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Lee Brown Chapter notes on Hume
& trial

~~3/24~~ 3/2/94 pp. 10-15

3/17/94 prison experience pp 3-6
release ~~6-9~~ 1-3, 6-9

8/31/94 release 1-5

Notion of trial 5-8
(and prison) Gets back in CP 9-12

5/24/94 Arrival in SF 6-
(Letter to Ann, Muel)

5/31/94 Arrival in SF 1-9 (good acct)

Arrival in SF
5/31/94 acct

Lee Brown, 5/31/94

My name is Lee Brown. I want to make a statement this morning for the Robert L. Allen, who is going to write my life story, putting together. I'm going to give him some information, things that I was involved in when I left New Orleans and come to San Francisco in 1960.

I came to San Francisco from New Orleans in the year of '60. I just had got released from the federal institution, Texarcana, Texas. And I spent a while with my cousin. I had to stay there about nine months because I were released nine months ahead on good time and behavior, they told me. I stayed there with my cousin, and I left there and went to New Orleans, Louisiana, went back there. When I got there, my union Local 207 was taken over by the United Packing Workers' Union. The President was named Peter Dent. So I went down and talked to Brother Dent, and he says, "Uh, Brother Lee, you know how it is. The work is slow here. And we have been taken over by the Packinghouse, United Packinghouse here," and I think the Local was 570, if I'm not mistaken. Been quite a while. But I'll try to get as much information as I can to go back and do a lot of research. I will do the best I can with what I have.

Yes, I talked to Brother Dent, and he say, "What I can do is write you a recommendation, give you a traveling card plus a letter, and that will help you in San Francisco." Cuz I'd talked to William L. Chester here, was the director of the ILWU, the International Director of the ILWU here at 150 Golden Gate here in San Francisco. I received a letter, and the letter told me, says, "If you come, we will

try to do all we can to find you a job." I knowed I couldn't get no job in San Francisco - I mean in New Orleans, 'cause I've tried when I went to the unemployment office. I put my card in there. And people come up behind me. I'd get there when it opened and 'round 8:30 or 9:00, and I put the box, and I set there and set, waited on them to call me, and people come in, and after [inaudible]. I was observing. The people knowed me because they made a lot of propaganda and publicity. My picture was plastered on all the daily papers even, and I knew it would be hard. I was spinning my wheels for nothing. So I say I'd better try to do much better than I'm doing here to, to listen at and take what Bill Chester said if I would come to San Francisco, he would try to find me work and do what he can. And [inaudible].

And I know the lady what I was living with before I - living in the apartment house. She runned an apartment house. Her name was Mrs. Matilda ^{Poppala} ~~Poppala~~. She had about eight people living in the apartment, about eight tenants. Each of them had a room. And I had mine. When I went back, she told me, say, "You always, Brother Lee, have a place to live here. Money or no money." That's the same sister, Mrs. ^{Poppala} ~~Poppala~~, wanted to put up her house for bond for me. The lawyer told - it wasn't necessary 'cause my bond was nothing but \$10,000, and [inaudible], get that. They got the bond, and I got out, and I was talking, and Sister ^{Poppala} ~~Poppala~~ said, "I have a friend name Mr. Preston Holmes. He have a son in San Francisco. I'm going to talk with him when he come."

Brother Holmes came, I think that evening. Mrs. ^{Poppala} ~~Poppala~~ started talking. She said, "Mr. Holmes," she say, "don't you have a

son in San Francisco?" And Mr. Holmes say, "Yes, I do." She say, "Brother Brown is planning on going there pretty soon, to find work. He can't get none here. It's very hard for him, and he said he rather to, to go there and maybe be more successful." And he says, "Yes, my son is named Joe Holmes. And I will give you his phone number, and his address, and you tell him so he can know you and know that you talked to me that he, he sent me two shirts, and the shirts had J. H., meaning Joe Holmes. And I want to say you, I'll give you the phone number so he can know that I know you. Soon as you get to San Francisco, you call him, and he will take care of you."

When I got here, I called him on the telephone, but his wife answered the phone, and I asked to speak to Joe Holmes. At that time she say, "He is not here," and she say, "just a moment." She said, "I hear the car pulling up in front of the house. That may be him." She looked out of her window. She says, "Yes, that is him." She called him to the telephone, and his [inaudible], his father, his father. Yes, he called - she called him to the phone, and he told me to tell him his son sent him two shirts with the initial on J. H., meaning Joe Holmes. So he would know that his father had sent me to him. We're friends.

I spoke to him on the telephone and explained myself and told him, him about the shirts, and he told me to wait. "I will come right away." And I set there in the station on 7th Street between Market and Mission Street, between Market and Mission. I'm going to try to make this clear as I can.

Joe came down out there at the Greyhound station, sat impatient. About twenty minutes he drove up. He picked me up

within twenty minutes to his - drove me to his home on Neptune, which is a street. We got there. He introduced me to his wife, Mrs. Florence Holmes. Were living, it were, who were living himself, pledging and hospitality he showed me. And he told me it were mine. He showed me a room and say, "This room, you can live there, as long as you want." I were welcome. He put my luggage in the room, and I went to bed.

The next morning he got up and he went over to the ILW - I went over to the ILWU hall, 150 Golden Gate, to seek assistance to find a job. I talked to one of the representatives in the ILWU hall that was the international hall on 150 Golden Gate. He sent me over to the Warehouse Union Local 6 to talk to one of the union representatives to get work. I met some of the union brothers in the hall, and we was talking. The brothers taking up a collection and give me some money, helped me out until I could find work. I stood around for a few days, and I went over to the hall several times during the period. One of those workers sent me to his good friend to ask him for some financial assistance. When I got there, they give me \$100. Another friend give me ten, another one give me twenty-five. That was here in San Francisco, in the year of 1960, when I arrived from New Orleans, Louisiana.

I was treated very well, and I appreciate it. I had my papers and union card and - from the Local in New Orleans, the Packinghouse Workers, what Brother Thomas West had given me, the president at that time, the United Packing had taken over the union. Our Local 207, it wasn't no more Local 207. It was [inaudible] with 270, I believe, I mean 5 - I'm worry. 570. And I went to the, the

Culinaries on Sixth Street, which was a Local 110. The letter what Brother Thomas West gave me, told me to take that to any union hall or union representative. So I went over there and I presented - I asked to see a business agent. Someone told me, "You see a business agent." And this business agent was named - he say, "You'll see a man by the name of Sam Daniels." And I talked to a lady there at the window, was information. I think her name was either Cornelius or Mrs. Susie ~~Barker~~, Barclay. And she say, "You wait. It's a business agent will be in here, and his name is Sam Daniels." She say, "You sit down in the union hall and get you some coffee, if you so care for any, you're welcome to it. You're amongst friends." That made me feel very good.

When Brother Daniels came in, a very low, dark-skinned fellow, and she point me out, cuz he went over by her before he went inside of his office. And she point him out to me. And he walked over to me, and he says, "My name is Sam Daniels, the business agent here, and I learned that you was looking for me. Would you please step in my office?" I say, "Thank you, Sir." So I went into his office, and he looked at the paper that the President West give me, and he looked at my union book. He say, "You're a union man." I say, "Yes, sir, I am. I been in the union for a number of years. Local 12, the Los Angeles Packinghouse, and I went there and I went down to New Orleans, Local 207, and we had problems," and "I heard about it, and read about some of the problems you had under the Taft Hartley that the trade unions staff had under the Tart Hartley law. Unfortunate that we ain't never been attacked so far. We had some problems, but I'm going to see what I can do." And he asked what kind of work. I

said, "Any - I can do anything now cuz I need work." He say, "What about working in a hotel? Have you ever washed dishes?" I said, "Yes, I washed dishes. When I was in L.A., I used to ride the Union Pacific, Los Angeles [inaudible] Nebraska, washing dishes and what-not." Then he said, "Maybe put you on at the Fairmont Hotel at night until we see what we can do."

So it was another brother there. He was the janitortory, work in the union, keep the union clean, by the name of Brother Bible. Everyone called him Bible. But I believe his name were Willie Bible. If I'm not mistaken. He say, "This man - I want you to come back here tomorrow evening. Be sure you be here before 5:00 o'clock over to the union hall." Say, "I'm going to write out a work slip, and Brother Bible is gonna take you to the Fairmont Hotel and see can the steward there" - the steward was name Brother Ward, Johnny Ward - "see can he give you a few days to put you on, and I'm gonna call him and talk with him." In the meantime, Bill Chester, director, national director of the ILWU called, and I think a number of others called.

When I got there, they talked - Mr. Ward. Willie Bible take me into Mr. Ward's office. Ward talked to me, say, "I heard some about you, Brother." He say, "I once was in the union, the Marine Cooks and Stewards." I say, "Yes, sir." He say, "I heard you been in the union quite a while." I said, "Yes, sir." Mr. Ward was a tall, brown-skinned fellow, very friendly. He say, "Yeah, I put you to work around here washing dishes and what-not." So he say, "You, you go to work tonight." He told me I had to go and get in a uniform to put on [inaudible]. I started washing night, washing dishes. And I stayed

washing dishes, oh, maybe a month or two. The next thing I learnt, he say, "I'm going to put you a good worker, Brown." He called me Brother Brown. "Brother Brown, I'm going to put you to work in janitorial, regular job." He say, "You got a regular job - you've been [inaudible] - you got a regular job. Working at night. You're a night porter now." I said, "Thank you kindly, Sir." [inaudible] It make me feel much better. It was good that I was success enough to get me a regular job. He say, "You a regular. You come in in your off days." I think it was - I had two off days. I can't really which two it were, but he say, "Now you have your regular job. You come in and you have time to come to work and come in at [inaudible] - I think it was 12:00, but I didn't wait till 12:00. I come in at 11:00, 11:30, to make sure that I go in, and change clothes, be ready to go to work, cuz I know how hard it was.

In New Orleans, while I was union representative, fought for the rights of workers. [inaudible] cotton compresses, the feed mill, the rice mill, and on the docks. Not deep water ships, but barge lines. I fought them and I went there, had [inaudible] New Orleans, back to New Orleans I thought about it. That's where I got my trade union education, working among people fighting for rights, better conditions, fighting for health needs, seniority, pension plan. When I got here in San Francisco at the hotel, as I become a porter, I began [inaudible].

[tape skips]

Fifteen of us, who were night porter, all the brothers were very friendly. We talked. We had lunch. They starting off, it was given us precooked food, and not - we started talking about we would like

to stop, have time to cook, to fix our own food, because they didn't want the precooked food what the cook leave there. They been there, made from other food, and he give it to the help. And I began to look in the union books, and I see in the union books where you had the right to have job stewards. Some call them shop stewards. I call them shop stewards, but that's what I like in New Orleans, job stewards. Shop stewards to see that the company carry out the working agreement that the workers get a fair. And I say, "We need a shop steward. We have some problems that we need to solve." And they say, "What about you?" One of the brother say, "What about you, Brother Brown? Would you take it?" I says, "Yes." "Seemed like you talk like you have some experience." I say, "I had a little experience working in New Orleans on the docks, working in the union. I also was on the negotiating committee, shop steward, vice president, executive board member, advisor to the president." I say, "I had a little experience, and I'll be willing to try to work so we can solve some of these problems." We talk to the steward, to Mr. Ward. We bring him our problems, our grievances, and ask him to work with us.

