolled the house on railroad ties?

Clark: And then take the team of mules and horses and pull them down the street.

Yancey: We are going to have a little pause here.

[Tape Interruption]

Yancey: I am turning this back on, we've got some ice and water again. We were just looking at the goal of this history--is try to figure out how the past affects the present, and I do know when I drive around Denton--when I first came here, I didn't know there was a black side of town. I drove downtown to the courthouse square, (I live on the south side), I would go to UNT, but I didn't know

there was a black side of town until I crossed the railroad tracks. So I had to ask, how did this happen? Why did this happen? And that is what I am asking you.

Clark: **Let me share this with you. We have a family in our church--I am a member of the St. James A.M.E.[African Methodist Episcopal] church--and when they came here, they're army people, but when they came in, I think they had been here a good while and they didn't see any blacks. They didn't know there was a black community either, because they would just go downtown. Finally the lady, whose name is Daisy Grayson, said she saw a black person in a grocery store and she asked her, "Are there any blacks in Denton?" And this person said, "Yes, you have to go across the railroad track to find them." So once they came across the railroad tracks--so this is another black person having the same experience that you had, even though you are a white person.**

Yancey: **In the year 2000 in this area--**

Clark: **They came in 19--I think they came in maybe 1977, somewhere along in there.**

Yancey: **To clarify, this was a black military family who moved into Denton and couldn't find [the black community]. So it was put out of sight and maybe out of mind, since you didn't have roads paved until the 1960s. How did this happen and what does this legacy mean to you, having moved here in the 1960s, having grown up with this history, the pain that your husband shared? But even to your children, how did he describe to your children? His boyhood, or how he grew up or just--did your children know it was hard for him to walk by the park and relive--**

Clark: **I think so, but I tried, too. Since the schools were integrated by the time they were able to go to school, I tried to focus on them being good students and not so much what had happened in the past. They did hear us talk about it, and hear their father talk about, and hear me talk about some of my experiences that I had when I was growing up, so they were aware of it. But we wanted them to know that since this [school integration] is going about, that an opportunity has opened up, that they will have an opportunity to share things that we didn't at the ages that**

they were able to. Because neither of us at their age was able to attend the schools. And right after integration they were some of the ones who were able to go, so it was quite new.

Yancey: **But some of the first ones--**

Clark: **Some of the first ones.**

Yancey: **Your children?**

Clark: **Some of them.**

Yancey: **Which integrated grade school did they go to?**

Clark: **They went to a school called Jefferson Davis, which was over here on Davis Street, but there is no longer-- Jefferson Davis [has] been renamed now, but that is where they--**

Yancey: **What is its current name?**

Clark: **Its current name is--I don't know; it is an alternative school now. [Editor's note: it is now Lester Davis School]**

Yancey: **Okay.**

Clark: **That is what they use it for, but that is where they went, and they walked to school.**

Yancey: **They walked to school?**

Clark: **They walked to elementary school.**

Yancey: Let's see, you worked for integration, you said, in the 1960s with that Christian Women's Interracial Group.

Clark: Yes.

Yancey: When did integration happen here for you?

Clark: Let's see; 1964, I believe. 1964 or 1965 I think is when it was. Of course, I came here in 1962, and it was still going because Fred Moore was still the [all-black school] and I was trying to learn my way, also. See, my children were not old enough, but by the time they were old enough to go to school, well, it was integration so it must have been about 1963. Integration had been [in place], I think, a couple of years then before they were old enough to go.

Yancey: So a lot of the tension and the turmoil was the first people going and--

Clark: According to some of my friends, it went smoothly with those that had children already that had to go to an integrated school. We lost some of our teachers but some of the black teachers were able to be relocated, too. Some of them weren't. I think some of them, because they chose not to, some of them sought employment somewhere else.

But they did use a goodly number of our black teachers when integration came about.

Yancey: **Talking about the teachers and your black teachers maintaining or actually moving to schools, white schools; I guess when integration--is that right? You're nodding your head yes. I am wondering back at the time of CIA, when did your father-in-law work there? I know Mr. Hill, Novell's father, worked there during this whole Quakertown episode.**

Clark: **I never did hear my husband say that his father-in-law worked there, but his brother, Walter, worked there.**

Yancey: **Walter worked there?**

Clark: **Walter Clark worked there.**

Yancey: **At the same time that Quakertown was dismantled?**

Clark: **Yes.**

Yancey: **So your brother-in-law, Walter Hill, who grew up in Quakertown, was working at the college and he maintained his job during this big forced physical movement of his house.**

Clark: **If you remember I said that they had no choice, the black community. Because they worked for the whites either at the college or in their homes,**

so they had no choice but to continue to work or leave. That was at that time the biggest employer of the town.

Yancey: So dependent for employment on them--

Clark: To stay, and as I said, I don't know the people for whom they worked were a part of all of that or not. But like I told you, all of them were not for the move. My husband didn't go into detail, he just made mention, but the blacks had to continue to work, those that chose to stay here.

Yancey: What do you think of that? What do you make of that legacy? Of those who decided to stay despite the forced segregation again, what kind of strength or--

Clark: I thought it was very good strength for this particular reason: even though they were being oppressed, shall I say, we were still able to pursue regardless of it. You will find that in a lot of black communities throughout the United States--because this not only just happened in Denton, but we know it happened back in that particular time in a lot of places that we were.

