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Interview with
WILLIE FRANCES MCADAMS
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Interviewer: Mary Lohr
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Oral History Collection

Willie Frances McAdams

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas Date: April 27, 1988

Interviewer: Mary Lohr

Ms. Lohr: This is Mary Lohr interviewing Willie Frances McAdams for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on April 27, 1988, in Denton, Texas. I'm interviewing Ms. McAdams in order to obtain her recollections concerning the Denton Christian Women's Interracial Fellowship.

 Would you tell me your birth date and where you were born?

Ms. McAdams: Okay. My birthday is October 7, 1939. I was born right here in Denton; this is my home.

Ms. Lohr: What about your schooling?

Ms. McAdams: Well, I attended the Fred Moore School--it was Fred Douglass and then Fred Moore--and graduated there. I haven't gone to college. I attended a class at TWU for three or four months. It was kind of, I guess, an experimental class. It was in the CDA field--child development, early childhood. It was just a

group of ladies from the community that went, and that's just about it.

Lohr: Were you born in Denton?

McAdams: I was born in Denton, not too far from where we're living now, I think, up on Wood Street. When I was a little girl, we'd call this Solomon Hill. The other side of town was always called "cross town." I was born right here in Denton.

Lohr: Why was this Solomon Hill?

McAdams: I don't know. I grew up knowing...well, for one thing that's the name of the addition. All these homes are called Solomon Hill Addition. Now I don't know why. I've never looked that far in history to find out. It would be interesting to find out. But this is called the Solomon Hill Addition. When we went to get our church historical marker, I was down at the city courthouse, and I looked in records, and that's where I found the name, the Solomon Hill Addition. We just grew up calling this "The Hill" on this side of town.

Lohr: It doesn't seem too hilly (chuckle).

McAdams: No, it doesn't. I don't know how it became that. I guess maybe someone named it that. I don't know. I will check on that because I worked extensively with the church marker and looked up a lot of records. I'll have to check on that and find out. I'll ask some of the older ones that have been here longer than I have, and

they will tell me.

Lohr: What was Denton like when you were growing up?

McAdams: In what ways?

Lohr: Just any way.

McAdams: It was just a pretty nice place to live. It was pretty comfortable. I guess I felt a little freer here in Denton because even after getting older, I didn't feel any racial tension, not a lot of it. But after getting older and getting away from Denton, I'm beginning to see more racial tension there than I had noticed in Denton. I don't know. Denton is more like a family situation. I think it's beginning to change some now. But it has been that way.

Lohr: How large was your family?

McAdams: There was only just two--me and my brother. There were two of us and my mother and dad. My mother had five brothers and sisters. There were, I mean, five of them in all. In my family we were smaller--just my brother and I.

Lohr: Did your mother's family live in Denton?

McAdams: Some of them did, yes. Some of them lived in Denton, and then others had moved away. She had two brothers that were living here that I grew up with. But her sister lived in Fort Worth. In the summer, my brother and I always spent the summer with them. She had more children, and it was just lots of fun. We always went

there for Thanksgiving. We had Christmas at home, but Thanksgiving was at Aunt Sue Ella's. We would go there and stay there three days. Then my grandmother, which is on my dad's side of the family, they practically helped raise me--she and my aunt, who is my dad's sister. They're both deceased now. They were like a second family because my aunt didn't have any children. So my brother and I were her children, too. They were always here with us, so we had a real close-knit family, real close.

Lohr: Was your father from Denton?

McAdams: They were from Denton County, but not from Denton. They were from Lewisville. My mother was from down near Terrell, I think. What was the name of the town? I can't think right now. It was down below Terrell. I've never been to her home. That's where she was from, and then they moved to Denton. I don't know when now, but they moved to Denton.

Lohr: And you were born here?

McAdams: I was born here, yes.

Lohr: Was your brother born here, too?

McAdams: He was born here, also, in Denton.

Lohr: You mentioned the Fred Moore School. Was it a good school?

McAdams: Pretty good. There were some advantages there, and there were some disadvantages. The teachers were different

than what they are now--very much different. They were kind of like--what you might say--extended family because they reached out. I notice now that teachers don't do that. I'm sure they do their best, but a lot of things that we learned in school the kids are not learning now--the black kids, I'll say.

Lohr: Such as? What kinds of things?

McAdams: Well, they don't have a lot of role models--even in the school where I am. I work in the school system now, myself, and there's not a black teacher there. I'm there but I'm not a teacher. I'm a teacher's aide. To me that's not a role model for the black kids.

Lohr: Is that in Denton?

McAdams: Yes, that's in Denton.

Lohr: Is it a grade school or high school?

McAdams: It's an elementary school.

Lohr: I wonder why that is. I'm surprised at that.

McAdams: I don't know why that is. I've wondered that, myself. I don't know why they haven't...they have had a black teacher there, but she retired. She retired and they never hired another one. I don't know why. For one thing, there hasn't been a big teacher turnover there. Not too many teachers have quit. It's been the same faculty there for some time. There's been a few replacements. One was a retiree. As far as teaching, I don't know of any black librarians. I guess there are

librarians somewhere else but not in Denton. As far as elementary teachers--first, second, third, fourth--we don't have any black teachers. When I first went there, there was a man teacher there. He was black, but he went to another school. And there was a lady there, too, and she retired. So they haven't hired anymore there.

Lohr: Well, did you have a favorite black teacher when you were in school at the Fred Moore School?

McAdams: Yes, I did. I had, oh, several. I guess my favorite was Mrs. Hodge. She was a home economics teacher. Mrs. Hodge took the girls out to different home economics conventions and institutions, and we learned a lot under Mrs. Hodge. She just kind of took us and taught us a lot of things about home and family life and a lot of values, too. We had another teacher that we thought a lot about, was Ms. Almes. She was an elementary teacher. Mrs. Hodge was a high school teacher. Ms. Almes was an elementary teacher, and we thought a lot of her. She was a real favorite, too.

Lohr: So they were role models?

McAdams: Yes, they were role models--definitely, definitely. There were several other black teachers there that I really liked, but those two stand out the most.

Lohr: When Fred Moore closed, what happened to those teachers?

McAdams: Mrs. Hodge retired and Ms. Almes did, too. They had been teaching a long time. I think Mrs. Hodge had taught my

mother, so she'd been there a long time. But they started real young in teaching. They were a lot younger than the teachers now. But they retired. They didn't go into the integrated schools.

Lohr: Do you think they would have retired if Fred Moore had stayed opened?

McAdams: I don't think so. I think they would have continued teaching. I really do.

Lohr: Do you have any idea why they retired? Did they just not want to go to those schools?

McAdams: I have no idea. I've never asked them or anything. They were still in the community and still very active in the community until their death. They're both deceased now. Ms. Almes died back in the summer of 1987, and Mrs. Hodge has been dead for quite some time.

Lohr: Did many of the other teachers retire when Fred Moore closed?

McAdams: No, not really. Let's see. Miss Alexander continued to teach; she was one of our teachers there. Ms. Jones--she was Lucretia Muse then--she's at the high school now. The others, I think, have moved away. They had either moved away prior or moved during the summer, and they had teaching jobs elsewhere. Some of them have died since then. We had a Fred Douglass/Fred Moore reunion last year. Oh, yes, Ms. Clark is teaching now in one of the elementary schools, and Ms. Parker. Well, they didn't

teach me; they taught my children, now that I think about it.

