

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Isadore E. Tansil Sr.

COLLECTION: 4700.0707

IDENTIFICATION: Long time Baton Rouge resident

INTERVIEWER: Rudolph Henry and Khary Carrell

SERIES: McKinley High School Oral History Project – African American Businesses

INTERVIEW DATE: July 8, 1996

FOCUS DATES: 1920s-1940s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1034, Side A

Born in Walls, Louisiana, December 7, 1917; father a presser, mother a seamstress; Tansil retired letter carrier, has lived in Baton Rouge for 75 years; during early 1930s, the average black family only had six dollars a week income; list of store in Baton Rouge where blacks could and couldn't afford to shop; use of barter system between blacks; neighborhood grocery stores; before 1930s, businesses in area were owned by whites; city limits for mail delivery; neighborhood businesses in 1930s; As a boy, Tansil sold newspapers, strawberries, watermelon, peanuts; made 1.5 cents for each paper sold; city limits in 1920s; schools for blacks in Baton Rouge in 1920s; local businesses tried to keep customers by giving lagniappe; decline of local businesses due to buying power of chain stores; Walgreen's offered highest paying jobs for black workers; "You may study budget and finance in school now, but God taught the blacks budget and finance by giving them small salaries and hardships"; stock market crash of 1929; economic recovering during World War Two; cigarette economy amongst soldiers; joining military allowed young blacks to save money; now businesses survive by undercutting each other; other neighborhood businesses; Leo Butler building; local man who was killed in war;

Tape 1034, Side B

Neighborhood businesses; recommendations for future interviewees

TAPES: 1 (T1034)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 51 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 17 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Index (2 pages)

RESTRICTIONS: None