So we did. We signed up. We say, "Now you have to sign your name, and then I'll call the business agent, Mr. Daniels." We still's in Local 1, attend the Culinary Workers' Union. And he said, "You all wants a shop steward." I say, "The mens have signed." He say, "Yeah. Bringing in all [inaudible], and we would elect you shop steward, and we will notify the company. Notify Mr. Ward." So we went to the union hall, was still on 6th Street. I can't [inaudible] the address. The number, but it was on 6th Street, Local 110. So we

went upstairs when Mr. Daniel come. He come about 8:00 o'clock that morning because we had to go home and sleep. He said, "I'll be there early, so you call can have the meeting." We had the meeting. We propose things that we wanted to discuss with Mr. Ward. And so when the brothers, like me, Mr. - Brother Sam Daniels. I say, [inaudible] "Now you all elect - who you all elect for your steward?" We say, "We elect Brother Lee Brown." So that was - OK. Brother Daniels say, "Now, Brother Lee Brown, you a shop steward at the Fairmont Hotel to take care of the grievance and see that the company carry out the contract and that none of the brothers will violate the contract." He said, "This will work both ways." I says, "All right, Brother Daniel," I say, "I have had . . ." He say, "I know you have had some experience in the labor movement." I say, "I will do the best I can to work with the brothers, and I hope the brothers would work with me."

Yes. Getting back, I was here in San Francisco still working at the Fairmont Hotel here at the Fairmont. I have by a release. I made and I find my work. But I'd like to say that I got into San Francisco, I arrived here in 1960, and I joined the Local 110 with my traveling card, which was my book, and a letter from the United Packing Workers' Union from Brother Thomas West. Now I'm a member of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union, and I at the Fairmont Hotel. I become the first shop steward in any hotel in San Francisco during the year [inaudible]. I was involved in the Civil Rights struggle with the NAACP, continue my fight against racism in employment. Blacks. I was doing organized work and met and married my wife, Gracie Oliver, acted in her own rights, acting in her

Lee Brown, 5/24/94--6

This is the letter I sent to Harry Bridges on November the 2nd, 1960. I was living at 2017 Jackson Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana. I sent a letter to brother Harry Bridges, 150 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco to California telling about that I was released from the federal institution in Texarcana, Texas on the 12th day of July, 1960. I was in [inaudible] until October 3rd, '60. I maintain I have been trying to find work, and they refuse, refuse at New Orleans. At this time tried to find work. Brother Bridges, you know that I was the vice president of Local 207 and late Brother Nelson was president of during this time I was called before the Un-America Activity Committee. And I was brought to trial and was find guilty and received a three-year sentence. It is - it is hard for me to find work up here because of the trouble I was in. This I am asking you for finance aid or help me until I can find employment. The system cost, of course, will be returned. I have been - I would appreciate much if you will state my case with Local 10 because I very much feel in need of help. My ten-year-old son is in school, and I am really need assistances. Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter. Lee Brown, end. At 2017 Jackson Avenue, New Orleans. I sent a copy to J. R. Roberson, the vice president. I sent a copy to Lou Goldblack, the finance treasurer. I send a copy to Brother William Chest(?), the director of the ILWU, and they respond. And I thanked them very much for they help. It was really good, and it helped me a lot.

And I want to say during the 1960 when I was here in '66 here in California, April 22nd, 19-, the year of 1966, I also campaigned for Dr. Goodlett when he ran for the government of California by

[inaudible] for Governor of California. I campaigned. I was on the campaign committee, and they send this - got the [inaudible]. I supported and worked hard with him when he ran for Governor of California. That's a lot of things that I did when I was in, in the union here working as a trade union a very active in the trade union.

Wrote an article to the press, my views on the military budget, talking about jobs, talking about the health needs, talking about decent houses for the poor, and decent education for the children. A better education. And asked that the religious trade union, the community active, get involved and stop fighting each other. That is not the solution to the problem. This country is in a crisis, and it's time for the American people to act. I, Lee Brown, was still continuing as the executive board. I was executive board member, including a resolution in San Francisco to put public toilets in San Francisco in the stores. The [inaudible] we came up. We were success. We did came up with the stores with the toilets, restrooms, in the supermarkets like Safeway, I know, has some now. Cuz I talked to ladies on the street with their children, and they - ladies was made ridiculous, they didn't have a place for them to go. And I learned that they did go to Paris and price them, and the Supervisors claim they cannot find the money for them. Someone claim they cannot find money for. But maybe we were success enough to get them in the large supermarket. I know they have them at Safeway.

I want to say here that I [inaudible] the Affirmative Action program in the hotels and restaurant, bartenders' union Local 2. I, Lee Brown, Local 2 executive board member and member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unions, at this particular time report the

Interview with Lee Brown, 3/31/94

My name is Lee Brown. I am going to talk about the activity and the day that I was released from the Federal Institution of Correction in Texarcana, Texas on July 12th, the year 1960. 008

I'm going to talk about that, the things that I can remember. I will try to do the best I can with what I have. I was released - repeat - I was released on that day. A total of good time I had 263 days. That's C. O. Anderson, Chief, classification and parole officer. Released me that day. On the 12th day of July, 1960, I was released on parole. I were released in Texas, a little town by the name of Hitchcock. 023

My cousin there, before I were released, they wrote and asked them would he take me in. He wrote back and told them yes. Then I was released. I was released on the term I had about 180 days, the tenth and third 1960. I had to do that on the outside. My cousin accept me. Say that he would see to me surviving, and that day that I was released I was given a ticket to Hitchcock, Texas. I think it was on the Greyhound bus. I was released from the institution on that particular day, as I said before, July 1960. 040

When I got to Hitchcock, Texas, I went over to my cousin's house. Was not too far. Where the bus put me off, it wasn't a bus station, but he put me off at Hitchcock. And I knew why it was, cuz I had been there before, and I got off the bus with my little belongings they give me. They give me a suit, a shirt, hat and a pair of shoes,

and one dress of work clothes. It was khakis or cotton, whatever.

050

And I went on into my cousin's house, and I knocked on the door. They was so glad to see me. But that's the one, my cousin's wife, cousin Seely, the one that taken a stroke. They supposed to come up to the institution on that Saturday, and that Friday my other cousin [inaud. - 058] had an accident, an automobile, and got killed. When she was told they was very close together relation, she had a stroke and did not say another word. She was - that was my cousin's wife, cousin Seely. 063

And I went there, and they asked us, say, "Do you know who this?" She began to laugh and smile, began to smile. Indeed, she knew who I was cuz our family was very close. I was staying at her house with my cousin, Boss. We called him Boss. When I was picked up and taken back to Louisiana for trial. So definitely she knew. She was going to come to the institution in Texarcana, Texas to see me, [inaud. - 073], my cousin from Galveston [inaud. = 074]. Unfortunate, he had an accident, and he got killed. But when she learned - they told her, and she had a stroke, and did not speak anymore. 076

So I was - stayed with [inaud. 078], put my clothes, cousin say, "You're welcome," and they prepared a dinner for me that evening, and we set down and talked. The next morning I went around to see my other relatives that was living close by. I had some in Galveston, some in Hitchcock, some in Lemar, some in Texarcana. I went around, and I see'd those I had scattered all over Texas, Port Arthur, Houston, Beaumont, and also I let them know that I was back, and all of them was glad to see me. 088

So I stayed there a while, about a month or so. I worked and helped cousin Boss with, and cousin Seely, cuz they need help. I prepared her food. She had to eat electric - liquid food, I'm sorry. Liquid food. And whilst he was gone to work, he was glad for me to be there to help her [inaud. - 094] cuz they had helped me. And I stayed there, and I prepared it because she had relatives and friends and next door neighbors in the little area would see about her, or I would be there sometime to fix her food. Sometime I had another cousin, lived further down. I don't know if you call it a road or whatnot, street. It was just something like a little gravel road. I would go and stay with one of my cousins were called - most of our people were called aunt and uncles. 102

Aunt Bernice - I call Aunt Bernice. Sometime I'll go there and stay, and I'd come back, cuz cousin Seely had quite a few friends and relatives, would be there all the time. Her daughter would stay there at night. And I would go and back and forth, to help take care of her, cuz I was released there, and I was going to do the best I can with what I had. 109

So I stayed there and finished out my parole, and I decide - I say I would go down to New Orleans, see my son, because that was - his mother was my common law wife, which was named Rose, and that's the only son that I was the father. And I say, "I must go down there and see about Brownie." I called him Brownie. I don't know Brownie's about eight or ten years old then, maybe. I'm not quite sure. I went down and - went down to New Orleans, and I went over to some friends of mine house there, and I say, "Well, I'm going over and see Rose." And also I went to my brother's house, and I called

Rose. She had a telephone, and I called her, asked her could I come over and see Brownie. She said, "Sure." 126

So I happened to go over. My nephew or named late nephew Skeet, was alive then. He was a musician. He played with Fats Domino's brother in a small band. Fats' brother played in a little local band there in New Orleans. His name was Freddie Domino. 136

My nephew was named Skeet, and he blow saxophone or trumpet, played in Freddie's band. So he happened to be at my brother's house that day, and he says, "I'll take you, old Uncle Lee," so him and I got in the automobile. And one thing about Skeet - he happened to have in his glove compartment a little paper bag, a small bag of quarters. He say, "Here, Uncle Lee. This will help you some." And I thanked him very - I say, "Thank you, Skeet, for being so nice to your uncle." 148

This is hard to remember, hard to talk about. It's emotional. Cuz the struggle I went through and the struggle I experienced from the depth of my heart when I talked about it. I went there and I met Rose, and she was glad to see me. And Brownie was setting outside. He - maybe like I was like when I was young. Setting always alone, by myself, alone. And she called him, said, "Brownie, come here." [inaud. - 160] Wanted to holler to loud about your daddy here, and he come and he saw who I was. He was young when I left, but he had grew up, and he knew me. He called me Lee. He ran to me, embraced me, hugged me. He was glad, very glad to see me. 167

And I was glad to see him. I was emotion. Sometime I get very emotion because it come depths of my heart. [inaud. - 172] is

real. And I set there and talked. So Skeet say, "Uncle Lee, I'm gone." And I thanked him cuz for the gift of quarters, thanked him for bringing me over, and he says, Skeet say, "You in good hands now, Uncle." And I say, "So long, Skeet, take care of yourself." 180

I talked, and I was so glad to see Rose and Brownie, which I call him. We set down and talk, and I talked to him. Cuz I remember when he was young, I bought a set of encyclopedias. They called "The World." A set of red books. "The World Encyclopedia." And I told him to study, to read, and I picked out a subject dealing with Islam, and I told him, "You study that. Learn about and study your history." 194

I even bought him a few books - that wasn't too many books before I left in New Orleans on black history. I don't even think they had a black bookstore in New Orleans, not to my knowings. But I say, "You get what you can, and study your history," because before I left I was in the Nation of Islam. 202

I sometime I used to buy the Pittsburgh Courier, an Afro-American newspaper, and I began to read it. And I kept seeing a picture of a man talking about freedom, justice, and equality. To me he looked like a Chinese. And I kept wondering, I said, "What the Chinese is so concerned about black folks?" And what he was saying - he was talking about my history, talking about my freedom. And I was very much concerned, and finally on one day I had my play sister - people thought that we were sisters and brother. We resembled each other, and I got, I say, "Levoya, I want to - Levoya, I want you to write to this place in Chicago. 5335 So. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago 15, Illinois." And I finally got an answer. 225

Back during that time, it was - I received the answer. I was living and Mr. Lee Brown, they called me, at 2017 Jackson Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana. And he was telling me about the Nation. And the name of the law, the beneficial, the most merciful, the lord of the world. And in the name of his divine messenger, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. 238

The next letter I received, Mr. Lee X Brown, 1017 Jackson Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana. And he told me, sent me another letter, and I received your letter, he told me. "I received your letter October the 26th, 1960. It is my hope by this time you have find a job. I am very much sorry to learn your difficulty in finding a job. Continuing to strive hard and pray to Allah, and you will be successful. I returned the clippings of notice of your trial. I thank you, like to keep them. I pray to Allah for your success and blessings. A salaam alechem. Your brother, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the messenger of Allah." 258