Lohr: How did you become involved in the women's group?

McAdams: I don't know how that really began. I guess it began through the churches. Nearly everything we do in our community is centered around our church. My daughter-- her name's Rosalind---was going to seventh grade then. Here in Denton they had just one school that would be seventh grade. It was just a one-year thing only. It was at Strickland. I can remember that. There was no bus for our kids to ride to school. We all worked. Most of the parents over here had to work. A group of ladies from the Presbyterian church and, I think, the United Methodist church...I can't think of all of them, but I know it was those two. They contacted Reverend Chew, I believe. It was Reverend Mark Chew. They got together, and the First Methodist Church loaned us their bus to pick up our kids and take them back and forth to school. I went around as one of the mothers to collect money for gas. Then from that it led into the Interracial Fellowship.

Lohr: What year was that?

McAdams: I don't even remember. Rosalind is thirty-two. I'll have to go back (laughter). She was in the seventh grade. Let me see. That's been over twelve or fifteen years when all that was. I'll have to go back and think.

I didn't think of any of that before you came. You should have told me to put my thinking cap on. But there were several ladies from the other community who were very instrumental.

From that we went about improving conditions in southeast Denton over here. It was called southeast Denton. Now I think it's just called east Denton now because Southridge is included.

We walked the streets in a campaign for paving the streets and for lights down in this area. We did a lot of trying to connect the young people together. The First United Methodist Church sponsored retreats, and we took the kids to one of their Methodist centers for weekend retreats. I went along with them. As I said, my daughter then was in seventh and eighth grades, and the group was real active on up until she graduated from high school. When she graduated from high school--well, during that time--some of the young people from the other community came over to Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, and they would tutor our children who were failing. That was so that we wouldn't have dropouts. Well, the parents suggested their children come over. Some were college students, and they tutored down in Reverend Mark Chew's Pleasant Grove Baptist Church at that time two nights a week.

We had a meeting once a month, if I'm not mistaken,

and we began to get politically involved and just several other things. We just branched out to different areas. You know, we had social activities which included our families--picnics and the Christmas parties where it included our spouses. We formed a relationship with just one another as friends. You have a lot of them that are still friends now, very much so.

Lohr: What were conditions like in southeast Denton when you were joining up to do something about it?

McAdams: Well, for one thing the streets weren't paved. I think this is one of the first streets that they paved. I didn't live over here at this time; I lived on the other side of town. The streets over here were not paved at all, and it was really horrible down here when it was raining and bad weather. Everyone worked here and paid taxes, but these streets just were not paved in this area. They would always give us excuses from city hall: "You're on the agenda. We're going to pave the streets this date and this time." "This has come up, and we don't have the money or funds for that right now." The lighting...they straightened the lighting out for a while.

When I grew up as a little girl, we didn't think anything about it because we lived on this side of town, and that was just it. My mother worked on the other side of town because she did domestic work. My dad worked at

the brickyard. So that was just life; I mean, you knew you lived on one side of town. As I said, as far as I know, it was pretty peaceful here. We weren't involved in any racial incidents at all. But then as you began to grow older, you began to see the difference and the changes.

The conditions here were kind of bad at that time. At that time then, where parents were working the salary wasn't high. It wasn't minimum wage, but it wasn't top wage either. The type of work that they were doing then, they don't do now. My mother was a domestic worker, and my dad worked at the Acme brickyard. It's a difference now. You could work at Acme brickyard now, but you wouldn't have to do whatever he had to do if you were qualified. So at that time, it was a little different. My mother took in sewing, and she sewed for people in the community for extra money to make ends meet. So we were happy. We were very happy.

Lohr: So there wasn't any overt racism?

McAdams: No, there wasn't.

Lohr: People weren't unkind to you?

McAdams: No, they were no unkind. We knew we couldn't go to the movie downtown in the front door, but we didn't go to the movies, anyway (chuckle). We didn't care. After I became a teenager, I wanted to go to the movies, and I resented the fact that they only showed us a movie at

midnight. And my mother never let me go. They'd have a midnight show once a month at the theater downtown, and we could go in the front door. I guess I was about fifteen or sixteen before I ever got the chance to go. It would be on a Saturday night. But any other time, when we went to the movies, we had to go around to the back. It wasn't the Campus Theatre then. It was called the Dreamland Theatre, which is where the Fine Arts is now. We had to go around the back and go up the stairway. We paid the same amount of money that you paid to go around front. We didn't ever go, anyway, so it didn't affect my brother and I. And my aunt was lucky to get a TV earlier, so we had a TV to watch.

I tried to tell my children about that, and they just really didn't believe it. But I told them you learned to know people, and I told them how some people would just go ahead and stay all day long up there in the movie. But that was the only form of weekend entertainment that was available for people who worked all week.

We centered our lives around the church. There were activities at the church that we took part in. Then we would go back and forth to my aunt's. We were lucky. A long, long, long, long time ago, we'd go to my grandmother's home. This is my mother's mother. When the train station was here, we'd ride down there on a

train. My uncle was a porter at the station in Fort Worth. So I had a lot of things going that maybe some of the other kids didn't have.

Lohr: What about restaurants and things like that?

McAdams: We didn't try to go there. We ate at home. I'm real conscientious of that now. I don't eat a lot out (laughter). We weren't able to go to restaurants and eat. There were no places for us. There's one place I remember going to, and that was in Lake Dallas at the Duck Inn. We had to drive around to the back to get our orders of fish. They had a little window cut out of this room where they would serve you at.

Lohr: You couldn't eat there in your car?

McAdams: I don't know. We never did. Whenever someone went to go get fish, they'd pick it up. My grandmother was lucky. She worked for the Jagoes, and when Mr. Jagoe went to the barge to fish, he'd bring us some fish. So we didn't have to go there, but I know that's what they did. I had gone there one or two times with someone, and that was just what they would do. And I heard others talk about it. But we didn't have that to worry about because Mr. Jagoe always brought us plenty fish (laughter).

Lohr: What about when things started to change in the early 1960s? What was Denton like then?

McAdams: In the early 1960s, when things began to change a little bit? I'm trying to think. Was I here then? I went to

live in Abilene with an aunt and an uncle. Things began to change kind of smoothly as far as I could tell. There was unrest in the schools. My children never...when they were going to school, we never had any racial incidents because my children are real outgoing and, they took part in activities. There was always some type of arguing or something reported. Even at some of our meetings, there were parents that came that were really not members of the group. They would come and tell about something that happened at school between the children and the teacher or the white students or whatever else. We had a complaint nearly every month about something that was going on. We would go to the superintendent or the school board, and we'd try to talk to them to see if things could be eased or something could be worked out. There was usually a parent that always had something to tell that was going on.

Lohr: Well, if the parents weren't a member of the group, how did they come to be at the meetings?

McAdams: Well, they heard about our meetings. They heard about our group, and they came to us for help. That's what they came for--help. Most of the time we could get them to join after that incident or whatever. They might would come. We'd invite them to come. We made it open because we announced it in all of our churches. It was always open. We met in our churches, and some of us met

in our homes at different times.

