

(Tape 1 of 1)

An Oral History Tape Transcription

Of

Interviewer: Steve Villemez

Interviewee: Fay Butcher Lathrop

SV: ...Lathrop of Houston. Mrs. Lathrop's going to tell us what she recalls of the Houston riot of 1917. Your father was Mr. Butcher?

FL: Yeah. And... I don't know what to say.

SV: Well, just – well, y'all were at the house. How close were y'all to that Houston camp where the uh...?

FL: We were just one block over – it was all vacant property – from the railroad track. And then across the railroad track here was the camp.

SV: So just a block away?

FL: Yeah, a block away just across the railroad track there. And ... 'course we heard the shooting, you know, as I said. But we didn't just know what it was. So my father just got on the horse to go up there to see about the boys. The two boys that was up there waiting for the sister to come out from work at the telephone company. And ... so that was when he was shot: the horse from under him, and then him. And he lay in this ditch until they passed him by, the ones that were doing the shooting, and he crawled then up to Brunner Avenue. And there he was shot again in the back. And that bullet was still in – at his death – the bullet was still in him. And ... the boys was pushed clear on back down to Heights Boulevard. And then they were picked up by their sister who was coming out there and taken back to the telephone company, and they went back to work, and he, uh, the boys that went in the restroom slept there that night. And how we heard about it was that you know, in them days they had – didn't have any radios and televisions, and so they used to have extras out.

SV: Yeah.

FL: The papers, you know. And course towards town, there they had them, but we didn't have 'em out there, and so they just had extras papers out. And one of the neighbors where we used to live down there had got one of the papers, and she seen Papa's name in there, so she called over the telephone, and I told her, I said, 'He was shot.'

SV: Was this the next morning, or...

FL: Hmm?

SV: Was this the next morning?

FL: Well, it was during that time. Cause we didn't know where he was or nothing else. Until the next morning. They first took him to St. Joseph. And then they took him from there over to the Southern Pacific. See, he worked for the Southern Pacific. And... The next morning [laughs] they finally got through. Winnie, my sister, drove the car through, you know, and of course she had to go through all kind of rigmaroles to get through that, you know. And then went over to the hospital to see how Daddy was hurt.

SV: What time did your sisters get off from work from the telephone company?

FL: The next morning.

SV: They worked the whole night?

FL: Early the next morning; they worked 'em all night. See, they were supposed to get off, but they got off at nine o'clock, but they had worked overtime I think till 10. And they ... but the next morning, well the telephone company sent 'em home in a taxi. That's how she got home behind the boys.

[Clock chiming in the background.]

SV: Well, they had tried to make it home right after 10, you said.

FL: Yeah, right after 10, but they didn't get any further than Heights Boulevard. And then they wouldn't let 'em come. So they just caught a street car going back to town, and taken the boys with 'em. That's where – and then they spent the night.

SV: And then they called your father, and...

FL: Hmm?

SV: Is that when they called your father? Did they call your father? Is that why he tried to go up there?

FL: Yes, he went on up there to see about the boys 'cause they had gone up to meet her, you know.

SV: Yeah.

FL: That's what he was going up to, doing up there where the streetcar turned around to go back to town. 'Cause he knew they were up there, and we knew that's where the shots was coming from. So he went up there to see about 'em, you see? He was half, just about halfway up there before he, when he got shot.

Um, there was um, I guess you ... know that ... they broke, when they broke out over there, they raided the ammunition, whatever you call it, at the plant.

SV: Supply tent?

FL: Yeah, like that. And then the hardware stores of Houston all opened their doors, and they, um ... gave ammunition out to the white people, you know.

SV: Yes.

FL: Whites, you know. And I don't think they ever got any further than Brunner Avenue, there. They might, a few of 'em, scattered, went on down to Heights Boulevard. But most of 'em went right straight down old Brunner Avenue, which is South Shepherd now, I think.

SV: Right.

