

Rhodes College Digital Archives - DLynx

W.T. McAdams, Memphis City Council Member, 1968

Item Type	Sound
Publisher	Rhodes College
Rights	Digital Audio (c) 2013, University of Memphis Libraries Preservation and Special Collections Department. All rights reserved. Use of this audio shall be governed by the University of Memphis Libraries "Duplication Agreement" http://www.memphis.edu/libraries/pdfs/duplication_agreement.pdf
Download date	2025-05-18 19:57:01
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10267/33835

SS008.mp3

David Yellin- 1, 2, 3 we should be in business now, if you will turn it off and clip it back.

Joan Beifuss- You will have to start I guess...

David Yellin- This is tape 1, tape 1. What is the date? July 18th.

Carol Yellin- July the 18th and we are interviewing councilman W.T. McAdams. Present are Bill Thomas and Jerry Byar, and Joan Bibas.

Carol Yellin- Ok councilmen McAdams let's start, what does W.T. stand for to start with.

W.T. McAdams- Wesson Thurman.

Carol Yellin- Wesson?

W.T. McAdams- Wesson, W-E-S-S-O-N. Wesson Thurman McAdams. I do not recall the explanation given by my mother because to begin with that was 62 years ago and I was to begin with born on a farm in Mississippi in 1906. Formal education consists of only an agriculture high school education. I was a bit of a ball player, and I call myself a teacher's pet because I brought her apples all along and it's the only way I got through high school. Since then I have been farming, I have worked in stores, I have been selling. During the last 30 years lived in Memphis. Traveling for, Corn Products Refining Company and the real old manufacturing company. Then for the last 17 years with the Prudential insurance company.

Carol Yellin- What part of Mississippi are you from?

W.T. McAdams- Oakland Ms, went to school at Yalibushy Agriculture high school.

Carol Yellin- What part of Mississippi is that, my geography...

W.T. McAdams- That's about 80 miles south of Memphis.

Carol Yellin- When did you come in Memphis?

W.T. McAdams- In the 1930's, oh no, no. I was born in 06'. In 1938 I bought the present farm that I have. So I was traveling for the oil company even during the depression, 29' and early 30's. Started work for them \$25 a week salary and \$25 a week for hotel allowance and they furnished me an old yellow car to travel in.

Carol Yellin- What was your territory?

Carol Yellin- Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee and Alabama.

Carol Yellin- Now the farm, you still hold the farm.

W.T. McAdams- I still have about 50 acres.

Carol Yellin- Where is that?

W.T. McAdams- Southwest corner of James Rd. and North Hollywood St. Built some stores on it and we have named it now Skylake Shopping center.

Carol Yellin- Oh your shopping center is on the farm?

W.T. McAdams- Yes, yes, it is the northeast corner of the farm.

Carol Yellin- Is there any farming area left on the farm?

W.T. McAdams- Yes , I have been on it today on a tractor and cutting bushes and getting some beans planted and so on.

Carol Yellin- What do you raise out there?

W.T. McAdams- Soy beans now, and we have raised corn, cotton, and all of it over the years, and two mighty fine sons. I have two sons, one 28 on 30, both are working for the International Harvester Company. One Joe, my oldest son is personnel supervisor at Harvester. My youngest son who got his degree from Memphis State is a designing engineer for Harvester.

Carol Yellin- Are they both here in Memphis?

W.T. McAdams- Both here in Memphis. Have their own homes and families now.

Carol Yellin- Mr. McAdams when did you get into politics? When and how?

W.T. McAdams- I have been working at the polls in my community which is North Memphis and an area known as Frayser community for about 25 years. Every year or two an election would come up, I was getting into everybody's business it seemed because an insurance man and the kind of business that I have been into for the last 7 years. I like to know people, and I like to call on people and have had to call on people to make a living. So I knew quite a lot of people in what is now district 1. And when it was determined that we would have a mayor council on the government was several friends and neighbors and church members, by the way I go to (Ardmal?) Baptist Church, got asked to be run for the councilmen's job which I did and I am enjoying it in a way, but it is very time consuming.

David Yellin- This was your first entry into the political arena?

W.T. McAdams- Yes this is my first time to get into politics.

Carol Yellin- You got in right on the top didn't you?

W.T. McAdams- Well, my wife helped me lots, we, our last summer worked about 4 months, as hard a work as any two ever did. We spent about a year's salary. If I could get out clean, without somebody getting pretty sore at me, I would pay a year's salary to get out of it, but I'm not about to resign right now I will tell you.

Carol Yellin- Did you work with the pop church people.

W.T. McAdams- No I voted against the change in form of government, yes. I thought at that time that it would cost additional money. I have found since being on the council that money was spent that shouldn't be spent and I think the council will be able to save money.

Carol Yellin- You think the council was sort of a watch dog committee.

W.T. McAdams- I do, every one of the councilmen I believe are concerned on this thing.

Carol Yellin- I don't think we have asked anyone else that. What is the councilmen's yearly salary.

W.T. McAdams- 6,000 a year.

Carol Yellin- And at the time you ran for it did you have any idea how many hours a week it would take to be a councilmen?

W.T. McAdams- I thought it would take at least Monday and Tuesday of every week. I had been in the insurance business 17 years and I thought I would be able to still make calls and still make some commissions selling life insurance. I am also qualified and do sell foreign casualty insurance. I haven't had time to figure a proposal to do anything for people, or to sell insurance.

Carol Yellin- The shopping center that is on your land are you a part of the company body...or board of directors?

W.T. McAdams- Yes, I built the, as I said I own the farm. Pumped sand up on the land from Wolf River bottom in 1961, and 1962. We pumped 265,000 yards of sand out of a whole in Wolf River. About 4,000 feet to build up about 15 acres. So I was then started to have to borrow money to help with this because that project cost \$100,000 to pump that much sand. Now, it would run even more because labor and equipment runs much higher.

Carol Yellin- About how many stores are out in the shopping center.

W.T. McAdams- I have 6 stores in the shopping center now, and we have a contract right now with (Thrasher's Fabric Center?) to build a store for the latest to buy some goods.

Carol Yellin- That is a good start.

W.T. McAdams- I hope to buy in if it's successful. I am depending on it because I am still having to borrow to build a building.

Carol Yellin- Well then you were poll watching and what not at the time Crump was the mayor here?

W.T. McAdams- Yes, I have worked at the polls since when Mr. Crump was in politics.

Carol Yellin- Did you know Mr. Crump?

W.T. McAdams- Yes, I knew Mr. Crump. Didn't have any direct deals with him, I was not in politics at that time. I was selling and I had met him, and that was about it. I admired the man I thought it was good for Memphis and now that we find we have so many very narrow streets as a result of his refusal to allow an increase in taxes, I hear that is what took place. It's a burden, it's a big, big burden on us now to improve the streets that were just wide enough for two cars.

David Yellin- A little difficult to move the buildings back now.

