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Speaker Identification:

Lareatha Clay: LC  
Larutha Odom Clay: LOC

**TRANSCRIPT BEGIN**

LC: Today is November the 25, 2006. This is Dallas, Texas. 1332 Belaire Drive and my name is Lareatha Clay: L-A-R-E-A-T-H-A. I am interviewing Larutha Odom Clay: L-A-R-U-T-H-A O-D-O-M C-L-A-Y. And we are going to be talking about the book that Larutha Clay put together over a span of several years. It includes a paper that she put together while she was in college at Prairie View and also talks about her, our discussions that she had with her parents, A. T. and Addie Odom. Okay, first question is--you have on here a statement that says, "Tom Holmes, who's grandson owns the Farrsville store, owned the entire track of land excluding Cedar Grove, and Burkeville--and Burkeville freed slave, Steve McBride's mother was Tom Holmes' half sister. First Steve, and then Jim and Winne Shankle, bargained with their former owners for land. Some was purchased at fifty cents per acre, other was attained by living on it for ten years and gaining possession." Can you tell me a little bit about why you wrote that particular passage?

LOC: There was a lot of discussion about who owned the land or who purchased the land: was it Steve McBride or was it Jim Shankle? Now the story had been told to us that they purchased it together. But Mama and Daddy were trying to identify Steve McBride by telling me who his mother was. His mother was related to this Holmes in Farrsville because that was a store there at that time. And we just didn't know whether Steve McBride dropped out of the sky or who his mother--but nobody knows who his father was. We don't know how he got that name, McBride. But his mother was related to this person who owns this store in Farrsville.

LC: So who was Tom Holmes?

LOC: He was the owner of the store.

LC: That's all you know about him?

LOC: Yeah, and that was his daughter who was Steve McBride's mother. And so far as--

LC: Was Tom Holmes Black?

LOC: No, he was white.

LC: Oh, okay.

LOC: And at this time, that store is no longer there. When we go, we're on 63, you know, after we pass a certain area, you know, where to go to Pleasant Hill and go to Indian Hill, then you come to Farrsville. That's the last little place before you get to the 1545 or whatever that is that goes into Shankleville.

LC: So what they're saying is that Tom Holmes, who's a white guy--

LOC: Yes.

LC: and he has a white daughter--

LOC: Right.

LC: And you're saying that his white daughter had a Black, had Steve McBride by a Black man?

LOC: We don't know. They don't know who his father was.

LC: But Steve McBride considered himself Black, right?

LOC: Right. Yes, he considered himself Black and married Jim and Winnie Shankle's daughter. And now somebody said it's some--you know, I don't know how those stories go--that some Indian was his biological father. I don't know how he looked, I didn't see him.

LC: So you--so you've never seen this picture?

LOC: No, I didn't see him. Yeah, I've seen that picture, I forgot I've seen that picture. But it looks like some of his descendants but, can you tell from that whether he's Black or white?

LC: No.

LOC: No? Well, you know he was instrumental in getting the college set up in Shankleville.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: So he had a lot of contacts evidently. I don't know about his education--somebody said he couldn't read and write. Mhmm.

LC: So, Steve McBride's mother is white and she keeps a kid that is not white?

LOC: Yeah. That--

LC: And she raised him?

LOC: That's unusual?

LC: Yeah, that's unusual.

LOC: Oh, well, I guess we didn't know that back in those days.

LC: Because nine times out of ten, it would be the Black woman would have a kid by a white man-

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LOC: I know.

LC: Not the white woman having a kid that's not white. That's the reason I'm--

LOC: And he would become a slave?

LC: I'm not sure.

LOC: I don't know either, but that was the story that had been handed down to Mama and Daddy. And after I had written that, then that's the explanation that they gave me as to how Steve McBride came into the picture.

LC: And "Mama and Daddy" are?

LOC: Addie Lewis Odom: L-E-W-I-S O-D-O-M and Daddy is Alvah, he goes by AT Odom: O-D-O-M.

LC: Okay. Okay, then we'll just continue in the book. Okay, and I'm--I'm noticing your notes here on page four. Did you know--okay, on page three, I'm sorry, you have Wash Rollins: what was his real name?