As I said, I lived on the other side of town. My aunt died, and I'm staying here until my cousin can come back and we can kind of get things straightened out this summer. Right now there's just been so much vandalism in this area of town and other areas, too--I read about it in the paper--and so we just moved in here to try to keep things together so they wouldn't take off everything.

But if there had been any fighting or, say, like, the principal or the teachers had been unfair in some way or another, they would come to our group and would tell us about it. And we would go and talk. They felt like we were a group that was a go-between for whatever the situation was. They heard about us. Some of them joined, and then some of them didn't join. They just came in and voiced their grievances. Some joined and we tried to work out the situation. That's really when most of the retreats and the family picnics all began. We thought that if we involved more people by having family picnics and have a relaxed atmosphere, we could ease a lot of tension. That would ease a lot of problems at school and whatever. By then, usually boys that were playing football had no problems at all because they wanted to play football and win as a team. Everyone wants winning teams. They don't care what color you are if you're winning. But then there were the kids that

weren't active in the sports and other activities. My daughter was one of the first girls to be a Filly over at Denton High School. I remember two young ladies made it, she and Melvine Moore. They were the two first black Fillies. And she was a Filly until she graduated. So I had no problem there. But there are a lot of kids that are more outgoing than others in any neighborhood--not so much in our black neighborhoods or white neighborhood but just any neighborhood. Steve was a lot different than Rosalind. He's not near as outgoing, but he has as many friends as Rosalind in a different way.

Lohr: Well, at first was the group's membership by invitation?

McAdams: It was by invitation through the churches. I guess that's the way it was. I'm trying to think now how was I invited. It was by invitation, and I think it was Elneita Dever that invited me, or Catherine Bell. I'm really not sure. But it was more or less by invitation. There were a group of people who thought this up, and they invited three and four more friends. We met together, and we talked about what it would be and what we hoped it would be. Then from there on, we would bring a friend with us or someone we felt was interested.

Lohr: Was the first meeting pretty much social?

McAdams: Yes, they were more social--to kind of get acquainted. Yes, they were.

Lohr: Where did you hold them?

McAdams: In the homes. Some were held in our homes in this community and in the other community. Sometimes we held them in the church--in the fellowship halls in our churches. When we got real big, no one had a big house, so we went to our church fellowship halls.

Lohr: What did you do at the meetings?

McAdams: We talked. We first got acquainted. We elected what we called chairpersons--not presidents--one from each community. One was from the black community, and one was from the white community, and they were to be chairpersons. We didn't charge any dues. It was just strictly just come and voice your opinion or your grievances or suggestions, what you think we needed for our neighborhood. We just kind of talked about things like that. It was just kind of, as you may say, a time where everybody let it all hang out--whatever you had to talk about. It was just kind of a sharing session--what we wanted for our families, what we hoped for our families. Sometimes it was centered around jobs. Maybe someone was interested in a particular job, and they felt like they'd been turned down because of discrimination. That's kind of how we first started out.

Then we would begin to have people to come in and talk to us as a group from different areas. We had one who talked about employment; we had one from the city; we had them from just different places. Whatever the

interest was, we'd call and request people to talk with us, tell us what we needed to do, what step to take, and how you go about doing it; and what was available, who to go to, and where you'd find the information. Some of the information we didn't know where to go about getting it. We may have read about it in the paper sometimes, but some things are not published even now. There are certain things that they still don't publish.

Lohr: What kinds of things?

McAdams: Well, like job opportunities. They don't tell you about a job opportunity all the time in the newspaper. If you happen to be lucky enough to be in the situation or the building where there is a opening, you're aware of it, and you may be qualified for it. But you may be sitting out here somewhere, and you need a job, and you've been to that same place, and they tell you it's not available. So we heard information like that. We were able to capitalize on...well, I won't say they kept it secret. I don't know what word you'd use for that. It wasn't really secret. We just weren't informed. We didn't know what resources to obtain to get this information. So it was kind of an information group. We were told things, and we were contacted by different people.

We were introduced to a lot of areas. I had been in Denton all my life, and I hadn't visited the campus at North Texas. Through this group, I began to take my

children out there, and we would go and attend things out there. I don't know. I guess I just felt like I wasn't going out there because I wasn't a student there. No one had told me that I couldn't go, but I just didn't go. To me that was a college campus, and it was a feeling of off limits. You know, maybe you don't belong there or something. And I hadn't decided to go into college or anything. Then I was aware of the things out there that was free to the public. We weren't aware of it. There was never any information in the paper that they were having a play out there and the public was invited. I notice now they do put it in there, and they charge tremendously now, so we don't get to go as much as we did then (chuckle). Those things were available, and I didn't know they were available. So this group made us informed of a lot of things that were available to us that we just hadn't taken the step to see if they were. And a lot of it didn't cost a lot of money, either. It was educational to me as well as to my family, and I liked that about the group, too.

Lohr: Well, you mentioned tutoring that the people did. How did that help?

McAdams: That helped our young people. Not all of them, but some of them, were beginning to drop out or talk about dropping out of school because they could not keep up their grades over there, or they felt like they were

failing. I don't know if they were prepared to go there or if it was just the sudden change. I think it was Carol Riddlesperger who had a daughter that came down to tutor. There were several. I can't call their names offhand. They came over, and they tutored the kids that were in high school because we had gotten word from some of the parents that their children had failed the first semester, and they didn't know what to do. They were talking about dropping out of school, so they suggested that idea of the tutoring. They came to Pleasant Grove Baptist Church twice a week for the tutoring, and they came and helped the kids out. I didn't ever go to any of those sessions. I didn't have anyone in high school at the time. Rosalind, as I said, had just started in junior high, and she was doing pretty well.

Lohr: Do you know whether or not the tutoring helped?

McAdams: Yes, it helped. We have Thomas Ross now, who is a judge in Fort Worth. He was a lawyer at first, and now he's a judge. He was in that age group at that time. So I feel like it helped. I don't think Tommy would have dropped out of school because his family wouldn't have let that happen, but I'm sure it inspired him some. It helped Mary Lee, but she moved on. She doesn't live here anymore. I don't know where Mary Lee lives now. But I think it helped. The kids formed a group called...what was that group? Some of the names I don't remember now,

so if I'm wrong you correct me. I think his name was Bob Black. His son came down, and he was one of the tutors. So that group formed a theater group with the kids from our neighborhood over there. It wasn't anything big. It was all fun. I'm trying to think...what was it that they did? It's on the tip of my tongue, but I can't think right now. It was the Creation. Anyway, the kids learned how to handle the lights and the sets, and this gave them some time to get together as friends. It wasn't so much peer pressure as it was in school. They did this after school and did it in the summer. I'm trying to think...what is that guy's name? I can't think right now. But the kids all got together. They did it in Fred Moore Park, and they worked together there. Then they went over to the Civic Center--I think that's where it was--and they formed this group. They all got together. This group came out of the tutoring sessions, which I thought was good. I think that kind of helped. I think it eased the tension in the school where some of the kids felt like they were left out. They realized then that, you know, "we can be apart, or we can all be together. We can all work." They didn't feel so isolated.

Lohr: How long did the tutoring last?

McAdams: i think it lasted about two years. I'm really not sure right now because I didn't work with that group. I'm

trying to think...who worked with that? Ema Rogers and Carol Riddlesperger, and, I think, Trudy Foster. Trudy Foster was just all around. She was in everything that needed help; she was there.