W.T. McAdams- That's right. That's right.

Carol Yellin- If you don't long range plan you are kind of sunk aren't you.

W.T. McAdams- That's right.

Carol Yellin- Now how many candidates were running in your district when you...in the primary.

W.T. McAdams- There were 8 running in district 1. Two negroes, Reverend Wynnfield, and Reverend Gladney. Six white men. I won the...well I was top man in the first in the primary by about 2500 votes and then I was in the runoff against Mr. Robert Bickers. Won with about a 3,000 vote majority. Mr. Bickers was a young attorney in the district.

David Yellin- Just out of curiosity sir, 10 negro candidates, do you know about what the make up is of that district?

W.T. McAdams- Yes, the negro candidates where from two areas of Hollywood. One is called the Hyde Park area where Reverend Wynnfield ran and received 1,001 votes I believe. Reverend Mr. Gladney, Alexander Gladney, who was on the pop committee by the way. Ran from the Douglas area. In the first primaries he received about 2,300 votes. I received I believe about 8,000 and was the leading candidate and Mr. Bickers was next to me.

Carol Yellin- What is your racial breakdown in the district, do you know?

W.T. McAdams- 12,000 negro and 18,000 whites which makes about 30,000 registered voters in the district.

Carol Yellin- And there wasn't a solid negro vote in your district was there?

W.T. McAdams- No, I received a good amount of negro votes in the primary. I worked over there quite a bit myself and my wife made some calls over there in the Hollywood area and I received quite a few negro votes, and quite a few friends though.

Carol Yellin- Characterize the Frayser area at all is it...

W.T. McAdams- Frayser area is primarily working people who work at the Harvester Plant, and Sears, and Firestone. Good solid citizens, they have been primarily of course white. Frayser we feel has been a forgotten area, maybe a step child of Memphis for many many years. We were annexed in 1958, as a result of a motion that I made at the civic club one night because at the time I was on the Memphis Suburban Utility District, I was a commissioner. We were unable to borrow a dime to put in sewers in the Frayser area. The health department was about to close some of our businesses in that area because sewage was actually running out into the streets, sides of curbs in the area. I made a motion at civic club one night that we petition the city of Memphis to annex Frayser and that was 1957 and we were annexed in 1958, during Mayor Orgill's...

Carol Yellin- Did they take a vote in Frayser to see if Frayser wanted annexation?

W.T. McAdams- No. We petitioned Memphis with what we thought at that time was at least 50% of the registered voters. Many people didn't like the idea at the time but are now well satisfied that they are part of Memphis. Many are still dis-satisfied about the narrow streets that are still part of Frayser and children having to walk up in the road, little black top roads. Many cases to go to schools. I am working hard to try and get sidewalks and gutters. Especially in the thickly populated area. In fact, I am almost, I almost made up my mind to vote against annexing any additional territory in Memphis.

David Yellin- Until certain areas have sidewalks curbs and gutters in Frayser area where taxpayers have been for 10 years.

Carol Yellin- Do you think that the additional revenue that would come in from Whitehaven if it were annexed would go into an area like Frayser? Or would it all be kind of earmarked for Whitehaven?

W.T. McAdams- No, Frayser money has gone into Whitehaven area. You see 80% of our city tax dollars are spent for the county. County money is spent in Whitehaven as well as all over. I think it is fair that every citizen that enjoys living in Memphis as I have for 30 years, Memphis has been good to me. I could have made it better had I worked harder. I for one would love to see people come in and ask what can they do instead of coming up with so many complaints about the things that are being done. People take pride today in griping about things, instead of saying gee I am happy to see you try, and better luck next time.

Carol Yellin- I am afraid that has been the lament of elected officials forever don't you think

W.T. McAdams- Well I believe I see a change in people's attitude. I tell you, the younger people and no reflection on them, they are demanding so much more than we used to in the old days. I'm getting...I'm 62 years old. When my daddy told me we couldn't afford something, why I believed that. We didn't keep on hounding him

to buy it. Our city government right now we are being asked to do a lot of things, as a matter of fact, go back to my sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. I know the city don't have the money to spend out there right now and our capital improvement budget has not been made up. So I am not making demands of the engineering department or anybody to get out there and start building sidewalks, curbs, and gutters until we get out of the spot we are in now in city finances. I think to, annex Whitehaven and make them start paying, carrying some of the load, which certainly should be carried by every citizen that is enjoying being a part of the city of Memphis. 75-80% of the people living in Whitehaven make their living in Memphis.

Carol Yellin- What do you think about that tax that you pay if you work in the city but you don't live in it?

W.T. McAdams- I believe that this is a car tag fee, certainly ought to be charged, and simply ought to be a fee because we do not have taxing power to assess taxes on their own property and certain fees. People have complained at us for charging fees that cannot be charged off, for income tax purposes. It's true. Until we do get the legislation that will let us make certain head taxes or salary taxes, or income taxes, I think a person's income is the first way to tax a person.

Carol Yellin- You see the property tax going higher?

W.T. McAdams- Yes. Do I see the property tax? It may go higher, I would have voted for an additional nickel on the property tax, but that would not have done the job, but this city services fee is going to do if it works out. Gee I hope it works out.

Carol Yellin- Seems like there would be more complaints about that than there would have been if the taxes had been raised.

W.T. McAdams- That's right because of the people who have objected to this thing. They claim they can't pay it, yet I find that many, many people are affording automobiles and color TVs that say they can't afford a city service fee. Many cities have fees for...even road fees. You have to drop a quarter in a slot to even drive across certain cities in this country. People in Memphis have enjoyed a low tax rate and very low utility rates for very many years. I think we are just going to have to start paying more salaries to the people who are doing the jobs we ask them to do. I think Memphis is heavily loaded with personnel. I don't know where to start using the ax, but I see people in the city employment that I do not feel are earning their money. That's an administrative job and I am going to try and stay out of it. The mayor has promised that nobody will be fired and just let attrition take care of this thing. But it isn't doing it fast enough.

David Yellin- Is there any particular area in which you see it...

W.T. McAdams- I see an excess of what I think of manpower right in city hall. I see men who have jobs called themselves inspectors that have been failures in business in our city. Over the years they have been able to get jobs because they are a cousin to one of the guys who hires. His folks have some way of getting him a job. I know

some men who have been failures in business, who are going out and telling people how to run their businesses and how to build buildings in the building industry. I have been in that developing land and it just doesn't set too well with me.

David Yellin- Well ok. I guess what I really want to talk about is the strike. Can you tell us this, let me ask you this, going into, this is sort of an obvious question, but just for the record. I assume there was no indication as the council was going in and you knew you had made it in your district and that sort of thing. Was there any trouble at all in the wind?