LOC: I understand now it was Washington, but that's all we knew. He--and his son died, and they buried him as Wash Rollins.

LC: Where was his son?

LOC: Up there in that little town between Jasper and Newton. Can't figure that little town now--that little, it was just a little stop in the road, you know. I can't think of that little town, but that's where he lived because somebody in Beaumont went to the funeral and brought the funeral program back for me.

LC: And how long ago was that?

LOC: Oh, about in '03.

LC: Oh, 2003?

LOC: Mhmm. 2003.

LC: That's Wash Rollins' son?

LOC: Yes. A grandson or something Wash Rollins. I don't know. He was the second or the third. But that's what I wanted to say about Mary McBride: McBride was her married name when she had married Steve. But there's been some discussion about whether she was a Rollins, or whether she was a Perkins. Because Winnie, when she was a slave, had two--one child that was a Rollins, one child that was Perkins. And because Mary McBride got to be a married lady--was named Mary McBride--well, nobody even remembered. But the latest material, they said she was Mary Rollins.

LC: What latest material are you talking about?

LOC: The latest discussions that we have, you know. Because Joan McBride, I guess, I guess she was the one who said she was a Rollins. I don't know if she can document it or not but I've heard it said that she was a Rollins now.

LC: Okay. What about Tobe Perkins--have you heard what his, what his real name is?

LOC: Didn't Pam say he had a different name and that's why we couldn't find him in--but I forgot what it was.

LC: Was it Wesley?

LOC: Weslynn?

LC: Wesley.

LOC: I don't remember. Wesley Perkins. I don't know because he got--he had a descendant that was named Wesley so maybe his name was Wesley Perkins?

LC: But all you knew was Tobe?

LOC: Yes. So we had that Tobe Perkins reunion in Beaumont and they knew--all they knew was Tobe. All his descendants knew was Tobe. Yeah.

LC: Okay.

LOC: But, but, but Pam Scourtin said that something else was on the tombstone. Because, you know, Cousin Pearl had said he was buried in Cedar Grove.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: But that Pam found his tombstone in Shankleville.

LC: Okay, I'm looking on page four, children of Mary and Steve McBride--you have "over the fence: Penny McBride, Aunt Lou midwife." What does that mean?

LOC: Okay. "Over the fence" is the terminology at that time we used in Shankleville to say that that was an extramarital affair that produced this child. That he was never married to Aunt Lou's mama--and who else did I have in there?

LC: Penny McBride is what you have.

LOC: Yeah, uh huh. And there was some more, too.

LC: Yeah: Emmerson, Christine, Uncle Eddie's first wife.

LOC: Okay, and they called them McMans. Christine--who else did I have?

LC: You had--

LOC: Jimmie? Jimmie.

LC: Emmerson, Susie Lewis, Molly Simmons, Charlie McBride, Savannah Wingate.

LOC: Okay, now all of those came from Charlie. All of those came from Charlie McBride. See?

LC: Who's Charlie? Well, how did Charlie McBride come to be?

LOC: He's right here.

LC: Well, mama say it.

LOC: Okay. Mary McBride was Mary Rollins--daughter of Jim and Winnie Shankle--

LC: Uh huh.

LOC: And she married Steve McBride.

LC: Uh huh.

LOC: And they had, they two were a married couple. Susie Lewis was born, and Molly Simmons, and Charlie McBride--that's Joan's grandfather.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: And Savannah Wingate, that's--

LC: Is that kin to Anthony Wingate?

LOC: Somewhere. I don't know exactly how.

LC: Okay.

LOC: And, and then there's Birdie Night and Alma Brown--all of those came from--

LC: Night. Is that kin to Monroe Night?

LOC: Yes. Right. Yes. I tried to number them: one, two, three, four. Well, okay. Mhmm, yes, mhmm. And then, now these are the ones what we call "over the fence"--Della and Lane McBride, Fred McBride--that's Opal's daddy, Liza Odom--that's Cousin, Aunt Lola's mother. She was married to Uncle Gippy. And there's a Miranda Jane and Martha--I didn't know them. But all of these were children that were born from a concubine or some, another--an extra wife that he had that--

LC: But you don't know the mothers' name on those?

