

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Barry Edwards

COLLECTION: 4700.2508

IDENTIFICATION: raised in Mossville, Louisiana; served in the air force; retired from Firestone, a tire and rubber company

INTERVIEWER: Chelsea Arseneault

SERIES: Mossville History Project -Second Meeting & Oral History Day, September 24

INTERVIEW DATES: March 27, 2015 & September 24, 2015

FOCUS DATES: 1960s-1980s; present

ABSTRACT:

Tape 4429, Session I

Barry Wayne Edwards born April 14, 1951 at Saint Patrick's Hospital in Lake Charles to parents McKeever Edwards, Senior and Thelma Prater Edwards; family origins; father was a self-taught man, graduated from high school the same time as Edwards' older brother; father's library contains documents pertinent to the history of the area, but hasn't been touched since he passed in 2007; father a Baptist minister, and they had him compile history of the town; black baseball team; swimming at the recreation center part of everyday entertainment; one of the first lifeguards there; fondly recalls childhood games and sports; earliest memory is eating dirt in his backyard; record hops; growing up with seven other siblings, the boys had the smallest rooms in the house; left home at eighteen to attend Southern University, then joined the air force; recently retired from Firestone; parents taught them to value work, respect women, and that people were people; meeting community members for the first time at the oral history event; attended Mount Zion Baptist Church, but father pastored a church in Vinton as well as associate pastor at Evergreen Baptist Church in Lake Charles; graduated from Mossville High School in 1969, the last year it was a high school; in 1970, it became a junior high school; favorite teacher was Coach Williams; has five children, and proud they're making a name for themselves; moved to Lafayette in the mid '80s; wants to pass on that "family is love."

Tape 4521, Session II

Interviewer asks some clarification questions regarding family names and origins; Braxton side of the family "a lot of fun"; childhood friendships; siblings; importance of sports; father graduated from night school the same year Edwards' older brother graduated from high school; father liked taking photographs; when father liked something, he dedicated himself to it; Edwards' enjoyed being a pastor's child because he could meet new people and spend time with his father when he traveled; father's work as a pastor; importance of religion; mischievous things he would do as a child, such as busting windows with rocks; brother Kenny and he would play

“war” with shells collected from the road; other games such as marbles and sandlot football; swimming at the recreational center and his job as a lifeguard; drinking alcohol before baseball games; was in the air force from 1970-1974; shocked that there were only three black people in a squadron of about sixty; boot-camp; served at several duty stations, with a permanent duty station in the Philippine Islands; military was where he first learned prejudice; letter to congressman Edwin Edwards; didn’t want special treatment, and the isolation he felt led him to substance abuse; recalls white roommate who liked to party; thankful for the way he was brought up.

TAPES: 2 (T4429, T4521)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 79 minutes

#PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 44 pages, total

T4429 (Session I) 18 pages

T4521 (Session II) 26 pages

PHOTOGRAPHS / PHOTOGRAPHER: Four photographs taken during the interviews at the Rigmaiden Recreational Center for the Mossville Oral History Days. Includes three photographs taken during Session I and one photograph taken during Session II. Photographer Kyle Tanglao.

OTHER MATERIALS: Biographical data form; Interview questions (2 pgs); Correspondence

RESTRICTIONS: none