Lohr: Her name comes up a lot.

McAdams: I don't know if Pat Cheek did it or not. I'm not sure. Pat Cheek may have. Dorothy McGuire helped because she had a daughter. She worked in the tutoring program, I think. I'm not sure what her daughter's name is. Anyway, she had a daughter that helped. I'm trying to think of some of the parents. I can remember Ema Rogers because she had three boys which were all high school age--the Rogers family. Betty Kimble had teenage girls that were over there, I think, at one time. I can't remember anymore right now.

Lohr: When parents came to the group with problems that their children had had in school, was the group able to do anything about those problems?

McAdams: Sometimes yes and sometimes no. But I don't think a parent ever went away feeling that they wouldn't get any help; I mean, they felt reassured that someone else cared. It wasn't just, like, they felt nobody really cared or "who can I go to" or "who can I talk to." I don't know what steps they took because I wasn't in that area, either. I guess you think I wasn't in any of it (laughter). But I'm trying to think...what steps did

they take. Usually, someone from the group who had more influence would talk to the people that had a problem--after the meeting--and they would work out something, or they would decide on what would be the next step to take. If you wanted to volunteer your time to be one of those to walk with them or participate--go to the school board or go to the superintendent's office or whatever--you could do that. At that time I worked for the Denton State School, so I worked from six to two, and it was kind of impossible for me to do anything in the daytime because I had a family. But I was using my car. I was a carpooler. If someone needed to do something or kids needed to go somewhere, I would work like that. That's what I did most of the time.

Lohr: Do you remember any of the specific problems that the parents had that they came to the group with?

McAdams: They talked about children fighting. They talked about fights between the kids. Some came to say that they had been called ugly names, and when they went to the teachers to tell them about it, the teachers would ignore them, and they would not talk to them. That was, I think, the biggest problem. It was a matter of feelings being hurt, really, mostly. I don't think they were ever turned down if they wanted to participate in anything because for a while the kids wouldn't participate in anything at all. They just decided not to participate.

If they wasn't athletically inclined, they decided not to participate.

I think some of the kids that were in the band...some of them went over there to play in the band. Then later on, the kids that came right from elementary, from junior high, participated because they had a better opportunity to go ahead. They had had the elementary and the junior high training, and then by the time they got to high school, they were able to take the test, and they were lucky enough to get the first chair and the second chair. The kids that went over there directly from Fred Moore, they didn't have this advantage, and they didn't qualify, so some of them felt left out. It's kind of like what you see on TV now where they were saying the other night about the SAT testing and the new Texas law or whatever. Our [blacks] SAT tests are still low, and it'll take twelve years before that will be where you can see a little bit of improvement. And that's kind of the way it was in that situation, because the first one didn't get a lot of things. I don't remember how many graduates we had that year. I don't remember right now, and I can't think of who the first graduates were, either. But I don't think anyone did not graduate. I'd have to talk to some of the mothers to find out for sure. I think they all graduated--the ones that went over and stayed in school. If you dropped out, you know, you

didn't. But the ones that stayed in school, I think they all graduated the first three years. I think they did.

Lohr: Did many of those go to college?

McAdams: Yes, some of them did. We have Richard Rogers...is his name Richard? I can't think of his name now. He went to college, and he taught here in Denton High School. Now he's gone to TSTA, and he holds an office in that area now. His name's not Richard. I can't think of his name now. Richard is his brother. Fred Rogers is one of the boys that went on to college. As I said, there was Tommy Ross. I'm trying to think of a girl. Katherine Mitchell is a nurse. I can't think right now. I'll have to have one of my children here to help me remember names.

Lohr: Did the group take part in integrating the restaurants and theaters and things like that?

McAdams: It did take part in integrating the restaurants because we went together, and we had lunches. We met for lunch and for dinner and things like that one time or another. Of course, we wouldn't be refused because we were with other people. I don't know if we would have gone there on our own. But we met at different places, and we had lunch together. We didn't plan it at a certain time. We just decided that maybe three or four of us would go somewhere, and we would have lunch. And we would do that for church services, also. The churches were aware of our group. We met together, and we had early services on

Sunday mornings together--just the group. We went to different churches in the community, on both sides of town.

Lohr: You said early services. Do you mean special services?

McAdams: Well, in the black community, we don't have an early service. We have what we call Sunday school anywhere from around 8:30 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. Then our morning worship is at 11:00 a.m. In some of the other churches on the other side of town, they have, like, an 8:00 service, so we met for an 8:00 service--just the group members. We went to that church. Now I don't know if the members of that church told the minister we were coming or not (laughter). They may have informed them ahead of time, telling them, "All right, we're bringing these people over. Y'all except them." I don't know. We didn't look at it in that sense, but they may have. I don't know. We invited them to our services. What else did they attend? Well, we didn't have anything down here but church at the time. They were always welcome to come. As relationships grew, we became friends, and we included them in our weddings and our family parties and things like that. And we were also included in theirs.

Lohr: Would you have felt comfortable going to the other churches had you not been at this early service with these other group members?

McAdams: Yes, yes. I had gone to First Baptist Church several times. They had programs that I felt were interesting, and I wanted to be a part of it. I would take my family there. I had gone to First Baptist Church. I had attended maybe Trinity Presbyterian. I'd attended two other churches prior to that already with my family. When First Baptist had had a program--I don't know if this resulted or this came out of our group or not--and my daughter was in one of their youth programs that they have over there with Bill Shadle. I'm trying to think...what was the name of it? I'd have to look in her scrapbook. Anyway, it's where they have their youth program for all the young people, and she was a part of it. Oh, what was that show? I can't think now. But, anyway, I think that when she was asked to participate in it--asked if she would like to come over and be in this program--she did. She tried out, she got the part, and she was in it. And we've gone several times. I've always read the church news. If there's something in the city and I see that it's interesting, then I would always go. and I felt comfortable. I really felt a little special because I was treated with royalty because I was an outsider. Not really an outsider, but a new face and not a member over there. So I was treated with a little more royalty, and then, too, I knew a lot of people because, as I said, I volunteered. I worked with the

Girl Scouts, and I knew people and Girl Scout leaders in that area.

Lohr: Were the churches sort of in the vanguard of integration in Denton?

McAdams: I really think so, yes. I really do. I think the churches were in the forefront because the other ladies were all members of churches, and we were, too. And we just combined together and gave it a boost.

Lohr: Well, in our class we remarked on the fact that the group was named the Denton Christian Women's Interracial Fellowship and that "Christian" was in that name. But was it dropped later on? Was "Christian" dropped out of the name later on?

McAdams: Yes, it was. It was Denton Interracial Fellowship.

Lohr: Why was it dropped? Do you know?

McAdams: Wait a minute. I'm trying to think. No, it's always been the Denton Interracial Fellowship of Christian Women, as far as I can remember. It may have been left out at some time or another. I don't know why it was dropped, if it was ever dropped. I can remember there were times that I did read where it said Denton Interracial Fellowship. It's always been Denton Interracial Fellowship of Christian Women. I don't know. I don't know why other times I didn't see "Christian Women" on there. Maybe it was just to shorten the name. Maybe it was a typographical error. I don't know. But

that's the way we acknowledged it--the members did.

