

Michele Mitchell: It was paved probably in the mid '60s.

Agnes Chatman Landry: You remember it being a dirt street?

Michele Mitchell: Between the [indistinct 00:00:14].

Agnes Chatman Landry: Right side here.

Michele Mitchell: [indistinct 00:00:17]

Agnes Chatman Landry: [indistinct 00:00:18] right here was dirt.

Michele Mitchell: The only paved [indistinct 00:00:23] were White.

Doris: So the White area has been paved for a while?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Oh yeah. Oh yes, ma'am. Now, I don't remember Main Street being a dirt road, but they say it was. I don't remember. When I came here, it was paved, Main, St. Peter.

Michele Mitchell: But what was interesting about the education [indistinct 00:00:53]

Agnes Chatman Landry: Maybe Washington Street. I don't don't know.

Doris: The college system was integrated before your high schools. The college system was integrated before.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Pershing Street. Pershing, name was changed, it was Madison. That's where the Blue Light District was.

Doris: Oh, that was called Madison Street.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah, it was a mud street, dirt road, dirt.

Doris: Was the Blue Light District bad, was it bad there?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Wouldn't hardly pass there. We had to pass there to go to church, the light district.

Doris: So what'd you do to get around it? You just went around it?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Well, we always did go in a group. Let's see, a group of people go over together, didn't have many cars at that time.

Doris: But when you moved here, did White people seem different than they did back in Texas or about the same?

Agnes Chatman Landry: About the same.

Doris: About the same.

Agnes Chatman Landry: And I lived around White people, but no, over here was worse. I tell you, they wanted "yes, ma'am" and "no ma'am," wanted you to say "yes, ma'am" and "no, ma'am."

Doris: You told me about the voting story—

Agnes Chatman Landry: That's right.

Doris: — before I turned on the tape recorder, so I don't have it on tape. I'm have to ask you to tell me again.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Oh yeah, honey. He wanted me to say "yes, ma'am" and "no, ma'am." I said, "School I went to didn't teach me 'yes, ma'am' and 'no, ma'am.' Yes and no." Boy, he could've spit in my face, and I'd have spit right back, that's how— He was something else with me.

Doris: So this was in the '50s when you went to go vote, when you went to register?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah, I registered. That's right. See, he wanted me to tell him, "Yes, sir. No, sir." And I said, "Yes, no," and I couldn't bring my stuff to say "yes, ma'am" and "no, ma'am."

Doris: So you never did?

Agnes Chatman Landry: No, I didn't. Line long, people was registering. Now, our children won't say "yes, ma'am" and "no, ma'am" right now, the Black children, but the White will. Yes, ma'am. The White will, the White pickup, I guess they get by.

Doris: But when people want to do say "yes, ma'am" and "no, ma'am," did that cause you trouble, other trouble, than this?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Mm-mm.

Doris: No?

Agnes Chatman Landry: No. We was registering at the school. I don't know. It didn't because me no other

trouble, uh-uh, just that in there, I guess he felt like spiting in my face or slapped me. But I guess he said, "Let me let this fool get out of here." That's the thing about White people that I love. You stand up to them. You got to be able to stand up to them. They'll leave you alone.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I've had some real good White people, friends, treat you like you're a human being, because I work in a home taking care of old man, you see, nursing him. He was something else. He was something else, but not in a way of niggers or nothing like that, just was a— Had a mind of his own.

Agnes Chatman Landry: But he was a kind old man, Mr. Dewey. He was a kind old man. At night, my shift was from four to 12 in the afternoon, and boy, used to sit and talk and tell me a lot of different things. And I was listening to him, and told me, "You heard of Grand Marin?" That's where the Mulattoes at. He told me, "I got a place, I bet you you can't go." That's what he tell me. I couldn't go there unless he bring me.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I said, "I can't where that's at." I said, "Where in the world you talking about?" "It's between two railroads." That's all he could tell me. Couldn't tell me it was Grand Marin. But I found out after that, that's what he was talking about. "You too Black, you can't go over there." I said, "Oh," I said, "you got to bring me there." I said, "You going to have to bring me there."