The next letter I received from the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, out of 1730 LaSalle Street in San Francisco, California. He was greeting me and wanted to know how was I was doing, was I was successful in finding work there. The letter was very short and right to the point. He say, "Seek [inaud. - 270], brother." He sent me greetings of [inaud. - 273], love, and peace. 274

When I begin, he sent me another letter, say that now, December 16, 1960. I'll say Mr. Lee X and Neptune, San Francisco, California. "A salaam ^{al-kun} alechem. In the name of Allah, the most merciful and [inaud. - 284] master of the day of judgment. I submit to him and seek his divine guidance." He say, "Now you are a

registered Muslim. Just take this letter to any mosque. May peace and blessings of Allah be upon you. A salaam alechem. I am your brother. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad." 294

I'm going to make sure I'm dealing with the era when I was in the federal correction institution in Texarcana, Texas also. That's before some of these happening, before I went to the institution where I was sent in institution. I also was in the Nation of Islam. That's when I began to study history, reading the paper they called Mr. Muhammad Speaks. I learned quite a bit of history, going to the Masonic store there in New Orleans, into buy some books dealing with black history, somebody was not deep history like I can find here in San Francisco and also in Los Angeles when I used to do a lot of reading. I'm self-studying, self-educated, and whilst I was in the institution, I went to school, and I received - I taken up vegetable growing, general education, and I received some certificates. I received a high school certificate, and I - that got lost somewhere during the time I've had notes typed up as I before said by a young man who was from New Orleans, and when I was going to school, I go through the books. There's one particular book that I liked and was very interested, and I was studying it cuz they were telling me all about - the title of that book was - it was Social Science Encyclopedia, tell me about what the human race was dealing with, what people was all about. It was teaching me about the [inaud. - 327] on psychology, sociology, archaeology, biology, socialism, communism, colonialism - every subject that human being was connected with I was learning it from this book, studying it, studying many things. Study history, some black history that I would find in the institution.

Not very much. But I studied labor history was there. Not the kind that I was able to buy on the outside and get. Political history. I studied about communism, socialism. 339

And it was very interesting. I learned a - learned - study hard. I went to school. Some of the inmates was teachers, and some of them was very good. They would take their time with you and help you, and I was concerned in that institution that I learned. I talked to people there. I learned from people. We sat down and had discussion with each other. And it was very good, that I learned many things. 350

And I want to say I put it on both tapes that I was able -

When I was - I stayed a while there. When I was in San Francisco, I was thinking about the Party here, and I was advised to go to the bookstore - at that time it located on Market. I forget the title of the bookstore at the time, but it was the Party bookstore. One time is on - that's when I find it was on Market, and again it moved on Turk Street between, I think, Masonic and Jones on Turk. I went there on Market Street, and I happened to talk to the fellow, and I introduced myself to him. And he talked to me, and he asked me about the condition. We was discussing the condition, and I had some Party literature with me. But that time I told him I was not in the Party, on account of the - you know the - he knowed the story on the labor, under the - the Taft Hartley law, McCarren Act, and the Smith Act, and particular the one that struck labor. It was the Taft Hartley law. That they had brought me up before the Un-American Activity Committee, and also later on I refused to cooperate with them, and they brought me to trial under circumstantial evidence

and tried to give me the, the attorney, the U.S. attorneys, which there were three of them, were fighting for the jury to give me twenty years. But they finally the jury come back and find me guilty as charged, being a member of an affiliate or associate with communists, with the Party, or affiliate with communists period. 401

And that judge brought me back to sentence me. He say, "We'll give you ten years, running concurrently," meaning you'll only do five. And the behavior on [inaud. - 410] however three, because I have did a year in jail before I went to trial. So we discussed, and he introduced, told me to contact some people there, was I - I'd got into the culinary union, Local 110, but I brought my traveling card and recommendation, a letter from New Orleans from the packing house union. And I happened to go up on Sixth Street during that time. That's where the culinary union was located, Local 110. And I joined that, and I begin to learn by talking to people, meeting peoples, which I begin to learn. I - going to the bookstore, and I started going to meetings, and I met with those people who were from the culinary, the culinary union, which was about five or six Party members used to meet and discuss the issues in the culinary. That's the one I was instructed to contact by someone else I know very well, and I started going to that meeting, and they soon began to, to break up and go into other groups. And I went into the - the started to attend meetings with all the groups. 441

Why we did not meet anymore, I - culinary Party group. Then I started to going to meetings, different meetings concerning the - about jobs, or fighting racism, or issues around, how [inaud. - 448] issues that benefit the people. And I happened to go to different

Kenrid Alexandry

meeting. I happened to meet ~~Kenrid Alexandry~~. She was seemed very nice. I would go to meetings where I would hear her talk, and I was very much concerned of her talk. I liked the way she talked. I was concerned. I learned a whole lot from her. She was, inspired me very much. And I liked very much - repeat that - I learned something by going to Party meetings there and listening to her talk. And I say it was very important, very good. 465

And I began - then the bookstore moved on Valencia. At 522 Valencia Street. I happened to meet another person. I told them I was not going to get into that, back to the Party. He begin to talk. He said, "Long as you had [inaud. - 474]," and I was saying there were some things I didn't agree with. And he kept - I said, "I will [inaud. - 477], I will support the issues. I have faith in the program. I have faith in the Party, the principle, but some of the people, some of the leadership I cannot understand." I begin to read Party literature, when every year - I think it was every four years they have convention and they pass resolutions, resolution on top of resolution concerned with Afro-America, and I still couldn't get the understanding what was going on. It created doubt in my mind. 491

Sister Kenrid, I should say the late Sister Kenrid - I went to the memorial when she passed, a tragedy death, and I went there that Saturday to the place, Congress Church of Oakland, Saturday, 29th, May 29th, 1993, at 3:00 p.m. I was on the program. And I said what inspiration. I told about, tell about the labor movement, tell about when they have trade union conference somewhere. I would speak at meetings. She was the chair of the Party in northern California,

and I would say that she will be missed. I never believe that we would find anyone to take her place. 523

I want to say I learned a great deal. Sometime when I be saying things, go there to get advice, to get some understanding because I know she had experience about people, and she understands people cuz she was down to earth. She was a grassroots teacher and leader. I would go to talk to her, and I would say, "Kenrid, I got a problem." And she'd say, "Well, tell me about it. Talk to me." And I'd start talking, and I'd have my opinion about it. She'd say, "Now, Lee." Now, when she say, "Lee," I had a chance. But when she rephrased and say, "Now, Lee Brown," I knew I was in trouble. 544

But [mumbles]. In her opinion. I respect her opinion. Cuz I loved her very much. Her family. Her, her husband. I said, "Definitely" [inaud. - 552], her husband, Franklin. Her was dedicated to the struggle of freedom not only for the Afro-American, but for the working people as a whole. She was dedicated, was willing to help people who was in trouble, who were lacking of understanding. And I'd listen at her and Franklin on the floor many a time, and I - it helped me, give me inspiration, political inspiration. And I read about her. Read about her in her struggle in the southland. I would say Kenrid at a time when, was the state chair of the Communist Party in California. I say she will be missed. My struggle - I struggled - [inaud. - 574] long time socialist died in the blaze. 576

I want to say this thing's I wrote an article to the Daily World in New York City, 2239 W. 23rd Street, New York City, a letter to the editor. My views on Kenrid Alexandry and the like. I, Lee Brown, a

member of the Party for fifty years. I have a fifty-year-old pin. As I read Kenrid article, pertaining to social and the U.S. Left, August 1990. Enclosed I will come to not only in California, but nation to read the article. I also encourage everyone to read this article by Kenrid, one the report on January 27 and 28, '90 at the two-day conference, and the article from the conference, "Equality," '90 October 6th and 7th, '90, Winston, at Winston Unity Center. I got in and I got a lots out of the three articles. They encouraged me to move forward, that among the masses. 620

After reading these articles encouraged me to get involved, get involved in more mass organizations, work with retirees, senior groups, national, in homes, about houses. The reason I encourage other comrades to read, study Kenrid's writing, because it is very encouraging, very encouraging. It is extraordinary work, comrade Kenrid is doing during this period. 637

I, and my opinion of her today, to me and my views of her, that she is a Mary, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Harriet Tubman, and I will always remain her brother in struggle. Keep up the good work, [inaud. - 649], Lee Brown. Mark well.

I will be waiting for the trial case to come out of Texas, and also wait on the file that come from the FBI. Then I have a lot of articles, a lot of letter to the editors, and may have other things that the author can interview me, talk with me about, and I can bring on more about myself in the labor movement in the struggle for peace. I had articles when I went in, went to the conference in New York City in 1981, and I met a number of peoples from all over the country, including young brothers and sisters from the southland,

from Africa, from Central America, Latin America, from Canada, the Soviet Union. Matter of fact, from all over the world. I've met people. I learned a lot of experience. I want to say I dedicate myself and I want to understand and the masses understand that I believe deeply in my heart to continue fighting for freedom and justice and equality. The liberation by the working people that we will have one world of peace, at last when the world can say we can have millions of jobs. When her an for president under the Republican party, he say jobs. And I want to say that we can still - friendship can save the world. Peace. Get rid of racism, white supremacy. We can do it. We will do it. We can do it. If we always have freedom, justice, and equality. Meaning that to every American, every person throughout the world, should no child, nobody should go to bed hungry. 718

Every child and person throughout the world should have a decent home, decent food, decent health, security. Those who are able to work should have jobs. The seniors, disabled should have . . .

END SIDE A, BEGIN SIDE B

727

Lee Brown is testing. Yes, I am testing. Lee Brown is testing. I am testing. Yes, I am testing, testing, testing. Testing. Monday morning, the 28th, 1994. I'm going to talk about putting together my manuscript for my life story. Thank you kindly. Thank you kindly. thank you kindly. 733

Lee Brown, 3/17/94

001

My name is Lee Brown. I am going to make a report by during the time when I was released from Texarkana, Texas. It was the United States District, Southern District of Texas in Texarkana, Texas. I, Lee Brown, was released July the 11th, 1960. I was released to a relative of mine in Texas, Hitchcock, Texas, in that area, the place that I was picked up at when the FBI finally caught up with me. 013

In that year, and I was taken back to New Orleans, the State of Louisiana, and stayed in the jail there for one year before I went to trial. But I'm going to talk about from the date that I was released, in July 11th, July the 11th, 1960, the year of 1960. 021

And I repeat I was released to my, one of my relatives, one of my relatives, and Hitchcock, Texas, in that area. And I stayed there a while till I served out the time. I think I had about nine months to serve that time out in that area. It was something like on the parole. I was paroled in that area until I served, and I remained there until I served the time. 030

And I left there and came back to New Orleans. I happened to get in touch with my former wife. That, I wanted to see my son, Brownie, where I called him Brownie. And I had a chance - she told me to come over and see him, and I went over there, and I set down and talked with her, with my son. She fixed me a dinner for that night, and we set up and talked, and I talked with Brownie. And I want to say that evening when I was there talking to her, I could look out and see Brownie setting outside, all alone. And I would

think the job that I got to do. The kid was living in the project. And he was growing up - I don't know, Brownie may have been around going on nine years of age, or a little older. And I was wanting him, that I stayed around a while, trying to get me a job. 052

I went back, our Local 207, had merged with the packing house workers' union. So I went there and talked to the president of the packing house union, which our union had merged with him. And he said that "Brown, we don't have anything here, but I will give you a letter, give you a traveling card, to go to other places," which I said I would go to--California. I'd written a letter to, to Bill Chestnut, the ILW representative. He was the director at 450 Golden Gate, at the, the National office there, to William Chestnut. And he sent me a letter back and say, uh, "We can't guarantee you a job, but if you want to come, you're welcome, and we'll see what we can do for you." "See what we can do." 068