W.T. McAdams- No trouble at all in the wind. I was actually looking forward to serving as I said awhile ago. I was just very, very proud to be elected councilmen. We had hardly had time to get started into the job that I wanted to do. I thought that money could be saved by consolidating certain offices and still think so if it can be worked out. Happen to be on the chairman of the committee on government, federal state and city governments. I did get busy and was able to get the county to take over, eventually will take over half the expense of operating the Memphis and Shelby County general court. I started to work on the tax offices both assessing and tax collecting and I found due to laws that were already on the books no money could be saved, in fact it would cost us money to go into that. TO come up to the strike I was certainly, at this point of it we had to get into it. I thought it would be settled earlier than it was. I still believe that had the mayor gotten an injunction against the sanitation department and had them go back to work just as I understand as Mayor Ingram did during his administration. Then this thing could have been settled a lot quicker and of course a lot smoother. It was very trying time and I was scared at times at city hall.

David Yellin- One of the things we try and do here, there is a number of ...(muffled). On the same thing, and so we try to put on a little bit (Muffled) Do you remember how you first heard the strike occurred?

W.T. McAdams- Yes. I heard it on my car radio I believe that Mr. T.O. Jones had gone to the mayor's office and changed clothes ready to go to jail , or to be put in jail because he was calling a strike.

David Yellin- This was a news item on the radio.

W.T. McAdams- I believe that is the way I heard it.

Carol Yellin- Did you know who T.O. Jones was at the time.

W.T. McAdams- No I did not. I had never heard of T.O. Jones. I saw him later, and realized who he was and we, then went to the mayor and of course and offered our help. When the strike organizers came to Memphis they wanted to come before the council and I was going, I was in council chambers after a council meeting one Tuesday afternoon when Mr., oh who is the man from Washington?

Carol Yellin- Champa?

W.T. McAdams- Not Mr. Champa.

David Yellin- Worth?

W.T. McAdams- Mr. Worth, bust into the city council's chamber asking about coming before the council. I motioned to him that the way Mr. (Donningpar?) was standing that was the chairman of the council and that the council had already adjourned. But I followed Mr. Worth to talk and introduce him to Mr. (Fire?) because he had told me who he was. Mr. Fire told him then that that was an executive matter and that the council was not having anything to do with it.

Carol Yellin- Was this in the council's chambers?

W.T. McAdams- That was in the council's chamber after we had adjourned the first Tuesday that came after the strike started. I was disappointed when certain council members called for a meeting of the union workers to talk to them, not the union workers but the sanitation workers because of what I had heard in the past that those men would not be allowed to talk and say whether they actually wanted to work or not. But that brought on meeting after meeting and I voted a total of 3 times in regular sessions, council meetings, against the council having anything to do with the strike. I felt all the time that it was strictly a matter that should be handled by the executive...

Carol Yellin- Do you feel that the council should serve in an advisory capacity on executive matters at all?

W.T. McAdams- Well when asked and just a few days ago the mayor was very, very glad that many of the council members, any as soon as we got out of the council meeting we went to the mayor's office, I think almost every one of the council members. Offered to help any way we could on this referendum that had come up about getting rid of the mayor and the councilmen, this petition that had been circulated. The mayor seemed to be glad that we came up and he wanted to talk to us.

Carol Yellin- If the mayor had asked your advice in February about the sanitation strike then you would have felt that it was a function of the council?

W.T. McAdams- No, I never did think.

Carol Yellin- Never thought it was an official function.

W.T. McAdams- No it was not an official function of the council. I think any personnel, that is an executive matter and it should be handled whether the men want to work or not. Our job I believe is to come up with ways to try and save money and check budgets and make recommendations. I just don't believe the council should advise on, well we should advise with the mayor, to talk, I like mayor Lobe and have gone along with him on almost everything he has done. I voted against him I think only 2 maybe 3 times during the time.

David Yellin- The councilmen you just spoke of that was called following the regular Tuesday meeting, later people showed up that was on a Thursday I think before the Friday meeting then went on in the hall. But that was rather a blisterous meeting as I recall. Were you at the meeting?

W.T. McAdams- I was not. I was called to come to the city hall and I was at home, listening very carefully at the radio at the news, TV at the time. I was called by another council member that then to come to city hall, that we were being asked and almost would be force to come up with some type of decision on it. I told this man that I would come but I felt like that should be handled by the mayor and the director of sanitation department. The public works department.

Carol Yellin- But you did go?

W.T. McAdams- I did go.

Carol Yellin- Yeah.

W.T. McAdams- But a meeting was not held by the council that night. That crowd that was in the city hall and making sandwiches had been promised by the chairmen of that committee that was holding that meeting that some type, some form of collection of dues check off would be forth coming. So I understood that they let, and they had left city hall when I got up there about 6:30.

David Yellin- You heard about the sandwich making...what was your reaction to that?

W.T. McAdams- I thought it was absurd that any group of people who were living off the city of Memphis, maybe not making as much money as they should have been paid but they were making what they had been promised they would make. Concessions had been made to them, and the arraignments were being made right then to increase their pay, just as soon as we had the money. I was disappointed that a group of citizens would do something like that in the city of Memphis. I believe that when a person goes and asks for a job, and somebody says ok I will give you a job. How much does it pay? It pays so much money, okay I will take the job. Then you are supposed to do a day's work for your pay.

Carol Yellin- Did you feel then city employees should not be unionized?

W.T. McAdams- Well, no I thought that if they want to be unionized it is alright but I think they said I will go along with the city's ability to pay and I think if any firm or industrial firm were to tell men that striking against them...alright you came and asked for a job. I gave you a job and paid you so much. If you don't want to work- good bye. And one of these days I believe it may have to come to that, because in my feeling unions are just demanding too much right now and there are some living off the fat of the land. Many of them are living in very high incomes that I don't feel like earn that right because they can speak loud and long and boisterous and they can

get the attention of people. They're causing trouble and I am afraid something is going to happen one of these days, it's got to bring it to a stop somewhere.

David Yellin- Following that particular meeting, then on a Friday there of course was another meeting in which they really jammed a council chambers, and this was adjourned in the auditorium. Were you at that meeting?

W.T. McAdams- Yes. That was a very short meeting. We did get together in the council offices on the 5th floor of city hall. Came up with a resolution that stated that council was in favor of the mayor and the executive branch handling that stack and turning right back to the mayor. Demands were being made of us at that time for the council to take over. I voted at that time, and twice more to turn that thing over to the mayor. Then I was finally glad when the mayor agreed to turn it over to mediation group. WE finally wound up doing all most of the things that were demanded of us in the beginning. I don't know as I am going to look back on that saying it should be handled any certain way.

Carol Yellin- What was your feeling at that meeting then? At the city hall?

W.T. McAdams- Well we had adjourned from the city hall and went to the auditorium. I was scared and glad to see the police department.

Carol Yellin- What were you scared of?

W.T. McAdams- I was scared of the way that some of the people were acting that were at that meeting. They were just not conducting themselves that I like to see people do.

David Yellin- You thought they were militant?

W.T. McAdams- I do, I thought we could very well have had quite a hassle and bloodshed right there with the appearance of some of those in the room.

