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JLFT 008 Henry C. Williams
John LeFlore Oral History Tapes (JLFT), Acc. 328
Interviewed by John Beebee on October 24, 1996
1 hour, 28 minute audio recording • 25 page transcript

Abstract: In this recording, Henry C. Williams is interviewed by John Beebee to discuss John LeFlore and the Civil Rights Movement in Mobile, Alabama. The interview begins with Mr. Williams discussing how he met Mr. John LeFlore at Mobile County Training School, and how their relationship developed during World War II. He describes the origins and development of the Non-Partisan Voters League, and the work that the organization did over the years under John LeFlore's leadership. Mr. Williams describes Dr. Martin Luther King's several visits to Mobile, and reflects on the relationship between Dr. King and Mr. LeFlore. He concludes with reflections on the legacy of John LeFlore.

Sheila Flanagan and John Beebee led the interviews for this project, recording the reflections of relatives, friends, and colleagues of Mobile activist John LeFlore for an Alabama Public Television documentary released under the title, "A Quiet Revolution: The Story of John L. LeFlore." The project was funded through an Alabama Humanities Foundation grant.

Preface: This is a transcript of an oral history recording archived at the McCall Library of the University of South Alabama. Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, which has been minimally edited for readability.



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JLFT 008 Henry C. Williams
Interviewed October 24, 1996

This is a verbatim transcript of an oral history interview recording, composed and formatted in accordance with the McCall Library transcription style guide.

Verbatim transcription is a style of representing as closely as possible the exact wording and phrasing of the speakers on the recording, though false starts, repetitious phrases, and other minor edits have been made as needed only for the sake of clarity and readability. Readers of this transcript are strongly encouraged to listen to the recording.

Please note that if any text is **bolded** in the transcript, this indicates uncertainty of either spelling or accuracy of transcription regarding what was said. Italics indicate emphasis, or are applied to titles and similar proper nouns.

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JLFT 008

Interviewee: Henry C. Williams

Interviewer: John Beebee (with Sheila Flanagan)

Date: October 24, 1996

W: I'm Henry C. Williams; was born in the Africatown area, which is roughly three miles north of the center of Mobile where we are now. During the days of just before World War II, I had the opportunity as a little fellow to watch the personalities that we are going to talk about a little bit. During those days, there were very few people in the Mobile area that really were struggling for what we were calling civil rights then. By my dad, Reverend Edward Williams, being interested and active from the very beginning, with some of those men from the back like A.N. Johnson—who was the founder of what you know of today as the Johnson and Allen undertaking or mortuary. Then there were other men that had just preceded them, like Reverend Newsome with the Negro Fair, the Safety and Guarantee Realtor Banking Company. And then, out of all this came Mr. John L. LeFlore. At first, we just knew him as John, because he was that type of person; he was right down to earth. And as a little boy since, this portion is on the agenda, I decided that I would watch them and see just what would happen out of all of this. And it was fortunate that just before World War II—in fact, it was in December, and the very month that we went into the war; the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Out of this, I got a chance to know Mr. J.L. LeFlore by being in Mobile County Training School. And here, the first impression that was really made on me was when he came and told us that there were going to be new trades that would come out of this war. I remember we had no television, we had no radio that was open like we see it today. They were talking about trades that were not on market, like welding, which I've placed my life in since that time. Since you have asked, I want you to know that it was my good fortune to set up the first welding classes educationalwise in the total South. Six months after the Japanese hit Pearl Harbor, we were riveting ships at Alabama. And when you hear me say "we," I guess you'll remember now, or you will note, that there were no child labor laws. So, if you were big enough to swim the river, mingle with those men who were blacksmiths, riveters, and buckers, and passers; then you had a chance to learn trades as early as you felt like it. It was my good fortune to have been with Mr. LeFlore. And on that morning, I believe, Dr. Belsaw was there, who was one of the voices. And out of this, they gave us direction in one of the programs that Dr. Benjamin F. Baker gave constantly—it so happened that this is Dr. Baker's church—when it was announced that all we had to do was go to Sears and Roebuck, and find out how we could set up these classes. And the program then was called VEND: Vocational Education National Defense. And I feel pretty good about the fact that when they made the announcement that these trades were going to come, and in a few days, Adam Clayton Powell would make it sure that we would be able to get those classes. We were instructed to go then to Sears and Roebuck where the board of

registrars are now. And out of that, we were fortunate to set up that first class. And we only got six men in that first class. Mr. Hall, Mr. Leander Hall is still living. There is Mr. A. Anderson, Leonard Anderson, who was one of the first. And after, it was my fortune to set up the first welding curriculum at Alabama A&M—as you know it, Alabama A&M University. And this was just six months after my leaving high school. So, out of this, the—

B: Okay, take me back to Mr. LeFlore; what do you remember about Mr. LeFlore? What do you remember about the first time you met him? What struck you or what impressed you about Mr. LeFlore?

W: What impressed me more about Mr. LeFlore was that he was always at it. He never gave up. You must remember, now, that during that time Mr. LeFlore was under constant criticism on both sides of the track; mine, yours, and his, and everybody else's. And I guess this is the way it is with most men who are a little bit in their time. You said "before their time," but I think those men are *in* their time, and Mr. LeFlore served his. Out of this, I don't think we perceived nor did the community understand him at that time. But since it was a constant go, there were programs carried, and out of these programs came radio programs: "Our Day's World," which he had every Sunday evening. And on those programs, we would discuss whatever issues were at that time. Some of the historical background, the programs served as a calling post; where when we met at the various places here, people would know mostly what the situations were. So far as trying to get policemen, trying to get businesses open in the days gone by, we just had to depend on people like Mr. LeFlore. Since he was one of a kind, we didn't have people running everywhere then, saying that these jobs, these places ought to be open. One of the things that I don't hear very much now is on the 'separate but equal' situation. I can say this affirmly: Mr. LeFlore never accepted 'separate but equal.' He believed in one American. With him—and it's beginning to fade a little bit—with him, there was no Black, there was no white. It was citizenry. I appreciated that about him, because when we were trying to impress him to step out and become like our good friend that we brought here three times: Dr. Martin Luther King. When we brought him in, there were a lot of criticism. But because of the persistency and the contact that Mr. LeFlore had with men like our present—who is still living, Mr. Joseph Langan—all of the police, he had good contact with both sides of the community at that time. Every Sunday, we had meetings. All of the meetings at that time—or especially into the [19]70s and the [19]80s—were held at the Adams Street Holiness Church, with the honorable Bishop W. T. Phillips, who was the founder of that particular group. But Mr. LeFlore was forever bringing forth jobs for certain types of education. And of course, as I pointed out a

