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WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS, E. GRAINGER (OH-155) 66 pp./index PRCQ(M)

President of the Little Rock, AR, Chamber of Commerce during school integration crisis, 1957-59.

DESCRIPTION: Personal background--attending Little Rock schools; owner of an insurance agency; Chamber of Commerce board, 1957-58, and president, 1959; comments on Virgil Blossom's integration plan; resignations of School Board members; purge of teachers; Williams' speech, January 1959; Chamber of Commerce campaign to re-open schools; the march to Central High School; previous experience with "Business in Education Day" exchanges; involvement as a parent; anonymous telephone calls; the Women's Emergency Committee; the White Citizens Council; support from the Arkansas Gazette; comments on Governor Faubus; the Williams' involvement in race relations through the Urban League, the Presbyterian church and other religious groups; Congressman Brooks Hays; school board elections; the STOP campaign; contacts with the Board of Education and other political leaders; Williams' feelings toward the federal troops and General Walker; Wesley Pruden; Amos Guthridge; comments on the Williams children's experiences; racial feelings in Little Rock since 1959; the fear of bombings, 1958-59; suggestions for other interviews.

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interview by John Luter, December, 1970]