LOC: Harriet. Harriet Williams--her name was Harriet Williams. And she was the mother of all of these children.

LC: Okay, name the children again that Harriet Williams--

LOC: Della--Della Williams, and Lane McBride--that's, that's Velma's daddy. Fred McBride--that's Opal's daddy. Liza Odom--she was married to Gippy Odom, who is my grandfather's brother. And this Miranda Jane. I don't, I don't remember that Martha. But that's Harriet Williams and Steve McBride had those children even though she was never married to him. And then these others--now, this Russell and Hollis and all of those, I don't know who their mother was. There was a Johnny Hadnot. I didn't, I didn't know all of that. But these that were born to Mary McBride and Steve McBride were Susie Lewis--that one's Cousin Emerson's mother.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: And Dana's grandmother.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: And Molly Simmons. I don't know if you know anybody. And Charlie McBride--that's the one that lived in Houston and was married to Aunt Florida. And Aunt Florida was Grandpa's sister.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: But she was married to Charlie McBride. And then Savannah Wingate and Harrison Simmons and I don't know any of these offsprings they had. But that's what I was trying to explain right there.

LC: Okay.

LOC: Okay.

LC: Okay. Well, I'm glad we're getting this on tape. [Laughter] Trudy and Dick Odom, Crecie Fowler and Joe Odom. And that's Lecrecia Fowler that we've talked about and Joseph Odom, which is Big Papa's grandfather, right?

LOC: Yeah. But I don't have those listed there.

LC: How come you don't have Joe Odom? That's the only children they had together, right? That you knew of? Crecie Fowler has some other children with Gibson Fowler--

LOC: I guess so. I guess so. I guess so. Well, the Joe Odom children were the ones that didn't anybody know about. I was thinking that. Okay. So then, that's the only one we know of that she, that they had. And they said Dick Odom was a preacher, right?

LC: No, he was a white guy.

LOC: Okay. And Fowler was a preacher.

LC: Uh?

LOC: That's what Leon said.

LC: No, Fowler and--Fowler helped form the Young Methodist Church.

LOC: Mmkay.

LC: Okay. So he, tell us something about these kids--the children of Jimmie Odom and Roxy Brooks.

LOC: Well see, Jimmie Odom was Joe Odom's son.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: And...

LC: Just personality, how they were?

LOC: Alvah was the oldest--that was my father.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: And Almada was second. And when their parents died, Alvah must've been fourteen and Almada like twelve, I guess. And so they became the parents of these other children. And Lou was--had a mental problem. She never did get, you know, grow to be an adult. She had, you know, a low mental capacity.

LC: Didn't she have a son?

LOC: Mhmm.

LC: What was his name?

LOC: Charlie. Charlie Odom.

LC: Okay.

LOC: And it was reputed that her first cousin fathered this child.

LC: What was her first cousin's name?

LOC: One of Lola's brothers. One of Lola Odom's brothers. I can't remember which one it was that fathered the child. And in the country, we thought that cousins producing a child was--you know, the child never was normal, you know, mentally.

LC: What was the child's name?

LOC: Charlie Odom.

LC: Okay.

LOC: He died in Fort Worth.

LC: Okay.

LOC: And the next one was Leondis Odom.

LC: That's Uncle Leon.

LOC: Mhmm. That's Uncle Leon. He lived in Lufkin. And then Lola--she married Mama's brother.

LC: He didn't end up in California--Leon?

LOC: Yeah, his children live up there close to Z now. That's who Z was with when she got sick this year.

LC: Okay.

LOC: Uh huh. And Leola--Lola was Woody's mama and Doretha's mama.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: And Jimmie and Jetty--they were twins. And Jimmie and Leon just wouldn't stay there and help Daddy with the farm. Daddy told them to go ply and they jumped the fence and left. And they never did come back to live with them in the house anymore. So when--

LC: How old were they when they left?