little bit there, the impression to me was that when we set up, out of his insistency, the first welding classes in the South: number three Government Street, today where the Convention Center is. It was he who spearheaded, through and along with men like A. Philip Randolph, Adam Clayton Powell—as I mentioned, or Congressman Adam Clayton Powell. With him, as he was in charge of the vocational education over America then—and I'm speaking of Adam Clayton Powell—Mr. LeFlore was in close contact with those people then, because of the segregated riding on the trains. And this is where even in this building, I had a chance to have met Mr. Randolph. Men like Paul Robeson; I heard him sing here. I remember the song. It sound like I can hear it coming now. [Singing] And if you noticed, I put my hand to my ear; Paul Robeson sang this way. And this was just before he was restricted from going to Russia. And I do believe that if we had understood what he was saying at that time, we would've had good relationship with Russia then. Maybe most people wouldn't realize the magnitude of a man who was down to earth as Mr. LeFlore was, and yet sought out so many different personalities, so many people of America then. Not of one group, not of one organization, not of one race, not of one creed; but there were no lines drawn. There were no lines drawn with females or males, or anyone who had a program that would embrace America for all. Were always ready, and Mr. LeFlore was constantly waiting for those people to present them to the public. I guess this will fit into this: there was Father Foley out at Spring Hill College. At that time, he was screaming—and he never talked above his voice. [Laughter] But he was screaming for human relations. And out of that program, I was fortunate—by constantly being with Mr. LeFlore—to have spent, maybe from the beginning of Father Foley's human relations until what he called the completion—which, to me, you never finish human relations. But Mr. LeFlore was the type of man that never gave up. You may think of the time when the NAACP was outlawed from the state of Alabama. Mr. LeFlore, along with us, founded what we call the Non-Partisan Voters League in order that we would have an avenue to search through and keep everything alive until the NAACP was back.

B: And what year was that, that the League started? You remember about what time that was? Was it right after the NAACP?

W: Right during the time of the NAACP. If you want some of the eras, check the Boswell Amendments. There, you would be dealing with Mr. J.J. Thomas, who was in the same building with us.

B: Now okay, real quick, just a real quick point to grab, because I want to make sure I get this—because we're on a roll now. [Laughter] I want to make sure I get this. What was the year you first met John LeFlore? About what year it was?

W: The first year?

B: That you met John LeFlore. Do you remember what year that was?

W: Oh, I met John LeFlore in maybe 1936.

B: That's great. Okay. And even then, he was—?

W: Active. See this was the era, now, when the image of men like A.N. Johnson, Reverend Newsome; Marcus Garvey had been here, if you've ever heard of him. Madam Coffey. These were people with the Back to Africa Movement. And all of these people were stern, but Mr. LeFlore was kind of like the dasher in the middle. With all of the quietness, there must have been some gift from God that kept him forever finding somebody in the community to keep it going. One of the things that I'd like to point out here is, most people are thinking there were never a crowded room with these meetings. There were always just a few. And even after we came through that era of outlawing the NAACP—and of course you know, out of that we had the untimely death of Patterson and those men who were on the other side of this. But with this, when all foreign corporations were expelled from the state of Alabama, then our way of keeping everything going was to know. And we believed, always, the NAACP would be brought back. But we had to wait until all of the litigation, and this is where men like Nicholas D.E.B. Katzenbach and the rest of the people that you are hearing their names. But out of this era, Mr. LeFlore was constantly bringing in different speakers, different personalities. And of course, as I pointed out, all of the persons that were brought in would be people that were giving something constantly on democracy. On the way America ought to be. One of the statements—[Laughter]—I liked Mr. LeFlore used to make, was that "Black slavery is just as bad as white slavery." And most people didn't understand that. And even though I won't touch on that but a little, but if you go back to 1860, to the census, you will find there that it is numerated, as whites, free men of color, and then you had slaves. If you have time and you will check, that during that period in Mobile, you had roughly 1200 free men of color. And for some reason, maybe it's an oversight, but we've forgotten that. Only the 1860, or the eighth census of the United States tariffs, what I'm talking about. You will find in Mobile County, Baldwin County, at this time the Afro-American, or then the Negro, outnumbered even the whites in the counties from Baldwin County, and the rest of those northern

counties. I point this out, because when Mr. LeFlore and my dad used to leave here on weekends and just go into what we call rural places—since the Pettus Bridge is around Selma and up in there. Well, when they would leave here, and just go and encourage people there to register and vote; as a youngster, I never realized that in those areas you hardly had five voters. But they always had the courage to go and reasonably be able to go into those places. And to my knowledge, I never knew of any type of situation that existed, that they were forced out. Now, later we had the situations that—after the Selma, and then we had the outlawing of the NAACP. Now, during that era, we did not talk in terms of the NAACP, but we talked in terms of the Non-Partisan Voters League. We had the idea that when NAACP was brought back, that Mr. LeFlore would become the head of it. And of course, that did not happen. But that did not keep the point of the Non-Partisan Voters League from remaining alive.

B: Tell me: going back now, what was it—this, Mr. LeFlore was, we're doing research on him, he was just driven, he had this passion in him. He was going for civil rights so strong there. What was it that motivated him? Did he ever talk to you about that? About what was it inside him that was driving him? Was there an incident that happened in his past, in his youth? Or was there something that he had back there that was firing him up? What was that about him? Did he ever tell you that?

W: Hearing the voices. I tried to allude to that. And the voices of men like A.N. Johnson that had been expelled from Mobile. See, Johnson was ordered away from Mobile. There are some situations in there that, when he left—and of course, the Johnson and Allen Undertaking company is still here. But out of his being expelled from Mobile, because of the situation where Negroes were expelled from the city park, or Bienville Square. Then you had men who stood up to that. And out of that—and we must remember, now: this is almost the turn of the century. Mr. LeFlore was strong enough to notice those men. And out of all of the situations he went, I don't believe I've ever heard him criticize any person, regardless to race, color, or creed, whether they were active or not active. He believed that it was the individual that was incepted with some gift from some source; I guess we would say that they a gift of God. But he was constantly carrying that on. But my idea is, for this reason: he was young at an era when all of those men who had come through Reconstruction were dying out. And there were some men caught in that 1910 era there, that he didn't believe were justly treated. And of course, I believe he was trying to open up an avenue that some way they would be paid not in money, but in just acceptance for the ideas that they had. See, he remembers when Marcus Garvey came. You had the Garveyites. Then came, Madam Coffey; you had the Coffeyites. Here was a man and a woman leading a group. But out of that, at this

