

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Charles Aubrey Ricard

COLLECTION: 4700.1744

IDENTIFICATION: Ricard is a longtime resident of South Baton Rouge

INTERVIEWER: Petra Munro Hendry

PROJECT: McKinley High School Oral History Project: Social Organizations

INTERVIEW DATES: June 15, 2005

FOCUS DATES: 1930s - present

ABSTRACT:

Tape 3446, Side A

Ricard born in 1930 in Baton Rouge; parents Wilbert Ricard, a contractor, and Bessie DeCuir, a housewife; mother was one of the first McKinley High graduates; both parents from Pointe Coupee Parish, both are deceased; mother's family moved to Baton Rouge due to boll weevil epidemic or a flood; father moved to pursue construction work; describes some of the work his father did in the area; many people in South Baton Rouge built their homes themselves; house his father built on Julia street in 1948; his maternal grandparents, Charles and Elisca DeCuir; location of his family members' homes in South Baton Rouge; grandfather Charles was a butcher, Elisca was a housewife and they owned various properties like a barbershop and apartment building; one neighboring property was owned by an Italian family named Monget; neighborhood was all Italians and blacks; Monget owned a shoe shop; he grew up poor but didn't realize it; grandmother had a garden and raised chickens and pigs; his uncle Charlie was the first to go to college; neighborhood was close-knit; he knows of several inter-racial married couples who lived in the neighborhood; no money or jobs to go around during the Depression; father worked at the Heidelberg Hotel; he walked to school at St. Francis Xavier; his first job was at a shoemaker, later worked at the Chicken Shack; Tommy Delpit of Chicken Shack and Joe Bernard of Bernard's Chicken Loaf; he graduated from Southern Lab in 1948; stores for clothing and groceries; his pediatrician, Dr. [Lorio?]; he never had a problem as an African American shopping downtown; other businesses in the area like Percy's Barbeque; Ideal Drugstore operated by the Butler family; he was in touch with Jean Butler recently; clarification of Butler brothers, George and Leo, and their businesses; getting his tonsils removed at Flint Goodridge hospital in New Orleans; Baranco brothers, a doctor and dentist; Gilbert's was the first funeral home in Baton Rouge; searching city directory for a Doctor [Lamotte?]; grandmother's attic fan was a novelty; streets were gravel and neighbors would water them to keep the dust down; no electricity but most houses had plumbing; garbage collectors were all white; police patrolled in black and red cars; fire stations were on South Fifteenth Street and Highland Road, oldest station is Bogan; St. Francis Xavier was associated with the Sisters of the Holy Family convent; Hendry

gives some history on the convent and members; Francis Xavier was grades one through seven at that time; Southern Lab had 350 students total;

Tape 3446, Side B

Blank air for first few minutes; Father Blanchard and Father Sheldon; his cousin is a bishop in Baltimore; met his wife, Mary, in 1967; looking at family records; most family is buried at Gilbert's, others at Chenal; Ricard family came from France; explains marriages in the family's history; photograph of his freshman high school class, he went by Aubrey back then; other students in the photograph; he has three children, his son died, one daughter lives in Chicago and the other in Minneapolis; he was married before and his first wife died, she was from Chicago; apartments in Chicago were hard to find for African Americans; he came back to Baton Rouge to start a building company with his father; he got his first car in 1951; story about a young woman in nursing school who he helped set up in an apartment after her husband left her; he went to work for Frank McConnell who had a building material establishment, then left to work for Joe [Conner?] at a store in Bon Marche Mall; neighborhood has deteriorated; story about working with the police chief when his wife's purse was stolen and the suspect was arrested; he's happy that they're working to preserve McKinley; the house he lives in means a lot to him, brings back good memories; family connection to J.M Frazier, McKinley principal; other men and women who lived in the neighborhood or had businesses there like Dupuy Anderson, J.D. Young, Dr. Harris, Dr. Wallace; Isabel Herson helped him get his son enrolled at Southern Lab; Coach Kraft and his wife Sis Kraft, one of the first blacks to get an MLS degree; Purple Circle Social Club; photo of relatives who liked to bet on horses; Bonanza Club activities at Prince Hall; taking photographs of his house; interview conclusion.

TAPES: 1 (T3446)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 21 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 87 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: None

RESTRICTIONS: None