Yancey: That the forced move of houses--

Clark: That the forced move--that they couldn't, even if they wanted to, buy--maybe just one family, even when integration came about, many of the families had problems if, you know, they wanted to move into a neighborhood that was predominantly white. But then there were problems.

Yancey: That they still were pushed out, were not allowed to buy?

Clark: --to buy.

Yancey: --buy.

Clark: Jobs and every other opportunity. So there it is.

Yancey: Wow. This is just--I would never understand any of this reading this history of Denton book [laughter] if you weren't alive to testify, really to witness to the fact that your own home and your husband, your in-laws went though this. Some have called it a shameful part of the history. How did your church, how did the St. James A.M.E. church, do you think, help your in-laws, your husband and later you cope with being forced to live with segregation?

Clark: I am sure that they did. He didn't say.

Yancey: Did you go to St. James?

Clark: Yes.

Yancey: You did.

Clark: I still do. I am still a member of St. James.

Yancey: Well, what does St. James mean to you?

Clark: Well, it’s just a church home for me. That’s it. It was my husband’s home church and since he, at the time was a pastor, even though he didn’t pastor St. James, and I chose the religion that he had. He loved his church and I have come to love St. James, too. We are a small congregation, but we are a loving congregation because of it. That’s it.

Yancey: St. James was forced to make this move, too?

Clark: St. James was forced to make the move also.

Yancey: Your husband saw that happen?

Clark: He saw that happen.

Yancey: St. James, your house, so many families lost their--

Clark: A lot of houses were moved over but they weren’t able to sustain [through] the years that passed on. I guess by our house being, I'd say, a better built house, and taken care of, it was able to last as long as it has.

Yancey: Taking the jar of actually being [moved]?

Clark: Taking the jar of being--

Yancey: Was jacked up and--

Clark: --jacked up and moved over here. After staying here, this being farmland and with the years--they didn’t know how to secure it. I was astonished when they--well, I had some work done on the house about twelve years ago.

Yancey: What happened?

Clark: Because of the foundation. They came in to fix the room for me because of the foundation, and I was astonished that I found out that the house was sitting on bois d'arc.

Yancey: It was sitting on what?

Clark: Bois d'arc.

Yancey: What is bois d'arc? Can you spell that for me? No? Bois d'arc. Okay.

Clark: That is a tree.

Yancey: Oh, okay.

Clark: That is what they were using to put the house on.

Yancey: The foundation of the house was a tree?

Clark: The foundation was bois d'arc wood.

Yancey: [Laughter] What is it now?

Clark: Oh, it is concrete now.

Yancey: But that had to be replaced?

Clark: Yes, it had to be replaced.

Yancey: But it stood, what, several--

Clark: It stood from what, 1921, 1922, to 2005. But as I said, the floors and things were beginning to sag and as you walked down the hall, well, then you could see. It was too old to try to raise and put the foundation, and so the most economical thing to do was to tear down and build altogether. Because it wouldn't have withstood a raising up.

Yancey: Which you finally did on its 100th anniversary in 2005. What about some of your neighbors? When I drive around I can see very small homes that are not kept up much.

Clark: Now, when I came here in 1962, this community and the older folks were still living and it was a well-kept neighborhood. But in the past forty-four years a lot of the older people have passed on and the children, I guess, choose not to do anything about it and--

Yancey: As far as the upkeep.

Clark: As far as the upkeep is--

Yancey: And the maintenance--

Clark: And the maintenance of it.

Yancey: **I think I am trying to [gain an] understanding [of] the present to drive through what we will call the black side of town. I brought a friend of mine, for instance, from Idaho over to the black side of town, and then I drove through Oak [Street] and on where all the nice houses were built and stuff, and I just asked her, "What do you make of this? Why do you think there is such an extreme on one side of the railroad tracks to another? How did it get this way?" And she asked me, "Why don't they just move out or why don't they repair the houses? Why don't they fix it up?" She doesn't understand how dismantling your community can affect you, socially, economically. How does a community recover from that?**

Clark: **Well, again, as I said, the older folks when I came here had pride and the community was well-kept. They died out and the young people have either moved, chose to live somewhere else, and either had this property for rent property or they just let it go. And even if they did, they didn't maintain it, since they have an opportunity now to live where they choose to**

live, and so a lot of them just don't want to live across the tracks anymore.

Yancey: **Do you think there is a stigma to living--**

Clark: **Yes, there is, there is, because usually when you say "across the tracks," they visualize that as being the ghetto. So that is what it is and that is the label that is put on, or stigma that is put on. But I know when I came, the houses that were here, the people were a little older but they maintained the house. They maintained the houses.**

Yancey: **So have you seen the neighborhood then kind of get run-down or older--**

Clark: **The neighborhood got run-down and I don't know anyone in the neighborhood anymore. When I came I knew everyone in the neighborhood, because when my husband brought us here in July and left us to go back to Austin to finish out the church year, everybody embraced Willie's wife and those small children knowing that he brought us here and left me with three small children. The community helped raise my children.**

Yancey: **Tell me more about that.**

Clark: Well, they did. After being here for a short time I had a job at the North Texas [campus], and I'd go to work like at 4:00 in the morning. Of course, my husband would be here. Sometimes he worked--for a long time he didn't have a permanent job because he had his church work to do. He made do, just yard work and odds and ends so he'd be free to do his church work.