time, it made it sound like they were accepting separate but equal. May I point out one thing here? If you look right behind you there, and you can't see through that wall, you will see a little archives. They called it, at that time, the library on Davis Avenue. That was supposed to be separate but equal. And that was spearheaded by Dr. Belsaw, E.T. Belsaw, with his office on Dauphin Street. At the time that that was brought forth—and I think that was around the [19]30s; [19]33 or [19]34—I was a little fellow. So, when he came to Africatown, seem like to me I was one of those folks who went round to get dimes to equally help build that. But my point on the library's this. The Mobile Public Library on the corner of Washington Avenue and Government was there, built on the site where there were shotgun houses that formerly all Negroes had lived in that area. And out of this, Dr. Belsaw along at this time—and you must understand, now, these—when I say Dr. Belsaw, and Henry Newsome, these were the leaders by age just before Mr. LeFlore. When they said, "Get a library," then everybody said, "Well, we can get one because it's separate but equal." I want you to look at it when you got—

B: It's not very equal is it? [Laughter]

W: If you compare the size, you would only have two rooms. Now in that area, one of the things that Mr. LeFlore pointed out—I don't believe I've gotten enough people to understand it. If you take the whole time or the whole era of separate but equal, I want to pass this on for Mr. LeFlore's sake. We used to do this. We'd get—he and I, or mostly he, would get in his car, I'd get in mine, we'd ride. And we would point out things like, "Let's go and look at the school buildings and libraries that were built under the separate but equal concept." Now, if you want to see the only time that separate but equal was ever brought forth in this area, go on and look at Old Shell Road School, and go and look at William Hooper Councill. And of course, I call the name William Hooper Councill, because at that time, he was the only slave that was actually the founder of an institution: A&M or Alabama A&M University, as it is now. And by the way, with his, Mr. LeFlore came right at the ending of the lives of those men that had lived through this era. Now out of this, William Hooper Councill joined hands up at Chase Normal, which is right on the Tennessee line. Huntsville is there; this is where I trained the first welders to build the *USS Alabama*. I didn't want it to creep in, but I found the *CSS Alabama* still in Cherbourg, France where the Coast Guard sank it. But out of that, William Hooper Council, the founder of A&M, was able to get and become the enrolling clerk for the state of Alabama in 1874. At this time, you had John **Kraff**, who was the representative from this area. And those men got together, this—as we like to put it; Mr. LeFlore and I used to talk about it all the time—this Black hand from Chase, from Normal, joined hands with this white hand here in Mobile. And those men

vowed that they would build good roads from the end of America here, which would be Dauphin Island now, to the end of Alabama. And they did. The Good Road Program was carried on by those men, but here is the fine point I'm trying to make: here's where, in those eras, people were saying what Negroes and whites couldn't do. But they set the example that all of the highways, even the Audubon thing that I brought forth—see, Wernher von Braun is one of my personal prisoners—when they went out of this VEND program that you sent, the United States government sent me to anything you name in education. I stayed in Sorbonne so much, I thought I lived there! Stratford on Avon and the rest of those places. But here's how that crept in: if it had not been for men like Mr. John LeFlore, or if it hadn't been for that man and honorable John LeFlore, I don't think I would have been pushed to the point. I wouldn't've been where I would have appreciated those things. Out of this, I was able to have met—name any of the presidents. Because of those men. And here's what people don't quite get: see today, for some reason, even here I am left today with the only private welding school in the total South. But people don't know it. I hate to say it, as it is now. Every man you see and every welder that you see in the total South came out of that pitiful program. And I remember the day—I eased that in because of this: the day when we decided in the AOH building, on the corner of Adams and Kennedy, after leaving the meeting we sent Mr. **Corren** and Lee. Mr. Lee is still in Mobile. But we sent them to **Fulton** Road Trade School and got them in order to go to Fulton Road Trade School, at Mr. LeFlore's insistence, to integrate. Governor George Wallace made contact with Mr. LeFlore and said, "Now, John if y'all don't integrate, I'll build you a school." Now, that was separate but equal. He put me in charge of building that school. I set up the first welding class there, so far as curriculum-wise. Now, wasn't it strange that Governor Wallace, then breathing separate but equal, said, "Now, if y'all don't, I'll appropriate a million dollars where you can get it." And he did. We were criticized—I'm saying "we" then, because wherever Mr. LeFlore went, I tried to stay around. [Laughter] I had no reason other than watching what people had said, what makes great men tick. I think some of us realized that in his lifetime; I don't think very many people did. But out of that, we were able to hold and get Carver State through Governor Wallace, and no one—but everybody criticized Mr. LeFlore for accepting that. My point today is, what would we do without Carver State as the technical college that has grown out of my little trade school? And this is what pushes me on, and this is just one of the incidents that we made, so far as in this racial—I call that era racial turmoil.

B: Mr. Williams, let me ask you—just a real brief note here, just a real quickie—on the radio program: do you remember what station that was, what radio station?

W: WMOZ.

B: MOB?

W: MOZ.

B: MOZ. And where was that? Do you remember—

W: Right off of Conception Street, there in the Africatown area. That was owned by Mr. Estes, who gave the community time every Sunday to “Our Day’s World” and the Non-Partisan Voters League, with Mr. John L. LeFlore as the moderator and head.

B: Was—Mr. Estes was a white gentleman, or—?

W: Absolutely.

B: Okay. But he gave—that’s interesting. I wonder if there’s any tapes of that.

W: He owned the—well, the facility is still out there, being used by one of the radio stations now. It’s still there. In fact, I did the fieldwork along with Mr. Vernon Floyd, who owns the WORV radio station—AM and FM—in Jackson, Mississippi, I believe it is now. And we built that station. I did the welding and all of the field, we have the field underground where you have the outfield now?

B: Now, MOZ was on Conception Street, you say?

W: It’s on Conception Street, right at the beginning of Africatown, in the area where—it’s called the Lewis’s Quarters. In other words, it’s about where it would be directly under Gulf Lumber Company there. You could probably—

B: So there’s a radio station around that area right now, you say?

W: No, only the building and the tower. And that’s used for, I guess, a bounce off station for someplace.

B: It’s right there on Conception. Conception and—

W: Right in front of Gulf Lumber Company’s office.

B: Got it. We'll have to look for that.

W: That will pinpoint it. If you get in front of Gulf Lumber and look east, you'll see the—

B: I wonder if anybody would have any tapes of John LeFlore doing that show. Would you know, by any chance?

