

Mr. Keith Long, Resident of Madison, Illinois
Transcript of interview for the Madison Historical Society Oral History Project.
Interviewed by Kalyn Belford, Madison High School Social Studies Student
Date: March 2, 2023

Kalyn Belford [KB]: [Recording starts] Hi, my name is Kalyn Belford. It is March 2, and I am with

Keith Long [KL]: Mr. Keith long.

[KB]: And we are in Madison High School, and we will be discussing life while in Madison. The first question I have for you is how would you describe your life while living in Madison?

[KL]: Madison is not too bad, it's a good place to grow up, you know, like any where it is, you know, it's good things and there's bad things, the upside, you know, I like the people, great neighborhood, but on the other side, you know, it's like, you know, crime like anywhere else. But besides that, I think it's a really good place to stay.

[KB]: Would you describe-- would you think it'll be the same way when you were a child as now or have we elevated since then?

[KL]: As far as elevation? I would say like with crime. Back in the day, it was a lot of crime, but now it's just, like different. Like with the younger generation is more like, they just like, really don't care. They don't have respect for the elderly. So, it's a little different, but far as like well, technology, stuff, things of that nature is, is improved. And so yeah, I can say we are going in the right direction.

[KB]: All right. Now, do you remember any significant people while you were growing up?

[KL]: I Do. I really looked up to my cousin, Bernard Long, Sr. He's a great guy around the neighborhood. He's a principal at Blair School. It used to be called Blair, now it's Bernard Long. They named it after him. They named the actual Blair after him. And then when they closed the school, they changed Madison Middle to Blair. So yeah, that was a guy I really looked up to. My cousin, Mr. Long.

[KB]: He must have been a great person to have a school named after him.

[KL]: Absolutely, about fifty years in education.

[KB]: What places do you remember being here that they are gone now?

[KL]: A lot of places. I want to say actually, like, right on Fifth Street in Madison, it was a store, I forget the name of the store. But it was like a little convenience store. it's actually right where this house is like, they tore it down. They built a new house. It was another place. It was a nice donut shop. It was called

Busy Bee Bakery. It's still there. But it's not open and I miss them. But like something, like significant I will say what's going on in Madison. Okay, our actual board of education buildings on site---But we used to have one on Fourth Street. And that's gone. That's something I have to think about that's gone now.

[KB]: All right. And do you think that Madison has improved from when you were younger?

[KL]: Yes, I do. I really do. I can say has certain thing have---a certain thing. Have... I really have to elaborate on that. But yeah, I can say all in all, yeah.

[KB]: How do you feel about the schools' improvement?

[KL]: Well, with the schools, I will say, like, I mean with technology. You all have different stuff than what we had; you know what I'm saying? It's a lot easier to teach. I don't say it's easy to teach, because I'm not a teacher, but I will say it probably might be a little easier to learn. You know what I mean, with technology, with the hands-on stuff. So, I will say yeah, it's probably a little better nowadays, because we was straight up textbook. The only time we got to watch a movie was on a free day. Where like, you all can get a lot of your lessons off the computer. Yeah, but...

[KB]: It'd be a lot more advanced now.

[KL]: Oh, yeah, absolutely. We was in a dinosaur age. That was just 20 years ago. Yeah.

[KB]: Wow, All right. Do you have anything else you would like to say about Madison or even Madison County?

[KL]: Madison County, I would like to say, you know, I gotta say, it's a good place to be, you know what I mean? Like I said, anywhere there is crime, but I mean, all in all, I like it there. And I mean, I like it... to say that.

[KB]: All right. I thank you for conducting this interview with me and I hope you have a nice day.

[KL]: Thank you.