So the packing house representatives there, one of the business agents that we was, you want to go to California, San Francisco? I says, "Yes, I'll have a better chance of getting the job." And he say, "We would make sure we'd give you the proper identification." And they - one of the uh, representatives, the business agent, bought me a ticket. He say, "Get you clothes and things, whatever you want to take with you, to, to San Francisco." And I was talking to a fellow there, named Mr. Preston Holmes. An old trade union, an old longshoreman with the ILA there in New Orleans. And he say, "Brown, I heard you say . . ." He used to come over and visit - uh visit Mrs. Poplars there, and I was talking, and Mrs. Poplars what we call Marmese. Well, Marmese said, "Mr. Holmes, you have a son in

Marmese

San Francisco, don't you?" He says, "Yes." He said, "Well, Brown is going to San Francisco, and . . ." 085

And Mr. Holmes say, "I'm going to give you my son's address and phone number. When you get there, you call him." So he say, "You tell my son when you call him so he, he can identify you, cuz I'm going to give you - tell him that he sent me two shirts named initial JH, and he will know, meaning Joe Holmes. And tell him my name, tell him so he can know you, my name is Preston Holmes. Tell him his father, Preston Holmes, told him to identify the shirts, JH." Just Joe Holmes. 097

So I left. I had my few clothes, and I take it, and I left some of my books up on Drive Street. Like it was 2717 Drive, in New Orleans, Louisiana. And I told ^{Miss} ~~Miss~~ Poplar~~s~~ to take care of my books and my - I left my trunk there with my books in it, and some of the newspapers from the trial. And I told her I was going, and all of them greet me, those in the house who knew me, all of them greet me. Prepared me food. All of them got together, give me a donation. And I was - made me very proud. And I was going on to continue, coming into San Francisco to continue my struggle, continue to fight because when I was in the institution in Texarkana, Texas, I begin to learn. I talked to people there, made friends. And all nationalities. Trade unionists. I met religious brothers, some of them from different religious beliefs, some talk with from the Nation of Islam. And I got along fine. 120

One of the officers talked with me there. He was very friendly. He was telling me that he had been to all the institutions. He - kind of old - he says, "I'm fixin' to retire." And I was talking to him about

a new trial I'd - my attorney had filed a new trial, which my attorney's passed now, Earl Amadie, in New Orleans, the late Earl Amadie. And he advised me, he say, "If I was you, I would serve my time. I would not accept a new trial because you may go and come back with more time than you got." Said, "You don't have too [inaud. - 132] but serving, all but three years. Do these three years. I would just advise you cuz I've been around these institutions, and I have some knowledge." 135

During that period, I did not have long to stay in the institution. My time was very limited. And I think during that time I only had 261 days total. The I'd have been free. It was no need accepting. They wait till the last minute when my time had got down very low. Time had got down very low, and they said word - it was in the newspaper there - and the warden called me in, and during that period I was in segregation. They had separated me. Causing some of the conflict they claim we was talking, discussing. We was [inaud. 148] different issues, and a young man, when the officer walked up that day, we was all - about six of us setting on the grass, discussion. Some men may was playing ball. Some was playing baseball. Some of them playing body ball, and whatever. And six of us was concerned of discussing issues [inaud. 152] that was confronting us, and we were down talking. And one of the guards walked up, and one of the young men was there, and the guard was talking, say, "I, how's the weather? How you all fellows doing today?" 156

One of the young men say, "It's cloudy." As I had some *Mafooni* knowledge of [inaud. 158], I understood that symbolic talk, that symbol talk. That mean that somebody was in there that was talking

things that, that he was not allowed to talk. We were discussing our own opinion and freedom, freedom of speech, and we were discussing the condition that we were living in, the condition that we confronted with outside, and why it was so many of us black people in the institutions, federal and state. And in the city jails, and the state prisons and the federal institutions. 167.

And the next morning, one of the guards had him blew his whistle, said, "Brown, now, all the way out." That mean that I getting ready - they was going to take me out. He say, "You going this morning. We're going to put you in, in the segregation." That mean they going to separate me. And I didn't know what it was the first time, wasn't [inaud. 174]. When I did find out, they put me in a cell by myself, and they - which I've been in a cell by myself in down in New Orleans, during before I went to trial. [inaud. 177] In a court, which I was tried by a Judge Skelly Wright, during the early '50s, or the late '50s. 180

And when I got into segregation at Texarcana, Texas, I was locked up in it long that one of the inmates come by who was a trustee. He says, "You need any books or whatever you need, commissary, just, you know, I got the slips. If you got commissary, I'll put it down, you sign the slip and I'll bring it to you, your books." And the segregation was not bad. The onliest thing about segregation is I couldn't go out on the yard. 188

So they - I was working out in the garden. The little garden, the garden that they had on the outside. The institution. Which I had taken up vegetable growing. I got [inaud. 192] on that. I wanted to study vegetables because in my studies and research, that

I begin to learn that vegetables was same as human. They had to have a food, water, and oxygen, same as the human being. I said if I studied vegetable life, I can find, have the knowledge of human life. So I taken up and complete it, and I received a certificate for vegetable growing, and I also taken up general education, and I received a high school diploma, and I learned there, certificate on education. 205

And that day when I was released, at first they called me in before I released, about five days, and measured me for a suit, give me some shoes, new shoes, new hat, and give me, I think it was - either \$75 or \$100 and some odd, I don't [inaud. 212] now, and I could [inaud. 213] the, the - the one who said to me getting out, one of the direction officers, I say, "I," I think his name is Mr. Anderson. The chief classified and paroler. I say, he say, "Well, take you to the bus station," which is in Texarkana, Texas, "and put you on the bus for Hitchcock, Texas." I give me my ticket and they give you a change in clothes, work clothes, not khakis like they showed you. It was in the little magazine they give you - when you first go there, they give you a little booklet, give you information on how you're supposed to do and what you do when you get ready, to what you're going to [inaud. 226]. So they say you could take notes, and as I was reading and going into different subjects, the labor movement, the religious movement, the political movement, and I taken up - I said it had one large book they call Social Science Encyclopedia. That cover everything dealing with human beings. And I studied that, and I put down notes and had a young fellow there from New Orleans. He worked also in the education department. 234

He had complete - had the write, he knew how to use the typewriter and everything. He says - I asked him would he put these, type these notes up for me, what I marked off and what I printed. I wasn't a good writer, but I could print a lot of stuff. I put it together. And he taken it and typed it up for me. And now - when I got ready to go, you had to bring your notes - it tells you right in the little book for me what they give you that you can bring out notes or even your life story. When I went back before the warden, he looked at it. He said, the way he looked at all my certificates, what I received, and he said, "You can't take this one with you." That was my notes. And he said they cause trouble if you take this out and begin to study it, because I had - I went back in the books and research on that religious movement, political movement, labor movement, in that, in the books. 252

And I studied more, find more about different things, the political issues, than I had read on the outside. So he say, "You can't take this." I don't know what he did with it. So I came on, left there, as I before say, come on to Texarkana, left Texarkana and come on to Texas, left there and came on, came on to New Orleans. Talked with the packing house representatives, and I'd written a Bill Chester letter at the ILU here in San Francisco, and Bill told me that you can come on and we'll do what we can for you, the best that we can. So I left. I get back over there again. They put me on the bus and ticket, ~~and~~ ^{food and chicken - a little money} and give me some [inaud. 265] and were very nice. And I came on into San Francisco on the Greyhound bus. And I got in San Francisco, I had Joe Holmes' telephone number, his address what his son, what his father had given me to call him when I get to San Francisco. 270

So I went to the telephone there in the bus station. It was around 4:00 o'clock that morning, maybe a little later. And I called his home, and his wife answered the phone. I said, "May I speak to Brother Joe Holmes, please?" And she say, "No, he's not here at the time. He works at night." Then she say, "Hold it just a moment. I think I hear him coming him." He had to raise up his garage door. She says, "Yes, that's him." She say, "You stay on the phone, and I'll call him come to the phone." 279

"And I call him." Come to the phone, and Joe came to the phone and I told him, I give him the information, what his father had told me to tell him. And he says, "I'm coming right down to get you at the Greyhound." I said, "Correct." 282

That - the station was on 7th between Market and Mission Street. So about thirty minutes, maybe not that long, he drove up. He says, "Are you Lee Brown?" He walked in the station. I was setting in the seat with my suitcase. I said, "Yes, I'm Lee Brown." He say, "Well, I'm Joe Holmes, Preston Holmes' son in New Orleans." He say, "Come up." 289

He even wanted to take the suitcase. I said, "I can take it. Thank you, Sir." So he brought me to his home and told his wife, said, "Get up and fix this brother some breakfast." I said, "No, I can wait. I'm not that hungry. You all rest." He said, "But I works at night," but he went on to bed and say, told his wife to - and he had an extra room there, and say, "You go to bed and get ready, finish drinking coffee, whatever. The wife can cook breakfast for you if you want it." And I stayed there. 299

The next day it was an holiday. I think it was Thanksgiving, if I'm not correct, but it - and they went over to a friend called Della. She was a member of the ILWU Local 6, the warehouse workers. She worked there, coffee factory here in San Francisco. We went over to her home. They taking me over there. They had something like a party, Thanksgiving dinner. People laughing and she knew - all of her friends, her neighbor was there, and come around. 310

And I was very nice. When I got there, they started to introducing me to people, their friends, and whatever, and telling them why I came. Or [inaud. 312] most of the people there was from the South and New Orleans. I was from New Orleans, and they had Soothsbury, over across the river. But not - I was very happy. And they started talking in loud [inaud. 317]. Even - they say we're going to pick up donations for this brother. They passed the hat. Say, "We heard about his case also." 320

So that made me very proud. Or successful, and I learned through these struggles. That's why today that I want to share this knowledge, this information, that my life can be a guide, a history, and I feel that the people, working people, poor people, [inaud. 329] regardless of who are, what's your religion, what's your philosophy, or what's your political belief, have a right to know. 331

I learned, and I refer the day that the world I live in is the university of learning. And the people are teachers of the best teachers at the grassroots level. The labor movement I've learned many things. I learned a lot in the struggle. From the year that I joined the labor movement I was young, 16. My uncle knew the president with the labor, common labor union, knew Mr. Springen. I

Insert 1

from 7/22/98
Interview

LEE BROWN HUAC NOTES

1/25/98
There was a whole thing that the government had decided to concentrate on the ILWU in the South. They didn't want that union there. That's the whole thing. I was the next one they came after. I'd gotten word that they was gonna investigate me, the Un-American Activity Committee.

Before the hearing this old doctor from the Charity Hospital, he was a stool pigeon and say to me, "Tell 'em, cooperate with them." I said "Man cooperate with 'em for what? I ain't did nothing." "I'm gonna cooperate with them," he said. I say, "That's you. Don't come tell what to do. I ain't gonna hand nothing over to them." See they was trying to kill two birds with one stone. They was gonna try to get the Intenational through me. But I didn't cooperate. They thought I was a troublemaker, they didn't know I was a troubleshooter!

I ain't had a damn thing to tell them! Tell them what? I wasn't going to admit to nothing. Hell, I wanted to make a statement! That was the tactic I used. I said I wanted to make a statement first. They wouldn't let me make a stement so I wasn't gonna cooperate with them. I wanted to know was Senator Eastland a member of the Klan. Hell, they wanted to ask me what I belonged to, but I wanted to know what Eastland belonged to! That was the statement I wanted to make. I wanted to throw that monkeywrench in there. I don't remember where I got that idea from, but I came up with something for them! I blocked them -- they wouldn't let me make my statement, so that gave me reason not to answer their questions. I got as much right to know about Eastland as he got to know about me. Shit, I don't care who he represents! That's the reason I refused to answer, let them know all blacks folks wasn't afraid of their bullshit. They asked me some fifty questions and I refused to answer, I told

The man what supposed to be the chairman jumped down and ran all around the damn chair. Shit, I just rolled back in my chair like I wasn't thinking about him. He was talking about , "You don't scare me!" I said "You don't scare me either!" They figured they'd come down South and try to make a fool of out a black man. Try to make me act like a Uncle Tom, scratching my head. They didn't know I was ready for their asses! I'd had me a half-pint of Granddad that morning and I was ready. I told them I was ready to make a statement.

was looking good, too, well groomed! I had a sharp (Cobodi?) hair cut, I had on a steel-grey suit, black tie, white shirt, and black shoes. I didn't come there with one pants leg rolled up like I just came in off the farm.