Agnes Chatman Landry: I used to drive him around, bring him different places where he wanted to go on my shift. Nice to me as can be. Nothing for him to go get me a big old ham, and Lafayette, used to go shop and get them ham at Hermans and Lafayette cookies for my children, tipped me every night I brought him out to eat somewhere. "Come on. You want go?" "No, I don't want to go in there and eat." "You can come in there with me." I don't want to go in there. No, no."

Agnes Chatman Landry: I said, "I'll go back home and I'm going to give you my telephone number and you call me." And that's what he used to do. Call me, and I'd go back and pick him up. Honey, 10, 15, \$20 wasn't nothing for him to give me to buy my, because I didn't want to go in there with him to eat dinner over there.

Doris: Why not?

Agnes Chatman Landry: I didn't want to go in them places. Them old White girls there, time they see him coming, I know he must have tipped them good too. "Come on, Mr. Dewey, come on." He used to get out. I used to see that he get in the door. I had to see him getting in the door and I see to him get in the door, and I'd tell her, "When he get ready to call me, I'd pick him up." They used to treat me nice because it was Mr. Dewey.

Doris: How long did you work for him?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Oh, I worked a good while for him, and he lived there with his two daughters. They lived way down Main Street on your way to Olevia, and they got trees all around they house, them tall bushes. Girl, I was scared to go in there and come out at night. Didn't know what you're going to see.

Agnes Chatman Landry: At night, I put him to bed, get in the bed after he made his little round where he wanted to go, and "I'm hungry," he tell me. "What you want, Mr. Dewey?" "Oh, I want some milk and some bread and some dessert." Different things like that. One night I had pain in my shoulder. I said, "Mr. Dewey, I'm sicker than you and I don't want you to be popping me tonight. I'm sick." "All right, all right."

Agnes Chatman Landry: About 25 or 30 minutes, "I'm so hungry. Oh, I'm so hungry." But they had a elevator in the house because he couldn't climb them steps. I go get on the old elevator making all that noise, go in the kitchen, fix him something. It wasn't nothing hard to fix. Always, he had a lot of things in the house that you could fix up. Go fix that, now bring it back up on a tray, bring it.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I would tell him, "Now, you tell me everything you want, because I'm not going back down there." I was scared in that big old house, anyway. Put it there, eat it, and he might go to sleep 15 minutes and wake up again. But he was nice.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I tell you one thing, because when I was going to class to care for these old people, they tell you not to take money from them old people because they forget about it. Give you money and they forget about it. And they'll say, "You done stole." Boy, when he [indistinct 00:12:27], and he used to give me a lot, I tell you. I went and told his daughter, she said, "If he give it to you, take it. Say whatever he give you, I want you to have it." But they didn't want you putting your hand, taking it.

Doris: So when did you work for him? When was this?

Agnes Chatman Landry: I was working at the school when I was working for him.

Doris: At Livingston or?

Agnes Chatman Landry: I was working at Freshman High.

Doris: At Freshman High.

Agnes Chatman Landry: And I would wait for them. I'd go in the evening, and I was off at 11 or 12 o'clock. So I had time to sleep and go back to work the next morning.

Doris: Now that must have been something working two jobs.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I guess so. I was so tired. Oh, when the old man died, when they put him in the hospital. But I went down there and I told his daughter and them that I find a change in him, that I find in him. He said, well, they was going to wait and see. Then he took very sick and they had to bring him to the hospital.

Agnes Chatman Landry: And I had to go backwards and forward to the hospital because they kept nurses. But by time I was just about to give up, the old man died. I just had gone my Lemon, my girlfriend of mine,

she worked with me at school. She was just about to give up too, she said, "Agnes, I'm so tired." I said, "I am too."

Agnes Chatman Landry: At the hospital, all you had to do is just go, if he needed anything or sit on the bed pain or something like that. You see, that was his private nurse. By the time I said I was going to give up, they called and told me he had passed.