FL: Or over towards San Felipe. It was just a small bridge down there, then, across the bayou. And ... that was where they seemed like they were headed for. Down that away. And course there was a unit – see, Camp Logan was just being built. It wasn't occupied at all yet. Except for one, there was a truck company out there, and then there was another company. And this – they sent them all in against 'em, you know, fighting against the Negros, too. All that was there. And they just took out after 'em.

SV: Well, you said neighbor – y'all's neighbor was killed with your father?

FL: Yes, the books – I couldn't think of his name until Myrtle read it off to me. And that man's name that she read, well then it came to me: Costan, I think it is. It's in the book. Ok. Just remember, what his

name was, and it's Mr. Newmeyer. I don't know where he was, but the book says he was there. But he heard Papa say that he was shot in the heart, you know. And then I don't know where this Mr. Rowe come in from. He had a ... I think it was Rowe, wasn't it?

SV: I don't recall.

FL: You don't recall? You haven't read the book?

SV: Yes, ma'am, I have.

FL: [Laughs.] Well, I haven't either. But, um... Myrtle, what I got from Myrtle. He had a little grocery store right – well, Papa had to go in front of that grocery store to get across the railroad track. Cause the railroad track run right on down Roy Street and the store right there in the... And he said he hollered at Papa because Papa had been hollering here, and he ... couldn't hear him. But they uh, brought in, uh ... police and all from Galveston. I mean on flatcars, boxcars. Brought 'em up here, you know, to help fight. Then they shipped those niggers out the next day or two. I don't know where they took 'em to, but they shipped them out, too. At the coroner.

SV: Well, I understand your father went up for the court-martials and testified?

FL: Yes. And he went up there, um, to San Antonio.

SV: San Antonio?

FL: And, uh... Course I – Myrtle said Papa told her or she remembers that. But I remembered, too, that he testified, you know, as his being one of them, you know, that was shot. And they gave him just a \$1,000. That's all they give him for, and I think that was for the horse. [Laughs.]

SV: Well, according to the book it wasn't until 1925 when he got the \$1,000.

FL: Yeah.

SV: And did he die two years, just two years after the riot?

FL: Hmm?

SV: How long did your father live after the riot?

FL: Oh, he lived, uh – he didn't die till 1927.

SV: Oh. I thought it was two years somebody...

FL: No, it – he lived till 1927.

SV: They say...

FL: Never suffered anything that I know of from the ... wound or anything. It was healed up, you know. And of course this bullet that was in his back, I guess it just didn't bother him, you know. But...

SV: But they did say on the tops of the bullet, it worked its way?

FL: Worked its way through, yeah. They said, that's what they said, it worked its way through to his heart. 'Cause Papa had heart trouble anyway, you know? Had a bad heart. So...

SV: You worked at the telephone company at that time, didn't you?

FL: Hmm-hmm.

SV: With your sister?

FL: Yes, I worked at the telephone company, and my sister did, too. I was off that day and ... all I did that night, that evening was to run around in the neighborhood trying to get a telephone working. [Laughs] And this nigger [laughs] across the street there waiting on that other nigger trying to kill the other nigger. I don't know why, but he didn't get me. Sure could've. But that was a hectic night.

SV: Well, I guess it was pretty busy at the telephone company right there after it, wasn't it?

FL: Oh, yeah. Um-hmm. Naturally, everybody calling everybody that night. But I couldn't get in to go to work at all. They wouldn't let nobody through, you know, from our place...

SV: Had it blockaded?

FL: ...to town at all. And they wouldn't let nobody out, come out from town through there. They had us all, uh... well, the police, I guess were surrounding the territory where the shooting was and everything. And of course that was between us and town. The city. So...

SV: How long they keep it blocked off?

FL: Oh, for a couple days. Because, uh ... when they went through the next morning to go to the hospital, why, they had to go – went through it, you know, and they had to give 'em all explanation and everything to get through, you know. And I can't remember if I went back to work or not the next day. [Laughs] See, we had a, my mother had a – as I said, I was the oldest of 11, so I must have been staying at home taking care of the younger ones. [Laughs] Because, as I said, you know, things like that is... been so long back that I can't... And if my brothers, the only two boys that was up there, that had gone up there to meet her, if they'd have been living, both of 'em are passed away now. They were the oldest ones, you know. They could have told you a lot. [Laughs] Cause they were right in it.