Carol Yellin- Where there any threats stated towards the council or just the feeling?

W.T. McAdams- No, no. it was strictly my feeling and I don't know that other councilmen were afraid, but I know they did say they were glad to see that the police were there.

David Yellin- Well then perhaps you weren't too surprised at what transpired following that meeting as they marched down the street,

W.T. McAdams- No as soon as the meeting was over that we had at the auditorium, which didn't last long just long enough to take a vote. We were escorted back to the basement of city hall and I got in my car and went home.

Carol Yellin- You were not downtown?

W.T. McAdams- No sir, no I was not downtown.

David Yellin- You say escorted. Was the council given some police protection?

W.T. McAdams- Police were along the side of us and helped us to get out of the auditorium out the back way onto the front street and then into the city hall garage.

David Yellin- And you thought this was a good idea huh?

W.T. McAdams- I certainly did, it was bad to see. I was, that we had been able to give the police as much pay as was promised a year ago they were promised a 10% increase because of the what may happen if the liquor by the drink was passed, which I think was a bad promise.

David Yellin- Now what was your reaction, sir, when you heard about the trouble downtown that happened?

W.T. McAdams- Well I was hurt because as we go back to my feeling about the city of Memphis, about the good life that we have enjoyed in Memphis. I was hurt to think that there were people being led to do things that I doubt seriously they would have done had they been thinking rationally.

Carol Yellin- Did you feel that Memphis had a good race relations?

W.T. McAdams- Yes, I thought that for years and years, and I have worked with negroes myself and I enjoyed it. I remember many, well 1954 when the first Supreme Court decision was made to integrate schools and so on. I didn't mind that and I looked forward to actually better communication between the whites and the negro than we have had. I have worked with and played with and then worked with negroes all my life.

Carol Yellin- What do you feel made Memphis different from some of the other southern cities during that period of the late 50's and the early 60's? When there was trouble in other cities and there was not trouble here?

W.T. McAdams- Because the leadership in Memphis, I think Memphis led in many ways and getting now restaurants, libraries, schools, integrated far ahead of many other cities. I think Memphis was the leader in that. I love to be living in a city that did that. I think that the negro, some of them, not the majority, the majority of the negro are wanting things to happen and are wanted to thing to happen that happened in the city that happened during the strike and the rioting here. I think the negro population are the ones who suffer most, because they were the ones that were burned out and I recall what Mr. Billy Hymen said, he might be burned out and maybe killed but the ones left in his family, and this is true of my own family, would be better off than negroes because they were burning their own areas, they were burning their own neighborhood stores. They would be hurt more I think because I carry life insurance and I carry fire insurance and if I'm killed on the way home tonight, my family can get the next meal.

Carol Yellin- Well did you ever during the strike period, did you ever get any threats or ever feel threatened?

W.T. McAdams- I did. I had some phone calls that were not good, I had some negroes to call me and they were not pleasant calls. I had some come to my stores but they did not do any damage at my stores. There was some national guards around there and some negro boys walked around my stores and across the shopping center that were watched very closely and they did not do anything to my stores.

David Yellin- You felt that they might have if the guard had not been there.

W.T. McAdams- Well put it this way, I was just glad the guard was there.

Carol Yellin- But you didn't yourself hire extra...

W.T. McAdams- No, I didn't. I take that back I did hire some additional protection for my business places.

Carol Yellin- Well now after this march should be sanitation workers at (Muffled), the auditorium that Friday afternoon yeah. When mace was used for the first time. Were there any meetings that you were at among council members? What was your reaction? Did you feel at this point the strike had become a racial issue rather than a union issue?

W.T. McAdams- Yes. I felt that it was fast becoming a racial issue rather than a strike issue. I know the members of the council, several members of the council saw it just the same way that it was a racial issue and the 3 negro councilmen were very disturbed because it had become what they, what we had been told by one of the council members that it could be a long hot burning summer. I was uneasy that Memphis could be treated worse than it was and I was very thankful that it was not.

Carol Yellin- Now theoretically if the council had felt it was a racial issue would that had put it on a different plane than if it had been a union dispute. That is do you think the council should advise the mayor on a racial issue where they should not on an employment problem?

W.T. McAdams- No, I never did reach the point that we should, that the council should go to the mayor, he was under quite a bit of pressure from people all over the city and I didn't think it was the place of the council to start legislating for conditions to change. I did vote for and I am glad that during that time a certain resolution was passed by the council for better employment, equal employment all over the city. We wanted Memphis to be a model employer area. Certainly I am for any person getting any job that he I qualified to fill. It doesn't matter what color he is, if he can do the job right, I am glad he can get it.

David Yellin- Ok, well after that march, let's see now there was a council meeting that Sunday evening...

W.T. McAdams- After Friday we did meet again on a Monday, I believe following that but I hardly think anything took place. Then of course we had the meeting on Tuesday following that Friday. And I don't recall now what did take place, but we were having meeting after meeting. Certain ones of us were holding out that we should not cross what was trying to be done by the executive branch of our government.

Carol Yellin- Was there any pressure put on you to change your stand on this?

W.T. McAdams- Well, no other than what I mentioned awhile ago. I have had calls that I should vote for dues check off, but I had many many times, that number of calls. I guess my number of calls were 99 to 1 to not vote for the dues check off and sign a contract with the union. I had decided at the beginning that I would not do that, would not vote for it and just had to let the chips fall where they may. It worked out though that almost everything that the union, well not everything the union wanted was given by the mediation board but they did get dues check off in a roundabout way and they did not get a written contract.

David Yellin- What was your reaction, I was asking your reaction but I don't want to lead you. What was reaction to Mr. (Keoppa?) and some of the people.

W.T. McAdams- Well I think that they were ill-advised the way that they approached the mayor, or just did it of their own mind or coalition maybe the word. They were the type of people that talk loud and long of what they think they would like to do and they were demanding money that we just did not have. IN fact, the union was demanding money that we just did not have. One of the union leaders that was demanding that the council step into this affair was at a meeting and I called his attention to a letter that he had written to the council because we had already discussed and some had been in the paper about certain taxes and additional try to get the legislature to let us have the referendum on one half sales tax. This letter from the union signed by many union officials said there was not going to be agreeable to any kind of tax what so ever, sales tax, property tax, whatever, anything at all to raise money. I mentioned this to a man who had forwarded that letter to us just a week before. He was sitting at the table and demanding more money. Money just had to come from some place if people were going to be paid. Get back to things that you, my young days my daddy said, I couldn't afford himself no way. We just couldn't afford at that time the money that they were demanding.

David Yellin- Did you believe the union officials, ill be explicit, was heavy handed? There has been some criticism...

W.T. McAdams- Oh I think the men stepped way out of bounds the way he approached the mayor and his demands. I understand that some of the officials, I believe Mr. Champa himself had been kicked out of certain other unions before he became an official in this union. I had heard that. I think he is the type of man that I would not want in an organization go my own, I just hope I never get in a position to

have to deal with a man like that.