Yancey: What was your job over at UNT?

Clark: I was in the custodial department; that's where I was.

Yancey: Okay. How long did you work there?

Clark: Twenty-five years.

Yancey: And then you did retire?

Clark: I did retire. I retired in 1989.

Yancey: From UNT.

Clark: From UNT after twenty-five years.

Yancey: And stayed here ever since?

Clark: And I stayed here ever since. My children stayed here, went to high school, and graduated. My son, Quentin, went to West Texas State. My daughter stayed here, went to TWU and North Texas, and my son, Cletus, went to the University of Houston.

Yancey: What years did Rubylene go to TWU and North Texas, do you think?

Clark: Let’s see. She must have gone to TWU in 1977-1978.

Yancey: She knew the history of how her grandparent’s home, the home she grew up in, used to be in the city park?

Clark: She knew, but TWU had an offer; she had a scholarship and things. So she went where she could get the education that she needed.

Yancey: Do you know if your family or the black community that helped you out, and made all this transition with you coming up here and these small children and then raising them--how big the resentment level was? Has that been something to--

Clark: We didn’t discuss it. It really--I think it was just something that we accepted and went on because we knew we had to live here and had to work here, so that is something that you don’t dwell on continuously. You just put it aside and get on with your life and try to improve yourself and improve your children. You just don’t keep--in my opinion--I don’t keep dwelling on something that’s unpleasant. You know it’s there, I know

it’s there but--I knew that it happened. Since things are as they are now, let’s move on and try to do better. Because, you know, all of us could probably [improve]. Well, we know they could have, but that was the time--and since its come back let’s improve our relationships where we are right now.

Yancey: Do you think that’s happened?

Clark: It’s happened. It has happened.

Yancey: How has that happened?

Clark: Well, I think we all realize that was a mistake. We all [are] human beings and we all, all of us, have something to offer. To help. I say to help Denton. You know, we, some of us, have the same ideas. Some of us have money; some of us don’t have money. Most of us just accept it and learn to live together and work together and be happy.

Yancey: In working towards the future, and as this house from the Quakertown era gets turned into a museum, the first African American museum--

Clark: For Denton County.

Yancey: For Denton County. How would you like to see this presented from the African American point of view? How do you think that the public would

best benefit from hearing the story? Should we ignore it and cover it up? Should we acknowledge it but then talk [about] how we--what would you prefer?

Clark: **We should acknowledge it and let everyone know, and if the descendents of any of those that were present when all this came about, that we get together and express our feelings towards each other.**

Yancey: **Have you done that?**

Clark: **Somewhat. Somewhat. There was some type of healing service, I've forgotten when it was, but Mike Cochran, you may have heard his name before?**

Yancey: **No.**

Clark: **He at that time he was on the Denton County [Historical] Commission and he was responsible for getting a plaque to stand in the park that goes across the bridge there.**

Yancey: **Oh, yes. The Civic Park.**

Clark: **One evening we had something. We came together and had something. I forgot exactly what it was, but if you could talk with Mike Cochran he could tell you about it.**

Yancey: **Were you there?**

Clark: I was there.

Yancey: Okay, well--

Clark: I was there. I didn't say anything because he had a program and I just listened.

Yancey: Can you describe the program for me? Just for the benefit of people listening to us who don't know the context: we are talking about at the Civic Park that was once Quakertown, someone named Mike Cochran--

Clark: Michael, Mike Cochran. At that particular time he was a member of the Denton County Historical Commission.

Yancey: Was he white, black?

Clark: He was a white.

Yancey: How did he invite the black community to come; did he come to St. James and ask?

Clark: He came to the churches and it was put in the paper and he talked with some of the blacks like Qvir [?] , Bill, Erma Peace, and some of the rest of them. As a matter of fact, he even talked with me to get some information. He was also instrumental in getting a plaque. There was a plaque that is in the Civic Center Park that goes across from the senior building over to the

woman's building. It's a bridge, and at the end of that bridge there it is a plaque there that says once this was a Quakertown community.

Yancey: **A historical marker.**

Clark: **A historical marker.**

Yancey: **So up to the time that Mike Cochran helped get that up there, there was no mention of Quakertown in the public memory in Denton. You could walk through the civic park and never know any black community--**

Clark: **Exactly.**

Yancey: **--ever lived there.**

Clark: **No, the only way you get it is by word of mouth.**

Yancey: **Well, that is what I am trying to get right now, your word of mouth. And I am very--**

Clark: **Prior to that, if you didn't know, you never would have known that the Civic Center Park was a black community until that historical marker was put there.**

Yancey: **I think that was, I am going to look it up--somewhere around 1983, was it?**

Clark: **It may have been a little, it seems like to me it was later than that. I don't recall, but it was--**

Yancey: What do you recall from just observing and listening and watching what happened at that healing ceremony at the park that was Quakertown? What was it like?

Clark: I don’t remember; isn’t that awful?

Yancey: [Laughs]

Clark: Really so many other things have occurred since then and so I don’t--

Yancey: I just wish I could hear, I want to hear from people who were there. Because it sounds like it was a white guy who was trying to reach out and acknowledge.

