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Interviewer: Lareatha Clay
Interviewee: Trogie Shankle, Larutha Odom Clay
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Speaker Identification:
Lareatha Clay: LC
Trogie Shankle: TS
Larutha Odom Clay: LOC
David Shankle DS

TRANSCRIPT BEGIN

TS: We have to talk about her—

LC: It's still September the fourth—we're still having a conversation—this is the second tape—with Trogie Shankle and Larutha Odom Clay. Y'all were saying you didn't know where Emmaline Shankle was. And then y'all started talking about Tim. What did y'all say about Tim?

TS: Tim was Old Man Houston's oldest boy.

LOC: That's his daddy—Tim is his daddy. He said he was the first one and Pate was the baby. Pate was number twelve.

TS: You've got that straight now ain't you?

LOC: Yes. And you already told me Sophie Farr was his—

TS: Old Man Houston wasn't married to but one woman. But they said he had another child.

LC: He had another child?

LOC: You know him?

TS: Yes and no.

LC: What do you mean yes and no?

TS: I was told I had to be in the motion to know. Ain't that right Sister Ruth?

LOC: That's right.

TS: If you ain't in the motion you don't know do you?

LOC: I didn't know Dosia McCarter—I'm trying to think. Who is Sophie White? She died in Beaumont didn't she?

TS: Sophie White—now she's a different bunch. Now let's see Sophie White—

LOC: Wasn't that Dosia's sister? Sophie was your mama's sister?

TS: No. Now White—it used to be a White family right out past that liquor store going to Jasper over there on the right in there. In 1951 and 1952 lived out there. Where the big brick homes is now. And you heard them talk about Junior White don't you? He stayed out there in Huff Creek. He a boost and fool around and got his butt in the pen.

LC: Wait a minute. What Junior White are you talking about? You're not talking about Anderson White?

TS: No! I didn't say Anderson White did I?

LC: Well they called him Junior White.

TS: I know it. Well you know Junior White is there named after his daddy. But this other Junior—Anderson—that's where his name come from. Junior White named after his daddy.

LC: Now y'all were telling some stories when the tape ran out. I want y'all to get back to that.

LOC: I just can't see—Azalee stared off like she was going to help me with this.

TS: Where Azalee at?

LOC: I just can't see why I don't have your family. I don't have your family! I've gone through this book over and over and over. I'm finna get your family.

TS: Oh you are something.

LOC: Okay. So we got Trogie and Thelma. Thelma was a Sibley. And what did you want us to talk about Lareatha?

LC: Y'all had started telling some interesting stories. But go ahead and do the family tree—

LOC: Now tell me your children.

TS: My children—Elray—

LOC: That's the oldest one?

TS: Yes the oldest. And Azzie Lee. Trogie Jr. Let's see—Valree. David. Eugene. Harold. Now I'll come back to my girls—Mary Lee. Zerline is the baby of them all. How many girls I got there? I should have four girls there.

LOC: I got three—Elray, Azzie Lee and Mary Lee.

LC: And the last one—Zerline.

LOC: Now I got four.

TS: Yes that's it. I got eight children living. Two dead.

LOC: Who died?

TS: Valree and Roosevelt.

LOC: When did Valree die?

TS: It's been four or five years ago because Thelma sung the song he asked her to sing at the funeral.

LOC: And Roosevelt died before he did?

TS: Yes. Roosevelt died in—oh God let's see—he'd be about right at seventy years old.

LOC: One of your sons live in Austin?

TS: No.

LC: There was a Shankle guy in Austin that just got a big promotion. They had it in the paper. I wish I had brought it.

TS: Who?

LC: A guy named Shankle that grew up in Austin—lived in Austin his whole life and just got appointed to a high position in the Texas government. And were trying to figure out who he was. Do you know any Shankles that lived in Austin?

TS: That's what I was trying to find out! There's so many different things—you understand? That's David there.

[David walks in the room and speaks with Larutha]

LOC: How far behind Azzie Lee are you?

TS: Azzie Lee about seventy ain't she? Seventy-one I think.

[David speaks in the background, audio faint]

LOC: We're trying to figure out who is living in Austin named Shankle.

DS: Oh! I met that guy there up in Dallas.

TS: That's what I was telling them.

DS: I forget his name too. He gave me his phone number in Austin and Dallas. I met him at the Martin Luther King civic center there on Martin Luther King. But I don't know where his number is or nothing.

LC: He just got an appointment—I can't remember what it was. He's the head of some government agency—

DS: He's one of the [inaudible] boys.

LC: [Laughter] I don't know who he is but he's a Shankle though.

DS: I haven't read about it in the paper and haven't seen it on the news.

TS: You can remember Charlie can't you? Charlie Shankle. Aunt Gertrude's boy.

DS: Oh yeah!