Carol Yellin- Did you feel the same way about Mr. Worth when he came...

W.T. McAdams- I thought more of Mr. Worth than Mr. Champa. Mr. Worth handled himself much better than did Mr. Champa. About that time we were meeting to and to go to Nashville and I did go because I had friends up in legislature and I went up to ask them to vote for this referendum to provide us ways to raise additional funds for this city and the one half cent sales tax addition. Then I asked to vote for a ways to Memphis for ways for Memphis to get more money out of sales of liquor in the state but I found that was turned down and they had good reasons for turning it down. There are certain other things, one of the bit of legislature I was interested in but the legislature did not pass that because of the distribution of the funds that would be made by the state. It turned out that Memphis citizens would not get nearly as much money as citizens from very thinly populated counties.

Carol Yellin- I was going to say do you feel that Memphis is kind of discriminated against as far as state revenue goes?

W.T. McAdams- I certainly do, yes maam. I know that an awful lot of money is going to counties of much less population and counties that are producing much less money in proportion to Shelby County. Oh yes and I look forward to that being changed one of these days.

Carol Yellin- Did several of the council members go over to Nashville?

W.T. McAdams- Yes. I don't know how many did go, but 4 or 5 or 6 of us and I was there and then at another time I was in Nashville the day the riot broke out in Memphis. I was in the legislature...

David Yellin- When King led the riot?

W.T. McAdams- When Dr. King led that march, I was in the house chamber that day and my friend Glenn Raines, a druggist from our area, went up to visit and he had something on his mind he wanted to talk to legislatures about. So he and I went up on a separate visit than the one the council went up on. It was in the house chamber when it was announced that Memphis was being....

David Yellin- Oh it was announced in there?

W.T. McAdams- Yeah, about 11:00, 10:30, 11:00 it was announced in the state legislature.

Carol Yellin- I didn't know that?

W.T. McAdams- That Memphis was being rioted, was under riot.

David Yellin- Can you remember about what was said and who made this announcement?

W.T. McAdams- I believe it was Mr. Pierson, who was sitting right back of me at the legislatures that Memphis is being, is under riot right now and that action was being taken by the mayor to get national guard to the city.

Carol Yellin- He got up and announced this to the entire chamber.

W.T. McAdams- Yes it was announced over loud speaker.

Carol Yellin- But the chamber was in session at the time?

W.T. McAdams- Yes. That is right,

David Yellin- Do you remember what the reaction was to the.....

W.T. McAdams- Well they were very disturbed because many of the people were concerned about this thing because the way the strike had been drawn out and action had not been taken. Well in the eyes of the union people good enough to get the men back to work. One part of the Memphis was being destroyed while many of us were very much concerned about it. We heard that one of the schools had been, was being torn up and my friend and I got in our car and went on back to Memphis.

David Yellin- Immediately?

W.T. McAdams- Yes we did, and we had been invited to lunch that day, we didn't take time to stay in Nashville for lunch because I wanted to get back and so did my friend because he had left his wife and children.

David Yellin- He was concerned about them?

W.T. McAdams- He was concerned about them and we were concerned about getting back in to our families and to our homes.

Carol Yellin- Did they announce that the legislature that the guard had been called out?

W.T. McAdams- I do not know if they announced in legislature. We heard it on the way home on the radio, and the guard must have been called out about the time they made the announcement . Actually it must have been announced the guard was moving in while we were in legislature because we passed long troop trains on the way into the city.

Carol Yellin- Trucks...

David Yellin- Convoys.

W.T. McAdams- Convoys that is what I am trying to say.

Carol Yellin- Well now...

David Yellin- Excuse me.

Carol Yellin- When you got back in did you find things as bad as it sounded in Nashville?

W.T. McAdams- Well we did not come into the city, we turned out East of Memphis on what is Raleigh Rd. and came through to our home which is North Memphis. We didn't go downtown, I had no desire to go downtown. I wanted to be at home and my two sons had telephoned my wife and asked if we shouldn't come away from our home, because of my connection with the city government. We declined to come away at that time, we had declined to leave home. I was up most of that night watching and listening to what was going on and trying to protect our own property and our own home.

Carol Yellin- Why did you decline to leave your own home?

W.T. McAdams- I just was not that scared. I did become so worried with the telephone messages that I had why in order to get some rest I did stay away from home.

David Yellin- Later on?

W.T. McAdams- Yes. Something I just felt like I shouldn't ever have to do.

Carol Yellin- Were you getting any, as a council member were you getting any kind of direct reports from anyone.

W.T. McAdams- No, no direct reports. I would listen to the radio and TV all the time and would telephone in. Then I then started listening and coming up at city hall and coming to city hall and stayed up at city hall quite a bit of the time.

David Yellin- Overnight?

W.T. McAdams- Not overnight no.

David Yellin- Where did you stay when you were working?

W.T. McAdams- With friends.

David Yellin- If I could digress just a minute there before that riot day. It was announced that Dr. King would come to Memphis what was your reaction to that, did you think this would be an escalation?

W.T. McAdams- Yes I thought that he might create more, well I will put it in my words, more trouble. I was sorry that any outsiders would come to Memphis. I just hoped they would get along without it. He did come and I was certainly very very sorry that he came and was certainly very very sorry that he was killed. I heard about him being shot and I was out in my community over at a friend's store when I heard he had been shot and I stayed right by radio to get reports on it and heard within a few minutes that he had died. I said oh boy this thing is really liable to turn topsy turvy now.

David Yellin- You thought then that this was an agitating effect on...

W.T. McAdams- Yes I didn't think that Roy Wilkins or this other man that came with Mr. Wilkins came down and made that speech, talking to some people that do not have an education neither do I have an education to be able to listen and think out everything that was being said. They were very boisterous speeches and again those men were smart men and could make speeches and get people all riled up about things. Then when the curfew was being called and I learned about that when we were on the way home from Nashville. Thought it was a fine thing, the curfew had been called. Then when the ministers both white and negro came to the city council and started really lowering the boom on us about our failure to act in the way they wanted us to act. Even misquoted our added words of hate to the Bible. Which I am taught from way back that no word or no phrase in that book should be changed.

David Yellin- Do you remember any instance?

W.T. McAdams- That had to happen...

David Yellin- More specific I guess.

W.T. McAdams- Actually happened in the council chamber, one of the ministers changed the word in a chapter of Isaiah to words of hate regarding our mayor and the leaders of the city and the council.

Carol Yellin- Was this after the march that Dr. King had led and before he was killed?

W.T. McAdams- I do not recall if it was before Dr....I think this was before Dr. King was killed. I have heard more hate preached by ministers up there than I had ever heard in my 60 years of life.