Clark: He was, he was. Talk with him because--

Yancey: Well I don’t know where he is [laughter]!

Clark: He is probably in the directory; [the] telephone directory.

Yancey: Well, I might talk to him later, but specifically for the purpose of our getting together, I only want the African American perspective. I want to hear it from your side.

Clark: I am sorry that I can’t. I am just only going by what my husband said and I know he was very hurt over the situation. He never fully forgave all the things that happened. He realized that he

was supposed to, but he didn't have favorable memories.

Yancey: **It's a bitter thing to forgive.**

Clark: **Yes it is, very bitter, because he often [would] say it put a bitter taste in his mouth.**

Yancey: **Being a pastor, you had that tradition of forgiveness.**

Clark: **Yes. Yes.**

Yancey: **But what a tough thing to live in; so he must have been quite a man.**

Clark: **He was, he was.**

Yancey: **I am looking for that marker when you went to the healing ceremony. It says "Quakertown Disappears" in this booklet about Quakertown and--[*Quakertown*, p. 153; See Photograph 4 in Appendix].**

Clark: **I don't believe that Letisha would have that, because I think that was done after she wrote the book, if I am not mistaken.**

Yancey: **Do you think Erma Peace was at that healing ceremony?**

Clark: **You know, I don't recall; she could have been. Her remembrance may be better than mine.**

Yancey: Okay. Was it meaningful to you or your children? Do you remember? Did your children attend?

Clark: I don’t think they were there.

Yancey: Okay.

Clark: They were off, and--I know my sons weren’t there, and I believe my daughter was gone, too, because the sons were off in school.

Yancey: Did that help at all in the black community, or was that--

Clark: I do know this much: some of the comments that were made--some of the whites were saying they were sorry. They didn’t know it happened like that. They didn’t know. Those that were there, a lot of them liked to say, “We are newcomers,” like you; “We weren’t aware of this.” And then some of them would say, “Yes. I think I remember hearing my grandmother say something about this. But I didn’t know what she was talking about.”

Yancey: And that was white descendents?

Clark: That is the white descendents that were saying that.

Yancey: From Denton?

Clark: From the Denton area. Those that came at sunset [to the ceremony].

Yancey: So, it was pretty--you're saying it was pretty hush-hush. If the descendents didn't even know and it was their--

Clark: No.

Yancey: And it was their grandparents who did it--

Clark: Well, some of them said, "I remember my grandmother or my grandfather saying something about it, but I didn't know what they were talking about." So that is the way that--and they'd say, "I didn't know what they meant when they were saying "Quakertown." And all of this is in [the park].

Yancey: [Searching through book] I can't find that historical marker that you are talking about at the Civic Park that acknowledges Quakertown. It came after this book, apparently.

Clark: Yes, it did, it did. I know it did because I worked with Letisha Deburson and helped formulating that particular book there. That is why I was saying, let me see when this book was. This [the healing ceremony] was after she edited the book.

Yancey: **Wow. So someone, Mike Cochran I would assume, someone read this book and it really impacted him to want to make an acknowledgement--**

Clark: **Well, by him being on the Denton County [Historical] Commissioners board, he is a person that likes history and began to do a lot of research. He has done a lot of research on his own. So that is how he became interested in it.**

Yancey: **Let's go ahead. I am going to put these two pictures aside so that we can compare them and I will put this over here. Let's go ahead, for the benefit for those who are listening and looking at this transcript that is written up or listening to the tape, we're going to talk about these wonderful pictures that Mrs. Clark has been able to bring to me from her Quakertown house. [Photos] of her in-laws and then her husband. We have got that picture here. I am just going to call this, "Quakertown house of Maude and C. R. Hembry." [See Photograph 2 in Appendix].**

Let's look at this picture and have you tell me who is in the picture from left to right; the woman is--[See Photograph 5 in Appendix].

Clark: **Eula Grey.**

Yancey: **Eula?**

Clark: **Spelled E-U-L-A.**

Yancey: **E-U-L-A?**

Clark: **Yes. Yes.**

Yancey: **Eula--**

Clark: **Grey.**

Yancey: **Grey; A-Y, or--**

Clark: **G-R-E-Y**

Yancey: **E-Y**

Clark: **Eula Grey was, when this picture was made, a stewardess in the St. James A.M.E. Church. [Editor's note: stewardesses prepared communion and baptism, assisted the pastor and stewards, and dressed the pulpit for funerals]**

Yancey: **Oh, okay. That's her stewardess outfit.**

Clark: **That is her stewardess outfit.**

Yancey: **Okay, she is a [church] stewardess. What year about, do you think? Let's go ahead from left to right. Somebody very important sitting right next to Eula. That is--**

Clark: **Willie; Willie Clark.**

Yancey: **Willie Clark.**

Clark: **Reverend Willie Clark.**

Yancey: Reverend Willie Clark, who is your husband. And where was this picture taken?

Clark: Inside the church sanctuary. It was after church at the church service. We were getting ready to make pictures to go into our souvenir book, I believe when the church was 100 years old and I forgot what year that was.

Yancey: It was in the 1980s, like 1983 or 1985?

Clark: No, that was the 100th. That is when we got the marker.