Lohr: When the group first started meeting, were the meetings sort of secret?

McAdams: No.

Lohr: Never clandestine or secret?

McAdams: No, not when I attended. No, it was real open, as far as I knew.

Lohr: Did any of the black women feel uncomfortable going to this? Were they suspicious of it in any way?

McAdams: When I first started to attend, I didn't feel uncomfortable because I felt the need there. I had a child that was going into junior high, and I didn't want any problems. I loved my little girl like the other ladies loved their children, too, and I felt like anything that would keep any problems from arising would help. And I was willing to go all the way with that.

Lohr: What about the husbands? Were they glad for this?

McAdams: I really don't know. They seemed to get along with one another socially. We had a meeting once a month. When we had the social meetings where the husbands were involved, some of them attended and some did not. At that time a lot of the black husbands were working at night in order for us to have the things we had. One of the two had to take a night job, and so there were a lot of times when the black husbands could not be there. They worked what we'd call the second shift. Now my

husband's going to work in a few minutes. In order to keep your head above water, one of you had to take the night job (for a better job, is what I'm trying to say).

Lohr: When the group decided to get into more political things, did every one want to do that, or did anyone see that as something that could cause friction within the group?

McAdams: No, I don't think so. Everyone wanted the streets paved, and the only way you could do that would be political. You had to go to the city council; you had to vote for people who would do something for your community. They felt like you pay taxes, so why can't we have the same type of streets that are all over town. So if there was anyone that felt that way, they never really spoke out about it or spoke out against it. The people that followed those...what I mean is, the people like Trudy Foster and people who didn't work; or they worked at jobs where they could get away. Ms. Othella Hill didn't work; Ms. Bessie Hardin didn't work. Let's see...who else was in that group? They were people in our community who didn't hold down jobs, and they were able to do the work in the mornings. Then what we did, we canvassed the streets on weekends--on Saturdays and Sundays--from door to door. All of us who had to work did this on our off days. But no one seemed frightful or fearful that it was the wrong thing to do or that they didn't want to be a part of this.

Lohr: Do you remember the urban renewal election that they had before the streets were paved?

McAdams: Yes, I certainly do.

Lohr: I know it was defeated...

McAdams: It was defeated because the community felt like it was a tricky way to get their property, so they didn't vote for it in our neighborhood.

Lohr: Was the community pretty divided?

McAdams: Well, you have to realize that at that time the older people here had homes. They weren't really divided, but they just felt like it wasn't the right thing to do to vote for it. They felt like it was just going to be a tricky way to lose their property, and they didn't want to do that. I was younger. I didn't have a home at that time; I was paying rent. So you have to look at the situation of the homeowner there, too. It may have been that they weren't really informed. I don't know. But I just can't really say, because my grandparents didn't vote for it. I know how hard they had to come about to get their home. When you don't know exactly what's happening and don't understand it, I'm not too sure I would have voted for it because there were a lot of little clauses that you'd have to read that you didn't understand. I don't understand them even now. So I won't say that the community was divided there at all. I'll just say that it was homeowners that felt like they

were protecting their property interests.

Lohr: Do you remember Jerry Stout's part in it?

McAdams: Jerry Stout? I'm trying to think of what did he do. He was a newspaper guy, wasn't he?

Lohr: He was opposition leader.

McAdams: Right, yes.

Lohr: Did you see that as a strange role for him?

McAdams: Well, as I just said, the community thought that there might be some trickery in there. It was kind of hard to vote there at that time. The city was changing over in more ways than one, and it was just kind of a...at that time, I don't think there was a racial thing, but I just think it was just a changeover that was happening. And both sides of the city were trying to decide to do what they felt like was best for their area at that time.

Lohr: How was the city changing?

McAdams: It was changing over. They were beginning to open doors to blacks--maybe doors that hadn't been opened--and we could see a little political interest had been involved at that time. If I'm not mistaken, I think that's when they had the first black run for the school board. There were things that were happening then that hadn't been happening before, so that made the city itself change over. We realized it was all white at one time, but then there was a chance that it might be a little different. So as a whole, the city was changing in more

ways than one. Nobody really realized it, I guess; I mean, one side of town realized it, and maybe some parts of the other side of town did, too. With the school integration, it was all over nationally. So at that time we just had a change.

Lohr: Do you think the people in this community saw that urban renewal as the other side to town's way of grabbing back some of that power?

McAdams: In a way I think so. Yes, I surely do. That's what I think. Urban renewal was to have helped the black community, but the black community didn't know just how much help they were going to get and if they were going to lose what they had in the process of receiving help. They were kind of unsure of that.

Lohr: And so it maybe came at a bad time?

McAdams: Right.

Lohr: If it had come at some other time, it might have gone through?

McAdams: Maybe, yes, it might have. It really came at a bad time.

Lohr: But it was after that that the group stepped in and got the streets paved?

McAdams: Yes. Sometimes I think they only paved the streets then to kind of smooth over whatever they decided to do later on (laughter) because all these years they had never paved these streets. When I walked to school, the streets were muddy. But we're happy to have them.

Lohr: What did they decide to do later on that you think they paved the streets for?

McAdams: I don't know. With things changing, they've changed a lot now because people have moved from their neighborhood to other neighborhoods. So I guess they decided, "Well, we'll just pave the streets down there, and that'll keep them quiet." I guess. I don't know (laughter).

Lohr: Well, I know still there's a problem with the ordinances not being enforced.

McAdams: Yes, there is. Oh, we've called several times. We've called different people, and they say they'll come out. Everybody makes promises, but that's politics.

Lohr: Do they enforce the ordinances now better than they used to?

McAdams: A little better, yes, they do. Yes, they do a little better. I don't know if there are more people attending meetings, but there are a variety of people attending the meetings now. The way we're divided up now, there's more voice that's not all coming directly from the black community, now.

Lohr: Do you think that there would be a need for a group like the interracial group now?

McAdams: There's always a need for a group that wants to better the community. I think there is always a need. We outgrew our group. We didn't really outgrow our group, but our children began to grow up, and the need of the

ladies just kind of disappeared. It dwindled off. As of now, we haven't met in a long time. We know one another, and we know where they live. We call one another up, and we talk to them. We meet each other, and we attend some things where we're all there. But our families have grown up. In our process of organizing our group and when our children began to grow up, we tried to include younger mothers, and we found that hard to do because then they began to get out and get better jobs. These were jobs out of town, so they were driving back and forth to Fort Worth and Dallas to jobs. And if you have children at home, you can't meet at night. So we were unable to just get anyone to come out who could keep the group going, is what I'm saying. We tried real hard, and then we didn't really want to make it a social group. So the group just began to dwindle away.

Lohr: What about voting? What did the group do about voting?

McAdams: Oh, we had voting drives. We canvassed our churches. At that time we didn't have the mall, but we went to Denton Center. We went as a group, and we registered voters. We volunteered to take people to the polls to vote. We went from door to door canvassing for voters.

Lohr: Did you make quite a difference in that respect?

McAdams: Yes, I think we did. I certainly do think we did because a lot of people that would have really not voted were made aware. Then in our churches, too, on Sunday we

began to register people to get them to vote. Now I'll admit the voting is not as high as it should be in this area, but we're still pushing for that as a community, as a group. All of us that belong to different churches still stress that--everyone should go out and vote. And we improve little by little. But right now we're trying to conquer the young people's vote and let them know that they need to vote. We're concentrating on them now.