W: Now, Mr. Estes lives somewhere in North Alabama.

F: Those were live broadcasted.

W: Yes, all of those were broadcasted. In fact, we went on for, oh, years, and it was no restriction.

B: On Sunday? What time was it on?

W: In the afternoon, from four to five.

B: That's great. That's interesting. Tell us about—I want to hit on a couple of things you brought up, it's the first time I've heard of this. What about the connection? How did he work with Governor Wallace? How did Governor Wallace interact with Mr. LeFlore?

W: We were buddies. I didn't say "they"; we were buddies. If Reverend Hope—if you had called me a few months ago, I could have brought you the person here who served as Governor Wallace's pivot person, to gain all of all the Negro votes.

B: Now this is—what about back in the [19]60s, though?

W: In the [19]60s?

B: That was a different kind of Wallace—

W: Governor Wallace was just coming up, see? Patterson was the big name. See, you had Talmadge of Georgia, Bilbo of Mississippi, and those were the names you heard constantly. And then the Phenix City thing came up, where Patterson was killed. And out of that, we heard the voice of the youngster George Wallace. And in that first election, you know, he admitted and said it publicly that Patterson **had saved him**. And he would not allow it again. So, since he's still living, I would almost challenge you to tell you he wasn't as bad in segregation as people looked

at it then. He was trying to live up to separate but equal; that's why we have a Carver school. That's my point. Under the Wallace administration, you had the best setup—since I'm a retired teacher—you had the best setup for education. What we are doing now—and this is no reflection on the Faulkners—but our whole program changed when the impetus of the idea of education changed what we had done. Frankly, I don't believe we were ready for technical colleges overall. I think we went into it too quickly. And so as far as the Afro-American, if you go to the places where I trained welders, other than the teachers at Carver and all the rest of the institutions, regardless to the magnitude of people that I trained; now, out of those folk who are there, the group at Carver State Technical College now would almost fit. But for what I experienced with Wernher von Braun and the rest of those prisoners that came and sent all these rockets out, we should be in the fine end of trades now. In fact, I think America moved off too fast in that era, and it's hurt education.

B: Tell me something you hit on just a little earlier just before that. You were talking about—so actually, I think it was before the tape was turned on—tell us about some—when you were with Mr. LeFlore, we're talking about early—Sheila was talking about—you went to some bad places, or tell us about the bad places you went. Tell us some stories about that.

W: Well, the hardest nut that we had to crack in Mobile was Wintzell's. That's Wintzell's. Your dad and I, Mr. Flanagan; her dad was one of those people. Frankly, he was the person we sat up in the—sometimes you look back and see; we just lost Senator Figures. But that was our aspirant to fill that position then. And out of that, Mr. Flanagan fell short in one or two of the votes. And of course, he didn't go, but I hope you remember he ran. And I sit and look back through that era and often wonder just what would have been. Because see, out of this now—and I have not touched it—we have under the Wallace administration the George Washington Carver Liberty Ship Park that's supposed to be in front of the *USS Alabama*. We were given a ship, the **Whale Bodenheimer**. We were sent to Washington and carried people like the present, Mr. Sydney Raine, who's working with people. All of this was done through Congressman Jack Edwards' office. And of course, those programs have not come. Governor Wallace signed into law the Africatown Park; we have one hundred acres of land up there, and I can't even get the president to talk about it.

B: Go back to the thing with Mr. Wintzell.

W: Wintzell's?

B: Yeah. What do you mean, he was a hard nut to crack? What was happening there?

W: Whenever we went in a place and the doors slammed, and we would go—see, at this time, if you would go into any café, it was understood that you'd go to the back door. Now, in the building with Wintzell is the office of Reverend, and Dr., Roger Williams. That was his office upstairs. And then, men like Mr. LeFlore went in those offices as youngsters. But here during that period when all of the land was being confiscated—see, there are many sections that we discussed during that time. Especially when the Boswell Amendment came in, and those different—outlawing of the NAACP. We realized then that most of the real estate—see, in this area, now, you had the Afro-American or you had the African here long before the Europeans came. And most people don't realize that. Old West Florida. We had the three boats, and I don't want to get on that; you'd need four tape! [Laughter] We out there dealing with Africatown Program now, and that's the last shipload of Africans that were brought here and caught. And the law said they should've been sent back or they should be taken care of. And of course, after that—which would take some time—but you know, we have Monroeville, and the Freeport in West Africa. And that was named after President Monroe after that 1839 through 1846 situation with the *Amistad*, if you've ever heard of that; A-M-I-S-T-A-D. That's up at Selma with the mural there where Africans killed the Spaniards and took over the ship. Now out of that, you have the *Clotilda* following that. Those Africans were sent back by the President. President Adams was the one that served as their lawyer. But we are not in that area; we are not lost. The thing that gets me now—[Laughter]—and I guess you would want to put it on there: for some reason, what we are doing now is more stringent than what Mr. LeFlore, Mr. Flanagan, Mr. Bolden, Rev. Edward Williams, Mr. O.B. Purifoy, and I could name the same names over. Twenty-five or 30 people who just stuck together, and Mr. LeFlore was listed and is and was the research secretary. Now, I guess you understand why that was. How could he be at that time head of a civil rights group or movement, and was a mailman? He was never president; I was chairman of the board at the at the [19]70s and [19]80s. But he was never in office. Now, we waited for the NAACP to be brought back so he would become that. He was not; Dr. Gilliard became the president. But did we fall out? No. That was the fine arts of John LeFlore. He was able to—even if those people had almost a bit of hatred, if you could say that, he was still able to work with those people. And I appreciate that with—and Ms. Flanagan mentioned the Willie Seals case. That was one hour before he was supposed to've been executed. And of course, Mr. LeFlore was there too. And we brought him back. In fact, he's back now and has lived through. We had one or two other cases, like Teddy Taylor, during that particular time, and

the same situation there. See, Mr. LeFlore lived right along with, and became active during, the Scottsboro Case. If you recall that. Which was a long, drawn-out situation like the homeless people now. I think of that era as then. But those Scottsboro Boys served long stays in jail. They hadn't been actually carried through the courts. But Mr. LeFlore was able to discern that, and here was one of his secrets, which I think you're looking for. He and Mr. Joe Langan became like buddies. I still contend today that since Mr. Langan is a reader, a reader is one who studies law under and not so far as school. Of course, Mr. Langan has done both now. But my contention was, as I grew beyond high school level, that even today there should be a tribunal or some group to restore some law degree on him. Because of the fact of his being able to steer through that era of segregation. Other than the bombing, we had other incidents. And of course, I'm sure you have something on that.