They brought Arthur Eugene there to testify against me. He said I was a member of the Party. They asked him how he knew I was a member of the Party and he said he used to attend meetings with me. He said we used to have meetings standing in the street. "You don't know those Communists," he said, "they meet standing in the street!" Hell, he was lying so bad! They was fools to listen to his lies. Arthur Eugene was sitting in front of me, and I was sitting behind him in a big chair, like a king. (And with that half pint in me I felt like a king!) They told him point me out, and he turned around and pointed his finger at me and said "That's him." That picture was in the papers the next day. First time I ever seed a black man on the front page of the paper.

Arthur Eugene shocked me. I thought about how I had tried to help him years before. I didn't think he would do what he did. I don't know if they paid him for his spying or what. I know they did pay him for testifying at the hearing. In fact, to my surprise, they sent me a check for being at the hearing that Friday. They sent me \$25. I thought, "What kind of shit is this!" They probably had that check made out already, thought I was gonna collaborate with them.

After the hearing, when I was out on bail before I went on trial I rememebr this guy from Cuba, a brother. I told him that if I went to jail I couldn't get no more than five years. He told me, "Hell, I wouldn't give up five minutes for these people!" He made me feel kinda bad. He said he could get me on the sea train going over to Cuba. Maybe he was right. I thought about all the work I had done in the trade union movement and civil rights and now this was what they was trying to do to me. Make me sacrifice five years! It made me mad, but I decided to stay here. The Cuban brother stayed a few days and helped me to put together some flyers and things about my case, then he left.

Version 1

CHAPTER 9: TRIAL AND IMPRISONMENT

(from interview tape 3/2/94 pp. 10-15)

Brother Nelson passed, and the next thing I was subpoenaed. I was working at a cotton compress, and the marshall, U.S. Marshall, served me one day with a letter, a subpoena, to appear before the Un-American Activity Committee, which was a Friday. ^{2/11/57} Between those years, the early Fifties. And I appeared that Friday before the Un-American Activity Committee, and they asked me over fifty questions. And I refused to answer them. I told them, "Until I be able to make a statement," and they asked me - one of the committee members asked me, say, "What is your statement?" I say, "Before I - first, I'd like to ask you a question." 1/11/57
1

362

"Was Senator Eastland a member of the Klans?" And he said, "Nah, we ain't got you here to ask question. We have you here to answer question." They refused - when I asked them that question, they refused to let me make my - I say, "I would like to make a statement." I was before Judge Skelly Wright for November the 4th. Skelly Wright court. Facing the possibility of ten years, Brown say, "And I want to say again, "I refuse to answer any question" and I say, "Until I make a statement."

379

And we went on with that. And I didn't answer none. ^{offer the UAC} They recessed. ^{James McCain} And I thought it was all over with. I happened to go to the lawyer's office, one morning, passed by, and I was in that area, and I stopped. ^{He saw} And they say, "Brown, you walking around here. You have been indicted," cuz he used to kid with me a lot. James Mac, McCain, and I said, "Been indicted, Brother?" He said, "Yeah, you indicted by the grand jury. They gonna bring you before court and try you for being a member of the Party, the Communist Party of the United States, as a trade union." He say, ^{my claim} "When you sign that affidavit, that anti-Communist affidavit, you was a member of the Communist Party. ~~You were at the National Labor Relations Board.~~" I said, "I was not." 398-

So they finally brought me to trial on November the 4th, said that I was the member of the Communist Party. I was indicted ^{they set} March the 7th, 1957, served ^{but it} with a subpoena, was mailed to the wrong address. On March 29th, 1957, I reported the, to sign up my unemployment insurance. I was served there at the office to appear before the judge the

same afternoon to post bond. I was unable to obtain bond. I was held until Monday, April 1st, 1957, ~~and reject my claim~~, Division of Unemployment. ~~My being not available, they claimed that I was not available for work March the 29th. So I told them what happened. I was picked up at the Unemployment office that morning, March 29th. I were~~ arrested later that same day. ~~Continued to harass me. Attempt to frighten me because I was a militant labor leader.~~ 429

I was proud to be a member of the ILWU, one of the two, few unions which Negro had full emancipation, share leadership responsibility with white workers, anti-Communists did nothing but excuse that, the Eastlands, to frighten the paid informers. All important to take over and destroy the union. I fought to the best of my ability, with some support from unions, individuals, church members, some other trade unions, even from the Catholic priests, helped me. Some black Catholics helped me. Some visit where I was in jail before I went to trial. 449

So I went to trial back November 4th in front of Judge Skelly Wright. We had only one black American and the District Attorney had three District Attorneys, I think. I know it was two. Refused to set on the jury. Was a, was a female. And they got her off, ~~and it was an all-white jury. I was in court a whole week from testimony. They brought in a Chinese guy, and I never had see'd but one Chinese in New Orleans, and that was on the dock while he was running a restaurant. And I know - and they find some young Chinese, about in his thirties, to come to testify and say that I tried to get him to join the youth Communist Party. Never see'd him before.~~ 375

And they brought in a sister by the name of Sister Clara. Said I was a member of the Communist Party. I used to go to her house and sat down, we talked, we had a few drinks, but we never did discuss political affairs. We always discussing - she was asking me about the Nation of Islam. We were talking about Elijah Muhammad, black history, but we never did bring up the political issue ~~or any issue~~ or discuss the American Communist Party. And she said that I was a member of the Party. 491

I knew her husband a long time ago. He belonged - ~~he was~~ belonged to the Progressive Party during 1948, with Henry A. Wallace, which I worked. I was also working with the Progressive Party, getting

people signed up, registered so they could vote. We would go out in the rural area and from the - we had one from the Food and Tobacco workers, a representative, one from the Leather and Fur workers. We went out in the rural area at night, and one night that we were shot at. We was on a [coughs] the way coming back to New Orleans, and the man by the - one of our friends was driving the car, and he was shooting. He said, "Oh, I forgot. I got a pistol in here," so he opened his drawer, glove compartment, and he shot back about three times in the back while he was going. And they turned off. We didn't have no more trouble with them that night. 516

That's what was happening. We was very active, getting, organized people at the feed mills. We had a place out in Souzberry because it was fertilizer plant. We had the - a number of other - cotton compresses, textile, Blenko Company, which we had close to fifteen hundred employees at, at the um Flenko Plant in New Orleans, on Gravis Street dock. We had the rice mills, the fertilizer plants, and other mills. We was making some progress. 535

We also got - we got a trophy. One Labor Day parade is when labor used to parade in New Orleans. We got - the mayor was standing on the steps, and we stopped, and I made a few, said a few words. And that year we got a trophy. The mayor presented Local 207 with a trophy. 547

They find me - find me guilty, and Judge Skelly Wright - when I went before the Judge November, they - they find - I have to stay about that - I stayed in jail a whole year before they brought me to trial. They find me guilty that week, and I was - the judge say, "I'm going to give you five years." They had give me ten, but I say, "I'm going to run them concurrent. You only have to serve five." This was Judge Skelly Wright. Was the - he give me five. And I say, "This is an order." I was struggling, and I was indicted, find guilty. They sent me back to the parish prison there in New Orleans, and I stayed there a while till they come got me, and I was speaking through the bars there to the rest of the inmates. In the night, the word got around that I was going to leave that morning. The old buzzer was around, pulled around my cell. I was in a cell all alone. They didn't allow no one, even when I go to the shower. 589

They would clear the day room to put fright into the people that I was some dangerous character. By being a Communist you are dangerous! Even if you're black, you're dangerous! I want to say I spoke that night all the, a lot of the inmates. I made quite a bit of friends cuz during the time when I was going to trial, it would come on the radio inside the jail. And all the inmates there was, would clap for it, wish me good luck cuz I was standing up fighting for the rights of my people and working people as a true trade unionist. I wanted to see better conditions. I wanted to see better health meetings. I wanted to see better houses, better hospital, better schools, better education for our people, and particularly for the seniors, the retirees. I wanted to see decent homes, homes and public domain, that we all could live in peace. We all could have decent food, decent health, decent houses, decent education, in particular to study our history, black history. As a matter of fact, I'd like to see all nationalities have knowledge of their history. That's what I was fighting for. 631

And I went on after I talked that night, had one little guy, he kinda couldn't understand too much. He didn't know what he wanted to say. Sometime he'd start off right, and then he'd forget. He was there. I told him, I said, "Let him talk. Let him bring it out." He clapped his hands after he couldn't get out what he say, he just, he clapped. Other brothers in there clapped with him. I learned. When they picked me up in Houston, I, I happened to - to leave, jump bail. I was on the bond. I left there. I went to Houston. And I met some people there, and I talked. I raised funds. And they picked me up. They put me in Houston about - I was there about five days, and I was talking to the brothers the place I went out. Made friends. When they find out that the black folks, the young black folks, were not scared of the word "Communist." They'd read it in the paper. They'd say - some of them ask me what do it mean? What are they saying? I'd say to them I was fighting for the rights of my people, fighting for the rights of working people, trade union, decent home, decent education, decent jobs, and definitely get rid of race discrimination. 670

In those times we would call it segregation and Jim Crow. And I made friends, and they hated to see me go that morning, when the marshalls come to get me. It made me feel good. The brothers was

clapping, saying, "Good luck, Brother. Good luck." And I used to talk to them, and some of them wanted - they come to Houston. They let them come in my cell's open after - they would come in and talk and one by one ask me questions. Some guy was in there for - I met all kinds. Murder, all kind of - talked with them. And they accept my advice. To give me strength, give me courage, and give me experience. And bit of the love and the respect from my people and the trade union as a whole, true trade unionists as a whole. 701

I want to say I learned much. I understood when I went. They taking me to Galveston, laid me over a night and a day in Galveston, and I also . . . 708

AT TEXARKANA

(fromn interview tape 3/17/94, pp 3-10)

One of the officers talked with me there. He was very friendly. He was telling me that he had been to all the institutions. He - kind of old - he says, "I'm fixin' to retire." And I was talking to him about a new trial I'd - my attorney had filed a new trial, which my attorney's passed now, Earl Amadie, in New Orleans, the late Earl Amadie. And he advised me, he say, "If I was you, I would serve my time. I would not accept a new trial because you may go and come back with more time than you got." Said, "You don't have too [inaud. - 132] but serving, all but three years. Do these three years. I would just advise you cuz I've been around these institutions, and I have some knowledge." 135

During that period, I did not have long to stay in the institution. My time was very limited. And I think during that time I only had 261 days total. The I'd have been free. It was no need accepting. They wait till the last minute when my time had got down very low. Time had got down very low, and they said word - it was in the newspaper there - and the warden called me in, and during that period I was in segregation. They had separated me. Causing some of the conflict they claim we was talking, discussing. We was [inaud. 148] different issues, and a young man, when the officer walked up that day, we was all - about six of us setting on the grass, discussion. Some men may was playing ball. Some was playing baseball. Some of them playing body ball, and whatever. And six of us was concerned of discussing issues [inaud. 152] that was

confronting us, and we were down talking. And one of the guards walked up, and one of the young men was there, and the guard was talking, say, "I, how's the weather? How you all fellows doing today?" 156

One of the young men say, "It's cloudy." As I had some Masonic knowledge, I understood that symbolic talk, that symbol talk. That mean that somebody was in there that was talking things that, that he was not allowed to talk. We were discussing our own opinion and freedom, freedom of speech, and we were discussing the condition that we were living in, the condition that we confronted with outside, and why it was so many of us black people in the institutions, federal and state. And in the city jails, and the state prisons and the federal institutions. 167.