Doris: Were you sad about that?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah, I was sad for him because in his own way, he was really nice. He was very nice, and had a boy that worked there, he had been working there for all years and more years. And he used to drive him around in the day anywhere he wanted to go or something. He wanted me to go to Franklin with him one day, and I didn't want to go.

Agnes Chatman Landry: He told me when we left the house, he said, "I'm going to tell you where to go. You just turned where I tell you to turn." So when we got to the highway from his house, he said, "Turn left." I turned left, got a piece— Now, I said, "Where are we going? We going to Franklin."

Agnes Chatman Landry: I said, "Oh no, we're not going to Franklin today. Uh-huh, we're not going, Mr. Dewey, I'm going home. I'm going back to the house. I ain't going no Franklin. I'm tired. I can't go to Franklin." I could've went, but I just didn't want to go traveling all the different places he used to like to go.

Doris: That's something, that's something.

Agnes Chatman Landry: You want a ham, he'll bring you ham. "Yes, bring me a ham. Bring me a big old ham." They was glazed, beautiful ham. "Thank you, Mr. Dewey. You're a good man." I used to treat him nice, because he had ugly ways at time. But in general he was nice, and his daughters and them were just like—

Agnes Chatman Landry: One night he got mad with me and he didn't want me to go bring him nowhere. I said, "Huh, isn't it?" And he said, "I'm going and you not coming with me." I said, "Where you going?" I said, "All right, I'm going, but you ain't coming with me." I went downstairs, and I told his daughter, I said, "Mr. Dewey said he going somewhere and I'm not going with him."

Agnes Chatman Landry: She said, Agnes, "Don't worry. Let him go. Call the cab for him." He left. I had to stay there until my time was up. Way after while, here he come. He peeked in the room. "Come on, let's go. I'm ready to go." His daughter said, "Tell him you're not going. He didn't want you to go with him before." I said, "Tell him you're not going—" That old man, I enjoyed him though.

Doris: And he even told you about Grand Marin, that he said he could take you there?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah, he could go there, but I couldn't go there. He did pass for White too.

Doris: Was Grand Marin the same way when you first moved here? Yes?

Agnes Chatman Landry: See them mulattoes, some of them you can't tell from White, but I find out they don't treat them no different.

Doris: They don't?

Agnes Chatman Landry: They don't treat them people any different from you. They Black and they White. Your skin is whiter than mine, but you go come through the same thing I come through.

Doris: But you've never really dealt with anybody out there that much.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Mm-hmm, girl worked with Doris who lived out there, her mama.

Doris: [indistinct 00:19:04] if you know, a couple questions. I have more questions I want ask. Do you remember what it was like when they ran the doctors out of town? Do you remember that?

Agnes Chatman Landry: I was sad. That was the saddest thing that I know, and you know why they did that? You see, and I'm not going to say this. No. Because I can't prove nothing. But I can't prove.

Agnes Chatman Landry: But Dr. William, he wasn't from here. He was from somewhere else. He moved here. This school where I told he used to belongs to the Black people on Pershing Street, where the courthouse was. They had the clinic downstairs, and then Dr. William was working down there. They didn't have air condition, anything like this. And he worked in his short sleeve and thing. That's what they couldn't stand. See, they had White people going to the clinic too.

Doris: And he was a Black doctor there?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah, he was a Black doctor. They went in the barber shop and got him out the barbershop and made him leave town.

Doris: Was this a barbershop on Hopkins Street?

Agnes Chatman Landry: No, barbershop on Pershing.

Doris: On Pershing.

Agnes Chatman Landry: And this barber called some of the other doctors to let them know, like Dr. Scoggin, he was waiting for him to come in there. They didn't break in his house or nothing. This barber had warned him. But the next morning, he left town. He left. He never came back. He had a drug store on— Not Corrine. Where's that drug store? Dory, where Dr. Scoggin was, Corrine. Huh?

Michele Mitchell: I think I remember y'all saying that. I don't remember [indistinct 00:21:37].

Agnes Chatman Landry: On Corrine. It was on Corrine.

Michele Mitchell: It was on a corner of Corrine and—

Agnes Chatman Landry: And Field.