SV: Yes, ma'am.

FL: They were right in it when it started and everything. They just, uh – seems as though they just went down the street just shooting everybody they could get, they could see. I've always understood that it was the police and the streetcar company, you know they're the ones that wouldn't let 'em sit up front, you know.

SV: Yes, ma'am.

FL: And they made 'em sit back in the back of the streetcar, and then the police, too, they – cause you know how strict in those days they were.

SV: Yes.

FL: With the white, with the blacks down here.

SV: Yes, ma'am.

FL: And these niggers were all from up North. And they did – up there, they mingled with the white. Well down here, why, it's just the opposite.

SV: Well, did you say you were only a block away? On what street do y'all live on?

FL: On Inker, I-N-K-E-R. And, cause... where the railroad track run, you see, well we was a block, and it kind of angled off that away then kind of got down to the cross and it was two blocks from the ward where the shooting was started. But the camp was right over in front of us, across the railroad track. Um-hmm.

SV: Well, could y'all see the camp from your house there, or were there houses in between?

FL: Well, I guess you could. You know, you can – I don't know how far it runs between there and Washington Avenue. See, Washington Avenue is about three or four blocks from the railroad track there straight down Roy, and uh... that's where it was situated right over in that section there was vacant property and all. They just put 'em down just for the time being. I don't know.

SV: What do you remember about the camp before the riot? Was there any trouble or anything?

FL: Huh? Over there?

SV: Was there any trouble over there with the black troops? Did y'all have any trouble?

FL: No, I don't think it was. They just ... got it in, you know, for the whole city, I guess. They was pissed at the police, and they just wanted to be like they were up North, you know? And they just decided, I guess, amongst their selves to... Cause they didn't have any trouble there I don't, that I know of. They may have. I don't know how they broke into the ammunition room or where it was stored. I don't know; I've never heard that. They evidently fought their way in there. Surely it was guarded. It should've been. And they just took, and just raided it, and got all the ammunition they ever needed, you know. And they went to ... on their march.

SV: Did y'all have any trouble, I mean, at y'all's house from the camp there, from the time they were there before the riot? Like noise from the camp bothering y'all or anything?

FL: No. We hardly knew they was over there; they hadn't been there very long.

SV: Yes, ma'am.

FL: I don't suppose they'd been over, not over a month, anyway that they had – when they moved 'em in there. But see they were just opening up Camp Logan out there, and I imagine the intention was to put 'em out there at the camp, which wasn't too far from our house. Now, I worked out at that Camp Logan. I was the first operator that went out there. And I stayed till the last telephone was taken out. [Laughs] Now come to think about it, I might have been working out at Camp Logan...

SV: That night?

FL: Let's see, that was first part of, um... 1917, wasn't it?

SV: In August. Last of August of 1917.

FL: Was ...[Inaudible] cleared before then?

SV: Yes, ma'am. I believe so.

FL: Yeah. I don't know or remember just what day it was that I went to work out there, but I know I was the first operator that was out there at Camp Logan.

SV: Well, I believe it was under construction at the time still.

FL: It was. It – all I know of was this trucking company, truck company that was out on, way out on Washington Avenue. It was a couple miles out, you know, from this camp. So ... why they moved 'em down here before, these troops down here before Camp Logan opened, I don't know. Cause where they were located at was a good piece from Camp Logan itself. I imagine about a mile down the road from it, you know. And it was just put in a neighborhood where people were living. People were all living on the side of Roy Street, and the school was right across there and everything. And this camp was right about a block off of Roy Street there. And it extended then – I don't remember how many soldiers they had there in the camp. Nothing there. As it was said, it was so new, all we knew was they – this regimen of Negroes was stationed there.

SV: Well, how did most people feel about them being there? Did...

FL: Hmm?

SV: How did most people feel about them being there?

