

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: John Blanchard

COLLECTION: 4700.0243

IDENTIFICATION: LSU alumnus, former Editor in Chief of *The Reveille*

INTERVIEWER: Pamela Dean

SERIES: University History – Distinguished Alumni

INTERVIEW DATES: May 19, 1993

FOCUS DATES: 1930s-1993

ABSTRACT:

Tape 369, Side A

Introduction; Born and raised in West CaRroll Parish on January 16, 1922; Parents Charles Ford Blanchard Senior and Mattie Idelle Peyton, married in 1900; family came to Louisiana in 1902 from Mississippi Delta, Yazoo City; Peytons came from England to Virginia; Blanchards came from France to North Carolina and migrated to north Mississippi; grandfather came from Mississippi to north Louisiana; grandfather's twin brother went to Moss Point, Mississippi, and then went to south Louisiana; Peyton's owned Wolf Lake plantation in Mississippi with two hundred slaves, wealthy, four boys, three girls; did not recover from Civil War so they became dirt farmers; Blanchard's were always poor farmers; youngest of thirteen raised on cotton farm during Great Depression; nine of the thirteen children went to college, dominant mother stressed education, mother received 1899 teacher's certificate, went to high school and passed the college exam; the older siblings helped the younger to enable the family to send nine children to college; four of the girls and one of the boys became schoolteachers; finished high school in Epps, Louisiana, class of 1939; attended Northeast Junior College, branch of LSU; transferred to LSU in fall of 1941 as a journalism major; lived with sister while attending college; hired by *The Reveille* for forty dollars a month; first in family to attend LSU; rest of family attended Northwestern State in Natchitoches now Louisiana Tech; either wanted career in medicine or journalism but didn't take chemistry in high school; sports editor at junior college; Dr. Jimmy Price held tryouts for *The Reveille* editor and he got it while taking twenty-one hours and holding a fulltime job; met and interviewed T. Harry Williams in September of 1941, became good friends; took course under Williams and earned a D; picked on by Williams during class; took government course from Dr. Daspit, professor difficult to understand; took journalism course under Robert Penn Warren, describes Warren and class; tutored by Warren once a week; chose not to take Shakespeare under Doctor John Earl Euhler because he acts out Shakespeare plays; seniors played joke on the head of the School of Journalism, Marvin Oshorne; taught editorial writing by Dr. Marcus Wilkinson; sponsors journalism scholarship through The Alumni Association; worked in PR for ten years, then went into newspaper business; Describes how he established work ethic in his children; Describes editing teacher Dick Wiggins; Editor of *The Franklin Sun*; Major Bruce McCoy, manager of the Louisiana Press Association; Stayed up

seventy-eight hours to finish a term paper for advertising teacher; Wrote a controversial story on the Dean of Women, Nora Neal Power, announcing that only slender girls could wear slacks on campus; Fraternity life as a Lambda Chi; Two-year cadet corps requirement; General Hodges, friend of the family, got him an appointment to Annapolis Naval Academy without mental examination but didn't take it; Military was very present on campus; Used cadet uniform to hitchhike; describes impact of war on the School of Journalism which was one big family;

Tape 369, Side B

Didn't have time for fraternity because he was recruited by a journalist; Describes fraternity dances; speaks of popular girl at the dances, Gloria Hodge; another Darling of LSU, Monica Lyles, society editor of *The Reveille*, married Dr. Joe Broyles; Wars today less clear cut than World War Two; Colleagues on *The Reveille*, Editor in Chief Dee Walker, junior year Jewel Claitor was Editor in Chief, Sports Editor E. J. Ourso, editor Mary Frances Williams; introduced Williams to Brian Putman, a marine combat correspondent, and they got married; Had no problems working for a woman; Social director Gene Quaw adopted the journalism students; Upset sons pledged Theta Xi over Lambda Chi; Famous women on the downtown papers, Orene Muse, Margie Arbour, Maggie Dixson; Relationship between politicians and news people; Doug Manship did a lot for the School of Journalism; Chains like *Eannett* in Shreveport ruining journalism; Sums up with what he learned in journalism school, the theory, the mechanics; Enjoys modern journalism

TAPES: 1 (T369)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 8 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 41 pages

RESTRICTIONS: None