B: Tell us about some of the dangers you faced. Tell us about the dangers, the threats, what, what were you all facing during this time? Give us a picture of what it was like.

W: Well, it was a constant thing. Like, when Mr. LeFlore came and encouraged me to set up, I had one white man to snatch the helmet out of my hand, and tell me I'd never use it in the South. That following Sunday, although I'm still in high school, I would walk from Plateau—that's three miles, roughly—to the meetings here. And of course, you still had nine. You'd have to see this: you still had meetings of those older men for the Republican Party. And since that, this is one of the things that I give Mr. LeFlore a real star for. When he said "Non-Partisan Voters League," that gave us a chance to deal with the Dixiecrats, and it gave us a chance to deal with the Republicans, which was never here. Yet they almost here now. And all of my bringing has been through that side. Because when you go back and you find President McKinley—I heard even the president say the other day that he's hired or done more. So, for his old people, and especially when we refer to that in the past, it was Negro. I would like and I would challenge him to read what President McKinley did before he was assassinated. All of the post offices in the South were brought under his administration with Negro postmasters. And most people don't realize that; we had we had people in every category. But now, back to the Mobile situation: I think of Wintzell's, because we never fully cracked that egg. They remained segregated. And even now, those of us who pass there, we feel it. We feel that bit of, "Don't come in here." And when we sit and look at that building, and the amount of finances, I think they've grown nine to two or three other business places; chain, like. But when we look and see that in 1900 it belonged to Dr. Roger Williams, right across the street from us was Julius **McConigal**, the first federal

marshal here. I don't I don't ever see any work on him. He was living right across the street on Government. Right down the street, going back toward the river, was Dr. Belsaw. And across the street from him was Reverend Newsome, who had the Safety Guaranty and Real Estate Banking Company at 256 St. Michael Street.

B: Tell us about the bombing of Mr. LeFlore's house. What do you what do you remember about that that day? What do you remember hearing about it, or seeing, or—?

W: Well, this was done early morning or late at night, whatever you would like. And this young white man was living in the rear of Dauphin Way Methodist Church, on the grounds or adjacent, somewhere in that. It so happened that where I live now was where he crossed, going back to his living quarters. Catherine Street was a dead end at Basil, and it was a dead end at Congress and the intersection of St. Stephens Road, as we called it way back. That is the old Craighead property and if you're not aware of it, there's a school named after Craighead. This is the place where A.N. Johnson was supposed to have been executed, I'd say. He was supposed to been ambushed from that. But one of the whites, or white men, who kept in contact with Mr. LeFlore, and after leaving—when Mr. LeFlore was young, real young—at the leaving of Mobile, A.N. Johnson being driven away. And they might've done a good thing, because he finally landed, or built, in Nashville, Tennessee, and became the largest funeral home of any Negro in the world. In fact, he imported the Lipizzan stallions for his funerals and so forth. But out of those, the biggest situation to meet with him was that I don't know of any man that—regardless to how rabid they were with the idea of segregation—I don't ever remember him gritting his teeth. It was always an expression. Not a grin. Yeah, but it was always an expression that, "We can work through this."

B: What did—what was Mr. LeFlore's reaction to the to the bombing?

W: To the bombing?

B: Mmhm, of his house.

W: Mr. LeFlore became for a few days real quiet, because of this: where the bomb was put. Normally after we had meetings, and he went home, in that part of his living room was where he did his noting. Mrs. McArthur was the secretary; I haven't heard anybody call her name, that was our secretary, if you remember. If anyone has been mentioned, Ms. McArthur had given him the papers for the programs we're working. But sometime after one o'clock, usually, he would take his seat right

with his back to the west, and do his notings for the next day—because he was going to the post office as well. But on this particular night, he did his noting in the bathroom. And at that time, this is when the explosion—. So, and you may check the young white man's name. And if you note now, one of the things that I think I copied from Mr. LeFlore, that he had copied from Booker T. Washington's people—who knew Dr. Washington up front at Tuskegee—was that we remember the names of those people who are hateful and rabid. But we don't keep at our fingertips and tongue-tip the names of those who on our side. So out of that, Mr. LeFlore never discussed openly any hatred for the young white fellow who did that.

B: Was there a person convicted for that?

W: Yes. But there was no—no, no. There was an apprehension, but no conviction.

B: Okay. So—

W: No.

B: It was a suspect.

W: That was kind of like a push-aside.

B: So, there was a suspect but it was never proven? Is that what you're saying?

W: Oh, it was proven. In the city, where—this was the outcome of that. The present house—and I guess you have a picture of it—is the house that was built for the bombing. At that time, he was living in a wood frame building. So out of that, we built him a brick building. And because of that change, in that area, then that became quiet.

B: What was the motivation of the white man? Why was he upset? Was he part of a group? Or was this him? Or what was the motivation behind the bombing, do you think?

W: Well you see, at this time, now, everyone had the idea that Governor Wallace was the segregationist that would never meld, would never meet. And they were wrong. Now, out of this, there were those men who formed this type of hatred. And some never took part with games, like the KKK. See, in Mobile, we knew every KKK. I know them now. [Laughter] We never had that problem. And I guess you know—have you noticed my—? You know what that is?

B: What is that?

W: That's the yellow top. If you go back to Mobile in the 1880s, all European women died in Mobile, and up to the 1880s. But in 1859, when those last Africans were brought into America illegally, you had a death, I believe it was every hour, almost, in Mobile. And out of that, those Africans that had been brought in, in 1859, taught the persons here, the Negroes, how to make tea from the yellow top. And out of the yellow top, they were able to control. But here is the thing that gets me: all of the European women, especially with families, died. And here were the Negroes and the former slaves, and the former Negroes who owned slaves, taking yellow top tea and didn't die. Now if you want something definite on this, go down to Virginia Street and see Dr. A.F Owens, who was the Negro preacher who tucked his tail, as we said, and walked out of the Bienville Square. And from that day until I was grown, we were not allowed to sit in the square. But now, when Dr. Owens got up; see, Mr. LeFlore was a young man then. A.N. Johnson and that bunch were on the scene. But after that happened, Dr. Owens lost his pull, and nobody would listen to him anymore, so to speak. Because they said he shouldn't have gotten up and walked out of the square. But he did. Now if you go down there and look on his tombstone, it's given, and it says at the bottom that it was given by *all* of the citizens of Mobile. Actually, this was the way of saying the white citizenry buried him. Now, from that time on, see—and this is the area I think you're looking for—Mr. LeFlore caught the glow from that, almost by himself. See, there was no leadership among us in Mobile. We're almost in that particular era again, because we've done what Mr. LeFlore said. If you note some of the things that after his era, we took—and I mean "we," along with Mr. LeFlore, and his direction—we groomed men like our late Senator Figures. We put him in the same seat. We didn't play around. We put him in Mr. LeFlore's place. How do you think Buskey and those boys got there? That's the seat that he died out of. Now, we were thinking that we were putting men there who were going to have the same type of push, quietness, and the dream for American living as Mr. LeFlore had. Now, through some way—and I wouldn't want anyone to think this is a matter of criticism—but I wrapped that up, because I've heard Mr. LeFlore sit and talk to those men. Not in a serious way; sometimes he would be on something real serious, then he would get up and just mention something that was kind of funny, and go on. But with our time, now, and this—see, what you're doing, if you go back to the beginning—at the end of the [19]20s and through the [19]30s, you'll find piles and piles of material. But no one is bringing it forward. Look, even for what I've said here: I found the *CSS Alabama* over there, at Mr. LeFlore's direction. I've done everything on the *Clotilda* and that sign down there—I hope you put it on this—that sign that Mr. LeFlore and I went

