

**T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection**

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** John Staples

**COLLECTION:** 4700.0665

**IDENTIFICATION:** LSU alumnus; World War II veteran; Borden employee

**INTERVIEWER:** Mary Hebert

**SERIES:** University History – Distinguished Alumni

**INTERVIEW DATES:** April 15, 1996

**FOCUS DATES:** 1940s-1996

**ABSTRACT:**

**Tape 963, Side A**

Introduction; born in New Orleans on September 1, 1924; father was John Batson Staples, Sr., a real estate man; mother's name was Cornelia Power; mother recognized as Louisiana Mother of the Year; sister Mary Sue Lewis graduated from Southwester; brother Robert Samuel Staples graduated from LSU in Geology in 1948; uncle Bowman Staples established the LSU Laboratory School; uncle Charles Henry Staples graduated from LSU in 1911 in dairy and headed the dairy department; stories about James Monroe Smith; Charlie Staples regularly hosted poker games with Commandant of Cadets Colonel Roy Hill, Perry Cole, Red Heard, Jim Broussard, General Middleton; Staples also hosted a party with most of the members of the board of supervisors attending and persuaded the board to agree to appoint Atkinson as president; Campbell Hodges the LSU president, Dean French the dean of men, Leo Lasalle the dean of engineering, and Fred Frey the dean of the University attended the dinner at Kappa Sigma's Founder's Day in 1941; Staples family was anti-Long and had to keep quiet or risk losing jobs; Charlie Staples exercised influence and power beyond his position as head of the dairy department; Staples taught Clyde Rougeau who became the president of Southwestern; another student became head of the dairy department at Southeastern; attended Isidore Newman School in New Orleans; Charlie Staples and Red Heard the athletic director very influential with legislators; Staples did not get along with Clyde Ingram and would not be happy that a dairy barn was named after him; the dairy buildings were the first to be built; became a freshman at LSU in the fall of 1941 with a major in history and minor in government; sophomore year, worked as a football manager; later worked as senior manager of the football team; senior year, worked part-time at the Chimes Theater, after graduation, worked part-time for Red Heard in the athletic business office for three years; story of hearing about Pearl Harbor at Greek social function; he was not hazed because he was allowed to live off campus freshman year with his uncle Charlie Staples who was friends with Colonel Hill; belonged to the field artillery, the headquarters battery, the first battalion; remained good friends with many Baton Rouge boys that he met in the battery; company recently celebrated fifty years; describes ROTC military training as very strict with drilling twice a week; a curfew and two classes.

**Tape 963, Side B**

Sent to Luzon in the Philippines for World War Two; description of bombing of Japan; invited to watch the verdict of General Yamashita, the general in charge of the Phillipines convicted of the rape and murder of civilians; many veterans returned to LSU on the GI Bill including himself; stories about Herman Lang a black man who worked in the athletic department; describes funding for the athletic department; description of incident with Perry Cole criticizing an article in the *Pel Mel* written by Pat McIntyre; mentions Puma Eaton the president of his freshman class and Louie Porterie the vice president of the student body; story about Hugh O' Conner the president; mentions Evelyn Norman the first coed student body president; wife Jane was a Chi Omega but met her after college; had no choice in joining Kappa Sigma Fraternity because his uncle Charlie Staples was a Kappa Sig; uses story to show Perry Cole's integrity; General Middleton's regret that Charles Staples did not get to see him named president of LSU; believes Paul Hebert was not made president because he was too young; Fred Frey was not named president because he turned down the position; story of Dean Hatcher getting him into the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Tape 964, Side A**

First course under T. Harry Williams was American History; also took Williams' Military History course; popularity of Williams; after getting out of the Army, hired by Borden and worked for thirty nine years, retiring four years ago; describes Charlie Stables as never afraid physically or psychologically; poor during the Depression but didn't realize; Charlie Stables gained influenced by providing jobs for students; story of a girl named Clayton taking nude photos but covering her face with a mask and selling them on campus; Charlie Stables ran the ice cream store; parents able to afford tuition at Newman High School because tuition was cut in half for students whose parents worked for the government or in education.

**TAPES:** 2 (T963, T964)**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 1 hour, 50 minutes**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 50 pages**RESTRICTIONS:** Copyright retained by interviewee and his heirs