FL: Well, naturally nobody liked it because they were Negroes, you see. But it was so, you know, so soon after they got here that we never had a chance to hear what other people did think about it unless you mingled amongst 'em, you know, going. And I, course I was just working, you know. Going back, and it didn't bother me as far as that goes. So... I don't know about that.

SV: Well, did your father tell y'all anything about the court-martial? Or...

[Clock chiming in the background.]

FL: No.

SV: They'd, uh...

FL: He, um ... I don't know whether he – don't remember whether he saw the, when they executed 'em or not. Seemed like he did. If I can remember correctly, he witnessed it.

SV: He tell y'all anything about that?

FL: Um-mmm. Myrtle told me that Papa told, she could remember Papa telling her something about it, you know. But, uh... I can't remember about him telling her anything about it. I don't know why. Seems like, me being the oldest, why, I would know more about it. [Laughs] But I guess I was working and away from home so much, and the younger ones were there. Myrtle and the other sister. She's older than Myrtle. She knows a little bit more about it than Myrtle – Myrtle wasn't but five years old, and that would have made her, my other sister, about nine. So she, she and I have talked together and tried to remember things, you know. But she fills me in, did fill me in on a lot of stuff that I ... didn't remember. But it comes back to me, but I can't tell, you know ... remember any dates or anything like that.

SV: ...[Inaudible]

FL: I remember that I said I went to work out there the first part of the war, I know. At Camp Logan, and then I worked all through there.

SV: Camp Logan is about as far as the – wasn't much past Camp Logan in the way of the city, was there? Wasn't that many people living past Camp Logan?

FL: Um... No, where this we were considered out where we were living then. Cause when this little, we called, addition was Cottage Grove, you know, where we lived in. That was across the railroad track out the other way. And there was very – we were one of the first settlers out there when we built out there. And ... we was about the last, the further out from town as there was out there. It's, you know, it's kind of a little suburb, you know, of Houston.

SV: So Camp Logan was actually way out from town. It wasn't...

FL: And Camp Logan was way – was about I guess maybe a mile from us out, you know. That's where they started building it. It's funny cause it's all built up, now. You know, before it was kind of dormant out there.

FL: That's about all, you know, unless you...

SV: Well...

FL: ... can think of some questions you want to ask me.

SV: Well, I'm trying to think right now.

FL: [Laughs]

SV: It's hard to remember what we talked about earlier, and what we talked about while the tape was going.

FL: Yeah.

SV: ...[Inaudible]

SV: Oh, you remember what started the riot? What you, uh...

FL: Huh?

SV: Do you know anything about what started the riot, or...?

FL: Well, just what I hear. I know that on the streetcar of one instance that was in the paper, you know. But he got, this Negro got on, and he started to sit right up in the front, you know, and the motorman ordered him to the back, you know, when they used to have those ol' signs in the back, you know, for coloreds, you know? And course they didn't like that because up North they didn't have any of that. And that's – I know one instance that he jumped onto the, argued with the motorman, you know. And then there were several run-ins with the police, you know, that they had when they got out and were going downtown and everything. And it was all kind of a – they couldn't go into restaurants, and they couldn't do this, you know, down here like they could up North. And they were just against that. And that's what I think started it entirely. All of it. Because they were just ... wanted to take over and do just the same as the white people did. Otherwise it was this what do you call it segregation? Guess I got these false teeth and I can't say those words. [Laughs]

SV: Well, uh, you don't think maybe they thought your father was one of the mounted policemen by any chance, do you?

FL: No, I don't think so. No, they were just...

SV: Cause I think that was one ...



FL: He was, the way he was shot was right across from the – I imagine they started out from the camp right over to Roy because it was just a very short block from this Roy was one of the main streets that led up to Washington.

But the school was right there, too, you know where he was shot right on the side, on the street on the side of the school. No, I don't think that they knew him at all unless they – because he never rode over there like that or anything. They were just shooting everybody.

Just like this man that was... He was supposed to be going to a meeting. The one that was shot, you know? And he got that far and I think, and then – or he may have gotten further, and then he decided that he'd better come back, you know, it was getting so bad. And that's when they got him. And course Papa just leaned over to see if he was on the street there, you know. To see who he was, you know. And that's when they shot him.