Lohr: Are you seeing apathy now?

McAdams: A little. I really do. They think it doesn't really matter. I don't know. They're just not really interested. I was surprised this time. There were several young people that really went out to vote--college students. So we're beginning to target on that area now.

Lohr: What about in the jobs area? Did the group help with that?

McAdams; They did help. There were people that were made aware of jobs. Well, even me, myself, I'm a teacher's aide, and I probably never would have gone to the schools to apply for a job. At that time there was only one teacher's aide or maybe three of them who worked in the schools. Oh, you could cook if you wanted to cook, but you didn't get to work in a classroom with the children. So I applied for it, although I had another job before that, before this one. The factories came to town, and so we

applied at those place. They were hiring. Victor Equipment was new in town, and Ohio Rubber. A lot of people drove back and forth to Texas Instruments. That was a better paying job at that time. As I say, the ladies who had to work at night formed carpools, and they did it to try to better their families. Then the city jobs began to get open downtown. They're receptionists and so on. Linnie McAdams has one. She's not a receptionist. She works with Social Security. She was a member of our group in the beginning stages of our group. She was a member of it.

Lohr: Is she related to you?

McAdams: Yes. We both married into the McAdams family--cousins. I'm trying to think. There were some people who even got jobs at North Texas. Billie Mohair was a member of the group, and she works at North Texas. So there were jobs that we pushed that were available to people. We sent them to them and put the applications in to check out the job to see if they were qualified for it.

Lohr: Do you think the group made a difference?

McAdams: I certainly do. Yes, I do. It's not active now, but it made an impact on the community. I really think so.

Lohr: What do you think Denton would be like if the group had not been formed?

McAdams: There would have been another group formed. It may not have been the Interracial Christian Fellowship of Women,

but there would have been another group formed, I think. I just feel like there would have been another one. I don't think that would have been the end because we didn't get organized, because there are people in our community who wanted to help one another, and we would have found a way to do that.

Lohr: Do you think that's a unique quality to Denton that maybe another town wouldn't have had?

McAdams: I do. Yes, I do. I certainly do. When I talked about it in other places, they never heard of it. They wanted to know how we went about it: "What did you do?" "What caused you to do this?" "What is it like?" It was met with great enthusiasm.

Lohr: Do you know of any other town that formed groups like that because of your example?

McAdams: No, I don't. No, I don't. I don't know anyone from any other town.

Lohr: But people in other towns were interested?

McAdams: Yes, they were interested.

Lohr: Do you think the group was more for black women or for white women? Who got the most out of it?

McAdams: In one sense, the black women got more out of it; but I think the white women had more to offer, and they didn't mind sharing. So I guess we both got something out of the group. It wasn't so much just for the black women; it was something we received from one another, I guess.

Lohr: You said lasting friendships were made?

McAdams: Very much so, yes.

Lohr: What about among children? Do the children still keep up with the friends that they made?

McAdams: They still keep up with them. I've met children...[Mrs. McAdams's husband walks in, and she introduces him to Ms. Lohr]. As I was saying, the children have a lasting relationship. I have two families. Steve is my second family. But, anyway, we met at the soccer game, and my older daughter came up to see Steven play. And another lady was there. I didn't even know her over the years. She screamed out my daughter's name when she saw her come up, and she said, "Is that your daughter?" I told her, "Yes." She said, "Well, I'll be! We went to school together. We did this; we did that." So they had a very good reunion just right there. The ones I know now that I do remember, close friends like Katherine McGuire's family and Martha Watson, when I meet their kids, they ask me about my kids. They want to know where they are and what are they doing now and things like that. When they come home, they ask, "Well, have you seen So-and-so?" Then they'll call them up on the phone if they're still in town. So I think it was very lasting, and it was worth it, I think, very much so.

Lohr: Did the people in the group either individually or as a group ever meet any kind of opposition from other people

who maybe were against integration and saw the group as causing problems or something like that?

McAdams: I can remember an incident when I tried to invite someone to come. They wanted to know what we were going to do and why are you going and what's it for. This was another lady, and she just said she wasn't interested in it. She said, "I don't see how y'all could get along like that. I don't believe that there are those type of people around." She refused to go, and she was a good friend of mine. But she just refused to go. She said she didn't want any part of it. She just kind of made remarks: "Well, people do what they want to. Those white people are just fooling you." I tried to convince her that this was a different group. We weren't out because we were black and white; we were out because we were women, and we had the same interests for our families. But that one person did that to me.

Lohr: She was never convinced?

McAdams: Never convinced. She would not go.

Lohr: Did she ever have a chance to see what the group was doing?

McAdams: I think she did go one time to a social event. I don't know if it was a Christmas party or a picnic. But she wouldn't go with us at all. She just set herself against it. She just would not go. That was the only opposition that I can actually recall. I just can't think of any

other ones. Well, my grandfather really wasn't for it (laughter). He wasn't for it at all. He wouldn't even talk about it. He didn't like the idea at all.

Lohr: Was he suspicious of it?

McAdams: I think he was suspicious. That's really what I think it was. He was suspicious. He didn't tell me in so many words, but I could sense that he was suspicious of it. But he never did tell me that I shouldn't go. He left that decision up to me; he left that up to me. But I think he was very much suspicious of the group.

Lohr: Well, going back to the women's husbands, do you know of any of the women's husbands who maybe thought it wasn't a good idea, that maybe thought it was being too political?

Lohr: No, I never heard anyone really say, so I can't really say if they did or not. We could usually get them to go with us if they weren't working. We would gather for a gathering of the families or whatever. I'm trying to think. We had a picnic. Whose house was that? They had a pool. I don't remember now. The men wouldn't wear their swimsuits. They sure didn't (laughter). But a lot of the women didn't, either, from the black community because a lot of us don't swim. So we dressed casual in pants. Most black men swim. I don't swim, but I didn't feel at all like I wasn't a part of the picnic that day.

Lohr: Why would the black men not wear their suits?

McAdams: Well, some of them just didn't swim, and some of them

said they weren't going to swim because they were going to a picnic. Then there were some white men that didn't, either. There were a few that were in the pool, but then there was some that didn't swim. I made it a point then to teach all my children to swim, and they did.

We learned a lot. We learned a lot about, oh, not so much yourself, but you learned a lot of things that you had missed in growing up because these things weren't available to us. The first swimming pool I know of in our community...it's covered up now. I don't even know if you noticed it over there on Industrial. There was a pool over there. I was little, and we couldn't go. They just filled it up the past five years.

Lohr: There was a pool, but they didn't fill it with water?

McAdams: What I mean is, they just filled it up--just covered it up recently. But the blacks didn't go. I don't know anything about that. I heard my mother and them talk about it. Do you know where Morrison Mills is?

Lohr: Yes.

McAdams: It's right across from there. It was a swimming pool there.

Lohr: Was this a public pool?

McAdams: As far as I know. We were talking about it. My mother-in-law was talking about the swimming pool being right in our neighborhood or community, and they could not go. I said, "Well, I remember that, but I don't remember the

water being in there and all that." When I remembered it, a man had bought the property, and it wasn't ever any water in it. Then he had his house built there in front of it. I'm trying to think. What is the business that's there? They do these windows--put this dark stuff over the windows.