Yancey: Okay. Do you have it? Well, just go on without the picture while I get that. Reverend Willie Clark. Was he considered a visitor, then?

Clark: No! He was considered a "son" of the St. James Church and that was in the 1980s. So he had retired from the ministry, so he was the assistant pastor.

Yancey: Oh, he was here now.

Clark: Yes. He wasn't the pastor, he was just the assistant pastor because he'd retired--

Yancey: I see.

Clark: --from the ministry in 1980, so that was 1985.

Yancey: You think this was 1985?

Clark: Yes.

Yancey: Okay, I am going to put 1985, and the location is actually the St. James A.M.E. Church sanctuary [See Photograph 5 in Appendix].

Clark: Yes. Yes.

Yancey: Do you recall what the occasion was for this? Did you say, you mentioned it--it was regarding--the purpose was--

Clark: Celebrating the church's anniversary.

Yancey: That's 110th, or--celebrating. I know it's over 100 years old.

Clark: The church is 131 [years old in 2006].

Yancey: Wow.

Clark: We celebrated. We're going to have an anniversary the third Sunday next month. One hundred and thirty one years old.

Yancey: Wow. In 2006--I am just going to make a note of this--St. James will be 130 [years] even?

Clark: One hundred and thirty one [years old].

Yancey: One hundred and thirty one years old. Went from a thriving church in Quakertown and is a thriving part, a central part of the community here.

Clark: We do have a state [historical] marker. I don't know if you noticed that when you--

Yancey: Tell me more about that.

Clark: What do you mean?

Yancey: Tell me more about the state marker. Why is there a state marker outside of the St. James? [See Photograph 6 in Appendix.]

Clark: Because it is a historical church. And your church--in order for you to acquire a state marker from the state historical foundation, you have to be fifty years old or older, and therefore we have enough documents to prove that we were as old we said that we were. Which, at that particular time, when we received that state marker, I believe that we were 110 years old. Many of us were instrumental in getting all the documents, the necessary [paperwork], and the state gave us the marker. They came and the state historical foundation, along with the county, working with us, together. They came and brought the marker and put it up and we had an unveiling service.

Yancey: Oh, okay.

Clark: I think you have pictures of that. That is when the Reverend Robin Slaughter was pastor, at that particular time. She was the first woman minister that we had as the pastor of the church.

Yancey: I see. I have got it over here somewhere. I'll make a note. So this was the occasion, was the unveiling of the historical marker.

Clark: Yes. Yes.

Yancey: That is important because that is history. These are the folks who made the history happen [laughter] when unveiling the historical marker in 1985. A historical marker--

Clark: I believe it was 1985. Like I said, I think you have it there somewhere. Yes. You do, don't you?

Yancey: Yes [See Photograph 6 in Appendix].

Clark: Was it in 1985? Yes, I believe it was 1985.

Yancey: I am going to put a question mark for myself there about that.

Clark: To make sure we get the right year--

Yancey: Okay, let's go on and have you tell me what this is a picture of--

Clark: That's the St. James A.M.E. Church; that's the way it looked when it was in Quakertown. That's all I can tell you. [See Photograph 7 in Appendix]

Yancey: Okay, in Quakertown. Do you know maybe what street that might have been on? Maybe we can find that out later.

Clark: Let me see your book there, your black book. It should tell you. I forgot the street. Oh here it is; [it] should have a map.

Yancey: Okay. Is this a drawing?

Clark: The church was over there close to where the women's [club] building is [now]; but that is Oakland. So, it was Oakland.

Yancey: On Oakland, and that is now the women's building. You know, that makes it more personable and human to me, for me to picture. I know where the women's club building is. And to think that that was a church--okay, go ahead.

Clark: Here it is, right here.

Yancey: Okay.

Clark: I knew I remembered--it was Oakland.

Yancey: Okay. [Reading] "The St. James A.M.E. Church also provided a place for school to be held after the 1913 fire. The structure was on Block 213, Lot 6, between Holt and Withers on Oakland" [See Photograph 7 in Appendix].

Clark: Yes. Just say Oakland.

Yancey: Okay, now, that is where the women's club is located. Now, that historical marker for Quakertown, then, isn't too far from that bridge.

Clark: It's at that bridge. The bridge that crosses and connects to the senior building there.

Yancey: The senior group [Senior Citizen's Building]?

Clark: The senior group.

Yancey: And the women's club area. Wow, so that is almost on the site where the A.M.E. church, St. James, was located. Do you think this is a drawing, or is this a picture of a picture?

Clark: Well this is it, and we got it out of the book. We just enlarged it.

Yancey: Is this an actual picture, someone's photograph? [See Photograph 7 in Appendix.]

Clark: Yes. Yes.

Yancey: I didn't notice that somebody is sitting right out here on the--

Clark: You see, we had it enlarged.

Yancey: I see.

Clark: But that is actually the church, from what I was told. They moved the church to the present site where our church building is now. It stayed there until 1962. This particular church, and what happened--

Yancey: This building was moved with the horses and stuff?

Clark: I am sure that everything was. It was moved to that location where the present church building is now. In April of 1962, they sort of had a little tornado or strong wind came through and damaged the church so it couldn't be repaired. They had to tear it down, so when I came in July 1962, they were building on the present building that is there now.