Michele Mitchell: And Field.

Agnes Chatman Landry: It wasn't just on a corner because his was from the corner. His house sit mostly on the corner, but he has his drugstore sitting right next to his house. That was Dr. Scoggin, and then they had, Dr. Dorsey was a Black doctor. He left and never came back. He died in Dallas not too long ago, Scoggin, William. Dr. Pierson was a dentist, he left and never came back. We had another doctor I'm trying to think about. But they beat up Dr. William.

Doris: They beat him up?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Uh-huh.

Doris: Bad?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Uh-huh, they beat him up, and with Scoggin, they didn't get to because he was sitting waiting for them. If they'd broke his door, they'd have find plenty of them. But they didn't. They had sense, they didn't.

Doris: And didn't they run the NAACP—

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, and then where it started again, this man, I can't think of his name. He was a teacher. And what did he want to bring in? It's something he wanted to bring into New Iberia, and they didn't want.

Doris: Was this the welding school?

Michele Mitchell: A welding school.

Agnes Chatman Landry: A welding school.

Michele Mitchell: Yes, it was.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah, a welding school, beat him up, and him and his family flee from here. This NAACP man too, Leo Hardy. Oh, they beat him, and they left him almost for dead on the highway

somewhere. They beat him up awful. Then they had a Black woman came after these doctors had been, a Black doctor, a woman, Miss Chatter.

Agnes Chatman Landry: She had some problems. They kicked her or they done her something, and she must have been wanting them talk back to them. But there's not many Black doctors come here since that happened. Dr. Diggs came out and he stayed. Dr. Pemberton stayed too. He was a pharmacy. Dr. Pemberton, he stayed. Dr. William stayed, he worked out of his drugstore, Dr. William. Then Dr. Diggs worked there until he bought him a place down there.

Michele Mitchell: So where would you go to a, I mean, after they ran all these Black doctors out of town?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Where you went, you had to go to them White one to do it. If you had to go, you had to go to White one. I mean, they ran. The only one stayed was Dr. Pemberton. That's the only one I really know is stayed yet.

Michele Mitchell: And Jimmy's grandfather, Dr. Garrett, didn't he stay?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah, he stayed.

Doris: Dr. Garrett?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah, Dr. Garrett. But he wasn't one of these power—

Michele Mitchell: Fair-skinned black.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah, fair-skinned Black. But what I want to say, he wasn't— Because Dr. Garrett had to walk where he went. When Dr. Diggs place come here too, he was walking and cab and everything. But Dr. Diggs did and did good business. He was the only one, after them doctors was run a week, he came and stayed. He was an honest one, because Dr. Chatter came in and tried to stay.

Doris: And she left, huh?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yeah. Because she had problems with those people in the courthouse. That was sad about Dr. Williams though. Dr. William was a fair doctor too. He had bad hair, but he was very fair.

Doris: And he had a drug store?

Agnes Chatman Landry: No, he worked out of Dr. Pemberton drugstore. They had another doctor came here, I'm trying to think of his name. He wiped out of the Cooper's Drugstore, which is—

Michele Mitchell: [indistinct 00:28:12]

Agnes Chatman Landry: No, a doctor. I had him when I had that blood clot in my leg.

Michele Mitchell: I don't remember.

Agnes Chatman Landry: He was at Sam Cooper Drugstore. I'm trying to think of that man's name, and they had a African doctor here.

Doris: When?

Agnes Chatman Landry: After the—

Doris: Yeah?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Uh-huh. I thought he was going to stay, [indistinct 00:28:47] he had bought his home, but maybe. I don't know what really happened, he left. He was a good doctor, because he bought across the bayou and build across the bayou on the Louisville highway. You done been there?

Doris: I was just there yesterday.

Agnes Chatman Landry: That's where he built out there. Close to the judge's house, Judge Corr.

Doris: I've seen his house, so I know what you're talking about.

Agnes Chatman Landry: You know where I'm talking about, huh? That's where that Black doctor stayed. He was from Africa. He was a nice doctor too, very good.