And the next morning, one of the guards had him blew his whistle, said, "Brown, now, all the way out." That mean that I getting ready - they was going to take me out. He say, "You going this morning. We're going to put you in, in the segregation." That mean they going to separate me. And I didn't know what it was the first time, wasn't [inaud. 174]. When I did find out, they put me in a cell by myself, and they - which I've been in a cell by myself in down in New Orleans, during before I went to trial. [inaud. 177] In a court, which I was tried by a Judge Skelly Wright, during the early '50s, or the late '50s. 180

And when I got into segregation at Texarcana, Texas, I was locked up in it long that one of the inmates come by who was a trustee. He says, "You need any books or whatever you need, commissary, just, you know, I got the slips. If you got commissary, I'll put it down, you sign the slip and I'll bring it to you, your books." And the segregation was not bad. The onliest thing about segregation is I couldn't go out on the yard. 188

So they - I was working out in the garden. The little garden, the garden that they had on the outside. The institution. Which I had taken up vegetable growing. I got [inaud. 192] on that. I wanted to study vegetables because in my studies and research, that I begin to learn that vegetables was same as human. They had to have a food, water, and oxygen, same as the human being. I said if I studied vegetable life, I can find, have the knowledge of human life. So I taken up and complete it, and I received a certificate for vegetable growing, and I also taken up general education, and I received a high school diploma, and I learned there, certificate on education. 205

And that day when I was released, at first they called me in before I released, about five days, and measured me for a suit, give me some shoes, new shoes, new hat, and give me, I think it was - either \$75 or \$100 and some odd, I don't [inaud. 212] now, and I could [inaud. 213] the, the - the one who said to me getting out, one of the direction officers, I say, "I," I think his name is Mr. Anderson. The chief classified and paroler. I say, he say, "Well, take you to the bus station," which is in Texarkana, Texas, "and put you on the bus for Hitchcock, Texas." I give me my ticket and they give you a change in clothes, work clothes, not khakis like they showed you. It was in the little magazine they give you - when you first go there, they give you a little booklet, give you information on how you're supposed to do and what you do when you get ready, to what you're going to [inaud. 226]. So they say you could take notes, and as I was reading and going into different subjects, the labor movement, the religious movement, the political movement, and I taken up - I said it had one large book they call Social Science Encyclopedia. That cover everything dealing with human beings. And I studied that, and I put down notes and had a young fellow there from New Orleans. He worked also in the education department. 234

He had complete - had the write, he knew how to use the typewriter and everything. He says - I asked him would he put these, type these notes up for me, what I marked off and what I printed. I wasn't a good writer, but I could print a lot of stuff. I put it together. And he taken it and typed it up for me. And now - when I got ready to go, you had to bring your notes - it tells you right in the little book for me what they give you that you can bring out notes or even your life story. When I went back before the warden, he looked at it. He said, the way he looked at all my certificates, what I received, and he said, "You can't take this one with you." That was my notes. And he said they cause trouble if you take this out and begin to study it, because I had - I went back in the books and research on that religious movement, political movement, labor movement, in that, in the books. 252

And I studied more, find more about different things, the political issues, than I had read on the outside. So he say, "You can't take this." I don't know what he did with it. So I came on, left there, as I before say, come on to Texarkana, left Texarkana and come on to Texas, left there

and came on, came on to New Orleans. Talked with the packing house representatives, and I'd written a Bill Chester letter at the ILU here in San Francisco, and Bill told me that you can come on and we'll do what we can for you, the best that we can. So I left. I get back over there again. They put me on the bus and ticket, and give me some fried chicken and a little money and were very nice. And I came on into San Francisco on the Greyhound bus. And I got in San Francisco, I had Joe Holmes' telephone number, his address what his son, what his father had given me to call him when I get to San Francisco. 270

So I went to the telephone there in the bus station. It was around 4:00 o'clock that morning, maybe a little later. And I called his home, and his wife answered the phone. I said, "May I speak to Brother Joe Holmes, please?" And she say, "No, he's not here at the time. He works at night." Then she say, "Hold it just a moment. I think I hear him coming him." He had to raise up his garage door. She says, "Yes, that's him." She say, "You stay on the phone, and I'll call him come to the phone." 279

"And I call him." Come to the phone, and Joe came to the phone and I told him, I give him the information, what his father had told me to tell him. And he says, "I'm coming right down to get you at the Greyhound." I said, "Correct." 282

That - the station was on 7th between Market and Mission Street. So about thirty minutes, maybe not that long, he drove up. He says, "Are you Lee Brown?" He walked in the station. I was setting in the seat with my suitcase. I said, "Yes, I'm Lee Brown." He say, "Well, I'm Joe Holmes, Preston Holmes' son in New Orleans." He say, "Come up." 289

He even wanted to take the suitcase. I said, "I can take it. Thank you, Sir." So he brought me to his home and told his wife, said, "Get up and fix this brother some breakfast." I said, "No, I can wait. I'm not that hungry. You all rest." He said, "But I works at night," but he went on to bed and say, told his wife to - and he had an extra room there, and say, "You go to bed and get ready, finish drinking coffee, whatever. The wife can cook breakfast for you if you want it." And I stayed there. 299

The next day it was an holiday. I think it was Thanksgiving, if I'm not correct, but it - and they went over to a friend called Della. She was a member of the ILWU Local 6, the warehouse workers. She worked there, coffee factory here in San Francisco. We went over to her home.

They taking me over there. They had something like a party, Thanksgiving dinner. People laughing and she knew - all of her friends, her neighbor was there, and come around. 310

And I was very nice. When I got there, they started to introducing me to people, their friends, and whatever, and telling them why I came. Or [inaud. 312] most of the people there was from the South and New Orleans. I was from New Orleans, and they had Soothsbury, over across the river. But not - I was very happy. And they started talking in loud [inaud. 317]. Even - they say we're going to pick up donations for this brother. They passed the hat. Say, "We heard about his case also." 320

So that made me very proud. Or successful, and I learned through these struggles. That's why today that I want to share this knowledge, this information, that my life can be a guide, a history, and I feel that the people, working people, poor people, [inaud. 329] regardless of who are, what's your religion, what's your philosophy, or what's your political belief, have a right to know. 331

I learned, and I refer the day that the world I live in is the university of learning. And the people are teachers of the best teachers at the grassroots level. The labor movement I've learned many things. I learned a lot in the struggle. From the year that I joined the labor movement I was young, 16. My uncle knew the president with the labor, common labor union, knew Mr. Springen. I never will forget. At the top, was a member of the union. Worked at Todd Johnson dry dock in Galveston, and he - and they taken me to the meeting on a Saturday. And I was the youngest kid. I was a young man, a young 16-year-old kid, and they - and I signed for my book, paid for my book, and they accept me that Saturday as a union member, swore me in, and gave me - I'll never forget. It was a black book. 352

Labor union man. And I struggled. I worked. And I want to say that I had learned the best education, the proletarian education, me, a trade union, rank and file education, grassroot education, from the labor movement. And I learned from other peoples there. In Texas at the dry dock. I struggled. 362

The history of a struggle. I also am - there when I got in to New Orleans, I was [inaud. 366], I went into the - I was a member of the Mason, Masonic. And also I begin to learn about Islam. I've studied - I

learned the history through Mason, through Nation of Islam, through the labor movement. I begin to educate myself. I learned. These things that I learned were the benefit not only for me, but for the masses of working people to share my wisdom, my knowledge, and experience. I want to share a guideline, struggle a better way of life. I learned. And I want to share it with not only the young, but with the elderly and all who are willing to learn. I learned. 382

(from interview tape 3/17/94, pp. 1-3)

I am going to make a report by during the time when I was released from Texarkana, Texas. It was the United States District, Southern District of Texas in Texarkana, Texas. I, Lee Brown, was released July the 11th, 1960. I was released to a relative of mine in Texas, Hitchcock, Texas, in that area, the place that I was picked up at when the FBI finally caught up with me. 013

In that year, and I was taken back to New Orleans, the State of Louisiana, and stayed in the jail there for one year before I went to trial. But I'm going to talk about from the date that I was released, in July 11th, July the 11th, 1960, the year of 1960. 021

And I repeat I was released to my, one of my relatives, one of my relatives, and Hitchcock, Texas, in that area. And I stayed there a while till I served out the time. I think I had about nine months to serve that time out in that area. It was something like on the parole. I was paroled in that area until I served, and I remained there until I served the time. 030

And I left there and came back to New Orleans. I happened to get in touch with my former wife. That, I wanted to see my son, Brownie, where I called him Brownie. And I had a chance - she told me to come over and see him, and I went over there, and I set down and talked with her, with my son. She fixed me a dinner for that night, and we set up and talked, and I talked with Brownie. And I want to say that evening when I was there talking to her, I could look out and see Brownie setting outside, all alone. And I would think the job that I got to do. The kid was

living in the project. And he was growing up - I don't know, Brownie may have been around going on nine years of age, or a little older. And I was wanting him, that I stayed around a while, trying to get me a job.

052

I went back, our Local 207, had merged with the packing house workers' union. So I went there and talked to the president of the packing house union, which our union had merged with him. And he said that "Brown, we don't have anything here, but I will give you a letter, give you a traveling card, to go to other places," which I said I would go to--California. I'd written a letter to, to Bill Chestnut, the ILW representative. He was the director at 450 Golden Gate, at the, the National office there, to William Chestnut. And he sent me a letter back and say, uh, "We can't guarantee you a job, but if you want to come, you're welcome, and we'll see what we can do for you." "See what we can do." 068

So the packing house representatives there, one of the business agents that we was, you want to go to California, San Francisco? I says, "Yes, I'll have a better chance of getting the job." And he say, "We would make sure we'd give you the proper identification." And they - one of the uh, representatives, the business agent, bought me a ticket. He say, "Get you clothes and things, whatever you want to take with you, to, to San Francisco." And I was talking to a fellow there, named Mr. Preston Holmes. An old trade union, an old longshoreman with the ILA there in New Orleans. And he say, "Brown, I heard you say . . ." He used to come over and visit - uh visit Mrs. Poplar there, and I was talking, and Mrs. Poplar what we call "Mommie". Well, Mommie said, "Mr. Holmes, you have a son in San Francisco, don't you?" He says, "Yes." He said, "Well, Brown is going to San Francisco, and . . ." 085

And Mr. Holmes say, "I'm going to give you my son's address and phone number. When you get there, you call him." So he say, "You tell my son when you call him so he, he can identify you, cuz I'm going to give you - tell him that he sent me two shirts named initial JH, and he will know, meaning Joe Holmes. And tell him my name, tell him so he can know you, my name is Preston Holmes. Tell him his father, Preston Holmes, told him to identify the shirts, JH." Just Joe Holmes. 097

So I left. I had my few clothes, and I take it, and I left some of my books up on Drive Street. Like it was 2717 Drive, in New Orleans, Louisiana. And I told Mrs. Poplar to take care of my books and my - I left my trunk there with my books in it, and some of the newspapers from the trial. And I told her I was going, and all of them greet me, those in the house who knew me, all of them greet me. Prepared me food. All of them got together, give me a donation. And I was - made me very proud. And I was going on to continue, coming into San Francisco to continue my struggle, continue to fight because when I was in the institution in Texarkana, Texas, I begin to learn. I talked to people there, made friends. And all nationalities. Trade unionists. I met religious brothers, some of them from different religious beliefs, some talk with from the Nation of Islam. And I got along fine. 120