to a number of times, that said “the last slave ship.” The spelling is wrong! Many theses, dissertations, and books are written on it. It’s totally wrong. But Mr. LeFlore was the person that told me when we had—see, right where we are now, two blocks from here, I had the privilege of being with Cleaver, Rap Brown, and Carmichael. I’ve seen Mr. LeFlore in their midst. He wanted to know, what was their feeling? Why do you want something destroyed? This was his feeling. “We America, we can build it. Why destroy it?” And that was strange. Then, what you were asking about the young white man that did the bombing; see, then I’ve heard men say, and I’d like to say this as piously as I can: I heard those contemporaries, with that young white man who used to come—one or two would come and sit in the back of the meeting on Sunday. We had meetings every Sunday evening. And they would say things like, they would ‘see blood knee-deep before they would allow to see a Negro with a white wife or girlfriend in Mobile.’ Now I’m wondering, here’s what I wonder: today, since Mr. LeFlore had open contact with everybody—but wasn’t this strange? Out of all of Mobile, other than Mr. Langan and a few of the police, and one of the two of the other, like Mr. Strickland, and one or two of those men who for some reason came? We didn’t have a following. Ms. **DePonti** came a little, she’s Miss **Tribett** now. I guess you’ve seen her name; she’s the one adopted the Afro-American girl. But out of this it was strange that we never got a calling. See, even today, if I were going to run for an office, I’d come to you first. And if you didn’t vote for me, I would—I don’t like anything. I’m like Mr. LeFlore, now; I don’t like nothing separate but equal. I think we ought to do it together. And out of this, I look at the—with me, and a lot of people say, “Well, how were you the first person in the South to get into welding?” It was Mr. LeFlore who said, “Go and get in these new trades and crafts.”

B: What was he like to work with? What was he like?

[Break in recording]

W: —she’s not here; they never invite me to anything. This is strange! Now, the only thing that gives me a lift, is this exactly what they did to John L. LeFlore. Mr. LeFlore made his contact with the white community through those men in office who—that was a totally hidden agenda. And it’s amazing. Of course, Mobile hasn’t changed much today.

B: Okay, what—tell us about the relationship with Dr. King. There’s been some thought that, it’s been told that Dr. King was shut out of Mobile, or he wasn’t invited. Can you just set the record straight? What was Mr. LeFlore’s relationship with Dr.

King? What did Dr. King think of Mr. LeFlore, and what kind of relationship did they have?

W: Okay. Dr. King was brought here three times during that period. Dr. King made his first speech immediately after he was stabbed. Do you remember? Or recall? Or, do you read? He was stabbed by an Afro-American woman. And immediately after that, we invited him here. My dad, Reverend Edward Williams—who was more like the financier of most of these folk; Vivian Malone and the rest of these folk? Always wanted—and I'm speaking of my dad. My dad said, "Don't invite the little King; invite his daddy. He doesn't need a loudspeaker." Well you see, we had—[Laughter]—we were standing in the crowd then. Now right across, if you don't remember seeing it, the ILA building is one or two blocks over. No, no; right here. This is it. Now, that's where we brought Dr. King. There was never any feeling of division with Dr. King. See, at that time, you had Shuttleworth, Abernathy, and King. Now, I don't hear people call those other names. Dr. King came in third in Montgomery with Shuttlesworth and Abernathy. And of course, after that, J. Echols Lowery joined the group, but J. Echols was right here with us. He worked—. Now, that was one of the reasons why, now, we never had meetings at Stone Street. Most of the other meetings we had [inaudible 1:02:41] were at Adams Street Holiness. And that was because, even with us, we wanted to look at it like Non-Partisan. See what I'm saying? If you had come here, you would've been dealing with a partisan group. And this is what I call—and nobody's discussed this, now. If you discuss it, you kill it. You follow me? So out of that, this was neutral ground.

B: Tell us about this place, this very church right here; tell us about the meetings. Give us a picture of these meetings. I understand these are almost the original chairs, or something like that? Can you tell us what happened here at this, at this very—at State Street Church? What happened here? Like a meeting? What would happen in a meeting like that? Paint us a picture of what happened here.

W: You mean when Paul Robeson was here?

B: I'm not sure who was here, but tell us about what John LeFlore did here, what—how the meeting, the League, met here, whatever. Can you give us a picture of that, or—?

W: I'm trying to get the glow of—what situation do you have in view?

B: Okay.

W: In other words, I'm trying to focus in—

B: Okay. Sure. And was there—was there a League meeting here in this basement? That's why I was told. Is that true?

W: That this was at the point of the meetings when some people misunderstood. And after that, you didn't have any other meetings. See what I'm saying? This is where they would shift it. And the reason for that, you had three different groups: you had the Monday night meetings; you had the NAACP meetings; and then, you had one or two other factional groups; and then after that, we set up the NOW organization. But out of the meeting here, the—if it looked like any type of hindrance against him, said him being thrown out, that wasn't true. I don't know of any place where Mr. LeFlore was ousted. Because whenever he felt that, we found another place.

B: What do you do—now, he worked with Father Foley, is that right? How did he work with Father Foley, or what was Father Foley doing? How'd he work with him?