Doris: So then he left.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I don't know if they put fire under his foot or what with us. He left. This was a bad little town. Now, [indistinct 00:29:52] just had a power generator not too far from here, and them Black people stuck together there, honey.

Doris: Did they?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Oh, oh, oh, did they. I see that man's suing Reverend Jones right now, Arthur Lee Jones.

Michele Mitchell: That's the police officer's name.

Agnes Chatman Landry: What that policeman's name of Jones said it was Cohn? His name is Cohn. See, so that boy just hung himself in jail, and then they killed another boy on the street. They killed the boy down there from our community right there on Field Street. They shot him, died from it.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Boy had a little stick, he said about as big as your finger. When it fell on the ground, it just broke all up, and they talking about he resist the law. That man still on the force. But they didn't do that in January [indistinct 00:31:25].

Michele Mitchell: [indistinct 00:31:26].

Agnes Chatman Landry: Was he here in New Iberia?

Michele Mitchell: That man's still on the force.

Agnes Chatman Landry: The man that shot him?

Michele Mitchell: Yes.

Agnes Chatman Landry: No, I don't know. Lately, I don't know, lately, about if he but he stayed on there a while after they. He stayed on the force a— Because usually when they have something, they take him off but they didn't take him off. They didn't. He stayed on there a while, I know. You should know, you worked up there in the courthouse.

Doris: Are you okay?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Uh-huh. I got a phlegm that comes up since I had—

Michele Mitchell: [indistinct 00:32:28] so a lot of time it hits the fluid.

Agnes Chatman Landry: That's in my throat.

Doris: Anytime you want to stop, just tell me.

Michele Mitchell: And not just her throat, around the [indistinct 00:32:47]

Agnes Chatman Landry: I got a pill [indistinct 00:32:53].

Michele Mitchell: You don't have shortness of the breath, [indistinct 00:32:56], she's going to be fine.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Give me some water, please.

Michele Mitchell: She's going to be fine.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I started in AB Simon, they called that school, AB Simon School. That school was named after a principal here at AB Simon.

Michele Mitchell: I wondered why she had kids, she just—

Agnes Chatman Landry: I told her that.

Michele Mitchell: Remember [indistinct 00:33:20] had three kids from school.

Agnes Chatman Landry: It was nice. Mr. Kelly was the principal at AB Simon when I was the PTA president over there. Mr. Kelly was a character. He was a character. That's all I can tell you about that. But the PTA bought different things for the school. They did little things for the teachers to make their work—

Agnes Chatman Landry: Bought a piano at AB Simon, bought piano at JB Livingston. Teachers' Appreciation Week, we would give them a dinner or give them gifts, program. We bought, she told you about the laboratory, they didn't have— Well, we had one at JB Livingston and didn't Mr. Augusta tell you anything about the school?

Doris: He told me something about JB Livingston. He did. It sounded like it's a nice school.

Agnes Chatman Landry: It was a nice school. It was a nice school. We bought piano over there.

Doris: How'd you get the money to buy a piano? That's a [indistinct 00:35:01]

Agnes Chatman Landry: We used to have some kind of project where is it. At Henderson High, we had an annual tea over there, calendar tea, each 12 months, and raised a lot of money for Henderson, and JB Livingston, we had a fair once a year and sold so many dinners and had different activities. We raised that money for the school.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Mr. Augustus, he's a wise old man too. He was the head of principal because they probably would've had that piano and thing there for the White. But we transfer the piano, he was principal over here at Henderson High School. It wasn't Henderson, it was junior high. And he brought the piano over there, good piano.

Agnes Chatman Landry: And we took the money and give it to some needy, not needy person. But let me see how we did that. Oh, we took it divided. I know different places where we thought that they needed different things. That was JB Livingston. Henderson High, I'm trying to think, what did mister, what did he do about that? Did I tell you Mr. Augusta was a head? He work right now, so they couldn't take it.

Doris: I believe that.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I'm telling you, he work ahead. If they had paid attention to Mr. Augusta, he had told us that in a PTA meeting about something was going to happen. Something was going on and it was going to happen. Because you see this year, the way they did it, they closed down them school vacation

time.