Carol Yellin- Did you yourself have any kind of contact with the negro ministers who were leading the support movement for the sanitation strike? (Muffled)

W.T. McAdams- The only contact I had was Reverend Netters who is on the council and I think very highly of Reverend Netters I think he is a good man. He was trying to do a job and I remember him telling me that he told his congregation that any amount of money that was agreed upon to have to be paid in addition to what they were then being paid was going to have to come from the taxpayers and you my congregation are the taxpayers so, some of that money is going to come out of your own pockets. I am very sorry to have reports right now that the negro community say they are not going to pay any part of this city services fee. I think it's a thing we had to come up with. I wish we hadn't have had to come up with kind of fee to get back to Dr. King being killed. I am certainly sorry it happened, I wish the man had never come to Memphis. I think that the, I just don't know what I really feel about such charge being made against this city. It has already been made in charges that Memphis didn't pay attention to the desires of its people. I think Memphis has paid

attention to and has been a leader in integrating and trying to do right by the poor, the negro, and the white as well as better than any other city.

Carol Yellin- After you heard Dr. King was killed you stayed at your friend's store listening to the radio and the television.

W.T. McAdams- Nah, I came on home then to my wife, I don't know why I was at this friend's store but that is when I heard the message. Wife and I.

David Yellin- What kind of store was this?

W.T. McAdams- This was a drug store.

Carol Yellin- Did you have contact with any of the council members that night?

W.T. McAdams- I do not recall. I probably did have because just my phone was ringing it was either a council member or some constituents, or some hate and I even had drunk negro women to call me on several times. Twice...

Carol Yellin- That night?

W.T. McAdams- I don't know that that was that night. Claiming that they were, had, lived in district 1 and they were expecting me to agree to the check off and agree to things that they had lost a great man in Dr. King and did not think the black people were treating him right.

David Yellin- It must have been biblical to deal with these people but what did you tell them?

W.T. McAdams- Well I said that I felt as if the man ought to work for what he had agreed to work for, that we just didn't have the money to meet the demands of the workers that were striking and the health of a whole city population was at stake and I wish they would encourage them to go on back to work and we could figure this thing out, but I thought it could be worked out we were doing our best to come up with ways to raise money to pay them.

Carol Yellin- Did you see Mayor Lobe then the day after Dr. King was killed?

W.T. McAdams- I don't know that I did. No I didn't see the mayor very much, probably once or twice a week.

Carol Yellin- Now the morning after Dr. King was killed there was a group of ministers both white and black went down to see the mayor, I remember it was on television.

W.T. McAdams- Yes, I remember that but I did not see the mayor that day. E didn't go to the mayor's office, we were in city hall, I don't remember if we had a regular meeting or not that day. We came up with another resolution again and I voted for it leaving the whole affair into the hands of the mayor and his directors to settle.

Shortly after that we came up with a resolution going along with the mayor's recommendation that it be turned over to a mediation board.

David Yellin- Can I ask you, just kind of curious. Did you have any trouble getting your garbage picked up during this time.

W.T. McAdams- No I didn't. As I have said before I lived on a farm and I happened to have a trailer and a tractor and a truck if I need it, but I never asked the city to pick up brush. I have trees in my yard and have limbs to break down and during that time we had snow broke a lot of limbs off trees in my own yard. I said to haul them back and help my neighbors with that I love to do things myself and then when I don't do it right I have no one to blame but myself. I have always done that. I could get along without a garbage pickup mighty well myself right now. But I have cans and I was willing to carry them out and willing to help the men get them form the street,. The limbs that were broken I haul them off myself and a lot of them break off trees. If it were not against the law I would be willing to have my own incinerator, because I would be lucky enough to have enough space to do it in the back of my house and in the back of my stores and on that sand pile I could build my own incinerator. I do look after keeping the places clean. As I said a while ago farming, in fact, I was on a tractor doing farming this morning. Had a meeting at 5:00 this afternoon went to house and cleaned up and rest for awhile then went to the meeting.

Carol Yellin- Would you like to go back and be a farmer?

W.T. McAdams- Oh definitely, I would much rather farm and I think it is a wonderful way of life. When I am on the farm, or digging a ditch, or on a tractor or anything I have my own thinking to do and a chance to do it. As I said awhile ago, it takes a lot of time for me to try to figure things out and try to keep from saying things that I shouldn't say because I want say them right I am afraid. That is one reason I didn't like this being put on tape.

David Yellin- You are doing fine.

Carol Yellin- You are talking in sentences just like the ministers.

W.T. McAdams- I love to do things myself and I love to do things for the city and I look forward, I hope the time does come when people do like, or as president Kennedy said, the ask what you can do for the city instead of what the city can do for you.

David Yellin- Right,. you mentioned your church, was the strike a topic of conversation, did it ever arise?

W.T. McAdams- Yes it does I have been active at (Armoyle?) for many many years. Armoyle Baptist Church. I asked them to pray for us and they did, a special prayer for them. The council and the members and the leaders of the city and we were,

everyone in my neighborhood that I know had much concern about the seriousness of this thing.

David Yellin- When was this?

W.T. McAdams- During the strike and from the time of the election that people were very corruptive at my church and my neighbors, I had, was invited to meetings and I went to city club meetings to get the feeling of the people, and I went to negro city club meetings and they grow churches and try to create better communication than we have had. Some of the leaders right now Ozzie Evers. I think I ought to make another effort to see and talk to Mr. Evers since he came up but I have not. I have called one time and I was unable to reach him.

Carol Yellin- Is he in your district?

W.T. McAdams- No, Charlie Meyers is one of the negro who is a leader in Hollywood area and works with the unity league that Mr. Evers heads up.

Carol Yellin- Is Manassas high school in your area?

W.T. McAdams- Manassas? Yes it is right in my district yes, that's district 39. Little Chicago is in my district, Shannon School.

Carol Yellin- What's Little Chicago?

W.T. McAdams- Little Chicago is the north end of Bellevue just as where it used to cross wolf river going into Frayser where they are building an expressway now. It is called new Chicago, had that name for many many years. It is a negro area and they are thickly populated with negros and most of them own their own homes. It isn't far from firestone branch, I have worked down there and been able to get many part in that area, been able to get lots mowed off for these boys to play ball on and I have been able to get many parks put in the Douglas area, and Hyde park area.

Carol Yellin- I would assume that in the southern part of your area.

W.T. McAdams- Which is south of wolf river.

Carol Yellin- Are there changing neighborhoods there are there new residents in the white areas there?

W.T. McAdams- No, they are not moving out into Frayser now. There is a housing project under way that has been planned for a rent subsidy apartment deal up in the Frayser area, that I am trying to stop because it is being built right north of Sky lake right next to an area right off Frayser Blvd. where homes ranging from 15,000 to 40,000 dollars.

David Yellin- Pretty valuable area.

W.T. McAdams- Pretty valuable area. The schools are already crowded and I am doing my best to get that project stopped. I don't know that...

David Yellin- The subsidy type homes will de-value some of those areas? Is that your thinking?