Yancey: So this had not been completely been dismantled? Or was it gone when you arrived?

Clark: When I arrived. They tore it down in April 1962. I came in July 1962. Due to the wind damage, it couldn't be repaired.

Yancey: Okay, thank you.

Clark: But it stood on that particular location from what, 1921-1922 to 1962.

Yancey: Wow, from 1921 to 1962. It continued to be used.

Clark: A strong wind came and damaged it. It couldn't be repaired. It was torn down and the new brick structure was built.

Yancey: Okay. Let's go on before we run out of tape here; we are almost to the end. I am going to include this quote from your husband in 1980 when he talks about his parents. That's going to be on

page seventy-one from the Quakertown book. It talks about him having--that his parents were in the church at Quakertown and then the schoolhouse was burned and the A.M.E. church was used for that school building. So this is a quote from Reverend Willie Clark we will include [Source: *Quakertown,* p. 71; See Photograph 8 in Appendix]. Okay, here is Willie Clark's mother, I believe you told me. Let's go ahead and get her name.

Clark: **Maude [See Photograph 9 in Appendix].**

Yancey: **Maude. M-A-U-D-E.**

Clark: **Yes, Yes.**

Yancey: **Maude--**

Clark: **--Wood Clark Hembry.**

Yancey: **Wood Clark Hembry. About how--**

Clark: **She was born, I wrote it down. She was born on December 22, 1877.**

Yancey: **1877.**

Clark: **She died April 3, 1949.**

Yancey: **1949. Can you tell me when you think this photo was taken? [See Photograph 9 in Appendix.]**

Clark: **I have no idea. My husband couldn't remember either.**

Yancey: Do you know about how old she was? Did you think she was about eighteen or so in this photo?

Clark: Probably so.

Yancey: I thought I heard you mention--I wanted to clarify that.

Clark: I remember her brother saying that she was young. He had an uncle named Walter, too, before he died. He came up here on visits and all he said was Maude was young when that picture was made. So, he didn't give a date then.

Yancey: Well, I have her birth and death date, and do you think this photo was--[See Photograph 9 in Appendix.] [Tape ends]

[End of Interview]

Interviewer's note: Interview concluded with description of Mr. John Clark, father of Rev. Willie Clark. After John Clark died, Mrs. Maude [Wood] Clark married Rev. C. R. Hembry, pastor of Quakertown's St. James A.M.E. Church. Upon the death of her mother-in-law Mrs. Maude Clark and her husband, Rev. Willie Clark [and] Alma Clark inherited the Hembry-Clark Quakertown house.

A P P E N D I X

Photograph 1

Left to Right: **Alma Clark and Rubylene Clark. The Clarks stand in front of their Hembry-Clark House on its 100th Anniversary, 2005.**

Photograph 2

The original Quakertown house. Willie & Walter Clark, their mother Maude Clark Hembry, and their step-father, Rev. C.R. Hembry resided here. This home served three generations of Quakertown residents and descendents, 1905-2005.

Photograph 3

Quakertown Studio Portrait

Left to right: **Mr. John Amus Clark and Mrs. Maude Woods Clark [Hembry] of Argyle (c. 1910). Quakertown Pioneers & Parents of Willie & Walter Clark. Paternal Grandparents of Rubylene Clark**

