

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Walter Lee

COLLECTION: 4700.2119

IDENTIFICATION: Baton Rouge resident, worked as an embalmer and film director

INTERVIEWER: LeBrian Patrick

SERIES: Baton Rouge's LGBTQ Community: Then and Now

INTERVIEW DATE: October 14, 2009

FOCUS DATES: 1960s - 2009

ABSTRACT:

Tape 3971

Introduction; Lee born June 21, 1943; he finished high school; participates in his community through his church, helping families in need; he is black; his career was an embalmer and also a film director; has lived in Baton Rouge off and on his whole life; has no children; his twin brother has children; he was one of fourteen siblings; was married for three and a half years when he was in his mid-twenties; had a gay partner for fifteen years; partner was killed by his own sister during an argument; it took him a long time to get over his death, he never looked for another partner because he didn't want to face the hurt; his recent trips to the hospital and medical care at home afterwards; he was taken advantage of at a young age; is sorry that he tried to change by marrying and breaking his wife's heart; he was sixteen when he met his long-term gay partner; he hid his orientation, didn't want people to know, feels that it is a sin; women were interested in him but he only dated the woman he married; if people accused him of being gay, he would get offended and probably fight them; loves cooking for and entertaining his family; his bank account was robbed and he has nothing now; used to go to a gay club in New Orleans; sees more gay people now than he did years ago, because people would hide it back then; in Baton Rouge, people gathered at Splash Nightclub; he used to go to Splash and George's Place; for fun, people would talk and drink; everyone got along; he sometimes had issues with men who thought they could "handle you any kind of way" and he had to walk away; remembers organizing in the gay community in other cities, not Baton Rouge; lived between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, took care of his sick mother in Baton Rouge until she passed away and he decided to continue living in her house on Convention Street; his mother never knew he was gay; his friend Calvin was influential in his life; people would never suspect that Calvin was gay; only recalls people fighting for gay rights in New Orleans and New York; gays now are younger and more flamboyant, he doesn't care for that, prefers normal people he can hold a conversation with; conclusion.

TAPES: 1 (T3971)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 17 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 20 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: None

RESTRICTIONS: None