W.T. McAdams- Well I am afraid so, because of what some of the occupants of the low income group are doing. I happen to be on the park committee of the city and I have had two white ladies to call me. One crying like everything because her daughter had been chased down and kissed by a negro boy at Volentine park. I talked to the parks and rec about it, Mac we are having trouble because the teenage negros are segregating the parks themselves. Although they claim they want to be integrated the teenage negro boys are propositioning our white women who need to work in the summer time and try to organize play and organize games at our parks and we have had 3 of them to quit just recently.

Carol Yellin- Just over teenage boys like that?

W.T. McAdams- Yes. Yes they have left the parks because they are being asked for dates and telephone numbers.

Carol Yellin- Don't the parks like that, can you go into the park at any age? I thought those parks were for smaller children?

W.T. McAdams- Well, they do go in, boys 18, 19, 20 years old are doing that. Well from 16 up I am sore to say that even children are being taught by hate by some of the preachers, something that is changed some of the days.

David Yellin- You are speaking of the black preachers?

W.T. McAdams- Yes, and there were some white ministers that came to the council and from their messages you almost cried to hear men make statements like they would make in city council chamber.

David Yellin- Let's go back a step and half. I thought I heard of all the problems of a councilmen but I cant recall of another calling about being kissed by a negro. What did she think you were going to be able to do I'm curious?

W.T. McAdams- Well asked for better supervision, well she said and she reminded me the word that I used that the negros instead of creating integration and to try to as they claimed become better acquainted with the white neighbors. Why they are segregating themselves, I think the golden rule ought to be taught in homes. If I want to get after somebody else's wife or daughter then I shouldn't mind my own wife or daughter being gotten after. And I do seriously object to that. I think that any child ought to know right from wrong in that regard.

Carol Yellin- Any child ought to be free to play in a park.

W.T. McAdams- Any child ought to be able to play in the park unmolested by even a white boy, she shouldn't be chased down and kissed by a white boy let alone negros.

Carol Yellin- Unless you want to be kissed.

W.T. McAdams- That's right.

David Yellin- If I could go back even further, now we are kind of (flossbarging?) Why do you think, you pointed out that the council did have in mind raising the salaries for the sanitation workers and for other city employees and that some complaints had been worked out and I assume now that we are talking about the one where supposedly the sewer workers were sent home...Would these things...Then why do you think they went out on the strike?

W.T. McAdams- Well, they had been led a year or two or three ago to go out on strike by this aforementioned T.O. Jones. Because as I understand T.O. Jones had been fired and he was the kind of a fellow that would raise Cain and create trouble as I understand it. Now I could be all wrong but the experience I have had with him and that hasn't been anything personal but I have just seen him and seen him in action. He is a rubble rouser in my estimation and he got the people to strike because he had been, was about to be fired by the union is the way I see it. He had not collected but about \$30 from their union members and two or three months time he was about to get fired. I understand that that is what really led to him to really go to the city office and demand to be put in jail.

David Yellin- He had to do something.

W.T. McAdams- He had to do something that is right. Yes the city was planning to raise pay just as quickly as possible. I had forgotten now, but I believe they were entitled to get a 5% raise on July 1. After the negotiation they got a 10% raise but I have forgotten exactly what they did get, but they have another 5% coming in September.

Carol Yellin- Were you in favor of the city giving the food stamps during the strike.

W.T. McAdams- Well yes for awhile because I was on that hospital and welfare committee and I voted for that to happen. Because I feel sorry for people if they can't eat. I have been once of those guys who has been pretty easy to touch and I don't make a difference if daddy is even fighting me I don't want to see kids go hungry. I think we were taken advantage of but in a democracy why we have that to happen. There is no other way to run it, we are going to have a lot of waste we are going to make a lot of mistakes but I still like our kind of government. One thing I haven't mentioned was I like taking up for Mr. Lawson. The rumors that I heard was that he does not go along with our way of government at all and I wanted to do it so bad when we were in city council. Champa when he was lowering the boom on us because I am on a draft board, I have been channel of the board 84'...I been on the board for 8 years I have been channel for a couple years. Having to draft and send boys over to fight and die for our kind of government and then to have a man to come in and try to cordone? Information I have. That does belong to a group that does not go along with our kind of government I just hate to see him leading a bunch of our people who I think should not be led that way.

David Yellin- Are you still on the draft board now?

W.T. McAdams- Yes I am chairman board 84. I met last Thursday morning we have an early morning meetings, 8:00.

Carol Yellin- Does draft board 84 what is that a section of Memphis?

W.T. McAdams- Yes, it deals with boys not in my own district thank goodness.
(Laughs)

David Yellin- They will never move.

W.T. McAdams- Southeast part of the city.

Carol Yellin- When you say Reverend Lawson, that's a communist...sheets.

W.T. McAdams- I have had it mailed to me just sheets of it about Rev. Lawson and about the man that came down with Mr. Wilkins.

Carol Yellin- Barrett Ruston.

David Yellin- Barrett Ruston.

Carol Yellin- Did you ever investigate any of these charges?

W.T. McAdams- No I have not. I know, I feel confident that there is records of that activity. Living in this good ole USA in the city of Memphis like we are I just have confidence that they will do as handling it. But it keeps anything that he may say even though he's a well educated man and he says things mighty well. To keep it from having much effect on me I let it pass on by. There is many of them that is up there preaching to us that I just let pass on by.

David Yellin- Had you been aware to Lawson's background prior to the strike.

W.T. McAdams- Yes I had heard during the election when he was running for board of education that he was a member of a communist party, I don't know about it. I had even had information mailed to me and passed them during that time because it was in politics, and I don't know how I got it.

David Yellin- Of course I know during this fact there was probably a number of takers.

W.T. McAdams- Well I think there again that outside influences have influenced a lot of good people in Memphis and I hope and pray we will just say that it has got to come to a screeching halt and let's get back to earning our living and live as we should and live together.

Carol Yellin- Do you think that outside influences are still operating in the city now that the strike is over?

W.T. McAdams- I am afraid it is. I am afraid that this effort that is being made right now to keep Inspector Holloman from hiring some help or putting on some help for

fellows that want to volunteer with our police department, we are having considerable objection to that at city hall. I understand that that is the way that the communist work, trying to get them to part with their policemen.

Carol Yellin- Do you see any chance of getting enough money so that more regular policeman can be hired?

W.T. McAdams- Mh hmm. Yes.

Carol Yellin- I mean that would solve that problem right there.

W.T. McAdams- I hope that we can hire and train at least 50 or 100 additional policemen, because if we do annex area, it is going to be over by no vote. That we have enough to do the job that we should do, police it and furnish the fire protection that they will be entitled to and paying for as citizens.

Carol Yellin- Even if Whitehaven were not annexed there is still a need for an increased police force?

W.T. McAdams- Oh yes and I wish that a lot of negroes would apply. I have heard Mr. Holloman say this many times. I think that quite a few of the fellows coming from service, I know of some that, couple of marines that I knew is applying to our police department and I think they make good policemen. I hope he gets the money, I hope the 1% sales tax is made legal, ½% additional. A good amount of that money can go for police and fire fund.