LOC: I don't know--right after their parents died. Daddy was fourteen, Aunt Jetty was twelve. I-- Almada was twelve. I guess Lou was ten and maybe they were nine and eight because well, Uncle Jimmie--well, I guess they didn't leave at the same time. Because Uncle Jimmie and Aunt Jetty

were three when their mama died. And so when Uncle, when Alvah married Addie Lewis, well then she became the mother of the household. And two weeks later, Almada, the second child who was the mother, married and then she established her own house with the Holmes.

LC: And so tell me about their personalities.

LOC: Well, my daddy was the sweetest daddy on earth, in the world, and he just was sweet and humble and did everything he could for everybody. He had the expression that “my name is Odom, that means, ‘I don’t owe them anything: I paid them everything I owed them.’ [Laughter] So that was his attitude toward it. And Almada was just a good homemaker--reared her children and, in spite of obstacles and--

LC: Obstacles?

LOC: Mhmm. Her husband didn’t have a steady, steady job all of the time that I knew him. And she had quite a few obstacles but her children turned out real well. And like I told you, Lou had this one child that was mentally retarded. And Leondis had two daughters and they are out there in California--and I didn’t know anything good to say about him until I met Cleo’s brother. Cleo and her brother, BJ, were reared in Lufkin. And he told me Leondis could fix anybody’s clock! That any--everybody around would take their clocks to him--no matter how old it was, he could make it work. And so, that’s the good thing I have to say about him. And Lola, she was just a sweetie pie, you know, she was--she just was my role model. We had these choirs that--where we learned how to shape notes and sing those shape notes, you know, to get the tune and I sat next to her all the time to try to sing like she did. And of course, you know Jetty.

LC: What about Jimmie?

LOC: Well see, I didn’t know too much about him because he left and didn’t come back! And he was--

LC: Where’d he go?

LOC: He went--I don’t know, he started off up there at Browndale. Their mother, see, Roxy Brooks--

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: Came from Browndale and that’s that little town out there right out of Jasper, before you get to Pine Neck. And those people out there just had a different culture altogether: they drank all the time, and just--you know--just had no morals.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: And evidently he’d gone up there to visit as a child and so, when he ran away from--you know--the family, that’s where he went. He went there and just started that drinking. And he was

a drunkard all of his life. And he moved on up to what they called East Mayfield--that's a little community out there from St. Augustine and we went to visit them one time and there were three girls and Daddy took his three girls and we visited them and the next thing we know about him, he had gone to--separated from his wife--and he had gone to St. Louis.

LC: What was his wife's name?

LOC: I can't remember that first wife's name.

LC: Is that the one the kids are by?

LOC: Yes.

LC: The daughters?

LOC: Uh huh.

LC: What are their names?

LOC: Doris, is my age. And that one that RSVP'd--Clay: what was her name? In Houston now--she RSVP'd for our fiftieth and didn't come. I can't think of her name now. But she'd come over to visit Aunt Jetty before that. And Estelle. Doris and Estelle and--

LC: I thought you said they lived in California next to Aunt Mary and Z?

LOC: No, that's Uncle Leon's girls.

LC: Oh, okay. I'm sorry.

LOC: That's Ardie B and Elnora.

LC: Okay.

LOC: They're good friends with Z now.

LC: Okay.

LOC: Ardie B and Elnora. But these, these--I don't know where they went after they left East Mayfield but they ended up in Houston. I guess they lived in Houston all of the time. Because that girl that came to visit Aunt Jetty, she came out to the reunion one time.

LC: Okay.

LOC: Mhmm. Mhmm. So that's her name. And that's Jimmie's girl. She had three girls and no boys. And so, Aunt Jetty got lost to him--she didn't never hear from him. When he got sick in St. Louis, I don't know how we found it out. But Lathea was a baby and we, and Clay's daddy died and we were on our way to Chicago and dropped Daddy off in St. Louis to visit his sick brother.

We got there, we found out Aunt Jetty was there and when we'd finished the funeral and came back through there, Uncle Jimmie had died.

LC: Oh.

LOC: And we went to the hospital to pick daddy up and they had gone and we had difficulty finding them. We had to call the Texas--the Fort Worth Herald to find him. And--

LC: Find Daddy?

LOC: Find Big Papa. Uh huh. And he stayed on up there for the funeral and then my brothers went up there and got him and brought him back. They went to the funeral and we came home. So, those are my, my daddy's brothers and sisters.