TS: They buried him this week.

DS: Now Charlie lived in Beaumont didn't he?

TS: He was in New York.

DS: Oh he moved to New York?

TS: No. When he went in the Army he just stayed in there. He stayed in the Army for a career.

DS: Tressie is still in Beaumont—

LOC: No Tressie is in Cincinnati. And Pricilla is still in Beaumont. Didn't Hap die?

DS: Yeah Hap died. And Salima—she's in Kansas City.

LOC: Okay. I forgot Salima!

DS: She's a Marshall.

LOC: She's a Marshall yes.

LOC: When I was teaching at Liberty I taught Hap and Charlie. So they're older than you.

DS: Yes they are.

LOC: Were you along with J.M. Powell?

DS: No—

TS: [Crosstalk] J.M. Powell—Old Larry—

LOC: J.M. been telling me he was too little to come to me!

DS: I don't know what he's talking about! Leevie(??) did you remember Leevie(??)? Now you might be talking about Wardie(??). Edward and I—we were classmates. That's the baby boy—Edward.

LOC: Do you have a family?

DS: No ma'am. Not now. I've been married though. I have kids.

LOC: They in this area?

DS: No I don't have any kids in the area.

LOC: Okay. There's a Shankle lady that comes through Beaumont and Uncle Tom's daughter meets her at her church. And she thinks that she was married to a Shankle. But she's no longer married to him now.

DS: Now this person that I met—[inaudible] Tom Shankle he knew all of them you know. I was in there and he approached me because his back was sitting over here and I went in and I came back out and he said he saw the Shankle face—

LOC: You're kidding!

DS: He started talking to me. He was living partially in Austin and other times in Dallas.

TS: Well listen David—would that be one of Percy's grandchildren?

DS: Uncle Percy? No this was an old man Daddy! This was an old guy.

TS: Oh okay.

LS: Yeah it's a younger guy in Austin that just got appointed to one of the government agencies. They had a picture of him in the paper but I can't remember his name.

TS: That's the reason why I was saying what I did. You know Chuffy(??)?

DS: Yeah [inaudible] they got a boy.

TS: And he promised me the other year he would come into the union but he never did it.

DS: Yeah those kids are up there in—

LOC: O'Neal is one of your boys?

TS: No I'm talking about Percy's boy.

LOC: This lady was married to somebody named O'Neal!

DS: Okay! Well this is one of his kids. O'Neal Shankle. Uncle Percy's son. You know Uncle Percy had three daughters and a son. This was his son.

TS: That's right. Didn't have but one boy.

DS: Clovis! That's where he was when he died—Clovis, New Mexico. That's where the kids are. They let Baytown and they went there. That's where he and Chuffy(?) they separated and divorced there. Because O'Neal he retired out of the Air Force. He came back to Baytown and married again.

LOC: Yes because this girl kept telling me about O'Neal and I was talking about Cousin Donny's O'Neal.

DS: No! See if O'Neal was living he wouldn't be but about sixty-eight years old.

TS: That's right. He wouldn't be seventy!

DS: No he wouldn't. Because he younger than Trogie Jr. and Trogie Jr. is sixty—

LOC: Do you know this lady that was married to O'Neal?

DS: Her name was Chuffy(?) and she's in Clovis, New Mexico. But she came from Baytown. Earnestine may know! Earnestine and Pauline they in Baytown they know.

LOC: Who is that—who is Earnestine?

DS: That's Uncle Percy's oldest daughter. That's Daddy's oldest niece by Uncle Percy. She might be under Smith or something like that but she's a Shankle. If you mention Shankle to anybody they would know who you're talking about. Down in Baytown. Daddy you ought to know Earnestine! The one—when you all go and cut that timber up there—you all know Earnestine's name.

TS: I can get Earnestine to them.

DS: And then she can call and get all that information.

LOC: I just wanted to know who the lady was who said she was married to O'Neal Shankle. Because I didn't believe her. I didn't meet her. But Florence met her. You all—the Shankles just name the children the same over and over! He told me how many Georges! [Laughter]

DS: Well it was about three O'Neal Shankles that I knew!

TS: Well you see here's the thing about it—Old Man George Shankle had a O'Neal down there at Jamestown.

LOC: Only one I knew was Cousin Donny's O'Neal.

DS: Well you know the O'Neal there down in Beaumont died.

LOC: That's what I'm saying—that was Uncle Donny's boy.

TS: Uncle Donny's O'Neal.

LC: That's Winniella(??)'s granddaddy.

LOC: Yes. And his daughter said when her daddy died she couldn't get in touch with anybody. Because she didn't know anybody. And so she wants to put out a Shankle directory.

DS: Yes she did! Those kids know us. Those kids used to come over here all the time.

TS: Sure did.