Photograph 4

QUAKERTOWN

CITY OF DENTON

DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

DISAPPEARS

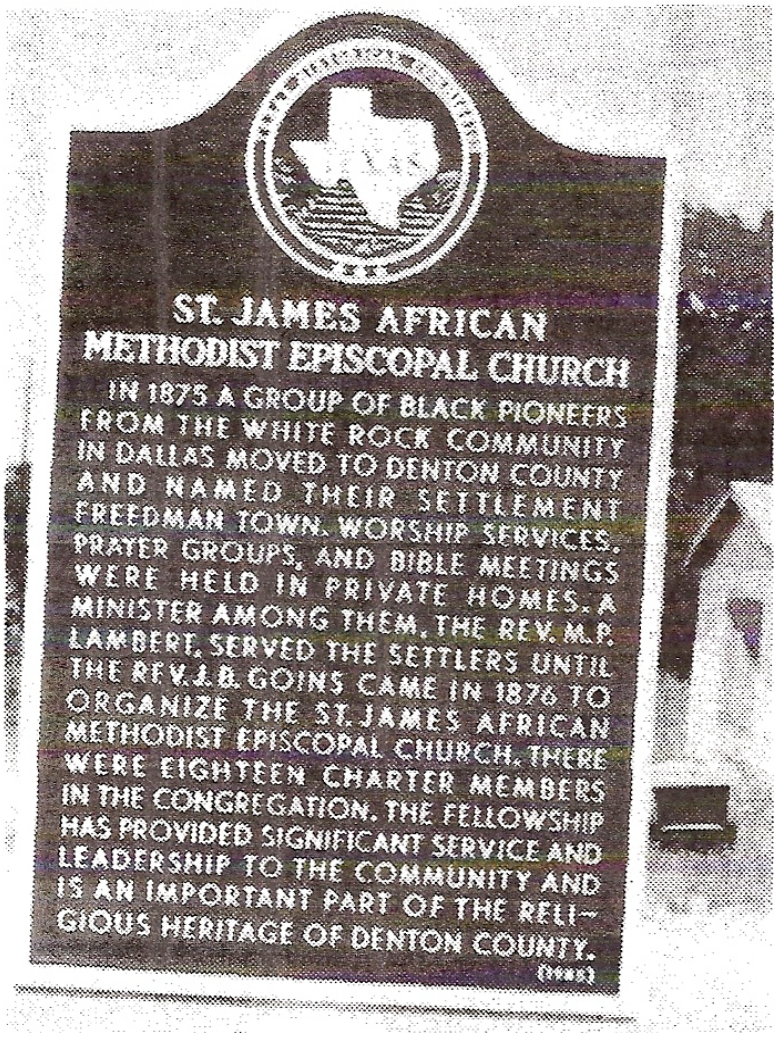
Photograph 5

Left to right: **Church stewardess Eula Gray and Rev. Willie Clark (c.1985). Occasion: 110th Church Anniversary Celebrated with Unveiling of St. A.M.E. Historical Marker. Present Location: 1107 East Oak Street, Denton.**

Photograph 6

SAINT JAMES AME CHURCH

Historical Marker



St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church
1107 East Oak Street, Denton, Texas.
Dedication of Texas Historical Marker, June 2, 1985. Celebration of St. James A.M.E. 110th Anniversary

Photograph 7

Quakertown's St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church (c. 1875 – 1922). Quakertown Location: Block 21C, Lot #6404 Oakland Avenue, Between McKinney & Holt.
Source: Sanborn Insurance Map, 1921 Quakertown.

Photograph 8

COLORED PUBLIC SCHOOL, QUAKERTOWN

Source: DENTON COUNTY JUDGE SCHOOL RECORDS

August 20, 1876--The Colored school was established and school board selected.

August 20, 1878--An order was issued by County Judge C. C. Scruggs for maintenance of the Denton Colored Public Free School.

Source: City of Denton Assessor's Abstract of City Lots, page 516

The school was located at the corner of Terry and Holt Street, Block 213A, Lots 11 & 12, until it burned in 1913. This was again verified by Rosa Lee Jones Daniels on December 18, 1990. Mrs. Daniels lived next door to the school on Terry Street.

Source: Quotation from Rev. Willie Clark, 1980

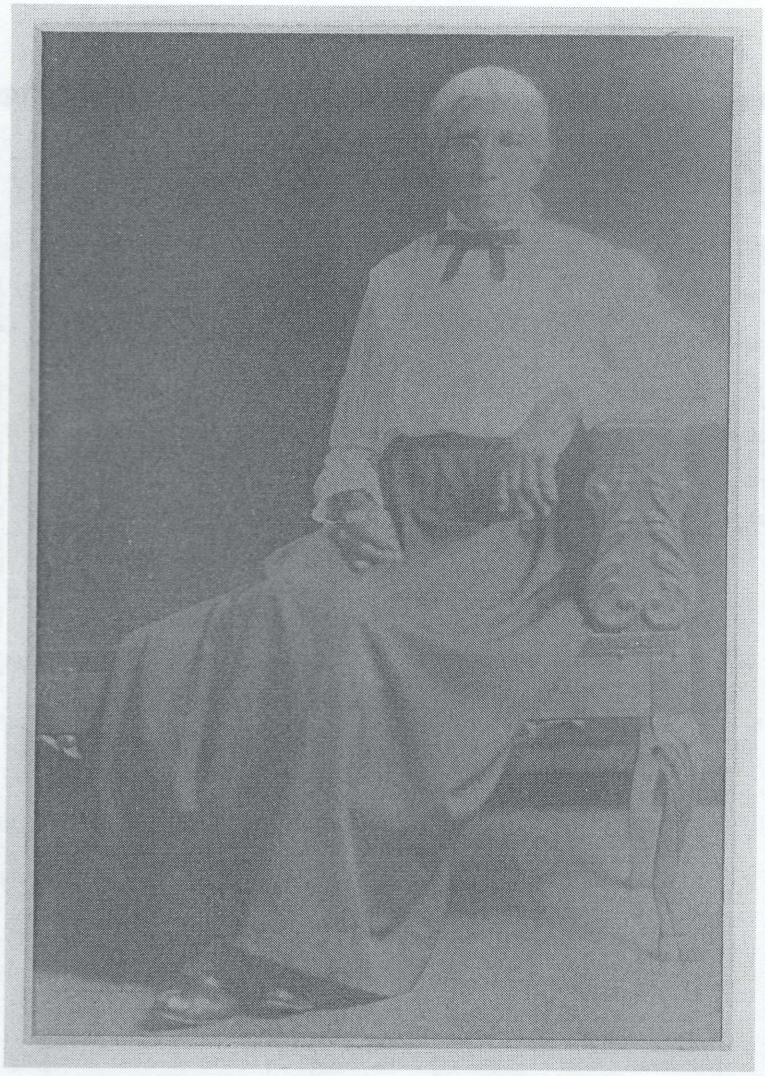
"My parents were C. R. and Maude Hembry. When the church was in Quakertown, the school house burned and the AME Church was used for the school building. The teachers were Miss Ella Hampton, Miss Emma Walker, and Miss Maggie Hampton. School was held in the church until the black school moved to its present location. The name of the school was Fred Douglass, now known as Fred Moore."

