

Ms. Lakeisha Cox, Lifelong Resident of Madison, Illinois; Madison Senior High School Staff
Transcript of interview for the Madison Historical Society Oral History Project.
Interviewed by Makari Wilson, Madison Senior High School Social Studies Student
Date: October 23, 2023

Makari Wilson [MW]: 00:01 [Recording Starts]: This is Makari Wilson as interviewer and,

Lakeisha Cox [LC]: 00:04 Lakeisha Cox,

MW: 00:05 As my interviewee. Today we will be discussing topics and living in Madison County. So, to open this interview my first question for Miss Cox is, did you grow up in Madison County?

LC: 00:17 Yes, I lived in Madison my whole life.

MW: 00:20 What areas around Madison County are familiar to you?

LC: 00:23 Areas familiar to me are Madison, Brooklyn, Granite City, Venice or Newport, as we call it affectionately.

MW: 00:35 Living in Madison County, what school or schools did you attend?

LC: 00:38 I attended Harris Elementary, Madison Middle School, and I graduated from Madison High School.

MW: 00:47 Okay, so growing up in Madison County, were there any "hot hangout spots" for you?

LC: 00:52 Yes, hot hangout spots were what they call Jon Hamm Apartments now, but they used to be called the Garesches, anywhere down "Meridochia???", Newport, and the Viola Jones. They were hot hangout spots and, the park on, I think it's Seventh Street behind the center.

MW: 01:18 Okay, so furthering hotspots, are there any places that are here now that weren't here when you were in high school? Or are there any places that were here when you went to high school that aren't here now?

LC: 01:37 Another one was the Dairy Queen right where Circle K is now, there used to be a Dairy Queen and after school we would go there. Everybody would make sure they had enough money to eat there after school and it's not there now. There's only an ice machine on the lot.

MW: 01:52 So, was the Tastee Freez here when you were in high school?

LC: 01:55 Yeah, that's a hot hangout, a hot spot for us now.

MW: 02:03 Do you still reside in any areas of Madison County?

LC: 02:06 I still live in Madison.

MW: 02:14 So, if your friend asked you about living in Madison, what would be three pros and three cons you would share?

LC: 02:39 Three pros about living in Madison. The biggest one for me is, there is family on almost every block, like it's a close-knit community. The drive to what you need isn't as far as compared to say, I used to live in D.C., and it would take you a while just to get to a grocery store, especially if you were out in traffic. So, things are closer, relatively closer. Another pro is you know everybody, like you, you feel safer and in a smaller town, because you know you about grew up with everybody here. Three cons, I would say, it's becoming more and more a food desert. I don't like the idea of having to travel outside of my city to go look for some fresh produce or good food. Another con would be, there are not as many opportunities inside of Madison. You have to travel outside of Madison for like movie theaters, or you know, outings to do-- everything's outside of Madison. But still, some in Madison County and speaking specifically of the city, Madison, where I live now. And Another con is you can sometimes be oblivious to what's going on in the world around you, living in a small, this small area, just kind of like a bubble.

MW: 03:54 Yeah. Okay. So, do you think growing up in Madison County shaped your personality and things that you stand for?

LC: 04:02 I do. I've always wanted to get away in high school every summer that I could. I traveled somewhere else, I went to U of I, I went to Texas, I just always tried to find a way to get out to see more of the world because, you know, everything---it felt so comfortable here.

MW: 04:22 So, it's comfortability what brought you back here?

LC: 04:25 COVID specifically is what brought me back here, but yes comfortability too, because I knew I felt safer here. I felt more comfortable here, yes, I'll say that comfortability did bring me back here.

MW: 04:39 Would you want to stay here or are you planning to leave again?

LC: 04:44 I would, I would leave again, but I would be bicoastal. I always, I'm always rooted here, but I still like to travel and see other places.

MW: 05:00 Thank you. Are there any other things that you would like to touch on that I haven't?

LC: 05:04 No, I thought these were really good questions.

MW: 05:07 Well thank you! Again, I am Makari Wilson as your interviewer and,

LC: 05:08 I'm Lakeisha Cox,

MW: 05:12 As my interviewee. Thank you for discussing these topics with me.

LC: 05:15 You're welcome!