LOC: But she didn't know how to get in touch with y'all!

TS: Oh. Well that may've been.

LOC: So she wants us to put out a Shankle directory. But you know I wouldn't want everybody kin to Shankle to call me! [Laughter] Because just like this lady was married to this O'Neal she act like she's trying to put the Shankles down. And I told Florence, I tell you what—tell her that if that's the only information she got—I thought she was separated from O'Neal. I didn't know he was dead.

DS: He dead. Oh yeah.

LOC: Yes. And I was trying to tell Florence that she separated from him then she must have some—

TS: They buried O'Neal over there in Shankleville.

DS: How did you meet this lady? Where was she?

LOC: I haven't met her. My cousin Reesa when she comes through Beaumont. She comes through Beaumont and she goes to that church where Florence goes. And every time she comes she wants to talk to Florence. And I said, Well Florence you don't know anything about it! You know Uncle Tom and them never did come back up here. I'm talking about Uncle Tom Shankle that married my Daddy's sister Janet. She never did come back up here so she doesn't know anything about the Shankles.

TS: Well he come up here one or two times.

LOC: He comes up there to the graveyard and turn around and go right back.

TS: I seen him at Patron and Matron Council two or three times.

LC: At what?

TS: Patron and Matron Council.

LC: What's that?

TS: That's for you to find out! [Laughs]

LOC: That's a Masonic function. They call the men the Patrons and the women the Matrons. And they have a turn out—usually on Palm Sunday.

LC: Oh okay. But it's not like the Masonic—

LOC: It is a Masonic. It's a part of it.

TS: It is a Masonic.

LC: Are you a Mason? [Pause] Why are you looking at me like that! [Laughter] You're not supposed to tell?

TS: You ain't supposed to ask me a question like that! [Laughter]

LC: Oh okay!

LOC: Well I joined the Eastern Star because they had a secret. And Aunt Sue would come over and tell me sister, You better do what I tell you! Because you know I'll use that secret word on you! And I wanted to know what the secret was. [Laughter] I got into the Eastern Stars and I got in there and found out it wasn't any secret!

TS: Wasn't nothing to it!

LOC: They couldn't make anybody do anything. Un Uh. I thought they must've had some kind of magic wand or something!

LC: You're not supposed to ask somebody if they're a Mason?

LOC: I guess not.

TS: She knows better than that.

LOC: Well we're going to find out who this Shankle is that was promoted in Austin. And see if he came from Percy Shankle. Okay review with me who Percy's wife was.

TS: I know Percy got some children. Grandchildren. Who?

LOC: Who was Percy's wife? Somebody kin to the Hawthorne's right?

TS: My brother Percy?

LOC: Yes.

TS: Now his first wife was Toogin(?) Morris' daughter.

LOC: You remember her name?

TS: Yes. Doris.

DS: She should know J.C. Morris. That's Doris' brother.

TS: Yes that's her brother. James. And you know Aunt May Birch was Toogin(?)'s mama. You know lived right there below where Canalmay(?) and them used to live. That was Toogin(?)'s mama. Girl I don't know if you know it or not but you scratching in a big old nest today! You hear me?

LOC: I remember May Birch had Janet. I remember Janet was you know—evil minded.

TS: You know Uncle Pate got a kid by Mary. Mary Spikes. Old Man Dick Spikes daughter.

LOC: And Cousin Pate had a child by her.

TS: Yes. She come over here once. Twice. Last I heard they was down there by Ginny(?).

LOC: By what?

TS: By Ginny(?), Louisiana. I don't know where they at. Don't be putting that down. I'm just telling about the last time I heard of them. People tell me a whole lot.

LOC: Yeah you listen a whole lot too! But I'm glad to find out so I can tell Florence who this lady is who's coming through there that's married to an O'Neal Shankle. Because I didn't know that.

TS: If you open up your head Cousin Odom you can learn a whole lot. But you know so many people don't know how to ask for nothing. They just go to telling you more than they ask.

LOC: Where's Zerline?

LC: Who's Zerline?

LOC: His baby daughter.

TS: My baby daughter. She there in Houston. It's time for her to quit teaching school—did you know that?

LOC: Oh Lord have mercy!

TS: Do you know how many years she been teaching? Thirty-six years!

LOC: It's time for her to quit. That's how many I had.

TS: Thirty-six years she been teaching school. She started in 1965.

LOC: And where's Trogie Jr.?

TS: I don't know. He was back there on his own awhile ago.

LOC: Okay.

LC: He lives here?

TS: Yeah he stays here with me. Since I've been sick he's been down here. Most times he comes down here in April. He been here ever since.

LOC: Where was he before?

TS: He would come from California back then. He been to California—he go to California same as I go to Jasper! Yeah he get in that Continental. He said though he ain't gon do what he did when he come here last time. He didn't stop and do nothing but gas. Get him a snack in his hand and keep going. He lay around about three days after he got here.