So they was all in ambushed there, you know, on the side, in the ditches and everything else. And... They were just shooting anybody that was out in the open. They never did try to go in any houses or anything because there was houses all along that street. But they just shot people in the street. But I don't know why that they were headed for over to River Oaks over there to San Felipe. Unless it, there's a Negro segregated – in that part of town there was a lot of Negroes lived over there. Towards that way. Unless they were going over there trying to get them to help 'em, I don't know.

But... There might have been a few that got down past and going towards town, but all of 'em just taken right straight down when they got to Brunner. It was called Brunner then; it's now South Shepherd. They just headed right straight on down. And there was a small bridge across the bayou, and that's where they headed over in there. I don't think they ever got too much further than there. You know, before they stopped 'em.

SV: Well, your father crawled all the way from Roy over to...

FL: Roy up to Brunner Avenue. Cause ...

SV: That's quite a ways, wasn't it?

FL: He went – went across the school grounds, and then, you know, up that away, kind of cut across, you know, until he got up there. And I don't know just where they picked him up at.

SV: Well, there was a fire station right at that corner, wasn't there? At the farthest end of Brunner?

FL: No, the fire station was, um, down ... two blocks down Washington Avenue.

SV: Do you think that's where he was trying to get to, or...?

FL: Well, there was a drugstore on just one block down. See, there was a little grocery store right on the corner where the streetcar come down, and then it turned on - it had one of those big tracks, you know, that taken up about a half a block, you know, it turned there and went back. And ...

SV: Now was that on Roy Street you're talking about?

FL: No, that was on Brunner.

SV: Brunner?

FL: And ... the boys always waited right there in front of that little grocery store – that was the end of the line – to pick up the girls. And... This drugstore was just a block in the same block up on the other end of it. And... That's where they first shoved the boys down there to there, and then finally got – I guess they feared for them to try and get everybody, every civilian out of the territory because they didn't know which way those niggers was going, I don't think. Cause they just headed up there, you know, to Brunner Avenue. And then on down.

SV: Well, you say that ... y'all knew the man that picked 'em up when they – could you us something about when they picked 'em up to carry 'em, take your father up there at Brunner?

FL: Well, he was a – it was Binford, his name was, and we always called him Sheriff, but I don't – as far as I remember, he lived a long time afterwards. But I don't think he was sheriff then; he had another title then. And there was a number of other men with him, you know. They were officers in the sheriff, for the sheriff. See, we was out of the city limits, and course the police I'm sure came in to helped 'em, you know? But it was just the sheriff's department, and...

They picked him up and they were carrying him out of the firing range, you know, I guess they took him up to this drugstore or something where an ambulance could get him. Because ambulances or anything couldn't get in because they were just starting out from the camp, and there was nothing but Negroes around over there. So... When they got almost to Brunner, his friend, they dropped him. Because there was a volley of fires, I guess, coming from every direction, you know, shooting. And I guess they – well, I understand, if I can remember right that Binford was injured, too. And probably some of those other men that I don't remember. Because they were right all in that line of firing.

And then after, I guess they went on then, passed them, and that's when they came back and picked him up ... and took him. They got him through that time up to Rice on by the park on the other side of Brunner. When the ambulance could get in there and get him. I guess Ja-, he was one of the only ones that maybe that was injured, you know, civilians like that that I remember out there because I guess there was all the rest of most of 'em were killed, you know?

SV: Yeah. They took him to St. Joseph Hospital, you say?

FL: Yeah, they take him to St. Joseph then, and then they transferred him cause he worked for the Southern Pacific. The next morning it was when the transferred him over to Southern Pacific. And I imagine all the hospitals were full, you know, just like anything else when they a disaster or something like that. And there were – they had people coming and going. And it wasn't a very large hospital at that, you know, then. Neither one of 'em were.

SV: Well, the day after the riot I guess a lot of policemen and soldiers and all searching all over everywhere? You remember anything about that?