W: Whenever Father Foley needed any information on the feeling of Mobile. And that was what he was doing: trying to steer through without bloodshed, as we say. And he was—good relationship. Anytime he wanted him, we went. I went along with him. What was the fellow's name that killed President Kennedy? I went with Mr. LeFlore; Father Foley invited him out while he was there. But out of that we—he was never hostile in any way or that. And when he was told that, "Well, the meetings here, we have something else. Just find another place." Actually, when the NAACP was ousted, then we moved in Dr. Franklin's building.

B: Now, what was your position with the League of—with the Non-Partisan Voters League? What your position, your title?

W: From the beginning, I was just a member. But at the end of—at the time that Dr. King came, I was chairman of the board.

B: Chairman of the board.

W: Chairman of the board.

B: What'd Dr. King think of Mr. LeFlore? Did he ever say anything about—do you remember Dr. King talking about Mr. LeFlore, or—?

W: I never—in fact, Dr. King was brought here three times, if no one has said it to you. And the first time, he never left the airport. The second time was when, supposedly, a group of Negro preachers stated that he wasn't needed here. And that's probably the one you are thinking of. Now, after the attempt on his life, we invited him to the ILA, and he had the biggest crowd here ever. Now if you are fortunate enough to get one of those programs, you will see that Dr. Gilliard was one of the persons on that program, and all of the ministers from the various groups. At that meeting, my dad told Dr. King, "Don't go to Tennessee, now. I see something bad." And he went. But this is the only place in all of his speeches, and I never hear—he spoke here of the three loves: eros, philia, and pythagorias. And when he got down to his third, to the pythagorias love, where the man would lay down his life for his brother, he got nervous. And I called for the first policeman here, Jackson to circle him; he never finished his speech. And after he left here, his next was going to Tennessee. But so far as any animosity? See, Mr. LeFlore—and I think I can say this with full conviction: Mr. LeFlore never intended to go universal. He had all of his hopes set on a local Mobile. And that's why you never saw him in Birmingham, or New York, or any other place. It wasn't that he wasn't invited, now. He was invited there, but his idea was Mobile.

B: What was his secret? He accomplished a lot for Mobile in the Civil Rights Movement, and he accomplished a lot through the system. What was his secret? What was the secret of his leadership? What was the secret of him being able to convince people that—what was it?

W: I don't think they were convinced. I don't think they were convinced.

B: How did he accomplish so much? What was his secret for that?

W: Those situations that were needed then. See, the government was just changing. Maybe you can't envision that; in the [19]20s, when President Wilson came, all jobs and all—intermingling was clinched. After he spoke, the Depression was on, and then through that, your biggest jobs, see, were the postmaster; post jobs. Most of my teachers quit teaching to become letter carriers. [Laughter] But out of that, when we got to the point of then, the "Good War," as folks said. World War II came. And here's where we had to either get some type of togetherness or lose. Now, those people that needed help—and I think I can point this out without any feelings toward either side—Mr. Langan is there now. Mr. Langan needed an ally in the community. Because at this time, we were fighting; like the Boswell Amendment. You missed all of the good things. Here I'm paying poll tax! And you may insert this: I want my money back. That was illegal. I want my poll tax back. And all of the

good—and I'mma say it like Mr. L[eFlore]: all of the good Negroes and the good whites. I think somewhere, somebody ought to be strong enough to say, "Let's appropriate this tax, because it was totally wrong." And this is the way Mr. LeFlore would bring things. Now, when Mr. Langan needed the age of the Dixiecrat vote—and of course, you know, the Republican vote was real slow, here—then here's where that little bit to tilt, and put those men in office. Now, after one of the two were placed in office, then this is where he had a little contact. Take with Wallace, now: Wallace needed the Negro vote to beat Patterson. The name that in Mobile was John LeFlore. This is how, this is my point of saying how we got Carver School; no other schools were placed here. In fact, we four ran all education in Mobile in that way. But every place that you would find, any person that got in trouble and needed the support of the community; they didn't come to the minister. They didn't come to the churches. They came to the Non-Partisan Voters League. All politicians made it to the League. Now, for one reason—see, the NAACP in the [19]20s were real strong. And Mr. LeFlore had stayed with the NAACP all the way through. In fact, when it was outlawed, he was the head of it. But when it was reinstated—and that was after or right during the end of Patterson's time—. But see, we had to fight that over the years. Was when those men would come that needed votes during that period, then they'd come to the Non-Partisan Voters League.

B: How effective were those pink sheets?

W: How effectiv—

B: Mmhm, how effective were they? The pink sheets—tell us about the pink sheets?

W: The pink ballot was carried into every booth, and that was the vote. This is what I'm saying. Those people—[claps]—needed Mr. LeFlore. And this was the avenue to go into those offices.

B: Did he ever meet Cudjo Lewis, did Mr. LeFlore ever meet him?

W: Did Mr. LeFlore ever?

B: Mmhm.

W: There was a program in 1934, at Stone Street. There were—and right now, I don't have those names. There were three Jewish persons in that. And they made their

contact through Mr. LeFlore for him to be at that meeting. This was at Stone Street, where it is now.

B: So, he got to meet Mr. Lewis?

W: He met—yeah. See, Cudjo Lewis didn't die until 1934.

B: And what did they think of each other?

W: Well, with old Cudjo, now, you didn't have much expressions on likes or dislikes. You just said and listened, and reminisced about something. And at the end of that, you know what? He always wanted to go back home. Now, that's where I came in. I built his monument out there. Have you seen it?

B: Mmhm.

W: And that was why building, as a little youngster growing up, he made me promise him that I'd get him back to Africa. And that's how—[Laughter][claps]—that's how he got back. Now, I didn't get him; he died in [19]34. But when the announcements of the dedication of the monument, then we invited the ambassador from Ghana. And in that way, we sent his spirit back.

B: Do you think that Mr. LeFlore was too accommodating to the white community? He wasn't militant enough? What's your feeling on that?