(from interview tape 3/31/94, pp1-10)

I am going to talk about the activity and the day that I was released from the Federal Institution of Correction in Texarcana, Texas on July 12th, the year 1960. 008

I'm going to talk about that, the things that I can remember. I will try to do the best I can with what I have. I was released - repeat - I was released on that day. A total of good time I had 263 days. That's C. O. Anderson, Chief, classification and parole officer. Released me that day. On the 12th day of July, 1960, I was released on parole. I were released in Texas, a little town by the name of Hitchcock. 023

My cousin there, before I were released, they wrote and asked them would he take me in. He wrote back and told them yes. Then I was released. I was released on the term I had about 180 days, the tenth and third 1960. I had to do that on the outside. My cousin accept me. Say that he would see to me surviving, and that day that I was released I was given a ticket to Hitchcock, Texas. I think it was on the Greyhound bus. I was released from the institution on that particular day, as I said before, July 1960. 040

When I got to Hitchcock, Texas, I went over to my cousin's house. Was not too far. Where the bus put me off, it wasn't a bus station, but he

put me off at Hitchcock. And I knew why it was, cuz I had been there before, and I got off the bus with my little belongings they give me. They give me a suit, a shirt, hat and a pair of shoes, and one dress of work clothes. It was khakis or cotton, whatever. 050

And I went on into my cousin's house, and I knocked on the door. They was so glad to see me. But that's the one, my cousin's wife, cousin Seely, the one that taken a stroke. They supposed to come up to the institution on that Saturday, and that Friday my other cousin [inaud. - 058] had an accident, an automobile, and got killed. When she was told they was very close together relation, she had a stroke and did not say another word. She was - that was my cousin's wife, cousin Seely. 063

And I went there, and they asked us, say, "Do you know who this?" She began to laugh and smile, began to smile. Indeed, she knew who I was cuz our family was very close. I was staying at her house with my cousin, Boss. We called him Boss. When I was picked up and taken back to Louisiana for trial. So definitely she knew. She was going to come to the institution in Texarcana, Texas to see me, [inaud. - 073], my cousin from Galveston [inaud. = 074]. Unfortunate, he had an accident, and he got killed. But when she learned - they told her, and she had a stroke, and did not speak anymore. 076

So I was - stayed with [inaud. 078], put my clothes, cousin say, "You're welcome," and they prepared a dinner for me that evening, and we set down and talked. The next morning I went around to see my other relatives that was living close by. I had some in Galveston, some in Hitchcock, some in Lemar, some in Texarcana. I went around, and I see'd those I had scattered all over Texas, Port Arthur, Houston, Beaumont, and also I let them know that I was back, and all of them was glad to see me. 088

So I stayed there a while, about a month or so. I worked and helped cousin Boss with, and cousin Seely, cuz they need help. I prepared her food. She had to eat electric - liquid food, I'm sorry. Liquid food. And whilst he was gone to work, he was glad for me to be there to help her [inaud. - 094] cuz they had helped me. And I stayed there, and I prepared it because she had relatives and friends and next door neighbors in the little area would see about her, or I would be there sometime to fix her food. Sometime I had another cousin, lived further

down. I don't know if you call it a road or whatnot, street. It was just something like a little gravel road. I would go and stay with one of my cousins were called - most of our people were called aunt and uncles.

102

Aunt Bernice - I call Aunt Bernice. Sometime I'll go there and stay, and I'd come back, cuz cousin Seely had quite a few friends and relatives, would be there all the time. Her daughter would stay there at night. And I would go and back and forth, to help take care of her, cuz I was released there, and I was going to do the best I can with what I had. 109

So I stayed there and finished out my parole, and I decide - I say I would go down to New Orleans, see my son, because that was - his mother was my common law wife, which was named Rose, and that's the only son that I was the father. And I say, "I must go down there and see about Brownie." I called him Brownie. I don't know Brownie's about eight or ten years old then, maybe. I'm not quite sure. I went down and - went down to New Orleans, and I went over to some friends of mine house there, and I say, "Well, I'm going over and see Rose." And also I went to my brother's house, and I called Rose. She had a telephone, and I called her, asked her could I come over and see Brownie. She said, "Sure."

126

So I happened to go over. My nephew or named late nephew Skeet, was alive then. He was a musician. He played with Fats Domino's brother in a small band. Fats' brother played in a little local band there in New Orleans. His name was Freddie Domino. 136

My nephew was named Skeet, and he blow saxophone or trumpet, played in Freddie's band. So he happened to be at my brother's house that day, and he says, "I'll take you, old Uncle Lee," so him and I got in the automobile. And one thing about Skeet - he happened to have in his glove compartment a little paper bag, a small bag of quarters. He say, "Here, Uncle Lee. This will help you some." And I thanked him very - I say, "Thank you, Skeet, for being so nice to your uncle." 148

This is hard to remember, hard to talk about. It's emotional. Cuz the struggle I went through and the struggle I experienced from the depth of my heart when I talked about it. I went there and I met Rose, and she was glad to see me. And Brownie was setting outside. He - maybe like I was like when I was young. Setting always alone, by

myself, alone. And she called him, said, "Brownie, come here." [inaud. - 160] Wanted to holler to loud about your daddy here, and he come and he saw who I was. He was young when I left, but he had grew up, and he knew me. He called me Lee. He ran to me, embraced me, hugged me. He was glad, very glad to see me. 167

And I was glad to see him. I was emotion. Sometime I get very emotion because it come depths of my heart. [inaud. - 172] is real. And I set there and talked. So Skeet say, "Uncle Lee, I'm gone." And I thanked him cuz for the gift of quarters, thanked him for bringing me over, and he says, Skeet say, "You in good hands now, Uncle." And I say, "So long, Skeet, take care of yourself." 180

I talked, and I was so glad to see Rose and Brownie, which I call him. We set down and talk, and I talked to him. Cuz I remember when he was young, I bought a set of encyclopedias. They called "The World." A set of red books. "The World Encyclopedia." And I told him to study, to read, and I picked out a subject dealing with Islam, and I told him, "You study that. Learn about and study your history." 194

I even bought him a few books - that wasn't too many books before I left in New Orleans on black history. I don't even think they had a black bookstore in New Orleans, not to my knowings. But I say, "You get what you can, and study your history," because before I left I was in the Nation of Islam. 202

I sometime I used to buy the Pittsburgh Courier, an Afro-American newspaper, and I began to read it. And I kept seeing a picture of a man talking about freedom, justice, and equality. To me he looked like a Chinese. And I kept wondering, I said, "What the Chinese is so concerned about black folks?" And what he was saying - he was talking about my history, talking about my freedom. And I was very much concerned, and finally on one day I had my play sister - people thought that we were sisters and brother. We resembled each other, and I got, I say, "Levoya, I want to - Levoya, I want you to write to this place in Chicago. 5335 So. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago 15, Illinois." And I finally got an answer. 225

Back during that time, it was - I received the answer. I was living and Mr. Lee Brown, they called me, at 2017 Jackson Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana. And he was telling me about the Nation. And the

name of the law, the beneficial, the most merciful, the lord of the world. And in the name of his divine messenger, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. 238

The next letter I received, Mr. Lee X Brown, 1017 Jackson Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana. And he told me, sent me another letter, and I received your letter, he told me. "I received your letter October the 26th, 1960. It is my hope by this time you have find a job. I am very much sorry to learn your difficulty in finding a job. Continuing to strive hard and pray to Allah, and you will be successful. I returned the clippings of notice of your trial. I thank you, like to keep them. I pray to Allah for your success and blessings. A salaam alechem. Your brother, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the messenger of Allah." 258

The next letter I received from the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, out of 1730 LaSalle Street in San Francisco, California. He was greeting me and wanted to know how was I was doing, was I was successful in finding work there. The letter was very short and right to the point. He say, "Seek [inaud. - 270], brother." He sent me greetings of [inaud. - 273], love, and peace. 274

When I begin, he sent me another letter, say that now, December 16, 1960. I'll say Mr. Lee X and Neptune, San Francisco, California. "A salaam alaikum. In the name of Allah, the most merciful and [inaud. - 284] master of the day of judgment. I submit to him and seek his divine guidance." He say, "Now you are a registered Muslim. Just take this letter to any mosque. May peace and blessings of Allah be upon you. A salaam alaikum. I am your brother. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad." 294

I'm going to make sure I'm dealing with the era when I was in the federal correction institution in Texarcana, Texas also. That's before some of these happening, before I went to the institution where I was sent in institution. I also was in the Nation of Islam. That's when I began to study history, reading the paper they called Mr. Muhammad Speaks. I learned quite a bit of history, going to the Masonic store there in New Orleans, into buy some books dealing with black history, somebody was not deep history like I can find here in San Francisco and also in Los Angeles when I used to do a lot of reading. I'm self-studying, self-educated, and whilst I was in the institution, I went to school, and I

received - I taken up vegetable growing, general education, and I received some certificates. I received a high school certificate, and I - that got lost somewhere during the time I've had notes typed up as I before said by a young man who was from New Orleans, and when I was going to school, I go through the books. There's one particular book that I liked and was very interested, and I was studying it cuz they were telling me all about - the title of that book was - it was Social Science Encyclopedia, tell me about what the human race was dealing with, what people was all about. It was teaching me about the [inaud. - 327] on psychology, sociology, archaeology, biology, socialism, communism, colonialism - every subject that human being was connected with I was learning it from this book, studying it, studying many things. Study history, some black history that I would find in the institution. Not very much. But I studied labor history was there. Not the kind that I was able to buy on the outside and get. Political history. I studied about communism, socialism. 339

And it was very interesting. I learned a - learned - study hard. I went to school. Some of the inmates was teachers, and some of them was very good. They would take their time with you and help you, and I was concerned in that institution that I learned. I talked to people there. I learned from people. We sat down and had discussion with each other. And it was very good, that I learned many things. 350

And I want to say I put it on both tapes that I was able -

When I was - I stayed a while there. When I was in San Francisco, I was thinking about the Party here, and I was advised to go to the bookstore - at that time it located on Market. I forget the title of the bookstore at the time, but it was the Party bookstore. One time is on - that's when I find it was on Market, and again it moved on Turk Street between, I think, Masonic and Jones on Turk. I went there on Market Street, and I happened to talk to the fellow, and I introduced myself to him. And he talked to me, and he asked me about the condition. We was discussing the condition, and I had some Party literature with me. But that time I told him I was not in the Party, on account of the - you know the - he knowed the story on the labor, under the - the Taft Hartley law, McCarren Act, and the Smith Act, and particular the one that struck labor. It was the Taft Hartley law. That they had brought me up before the Un-

American Activity Committee, and also later on I refused to cooperate with them, and they brought me to trial under circumstantial evidence and tried to give me the, the attorney, the U.S. attorneys, which there were three of them, were fighting for the jury to give me twenty years. But they finally the jury come back and find me guilty as charged, being a member of an affiliate or associate with communists, with the Party, or affiliate with communists period. 401

And that judge brought me back to sentence me. He say, "We'll give you ten years, running concurrently," meaning you'll only do five. And the behavior on [inaud. - 410] however three, because I have did a year in jail before I went to trial. So we discussed, and he introduced, told me to contact some people there, was I - I'd got into the culinary union, Local 110, but I brought my traveling card and recommendation, a letter from New Orleans from the packing house union. And I happened to go up on Sixth Street during that time. That's where the culinary union was located, Local 110. And I joined that, and I begin to learn by talking to people, meeting peoples, which I begin to learn. I - going to the bookstore, and I started going to meetings, and I met with those people who were from the culinary, the culinary union, which was about five or six Party members used to meet and discuss the issues in the culinary. That's the one I was instructed to contact by someone else I know very well, and I started going to that meeting, and they soon began to, to break up and go into other groups. And I went into the - the started to attend meetings with all the groups. 441