Agnes Chatman Landry: That's right, and then they opened the schools they wanted to open. By right, I wouldn't have had a job managing, because they closed our school down, JB Livingston. They closed JB Livingston down, and she was going to put me in a school working as a worker. I raised a little saying before. My supervisor was upset with me. She really was upset with me.

Agnes Chatman Landry: But she didn't know where she was going to put me at and I just wasn't going to take anything. She called me here and was trying to tell me. I said, "Well, I don't care. Who going to say I'm not going there?" But girl used to work with me back there at JB Livingston, they put her sister manager at Freshman High and she didn't want to go there. She didn't want to go back there yet, so she called me.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I don't know why they used to think that I could do so much. But she called me and she told me, saying, "I don't want to go back to Freshman High if Miss Barbara will give me a job closer to my house," she said, "because I don't drive, I don't have no car." She said, "I would change with you." I said, "Well, Gert, you call Miss Barbara and tell that to Miss Barbara." She said, "No, you called Miss Barbara."

Agnes Chatman Landry: But Miss Barbara and I had had so much a mess by where she had put me at anyway, so she told [indistinct 00:40:27] that I was mad because I wasn't getting a manager job, and she had done all she could do, but all them White didn't lose her job. You know what I'm talking about? They didn't lose it, but I was going to be out of a job.

Agnes Chatman Landry: JB Livingston, Henderson high school manager, she was going to be out of a job. She had to go work under somebody else, and at that time, new jobs was hard. You made your own menu. You ordered your groceries yourself. I made my menu, yes, ma'am. I had to plan it, plan my own menu.

Doris: How long did you do that job as a cafeteria manager? How long was that?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Oh, I worked 25 years in the school.

Michele Mitchell: It was longer than that.

Agnes Chatman Landry: What?

Michele Mitchell: You worked longer than 25 years.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I worked 25 years in a school, girl. That's how I retired, 25 years, and I work at JB Livingston. I said I worked about 14 years maybe back there at JB Livingston before integration, and then I worked the rest of the time, when integration came, at Freshman High.

Agnes Chatman Landry: The time I was back there at JB Livingston, I did my own menu's planning. I had to do it myself. I had to do them for a week at a time, my menus. Boy, our color, they swear sometime I had the

hardest menu than anybody.

Doris: Really?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Because they want to do what they want. They want to do what they want. I said, "Well, that's my menu." Make them about a week. I had them up there for Monday. You come start Monday. I even had my workout line, who was doing what and everything, was there on the board, see what you had to do.

Doris: If they complained about the menu, what sort of things did they make?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Oh, we had to make our own bread.

Doris: You had to make your own bread?

Agnes Chatman Landry: Yes, ma'am. Sometime, we got sliced bread when we had sandwiches and things. But most of the time when I was planning my menu, we didn't get sliced bread that often. We had to make biscuit, cornbread, roll, cinnamon rolls, all them things like that we had to make.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I tried to suit with the children like. The children liked it. Bean and rice, that's what they're like, and vegetables. I had to have two vegetables. I had to have the protein, which was bean and then I'd put some salted meat in there or either some smoked sausages in there, and rice. Rice was just basic, and some mustard green, or a cabbage slaw.

Agnes Chatman Landry: Some of the things like that I would have from stew, hot dogs, hamburgers. But when that lady, when we had centralized menu came from the office, they couldn't say nothing. I used to tell them too, I said, "Look here, see what you got to do?" Boy, when we started making tacos and pizza, boy, they used to—

Agnes Chatman Landry: And our children didn't know it. It was hard with them because they didn't know nothing about tacos and pizza and all that. They didn't like that. They liked hamburgers and hotdog and they love beans and they love spaghetti. They like that.

Agnes Chatman Landry: I was glad when they centralized the menu. I was happy because I didn't have to bust my head of getting it out every week. I did that a long time. They used to fuss, "Agnes work the hardest, Agnes give us the hardest, or Angus this," and when I get them a dessert, like make a cake or something, oh, so you got to give them a dessert sometimes. You got—