FL: Well they, uh... I'm sure they did. They probably went in houses and just searched all around for them. Until they kind of – they've bound to because they were going down that street, and they were just hiding in the houses and ... as I said, you know, and vacant lots and everything else where they could hide, you know, and they just – but they were just ... went like in a drove, you know. Just like a ... drove of cattle or something just going in one direction. You know, they didn't scatter out. It seemed like they all stayed together in this one path. But they... And it led right straight like ...[Inaudible] would take 'em across in front of that school, you know, and then up Washington Avenue, which wasn't very far. And they just drove right on up to Brunner Avenue. And then when they got to Brunner, that was on

Washington and Brunner, you see. And then they went straight on out Brunner across Washington. That's the way the line of 'em went, you know. And just ... going through everybody in their paths. The report was that there was more white people killed at, in that than there was Negros. But I can't believe that because I talked to – I was going with this boy out there in this truck company at the time, and he told me afterwards, says, "Nobody gonna know how many I killed." [Laughs] So I know that there was a lot of Negros killed that wasn't accounted for, you know. They just rushed 'em out here, I guess. [Laughs] I don't know where they took 'em to. It seemed like to me it was San Antonio. Cause they have a big camp up there. They took 'em out on flatcars and boxcars, and everything. [Laughs] And... They just took 'em out of here.

SV: They didn't search under y'all's house for anybody?

FL: Hmm?

SV: Did they search under y'all's house?

FL: No, they never did come over there. But somebody's the one that told me about that Negro being over there, you know. And the other Negro hiding under the house over there. See, the houses them days were built up higher off the ground than what we are now, you see?

SV: Yeah.

FL: And he just crawled underneath that house and stayed there the whole time, I guess, until morning I imagine before he come out.

[Clock chiming in the background]

FL: I never did see them come back out. They told me he was there. The neighbors did.

SV: This was when you were looking for a phone?

FL: Huh?

SV: You were looking for a phone?

FL: Yeah, I was looking for a phone. We had one, but naturally it wasn't working. Everybody was using the lines and all. So I was going around, looking next door and then one side, and the next one on the other side to see if their telephone was working. Cause I wanted to get through, you see, on the count of Papa, you know, and being up that way. And then the girls, too, you know, was expecting the boys.

But finally my sister did get through on the telephone. Called us and told us that the boys were safe, that she was, but we ... couldn't find Papa. We didn't know where he was. We didn't know what hospital he was in or anything. This lady that called us just said that he was shot; that's all she knew. The paper said that he was one of the men that was shot. And that's all the report we got until the next morning when we went to hunting him, and I don't think there was but about one or two hospitals in the city at that time. St. Joseph's was all that I can remember. Cause all out towards the medical center here now was just nothing but a bunch of suburbs. That was all very ... not populated very much. And... So it had to be there, or the Southern Pacific. They were across town.

SV: Y'all couldn't get through the streets to get to the hospitals, huh?

FL: No, not till morning. Morning – this happened, it started out early in the evening. Actually, maybe just about dark. Or then a little later, because my sister got off at nine, and they always went up there to meet her, and they worked till about – course they always went early, like kids do. Hang around. So... It must have happened along about seven or eight o'clock, started out about that time.

SV: I guess there was a lot of interesting calls coming through on the switchboard at the telephone company at this time, weren't there?

FL: Yeah, there was, too. I wasn't up there, but I – everybody wanting to know what's what, you know, and about their people. I guess anxious to know about their own people, relatives, you know, that lived out in that direction, you know, you get kind of all kind of reports, you know, at first starts out it's... Well, and you can't blame 'em. Just like we were. We were anxious about our brothers and my sister, and as they were people in town well other people lived out that away. Cause I'd tell 'em. Cause I think the city limits was along by Brunner Avenue, then. But the young near my – was just suburbs. Suburbs. Yeah...

SV: How did, uh... How did this affect everybody right after it was over? As far as their attitude toward the soldiers and the black soldiers being there? I guess they were already...