Lohr: Oh, glass tinting?

McAdams: Yes. It's right there on that corner in the next block from where that is--between the glass tinting company and the houses. It was a swimming pool there. The lady, who's an old-timer here, asked me to come to her house. She wanted to show me these pictures and things of her, and she was going to share some with me.

I remember the first hotel. I won't say the first hotel, but I remember the Southern Hotel. I never remember anybody going there to stay, but at that time we didn't go to hotels like we do now or anything like that, or motels. Now you get in the car and take off, and wherever we stop, we're going to spend the night. But things were different then. So to me, I don't feel like I really missed anything by not going to the Southern Hotel. But if I had had the opportunity to learn how to swim, I think I would have enjoyed that. They have swimming classes now for adults, but I'm "chicken."
(laughter) I don't think I want to try it now. I just enjoy the water and the outdoors.

Lohr: Now when you see these little teeny-tiny kids jumping off high diving boards, it makes you feel kind of dumb that you're out there just walking around.

McAdams: It really does (laughter).

Lohr: Did you learn anything about white people that surprised you when you got around this group for the first time?

McAdams: No, I didn't learn anything because, as I said, my grandmother worked for a prominent white family, and my brother and I would go out and play with the grandkids. So I'd always been around them. And my mother worked for a family here, and the family's daughter would hand me down her clothes, and so I had the latest clothes in my neighborhood or in school until I outgrew them. No, not really. No, not really, I didn't because we all had the same desires and the same needs. We wanted for our families and for ourselves, so I really didn't learn anything new.

Lohr: So there was really no hesitation or fear?

McAdams: There was not hesitation or fear there at all--none at all. As I said, we'd always been around them. During the holidays and on weekends, when my grandmother had to work, well, my brother and I would go out and play with the Jagoe grandchildren. We'd play while she'd clean the house inside and cook. When it was time to eat, then we'd all come in and eat. So there was no hesitation or fear at all.

Lohr: Do you think maybe Denton, again, was unique in that area?

McAdams: I do. It certainly was. There's several families I know that had the same experience in that manner. Where my mother worked, they only had one daughter at the time...well, they only had one daughter period. But if she had to take us to work with her, well, then that was no problem. Then when I began to work...oh, many years ago, when I had small children, I worked for a family. I told the lady I was going to have to quit when school started because I had a teenager babysitting. We needed the money, but I was just working to get away from the house three days a week, and I had a teenager to come in and babysit. When the fall came, she had to go back to school, so I informed her I was going to have to quit because I didn't have a babysitter. And she insisted I bring him with me. And I did. I'd take him right out there and put him to bed when it was time for him to go to bed. By the time he'd finished his nap, I'd be finished with the work, and I'd come home.

So my children are not fearful of white families or whatever. I have to make Steve come home sometimes (laughter). We go places now, and we always see them. We met a family not long ago in the Love Shop when we were buying a gift. The next thing I knew, there he was with three other guys, and they were sitting there

exchanging names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Then they got together during spring break. So we just kind of had that...I don't know. There was just...to me people are people. I don't know. I have something about me. I have a "vibe." If I don't have a "vibe" about you, I don't associate with you. I had a good "vibe" with you.

Lohr: Well, thank you.

McAdams: Even on the phone.

Lohr: Thank you.

McAdams: And I was hesitant last night to call you. I said, "This is so late." When I went to call you yesterday morning, I had thought of every way I could to get someone else to drive the van, and I couldn't. And I thought, "Well, I've got to call her, and we have to change this date. I hope she'll understand."

Lohr: Oh, surely.

McAdams: But if I don't get a "vibe" with you, I just tell you nice and politely that I don't wish to talk to you. And I feel like that comes from on High. I really do.

Lohr: What about housing patterns in Denton? When the black people first started going out into other neighborhoods, how easily was that accomplished?

McAdams: I don't know. I didn't have the money to go (laughter). I'd like to go right now, and I can't afford it (laughter). I really don't know. The people that went

out in the other areas of town in housing were more able financially to go. I don't think it presented a problem because whatever you have the money for, you can buy it. As far as I can see, the people that have gone out in those areas are financially able to stay there and to live there.

Lohr: And you don't think they experienced any kind of discrimination or problems.

McAdams: Well, I've never heard anything about it, because usually they are professors. They don't care what color a professor is. If he's got money, your neighbor is not going to say anything. Now, it's kind of wide all over the area; I mean, people are all over town. I haven't heard anyone say they had any problems. I know several people who have moved in different areas all over the city, and I haven't heard them voice any problems at all.

Lohr: What do you foresee as the future for this area of Denton?

McAdams: The future for this area of Denton will be not as a neighborhood. The city is going to move down in this area. They've already blocked us in. They have the jail on one end, and town is on this end, which is considered "Old Town." But they're getting ready to do the square, so eventually these people are going to have to move.

Lohr: What are they going to do to the square?

McAdams: They're getting ready to re-do the square. I've been

reading in the paper that they have a committee where they're going to beautify it and everything down there. I kind of think it will finally be an historic area one day.

Lohr: That southeast Denton will be?

McAdams: I don't know about southeast Denton. I feel like that the businesses will move in here. I don't know, but I feel like that.

Lohr: What will happen to these people who live here?

McAdams: I think the homeowners will have to move. That's just what I think.

Lohr: Where will they go, do you think?

McAdams: Wherever they will be able to go. And that's just what I think. If you look at the area that they're in now, they're enclosing it. The jailhouse is down there, and the high school is going to be over in that area--the new high school.

Lohr: Oh, I didn't know there was going to be a new high school.

McAdams: Yes, they're going to build a new high school. They've already named it. Have you not read the paper?

Lohr: No.

McAdams: Billy Ryan High School. They have the land. I'm not sure where it is. I haven't been out that way. I've read about it the paper, but I haven't been out there. But I feel like in the near future...Steve is in the

sixth grade, and by the time Steve enters college, which I hope he will, I don't know if there will be any neighborhood in this area. And that seems pretty fast--in six years--but I feel like a lot will be moving. On the other end up there where Moore Business Forms is located, there's still a part of it there running across town. Well, then there's the gas company on that end. It's just predominately a black...it's a block in here that is all black. Now over in the Phoenix Apartments, I feel like they'll be there. It's a project, and they won't move that because the city has control of that. But very few homeowners, I believe, will stay in here. East McKinney is predominately business. And that's just what I see. I hate to see that happen, but I just feel like that.

Lohr: Have you heard any of the homeowners talk about where they'd go?

McAdams: No, they haven't talked about it. I've heard them speak on the same terms that I have. It was not really in a discussion, but it just came up. But no one has said where they'd go.

Lohr: Do you think anyone will protest it?

McAdams: I think they will. There a few who will, but, see, a lot of this area over in here is rent property. There are a few homeowners over here that might protest it. But if it's rental property, it may not do any good. But there

are some that, I feel like, will protest it. There's our church over there. I don't know if they'll move it or not. They're not supposed to because there's a historical marker there. But you never know.

Lohr: So that would, in effect, destroy the community?