W: If it were not for Mr. LeFlore, when you built Spanish Plaza—and I'm sure you've been to it—his name is the only name on it. In other words, if you go and look in the Spanish Plaza, you will find only John LeFlore's name from the Negro community. Now, I think there were two ties. See, for men who lived in the area with A.N. Johnson, Newsome; those were men who really had vision. Banks. We didn't have—and of course, I guess you know now, through his influence, was why we got the first low rent housing in the total United States. I don't hear anybody talk about that. Orange Grove Project is the first project was built for poor people living on the dump; that was the city dump. And that's the first appropriation for money for your housing projects. Now, the accommodation, you see, I don't think it was like this. You know? I haven't heard you use the word "Uncle Tom." That's out. There was no Tomming with him. When he would go places, he had the feeling then that it was right for him to walk into Wintzell if he wanted a sandwich. It was right for him to use the bath facilities wherever he was. And that was the feeling all the way through. Most people wouldn't realize now, but you see—if you go back

to the eighth census of 1860 and see the free men of color in Mobile, then you would understand that in Mobile now, with all of the *old* families, you will find—here, Fisher’s Alley. That means a German man with an African family from an Afro-American woman. Maybe people don’t understand that. If it’s anything on Chestang, then that would be French. Where I’ve gone to the villa there, out from Paris. Those men left their children, and see, those children from those families and that’s just a few that I named. And if you in this area, you will find the Fisher Tract. You’ll find the other tracts that were named from those people. But the strange thing is, is for some reason—maybe it’s an impact the same way you’re thinking about Mr. LeFlore. Like the Toulmins. See, their mother was—the first mother was a Juzang. Those are Afro-American people. And I, as it is now—and maybe in the next 10 years, we’ll be able to do that; then Mobile will sprout out. See right now, there’s a restriction on Africatown. Isn’t it strange? We have, and you’ve spoken of it out there: we have the only monument of an African on all of the highways in the international trail. What do you see on it? What’s in Mobile now that’s universal? And I’m saying we have the last ship. The president is empowered by Congress to see that if reparation or whatever is needed there, to do it. But we can’t get them.

B: Tell us—tell us real quick as we wrap up here: what was John LeFlore like as a man? What was he like, tell us what his personality was.

W: Just a human being. Mr. John LeFlore was a human being with the magnitude of a personality that, “You don’t play with me.” See what I’m saying? He wasn’t like a lawgiver, forever saying, “You better do this.” It was—. [Laughter] Do you see what finger I’m using? You use your index finger. [Laughter] He used his center finger, middle finger. And most people, I guess, don’t know it. But the strange thing was, is that he dealt strictly in the law. And whatever the law said, that’s what he held to. I think, my first of noticing was from Mr. LeFlore and my dad was that poll tax were not legal. And we laid on that until it was wiped out.

B: Real quick, you remember anything about the Birdie Mae Davis case? How Birdie Mae Davis was chosen, or Vivian Malone? Do you remember those cases? How they—what went on behind the scenes, and those, how they were, Vivian was picked, or Birdie Mae Davis was picked. Do you remember anything about that?

W: How they were picked?

B: Uh-huh.

W: They came into the office and told us where they wanted to go. Just like you and I are talking? Many did. [Laughter] My dad paid for Vivian, the first two semesters. Reverend Edward Williams paid for that.

B: Now was John LeFlore there?

W: John LeFlore, Rev. Edward Williams, Mr. Bolden; and I'm naming—this was like a pillar. See, there were five men circling him. He couldn't announce that he was taking a part on this as long as he was in the Postal Service, government—

B: Was he was he there at the stand at the schoolhouse door? Was Mr. LeFlore there?

W: When?

B: When Vivian Malone went to the schoolhouse door, and George Wallace was there. Was John LeFlore there at that scene?

W: At that meeting?

B: Uh-huh.

W: No, no. No, no. I was the one sent to make the speech when Vivian—the first speech was made at the University of Alabama. I made the first speech for Vivian. And that was concluded in the meetings, because my dad had paid for it. Her Uncle Joe Malone was one of the operators, crane operators, at Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company. And we stayed on that case. [Laughter] Sometime the crane didn't have to move for an hour. So, they caught him asleep; which was normal, what everybody did. But they wanted to fire him. And we stayed on that case for a long time.

J: So, you went to Alabama with Ms. Malone? For the stand in the schoolhouse door?

W: See, by my training, the first welders to ever come through. Then I was in all of the shipyards, but I was in Alabama most. Well, it was the leading—and see, during that time, Bender was just a little corner business. But as the war progressed, then we built more, and of course out of that particular time I was at A&M teaching welding there. And this is where a lot of those men were sent to Newport News and Hampton Roads, and we built the *USS Alabama*. And of course, from A&M, I was drafted into the Service, and they put me in charge of the same thing there. I

was sent back to Hampton Road. [Laughter] From there, back to Georgia; from there to England, where we started welding; from there to France; and from France to Germany, and all the way through.

B: Is there anything—just to wrap up—is there anything else that I need to ask about John LeFlore that would help us to know him better? Anything that I haven't asked that would—a story about him, or anything that that would be important for us to remember about John LeFlore, what he?

W: Well, the thing that always gets me was that we have to remember, now: he wasn't popular with neither side. He was needed by the whites who were seeking office. And when he took their image and schedule, and looked at their life, I heard him use on a number of occasions, "the lesser of the evils." We used to use that a lot. And this is what I think he did. And of course, out of that, he was able to be respected from them, because it was not in the sense of an Uncle Tom, it was not in the sense of someone being used. It was in the sense of what will be the best for us during these four years or when this is over. And I'd like point out what was done because when it was stated and given that he had—and I'm speaking of Mr. LeFlore—when he had accepted from the governor, Wallace, to build Carver State, a lot of our people condemned that. Because they didn't want another school built that would become a Negro school. But they forgot one thing, and he would say it all the time: "Now, I've gotten you ready for this job, and I want a job done. I want to see trades equate the same height and distance that the rest of our educations are done." There shouldn't be any difference in trade education and your regular liberal education, other than you are doing different, separate things. Separate, but one is just as equal to the other. And this is the way I think his life was. Now, for those men that came and needed his assistance, I think they looked at him as John LeFlore. I don't believe, from his appearance and ways with them behind the wall—. And I remember, I was with one of the politicians once, and I remember what he said. [Laughter] He asked Mr. LeFlore, "Who is this with you?" He say, "Oh, that's Henry Williams. That's my protégé." Something to that effect. And the politician say, "Can we trust him?" And he said, "Oh, yes." And we go on; we never had that again. So, I guess what you're seeking is the fact that through this, when he walked out of those meetings? He was like any other citizen. But when he was—before the Non-Partisan Voter's League and group, the few people there who believed listened. And followed through. Now, that was the thing: the perseverance of his following through, was what caused both white and the Negro community then to listen to him. When it comes to acceptance, now if you notice, I have not used that. I don't think he was accepted on either side. And that goes all the way through. Communitywise and through. But when a man is needed like that, I think

he figures out a way. And in this case, he was fortunate enough to get enough people to see what he was saying. Not rallying and boom, boom, boom. But as a person who believed in true democracy, one America, equal rights for every man, regardless to race, color, or creed. And I think that is about it.

B: That's good. That's good.

[End of recording]

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