David Yellin- You feel, indicate you feel that money and financing is the city's main problem right now.

W.T. McAdams- Well there is just no doubt about it, it's a problem that I have had all my life. Because of the things that I try to do...

Carol Yellin- Who doesn't.

W.T. McAdams- I always want to do things that I am not able to do, and boy I have used up my credit limit. But I think that our city's finances should be watched very, very carefully. Especially the bond selling, right now we are in debt I have forgotten how many millions of dollars. We are having to come up with over 4 million dollars this month to pay the debt service. The bond issue that we made when we first took office I think should have been made early last year. Is costing us 2 and a ¼ million dollars this year.

Carol Yellin- What about the increased funds that the board of education are asking for? Has that been allocated?

W.T. McAdams- Well we almost met the board of education's request, Mr. Donelson did a mighty good job on that she is chairman of the board of the education committee. I think they were very well pleased the amount of money the council did

allot to them. There again I will say that Mr. Drew Donelson did a terrific job as chairman of that budget and finance committee.

Carol Yellin- DO you think this 4 million dollar program that the chamber of commerce is overtaking do you see any relief financially for the city as more...I see industry comes in?

W.T. McAdams- Well, yes I see more jobs, and I want to mention that our tax rate would have been higher had we not been afraid of losing industry in our city. The states next to us are building buildings and giving them industry buildings and facilities at no tax at all for 5 to 10 years in order to get them to move in.

.Mississippi and Arkansas are doing that?

W.T. McAdams- Yes I understand that's true and I understand that firestone has branch not built too long ago in Tupelo, that probably Memphis could have had if we hadn't had the tax rate and liable to change. I had one firm that was looking at a good sized piece of my own land that did not say that the \$2.70 tax rate that we are talking about. At the time they were looking at the piece of property had anything to do with their decision to not buy my land at the time but I...

David Yellin- You believe it did.

W.T. McAdams- I think it would have affected me had I been looking and planning to build buildings and start something new in this city and spend the amount of money they were talking about spending. They decided to let that project go for awhile.

David Yellin- I wonder if I might explore one other area with you. You touched on police what is your evaluation do you think the police handled themselves well and did a good job, during the emergency...

W.T. McAdams- I certainly do and I think that there has been so much talk about police brutality but I think that could be turned around. I know that I am a bit different form one other councilmen especially on the council that they say the negros were treated very badly by the police, but I think the police have been treated, I mean the negros have been treated badly by the police, but I don't buy that too much because I know some of the policemen have taken some pretty tough treatment from that element. I think it has been the brutality has gone the other way. Just as I thought when, who was it, one of the ministers were talking about the curfew being in his mind put upon the negro youth and he was making quite a speech about it in the council one day. I wanted to ask him if they had found that white youth were burning and stealing and rioting and should be the ones that have to bear the brunt of the curfew. Although I think white people did observe the curfew.

Carol Yellin- I was going to say, do you think that psychologically for the city by imposing the curfew that instill a lot of fear in the white community when the rioting started?

W.T. McAdams- It did, yes. It made me feel better to know that there was a sharp eye out for anyone who may be out around the homes and businesses.

Carol Yellin- Was there much burning in North Memphis? There wasn't was there?

W.T. McAdams- None. There was in Hollywood but none north of Wolf River. The only time that I was scared was the day, two days that young negroes were walking out, and I don't know if they...one time they came from the west and down James Rd. and around my stores and one time they came across from Hollywood.

Carol Yellin- Was it just a group of them or...

W.T. McAdams- One time there was 4 and one time there was 6. They had sticks and I was afraid they were about to start breaking windows. My buildings were new and I just didn't want anything to happen to them.

Carol Yellin- Do you think that bringing Ray back here for trial is going to upset the city.

W.T. McAdams- I wish that could happen somewhere else. I wish they could have had the trial, they caught the man in England and that's not right. I want to be a law-abiding citizen and try to be. I guess it is fair that he be tried here. I hope and pray that nothing out of the way will happen. I just hope it is a fair trial, I hope the man gets a fair trial, and if he is found guilty have to suffer the penalty. I certainly do.

Carol Yellin- Do you see as a result of strike and Dr. King's death, do you see any accounts on the part of the city perhaps to communicate more with the new workers, or do you see a feeling on the part of the city that communication perhaps wasn't as good as everyone thought it was.

W.T. McAdams- Well there is quite an effort made now by the city and the council to create committees and human relation committees and so on. To put good people on those committees, to try and create better relations, and the county voted money we didn't have. Actually, 100,000 dollars to try and create better relations and to try and get kids jobs and keep them off the streets not long ago. I voted for it and we had to use money that is being collected in June. We borrowed it from ourselves, it was one of those deals you borrow from Peter to pay Paul. Money that we hope we can overcome in the city to get that project under way. Incidentally Mrs. Dreiffers I don't know if you know her but I thought of her s soon as I heard your name.

Carol Yellin- Yes Maria Dreiffers yes.

W.T. McAdams- She worked on that and I was at her home.

Carol Yellin- She has done a splendid job.

W.T. McAdams- She is trying hard, oh yes.

Carol Yellin- She to me is a beautiful example of one individual that is finding something that should be done and going out and doing it.

W.T. McAdams- That's right, going out and doing it. I have had help, I hired some boys out there for cleaning up their own place. I have been so aggravated at the kind of help I have had I just told the boys to go ahead and leave. I paid them a pretty high price I thought for having them clean up around the stores and I did most of the work myself.

David Yellin- These were negros?

W.T. McAdams- Yeah, negro boys from Hollywood.

Carol Yellin- You think it is because they haven't been trained?

W.T. McAdams- They haven't been trained to do a day's work maam and to try and do things. They don't want to do what they are told anymore. A white or negro, young or old, should do what they are told without trying to find ways not to do things. I am still of that old school, the belief in doing a day's work.

Carol Yellin- Do you see anyway of reaching these younger people and training them or...

W.T. McAdams- Yes I think they can be reached, now there are a lot of smart young negros, young people and I gave one a lift from Memphis State last time I was over here on the TV station that I enjoyed talking to. Took him on back down to Orange Mound where he was lived. A smart young man. I do believe that, I don't ever want to lose faith in the future. I'm not going to. I think it will work out. I think the quickmaster take charge, we could be in for hard times. But I remember my dad used to say that things have gone to the dogs in that was better than 50 years ago. They said that aw we have jut gone to the dogs and kids are no good and they are not going to do anything, but we are living better and we are doing better than we have ever done in our lives. Enjoy more things than we have ever enjoyed and so I still have faith that we will continue to enjoy.

Carol Yellin- I think on that altruistic note....

David Yellin- Yeah we are about at the end of the tape, and we have taken a lot of your time...(Tape Ends).