LC: Tell me about Aunt Jetty?

LOC: Oh, Aunt Jetty married and came to Beaumont. She said at first, they moved because she married Tom Shankle and she came to Beaumont and she said she lived in Port Neches first. There was a refinery in Port Neches and she lived there at first but she said that the refinery decided that they didn't want to hire any more Black people. And so, Uncle Tom came to Beaumont and started working at Beaumont homeworks. And he died and they said it was in '74 when he died and Aunt Jetty didn't die until 2000. January of 2000.

LC: She died in 2000?

LOC: Mhmm. She--

LC: I didn't realize it was that long.

LOC: That she's been dead that long?

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: Yeah, she died before--she's the only person that we had on our guestlist to invite to our fiftieth and she died before. Mhmm. January. I have to walk now.

LC: Okay.

LOC: I wasn't sure if..

LC: Let me make sure that this is--we're on the--okay. Children of Nancy and Norman Brooks. Who were Nancy and Norman Brooks?

LOC: Well, Nancy is the wife of Jimmie Odom. So, I don't know how they met or anything. But that's the one I just told you about that lived up there in Brownville. That's the Black community

in Brooklyn, Texas. And those were her sisters and brothers. Now those are the only ones I remember.

LC: Do you know any of these?

LOC: Mhmm. Emma and Charity and Sally. I don't know any Anna and Mary. I think I told you about that man--

LC: It was all girls?

LOC: Mhmm.

LC: Okay.

LOC: But see, when they was--Duffills, they were, I don't know. They were--I guess they were Duffills. No, they were Brooks! But there must've been one brother, I don't know. Somebody remembers somebody named Duffill. I don't know what that Duff--maybe Charity married a Duffill? Maybe she was a Brooks and Charity married a Duffill. But that's the house that we would go visit--Charity's.

LC: Charity was where--in San Antonio?

LOC: Oh, she was--yeah, that's not that lady in San Antonio, there's another one.

LC: Oh, okay.

LOC: There's another Charity and she's in San Antonio. But Charity was Daddy's sister. Daddy's mother's sister. And I don't remember Sally. I don't remember but it seems to me that one of these was married to...let's see...

LC: These?

LOC: One of these girls...

LC: Annie or Mary?

LOC: Annie or--one of those married...I don't remember now. I can't remember now. Isn't that something? Umm...somebody up in St. Augustine. Because he tried to date me and the girl was in my wedding--her sister was in my wedding because she was dating Lee! But they said that we were too close kin, because we didn't know. See, I can't think of what their name is, last name is. Something. Something something name. And you see, we grew up--we didn't know that they came from down there and their ancestor was our ancestor's sister. See, Roxy was our ancestor. We knew Charlie, and Sally, and Emma but we didn't know these two. But it seemed to me they had settled on up in the community past--

LC: So, do you think they had a different father or something or?

LOC: No, no they were just the younger ones.

LC: Oh, okay.

LOC: And see, and then we didn't know them.

LC: So how did you, what did you--tell me about these: Emma, Charity, and Sally.

LOC: All I know is they would come to visit us. See, Roxy was dead by the time I knew anything but they still would come to visit us and we'd go visit them. And it's just like I said, they were some wayward children: you know, drinking and would flirt with young girls. See, we were just afraid of them when we'd go up there. You're not coming inside?

LC: [Negating] mm-mm. You went to Browndale?

LOC: Yeah, we went to Browndale. We just, you just, it was just a different ball game and all. But Charity was the one that we liked real well. She had some children. Leetha used to keep up with them. I can't remember their names. But Aunt Jetty said that she never did know her mother's birthday or anything. I hear--I don't know, I guess because she died when she was three. That's it, isn't it?

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: She died when she was three and so she just didn't know her mother. But she remembered these--Emma and Charity. But I don't remember Aunt Jetty going up there with us because Aunt Jetty got married at a very young age and even though she lived in the same household, you know, she wasn't there when I came along. She was married and gone. She was barely even older than I am and Tom is older than she is--her oldest child.