LOC: Bless his heart. Kathleen helps Leetha and so I see Kathleen a lot. She brought Leetha to Beaumont. You see she came up in this house.

LC: Kathleen—that's your granddaughter?

TS: Yes that's my granddaughter.

LOC: That's Elray's—that's the oldest daughter.

TS: Let's see—Kathleen. Borderine. Elmarine. Pam—

LC: Why are their names 'rine'?

TS: Now don't start me now because I wasn't there! [Laughter]

LOC: Elterine—is that what that is?

TS: Borderine is the oldest one. Katherine is the next.

LOC: Then Walterine.

TS: Walterine is the oldest.

LC: Walterine is the oldest one. Then Katherine. Then the last one is Elmarine.

TS: Then Pam. Pam and Oscar is O.C.'s children.

LOC: The one that leaves is Kathleen. Kathleen—is she the same a Katherine?

TS: Kathleen—she's married to a Kinbrew(?). But she's a Jonner(?) by birth. These Jonners(?) over here brother is they daddy. That's her daddy.

LOC: There's a Kinbrew man that died I remember [inaudible name] saying she went to the funeral.

LC: Let's get back to some of these stories y'all were telling.

TS: You better leave it alone then.

LOC: Now tell about the time you got lost.

TS: Well what you wanna know about it?

LC: How did you get lost?

TS: Well. I tell you how I got lost. The woods set afire and it was this time of year. And woods is hot whenever you go through where the woods burn. And the way I wanted to go—the way I needed to go—the fire was burning. And I made a detour. And when I made a detour I went too far. And when I knowed things get about night and I couldn't come back and get right before night. And I guess looked for me an old shade tree about sundown. Between sundown and darkness went down there and got me a place and laid down there.

LC: So what were you doing out there in the woods?

TS: Well I was going to hayfield.

LC: How long were you lost?

TS: Didn't nobody know where I was from about ten o'clock until ten or eleven the next day.

LC: Ten at night?

TS: No the next day.

LC: They didn't know where you were from ten o'clock at night—

TS: No! In the morning. That's one time I never got water until water looked good to me!

LOC: I'd say about twenty-five hours huh?

TS: A little better.

LOC: We had him all on the news.

LC: But if you took a detour—and you were afraid to go back before it got dark. That means you had been out there all day.

TS: Well I was.

LC: But nobody knew that you had gone?

TS: They didn't know where I was.

LC: You didn't tell anybody?

TS: Yeah I told them where I was going. They found my tractor but I wasn't on there. And that's what messed them up.

LOC: Why'd you get off the tractor?

TS: Well you know how people is. I got off in a hole and a tractor—if you don't be very careful you'll turn that joker over on you.

LOC: You'll turn the tractor over?

TS: Yes. And I didn't want to be out there and get piled under that tractor. And I stopped. And I went to walking.

LOC: That was thinking. Get down and started to walk.

TS: Oh yes.

LOC: You see Laretha—there's a detour. No matter if he did tell his wife where he was going you know he didn't know he was going to have to detour.

TS: And I moved—I got out—I was trying to come out on sixty-three. Instead of coming out there on sixty-three I come out back down here you know where that Jamestown curb is? At Pine Hill. It was a log roller coming in out in there. Where I come out in there. I come back out down this way all the way went over yonder way and if I had went out over yonder way I'd have come out on sixty-three. And when daylight come the next morning I heard a truck crank. And I walked a little further from here to the mailbox and I got back where I got out on my road at. And come on back.

LC: So you found the road—they didn't find you?

TS: No.

LOC: They still had to find him in that road.

TS: When they found me I done walked about six miles or more. And I was sitting out there on a thing with planes flying over me when they found me. Junior White was in the plane. Told them there he is.

LC: So did you go out and help when Cousin Pate got lost in the woods?

TS: Did I go where?

LC: Cousin Pate got lost in the woods in the 1970s right?

TS: I don't know when he got lost—what year it was.

LOC: She's asking did you help go look for him.

TS: Did I go? I stayed out there. Let's see. I've thought about that a many day. You know I walked on the ice two or three mornings going in the woods over mud holes before they froze at night.

LC: Trying to find Cousin Pate?

TS: Walking. Hunting him.

LOC: How far do you think you all passed over him? Over where he was. Over and over again.

TS: Ruth—you asked me a question I can't answer. Now I had two men riding horses. Said where they picked Uncle Pate up they had rode by there. And you know a horse don't ride by nothing it don't see. Some of them say he just wasn't there at the time.

LOC: That's a strange thing that happened in Shankleville.

TS: Some dirty work went on there! You hear me.

LC: What do you mean?

TS: What I said.

TRANSCRIPT END