Transcription of Five Minute Segment of Interview With Ms. Brown and Ms. Watts

Date of Interview: April 1, 1998

Ms. Watts: We came here just about the time the Supreme Court handed down the ruling that the schools had to close. So we were here during the time that people were getting angrier and angrier and...

Ms. Brown: (interrupts)...and sending them to the private schools...

Ms. Watts: ... yeah, it was getting to be real bad. I know our son ... he was just a little boy and him and his dog, over there now where they have that field where the R.R. Moton, ahh, museum we’re hoping to have, you know the field down below there, well that used to be where kids would go and play and they would play ball and stuff like that and it didn’t belong to the college and ahh him and his dog Joe Boy, that was their favorite romping place. And we had two little white boys that used to come down whenever they could and they played together

Ms. Brown: mmm-hmm

Ms. Watts: you know and I didn’t see anything wrong with it, they got along well you know and their parents didn’t mind and certainly we didn’t. A group of young men because they were out there playing, and shot at my son with b-b’s and he wears the scar right above the eye. And he was just a little boy -- they were just kids! They like six, seven, something like that, eight, out there playing with the dog, and uhh I was at work
and my husband said that the dog, Joe Boy came to the house just barking and running back and worth, and said... at first he scolded him, you know, “you what’s the matter with you?” And then he, you know, light bulb came on Ronnie wasn’t with the dog. And he went of course, he was lying down there it had stung him enough to knock him down out there in the field. And that’s just how, I mean, I was hysterical, I really was you know. And, of course, Ronnie was too young to identify who it was it scared him so bad you know. And ahh he kept saying it was in a car or something like that. So that’s how bad it was that young men...

Interviewer: (interrupts) like teenage, our age, or little bit younger?

Ms. Watts: yeah, yeah, big enough to drive, you know and uhh, feelings just were running quite high. And we went down to the... there isn’t nothing we can do, you know, he couldn’t identify... And they, I mean, they were not sympathetic. Feelings were running very, very high. So we were here during the worst of times, really. And then in June of that year, that’s when the Board of Ed. said they would not, or whoever it is that supplies money to the schools, said that would not and uhh, supply money for the schools. And so, my husband I just sold what we had, we had a rented house. We sold some, gave away some, you know, and ahh paid off whatever bills we had. We quit our jobs, loaded our kid in the car and the only thing we couldn’t take was Joe Boy...

Interviewers: Awww!

Ms. Watts: ...that was heart breaking. But ahh and that’s why we left, so that he would be in school, you know. And umm, so my feelings when I left here was, that I was glad to leave, you know. I had cousins who couldn’t leave, my Aunt Mary couldn’t afford to leave, you know, to go, or to send them anyplace and no place to send them. And they
were like maybe twelve maybe and the fifth or sixth grade and by the time schools reopened they were seventeen, eighteen years old. Some of them were married. So what’ve you got? You got a bunch of people today that are approaching middle-age with no education that can’t find work (tape scrambles) where everything is technology. So if you have a grammar school education, in some instances much lesser, and the kids didn’t want to go back ‘cause you’re in the third grade five or six years later, you don’t what to go back to the third grade. You had a lot of folks who that never, you know, some were fortunate, we were fortunate, we could, we could leave. But ahh, not everybody was that fortunate. So I’ve I’ve got some cousins that grew up today, you know you could tell if you talk to them for five minutes that they just didn’t get an education. That’s the most unfair part about it. When I left here, I never thought I would come back, but it’s a different town now, and uhh, it’s just more pleasant.