LC: Okay, let's keep moving along. Okay, these are the descendants of--

LOC: Of Harley and Joe Odom. Okay. Jimmie was Alvah Odom's father. And Gippy--that was Lola Odom's father and I told you he was married to Harrod Williams' daughter, who's Steve McBride's daughter. And Elijah--that's Biggun's daddy. He got killed on a, on a train--on a train. These people who would work on the railroad track, they'd ride that little trolley car--they'd just ride it down on the train and something came along, I forgot what it was that ran them off the track or something and he got killed at a very young age. But he had a bunch of children, you know, I keep on telling you that was Biggun's sister and Biggun's, all of them are dead now. Alma--one of my favorites and so that's Elijah. And the next one's Leroy. And Leroy Odom lived over there in that Liberty community. He had a bunch of children--bunch of them. And his, his daughter was a teacher in Houston and she was--got accolades, you know, for being an outstanding teacher or principal or something. Now here we come to these girls. See, those were the boys: Jimmie, and Gippy, and Elijah, and Leroy. Now we come to four girls and their names were Nora, and Dora, and Ora, and Dosaia. Now, Nora was the one that you remember. Her name was Nora Jane, she got

married but she never did have any children. And she would come and live in our house and Mama and them would take care of her and then she'd go back home. Now Dora Samuels is Arlene's grandmother and she married and lived in that Biloxi area. I don't, I don't remember her. But Ora married a White and she lived in Jasper, I just can't remember her but she had a lot of children but I can't remember too much about them.

LC: Now which one lived in Shankleville that died and we went over to her house?

LOC: That's Nora. She lived in Wiergate. She lived in Wiergate.

LC: No, the one in Shankleville? We went over, she died.

LOC: The one that was Daddy's sister?

LC: And Big Mama went over--we went over to the house and Cousin Dora and she had a puzzle.

LOC: Oh, Nora. She was a Perkins. She was a descendent of the Perkins. She was an outside child of the Perkins.

LC: So, she was a totally different person?

LOC: Totally different person, yeah. That was Cousin Dora Allen.

LC: Okay.

LOC: But these, this is--this is Dora White that lived in Jasper, I can't remember any of her children.

LC: Okay.

LOC: And then Dosia Stevenson well she was married to Crocker Stevenson. I don't know why--he was such a, such a pillar in the community. I don't know why but he, after she died, at a young age, then he married Cousin Riley's sister.

LC: Riley Lewis?

LOC: Mhmm. Riley Lewis' sister. And then she ended up married to Reverend Trevilian. Reverend Trevilian. She ended up married to Reverend Trevilian. Riley Lewis introduced Reverend Trevilian to Dora and Ruby's mama, you know what I'm saying?

LC: So Reverend Trevilian was married to somebody before he was married to--

LOC: Mhmm. Mhmm.

LC: What happened to her?

LOC: She died.

LC: What'd she die of?

LOC: I don't know. I don't know. But her name was Dosia. Dosia Stevenson. She was married to Crocker Stevenson. Then she was married to Reverend Trevilian and Reverend Trevilian died and Reverend Trevilian married Cousin Riley's sister's sister. Cousin Riley's wife's sister. Cousin Riley's wife is named Indian is that what her name was?

LC: Indiana.

LOC: Indiana. Mhmm. And so that's what that family...Yeah, that's all of these Harriet Odom children. Harriet and Jimmie. Now, we've gone back--we left out Joe on that other page. Joe and Chrissy Powell--that's the only one that we know of, he's the only child that we know of.

LC: And he, and Joseph Odom is Harriet Odom's husband?

LOC: Right, uh huh. And they had all of these children.

LC: And these are their children?

LOC: Mhmm.

LC: Okay. Where's Joseph on here? Oh, okay. Alright, okay. Emmaline Lewis moved to Navasota-

LOC: And that's so strange to us, because I've asked questions because Virginia White's grandfather was named Cousin Simon. Cousin Simon Lewis--he was kin to grandpa some kind of way. And I was trying to figure out what she was related to him, how did she--you know? If she came off of that Shankle tree, it seemed to me she should have been there with the maiden name of Shankle.

LC: Mhmm.

LOC: And that Lewis must've been her married name. But no.

**TRANSCRIPT END**