McAdams; In this area it would, yes. It certainly would. There's a lot of rental property down here. We have a house on the end of the street that was brought in here by a landlord. He has fixed it up and made it real nice. He had a sign out there where he wanted to sell it first. I don't know what he wanted for it. Now I think he has a for rent or lease sign there. He's not going to ever live in this area. So if he can make some more money by selling it, he will.

Lohr: Are people moving in here or moving out?

McAdams; Well, let me see. The people on my street are all widows. There are not any families. It's just two families over here. All the other women and men are widows. Most of the families are over in the Phoenix. On back around, for the next block or maybe two blocks, they are homeowners, but they're older homeowners. So they're not really moving in here, just not moving in here at all.

Lohr: I guess all the young families have grown up and gone off then.

McAdams: Yes, they've grown up and gone off. They're not coming

back. They're not coming back to Denton. They go to other states to try to find a career somewhere else. Most of the boys join the service, and when they do that, they travel and they don't come back here. If they're not married, they marry someone from another state, so we lose them.

Lohr: Do most of the children go to out of state schools rather than stay here?

McAdams: Some of them do. It depends on where they get their scholarship. If they get a scholarship out of state, they'll go. We have some in the community that are attending TWU and North Texas. They're from over at our church, but mostly those are girls. They'll do that. But the boys usually, if they have a scholarship or something, they'll go out of Denton or go out of state.

Lohr: Well, that's a shame that the community is busting up like that.

McAdams: Yes, it really is.

Lohr: What will happen to the churches?

McAdams: I don't know. I wonder about that, myself.

Lohr: Will they disappear?

McAdams: I don't think they'll ever disappear. If they have to relocate, they'll relocate. I don't think they'll disappear, though.

Lohr: Do the black families that live in other parts of Denton still come here to church?

McAdams: Yes, some of them do.

Lohr: Why is that, do you think, rather than going to the white churches?

McAdams: To the white churches?

Lohr: Yes.

McAdams: I don't know. But if I lived somewhere else, I'd come back over here.

Lohr: Why is that?

McAdams: That's my home church. That's my faith. They don't have any AMEs on the other side of town. They have United Methodist but not African Methodist Episcopal. I enjoy the other message and singing and all in United Methodist and in First Baptist and all that, but there's nothing like AME. So I don't know. We have to stay in our churches. We can't just venture off somewhere to another church. We have to keep our church alive.

Lohr: As in institution or as a tradition or as a cohesiveness to the community?

McAdams: As all three of those things. Yes, all three of those things.

Lohr: If your churches went, there would be less of a group of people with community interests?

McAdams: Yes, I think so. I really do. I really do. I think that's what really keeps us all together--our churches. I really do.

Lohr: Do you see a time that Denton will have a black mayor or

more black people on the city council?

McAdams: I see more people on the city council--more black people. I don't see a black mayor (laughter).

Lohr: Ever?

McAdams: Ever (laughter). No, not ever. They'd try to re-elect Richard Stewart. They'd re-elect him first (laughter).

Lohr: Why do you think they would never have a black mayor?

McAdams: I just don't think they would. No, no, no, I don't think so (laughter). That's an unfair question (laughter).

Lohr: What do you think it would take? What would have to happen to Denton for there to be a black mayor?

McAdams: More black businesses. My son Steven says he wants to own a shopping center. If he owns a shopping center, we may have a black mayor.

Lohr: They may make him the mayor.

McAdams: They may make him the mayor. We'd have to have more black businesses in Denton. We just have to have more black businesses, but even then I don't know if we'll have a black mayor. They're fighting hard against a black president (laughter).

Lohr: What about the status of black businesses in Denton?

McAdams: It's not very high. It's not very high. There are a few small businesses: Logan's Barber Shop and Logan's Shoe Shop and Steve's Barbeque. The funeral home is a "must." Well, it's not really a "must" because there are white funeral homes who take in blacks now. They used not to,

but they do now.

Lohr: Who will take them in?

McAdams: I don't mean take them in; I mean, who will funeralize them.

Lohr: Do you mean, well, that they used to not do that?

McAdams: I don't know if they didn't used to or if they were never asked to pick up someone. I'll put it like that. I don't know I just don't know how that all came about.

Lohr: Do many black people use white funeral homes?

McAdams: Not many. Not that I know of. Not in Denton. I've noticed they've been using the one in Lewisville a lot. Is it Lewisville?

Lohr: Dalton?

McAdams: Yes, Dalton. I see a lot of that in the paper.

Lohr: Why do you think they don't use the white funeral homes? Is it custom?

McAdams: It's custom, yes. That's what I think. It's custom. I think it's custom.

Lohr: It's not that there would be any problems?

McAdams: No, I don't think it was any problems. I think it's just custom.

Lohr: That's something I had never thought of before.

McAdams: What else do we have here in Denton as far as businesses? We don't have many black businesses in Denton.

Lohr: Even in the black part of town?

McAdams: Not even in the black part of town. Little small

businesses like beauty shops and barber shops is predominately all that we have in the black part of town. And that's it.

Lohr: Did it used to be different?

McAdams: Yes. Now I don't know anything about this, so I can't tell you much about it. But I've heard my uncle talk about the barber shops and the beauty shops and the cafes and the tailor shops (which were the cleaners, in other words). My uncle ran a cleaners. And they had a movie down on East Prairie. I remember the movie.

Lohr: Oh, I didn't know that.

McAdams: Yes, on the corner of East Praire and Skinner was the movie. And I remember that. I can't think of the name of it right now. I lived with my aunt. I'd visit her on the weekends, and she'd take me down there to the movie. That's the reason, I guess, I never did worry about going downtown to go. I'm trying to think. What else was there? This lady promised to tell me all this stuff because she knows I dig a lot into history. She's going to show me these pictures and things. But there was some businesses in Denton a long time ago that were black-owned.

Lohr: And so integration put them out of business?

McAdams: I don't think integration put them out of business. I think they closed down before integration. See, that was before my time. I don't remember anything but the movie.

Lohr: Maybe the Depression destroyed them.

McAdams: Probably the Depression got some, and I think that when southeast Denton was moved from where the city park is over to here, a lot of businesses that were over there closed down. And the Depression, like you said, got some of them. A lot of them I didn't even know, but I just heard different ones talk about them.

Lohr: Southeast Denton was moved?

McAdams: Yes. Didn't you know it? Southeast Denton used to be over where the city park is--over in that area. My church was over there on Vine Street. The Clark house was moved from Oakland. It's about two houses in this neighborhood, I think, that were moved from that area over there on Oakland. Who was that? One of the members in our choir was telling us that he lived on Congress. He showed me the corner where he was born. The need for a park, I guess, is why they moved them over here. I don't know.

Lohr: So they just said, "Today is the day to move, and everybody just pack up and move."

McAdams: No, not like that. They gave them money for their property because they gave our church the land right over there. They gave them the land, and then moved our church there. Our church has been rebuilt, though, since then. I know that much from looking into the history of our church. I guess the other families came from over

there. I know the Clark house was over there. There's another house down there on Hickory Street that they said came from over in that area. I'll have to invite you to something we do in February. It's called our Founder's Day. Maybe you can find out a little more about our history because we tell about the history of our church here in Denton. We're 112 years old. I'll try to remember to invite you in February when we do our celebration day. And you can find out more that I don't know about.

Lohr: Where everything was?

McAdams: Yes.

Lohr: Well, I certainly do thank you.