Note: Alma Clark's husband, Rev. Willie Clark, grew up in Quakertown and attended school until the building "mysteriously" burned down in 1913. School was then held at St. James A.M.E. Church building until exiled in 1922.

Photograph 9

First generation Quakertown pioneer (1905-1921), Maude Woods Clark Hembry, circa 1895), 18 years old. Birth: 1877, Argyle, Texas. Death: 1949, Denton, Texas. Daughter of Minnie Bell Woods; sister of Will E. Woods

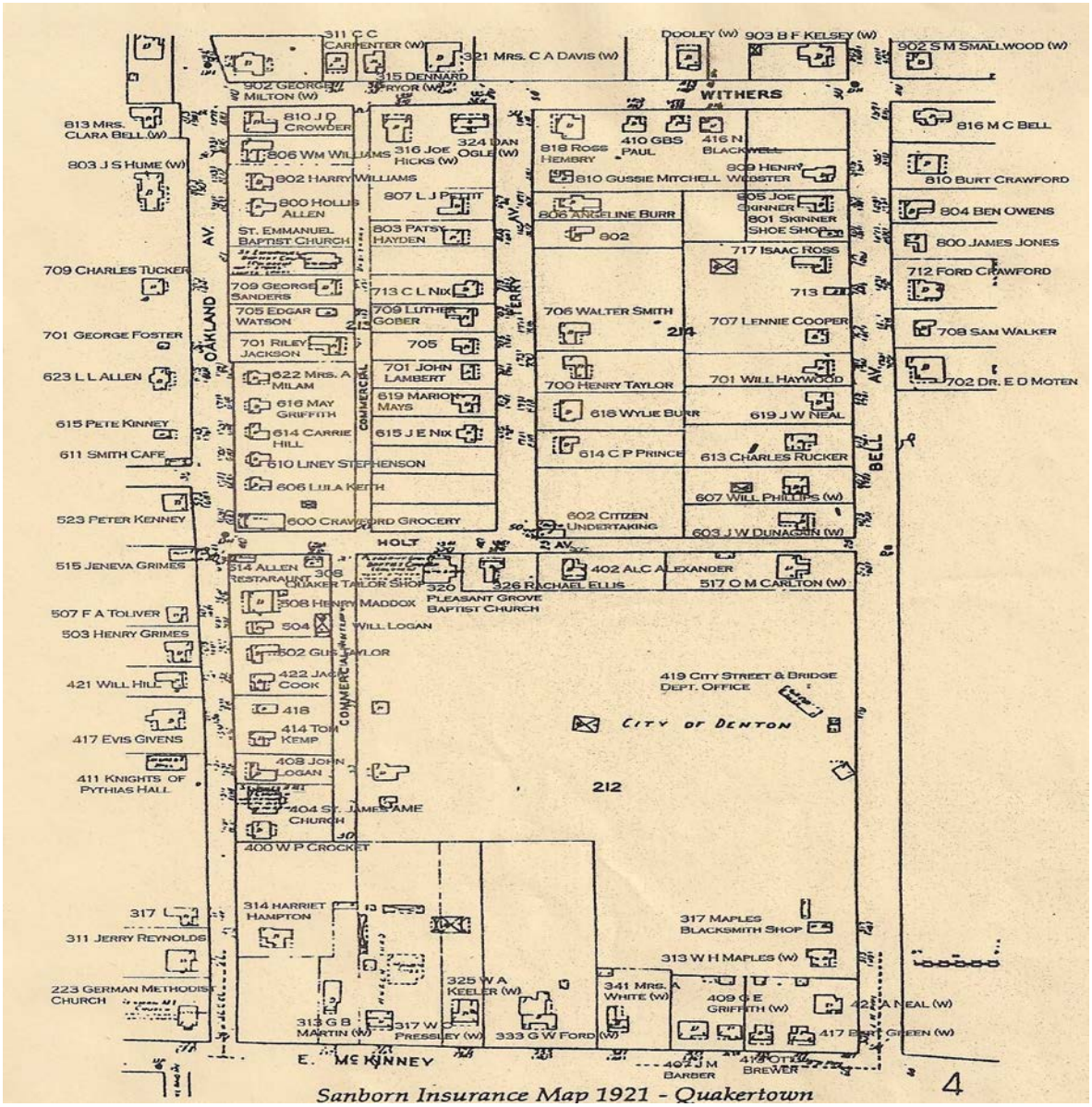
Photograph 10



Minnie Bell Woods of Argyle, (c. 1890s). Mother of Maude Woods [Clark Hembry] & Will Woods of Argyle. Grandmother of Rev. William & Walter Clark, Great-Grandmother of Rubylene Clark. Mrs. Woods was of mixed heritage [African American, Caucasian, and Cherokee] and easily crossed the colorline to her advantage during Jim Crow days.

Photograph 11

SOURCE: Sanborn Insurance Map, 1921 Quakertown



Overview of Historic 1921 Quakertown Era

Homes, Street Names, Businesses, Schools, Churches, Cafes, Fraternal Lodges, Doctor's Office & Pharmacy, and Funeral Home identified by Kim Cupit, Curator of Collections, Denton County Courthouse-on-the-Square Museum.