FL: They just [laughs] didn't like 'em, to tell you the truth. They were all up against 'em, you know. Against the government for sending 'em down here to begin with. And I just don't think it was the right thing for 'em to do. They knew the situation here in Houston. They knew that it wasn't like Northern soldiers, like that. And I – I don't think they were guarded enough, myself. Cause it was just, looked like they just placed 'em out there in that open field, like. And they lived in tents, you know. Over there. They had no barracks or anything built for 'em yet. And... Of course Houston was all up against that, you know. They just didn't – and I guess that's why they got 'em out of here in a hurry. Albeit if they hadn't got 'em out of here maybe they ... would have been worse than what it was. But they shipped 'em out of here that, during the night. By morning I think they were all gone. It was round that they could capture up.

SV: Well, did it affect anything – how did it affect the feelings between the black civilians and whites of Houston?

FL: Oh, it made it worse. [Laughs.]

SV: It did?

FL: Yeah. Everybody was really against the lynching up.

SV: They cause much problems that ... that you know of, there?

FL: No, I don't know.

SV: It did make a difference though between feelings? Made a lot of hard feelings?

FL: No, cause as I said, they taken 'em away from here, you know. They didn't have no chance to get at 'em or nothing anymore.

SV: I mean the black civilians of Houston.

FL: Oh, the blacks? No. Um-hmm.

SV: They were civilians?

FL: Hmm? That I know of. They might have.

SV: Didn't cause any problems?

FL: No, uh-huh. They didn't have any problem with 'em. Well, I guess ours – the ones that lived down here – were more educated, and they knew what they had to do or what to do. But, uh... They all lived in one section of town here, you know, the blacks did, you know. They weren't scattered all around like they are now; they just stayed in one section of town. And that's what I said – San Felipe well, see runs right down the middle of the River Oaks, River Oaks on one side. And then the other is they what they call the Fourth Ward. And that's where most of the Negroes in Houston lived. And then they had another over on the Fifth Ward where a good many others, they just lived in one part of the town, you know, just a certain part. And they all lived together in that vicinity around. Course, there were large quantities of 'em, you know, around in these sections. But, uh, we had no Negroes working on the streetcars or any policeman, nothing then, you know. Never. It was all ... white.

SV: Well, wasn't Houston at this time – a lot of people making a big push to make the city dry? And blaming some of the riot on liquor? About the soldiers being drunk, or ... you recall anything about that?

FL: I don't think so. [Long pause.] I can't remember anything about the – of being dry, but... We never, them days we never had much trouble with liquor, you know. It seems as though that I – course, and maybe cause I was just brought up in a home that didn't know anything about liquor or anything, you know, as children. And, but I don't think there was anything – that didn't cause it. In fact, I know it didn't. It just bizarre and all about that the police and streetcar company, you know. And, course I imagine they had trouble with police; they wouldn't let 'em go in the cafes or anything then, you know.

SV: Yes.

FL: They couldn't go into a café, or a show, or nothing else in Houston. They were that against blacks like that, you know. And of course they were used to all that up, back up where they came from. I don't know where they come from up north, whether it was Chicago or a place ... place like that. Well, the man that wrote that book might know. I'm anxious to read that book. Just to see. What Myrtle has read to me, we – she kept me up the other night...about an hour, and she just thumbing through the book, you know, and just reading me little articles. I guess she's about finished with it, now.

But I don't know where they got that information. Course I'm sure there's lots of – there were lots of people lived around out there that had the same information that I did, you know. That I did about it. Course they all didn't have anyone killed, I mean hurt, hurt like Papa was, you know. But, uh... And so I'm sure that they got the information from others, too, you know. But, I ... to write a book and use Papa's name in it, and all ... I don't see where they would be permitted to do that without the consent of the family.

SV: Well, I'm not sure about that. I think they...

FL: I don't know.

SV: ...they got it out of records and all, like testimony. Trial.

FL: Of course, if they tried to find out if any of Papa's family was living, they didn't do it, didn't – not a one in our family heard that they come to or anything about it. Course, my mother's gone now, and

father both has died, and ... so but then at the time when Papa died, we were all living. And... Well, out of 11, let's see there was eight of 'em living. Of course since then, why, there's now there's just...

[End of tape.]

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