Why we did not meet anymore, I - culinary Party group. Then I started to going to meetings, different meetings concerning the - about jobs, or fighting racism, or issues around, how [inaud. - 448] issues that benefit the people. And I happened to go to different meeting. I happened to meet Kendra Alexander. She was seemed very nice. I would go to meetings where I would hear her talk, and I was very much concerned of her talk. I liked the way she talked. I was concerned. I learned a whole lot from her. She was, inspired me very much. And I liked very much - repeat that - I learned something by going to Party meetings there and listening to her talk. And I say it was very important, very good. 465

And I began - then the bookstore moved on Valencia. At 522 Valencia Street. I happened to meet another person. I told them I was not going to get into that, back to the Party. He begin to talk. He said, "Long as you had [inaud. - 474]," and I was saying there were some things I didn't agree with. And he kept - I said, "I will [inaud. - 477], I will support the issues. I have faith in the program. I have faith in the Party, the principle, but some of the people, some of the leadership I cannot understand." I begin to read Party literature, when every year - I think it was every four years they have convention and they pass resolutions, resolution on top of resolution concerned with Afro-America, and I still couldn't get the understanding what was going on. It created doubt in my mind. 491

(from interview tape 5/24/94, p. 6)

This is the letter I sent to Harry Bridges on November the 2nd, 1960. I was living at 2017 Jackson Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana. I sent a letter to brother Harry Bridges, 150 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco to California telling about that I was released from the federal institution in Texarkana, Texas on the 12th day of July, 1960. I was in [inaudible] until October 3rd, '60. I maintain I have been trying to find work, and they refuse, refuse at New Orleans. At this time tried to find work. Brother Bridges, you know that I was the vice president of Local 207 and late Brother Nelson was president of during this time I was called before the Un-America Activity Committee. And I was brought to trial and was find guilty and received a three-year sentence. It is - it is hard for me to find work up here because of the trouble I was in. This I am asking you for finance aid or help me until I can find employment. The system cost, of course, will be returned. I have been - I would appreciate much if you will state my case with Local 10 because I very much feel in need of help. My ten-year-old son is in school, and I am really need assistances. Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter. Lee Brown, end. At 2017 Jackson Avenue, New Orleans. I sent a copy to J. R. Roberson, the vice president. I sent a copy to Lou Goldblack, the finance treasurer. I send a copy to Brother William

Chester, the director of the ILWU, and they respond. And I thanked them very much for they help. It was really good, and it helped me a lot.

(from interview tape 5/31/94, pp. 1-9)

I came to San Francisco from New Orleans in the year of '60. I just had got released from the federal institution, Texarcana, Texas. And I spent a while with my cousin. I had to stay there about nine months because I were released nine months ahead on good time and behavior, they told me. I stayed there with my cousin, and I left there and went to New Orleans, Louisiana, went back there. When I got there, my union Local 207 was taken over by the United Packing Workers' Union. The President was named Peter Dent. So I went down and talked to Brother Dent, and he says, "Uh, Brother Lee, you know how it is. The work is slow here. And we have been taken over by the Packinghouse, United Packinghouse here," and I think the Local was 570, if I'm not mistaken. Been quite a while. But I'll try to get as much information as I can to go back and do a lot of research. I will do the best I can with what I have.

Yes, I talked to Brother Dent, and he say, "What I can do is write you a recommendation, give you a traveling card plus a letter, and that will help you in San Francisco." Cuz I'd talked to William L. Chester here, was the director of the ILWU, the International Director of the ILWU here at 150 Golden Gate here in San Francisco. I received a letter, and the letter told me, says, "If you come, we will try to do all we can to find you a job." I knowed I couldn't get no job in San Francisco - I mean in New Orleans, 'cause I've tried when I went to the unemployment office. I put my card in there. And people come up behind me. I'd get there when it opened and 'round 8:30 or 9:00, and I put the box, and I set there and set, waited on them to call me, and people come in, and after [inaudible]. I was observing. The people knowed me because they made a lot of propaganda and publicity. My picture was plastered on all the daily papers even, and I knew it would be hard. I was spinning my wheels for nothing. So I say I'd better try to do much better than I'm doing here to, to listen at and take what Bill Chester said if I would come to San

Francisco, he would try to find me work and do what he can. And [inaudible].

And I know the lady what I was living with before I - living in the apartment house. She runned an apartment house. Her name was Mrs. Matilda Poplar. She had about eight people living in the apartment, about eight tenants. Each of them had a room. And I had mine. When I went back, she told me, say, "You always, Brother Lee, have a place to live here. Money or no money." That's the same sister, Mrs. Poplar, wanted to put up her house for bond for me. The lawyer told - it wasn't necessary 'cause my bond was nothing but \$10,000, and [inaudible], get that. They got the bond, and I got out, and I was talking, and Sister Poplar said, "I have a friend name Mr. Preston Holmes. He have a son in San Francisco. I'm going to talk with him when he come."

Brother Holmes came, I think that evening. Mrs. Poplar started talking. She said, "Mr. Holmes," she say, "don't you have a son in San Francisco?" And Mr. Holmes say, "Yes, I do." She say, "Brother Brown is planning on going there pretty soon, to find work. He can't get none here. It's very hard for him, and he said he rather to, to go there and maybe be more successful." And he says, "Yes, my son is named Joe Holmes. And I will give you his phone number, and his address, and you tell him so he can know you and know that you talked to me that he, he sent me two shirts, and the shirts had J. H., meaning Joe Holmes. And I want to say you, I'll give you the phone number so he can know that I know you. Soon as you get to San Francisco, you call him, and he will take care of you."

When I got here, I called him on the telephone, but his wife answered the phone, and I asked to speak to Joe Holmes. At that time she say, "He is not here," and she say, "just a moment." She said, "I hear the car pulling up in front of the house. That may be him." She looked out of her window. She says, "Yes, that is him." She called him to the telephone, and his [inaudible], his father, his father. Yes, he called - she called him to the phone, and he told me to tell him his son sent him two shirts with the initial on J. H., meaning Joe Holmes. So he would know that his father had sent me to him. We're friends.

I spoke to him on the telephone and explained myself and told him, him about the shirts, and he told me to wait. "I will come right

away." And I set there in the station on 7th Street between Market and Mission Street, between Market and Mission. I'm going to try to make this clear as I can.

Joe came down out there at the Greyhound station, sat impatient. About twenty minutes he drove up. He picked me up within twenty minutes to his - drove me to his home on Neptune, which is a street. We got there. He introduced me to his wife, Mrs. Florence Holmes. Were living, it were, who were living himself, pledging and hospitality he showed me. And he told me it were mine. He showed me a room and say, "This room, you can live there, as long as you want." I were welcome. He put my luggage in the room, and I went to bed.

The next morning he got up and he went over to the ILW - I went over to the ILWU hall, 150 Golden Gate, to seek assistance to find a job. I talked to one of the representatives in the ILWU hall that was the international hall on 150 Golden Gate. He sent me over to the Warehouse Union Local 6 to talk to one of the union representatives to get work. I met some of the union brothers in the hall, and we was talking. The brothers taking up a collection and give me some money, helped me out until I could find work. I stood around for a few days, and I went over to the hall several times during the period. One of those workers sent me to his good friend to ask him for some financial assistance. When I got there, they give me \$100. Another friend give me ten, another one give me twenty-five. That was here in San Francisco, in the year of 1960, when I arrived from New Orleans, Louisiana.

I was treated very well, and I appreciate it. I had my papers and union card and - from the Local in New Orleans, the Packinghouse Workers, what Brother Thomas West had given me, the president at that time, the United Packing had taken over the union. Our Local 207, it wasn't no more Local 207. It was [inaudible] with 270, I believe, I mean 5 - I'm worry. 570. And I went to the, the Culinaries on Sixth Street, which was a Local 110. The letter what Brother Thomas West gave me, told me to take that to any union hall or union representative. So I went over there and I presented - I asked to see a business agent. Someone told me, "You see a business agent." And this business agent was named - he say, "You'll see a man by the name of Sam Daniels." And I talked to a lady there at the window, was information. I think her name was either

Cornelius or Mrs. Susie Barclay. And she say, "You wait. It's a business agent will be in here, and his name is Sam Daniels." She say, "You sit down in the union hall and get you some coffee, if you so care for any, you're welcome to it. You're amongst friends." That made me feel very good.

When Brother Daniels came in, a very low, dark-skinned fellow, and she point me out, cuz he went over by her before he went inside of his office. And she point him out to me. And he walked over to me, and he says, "My name is Sam Daniels, the business agent here, and I learned that you was looking for me. Would you please step in my office?" I say, "Thank you, Sir." So I went into his office, and he looked at the paper that the President West give me, and he looked at my union book. He say, "You're a union man." I say, "Yes, sir, I am. I been in the union for a number of years. Local 12, the Los Angeles Packinghouse, and I went there and I went down to New Orleans, Local 207, and we had problems," and "I heard about it, and read about some of the problems you had under the Taft Hartley that the trade unions staff had under the Tart Hartley law. Unfortunate that we ain't never been attacked so far. We had some problems, but I'm going to see what I can do." And he asked what kind of work. I said, "Any - I can do anything now cuz I need work." He say, "What about working in a hotel? Have you ever washed dishes?" I said, "Yes, I washed dishes. When I was in L.A., I used to ride the Union Pacific, Los Angeles [inaudible] Nebraska, washing dishes and what-not." Then he said, "Maybe put you on at the Fairmont Hotel at night until we see what we can do."

So it was another brother there. He was the janitortory, work in the union, keep the union clean, by the name of Brother Bible. Everyone called him Bible. But I believe his name were Willie Bible. If I'm not mistaken. He say, "This man - I want you to come back here tomorrow evening. Be sure you be here before 5:00 o'clock over to the union hall." Say, "I'm going to write out a work slip, and Brother Bible is gonna take you to the Fairmont Hotel and see can the steward there" - the steward was name Brother Ward, Johnny Ward - "see can he give you a few days to put you on, and I'm gonna call him and talk with him." In the meantime, Bill Chester, director, national director of the ILWU called, and I think a number of others called.

When I got there, they talked - Mr. Ward. Willie Bible take me into Mr. Ward's office. Ward talked to me, say, "I heard some about you, Brother." He say, "I once was in the union, the Marine Cooks and Stewards." I say, "Yes, sir." He say, "I heard you been in the union quite a while." I said, "Yes, sir." Mr. Ward was a tall, brown-skinned fellow, very friendly. He say, "Yeah, I put you to work around here washing dishes and what-not." So he say, "You, you go to work tonight." He told me I had to go and get in a uniform to put on [inaudible]. I started washing night, washing dishes. And I stayed washing dishes, oh, maybe a month or two. The next thing I learnt, he say, "I'm going to put you a good worker, Brown." He called me Brother Brown. "Brother Brown, I'm going to put you to work in janitorial, regular job." He say, "You got a regular job - you've been [inaudible] - you got a regular job. Working at night. You're a night porter now." I said, "Thank you kindly, Sir." [inaudible] It make me feel much better. It was good that I was success enough to get me a regular job. He say, "You a regular. You come in in your off days." I think it was - I had two off days. I can't really which two it were, but he say, "Now you have your regular job. You come in and you have time to come to work and come in at [inaudible] - I think it was 12:00, but I didn't wait till 12:00. I come in at 11:00, 11:30, to make sure that I go in, and change clothes, be ready to go to work, cuz I know how hard it was.

In New Orleans, while I was union representative, fought for the rights of workers. [inaudible] cotton compresses, the feed mill, the rice mill, and on the docks. Not deep water ships, but barge lines. I fought them and I went there, had [inaudible] New Orleans, back to New Orleans I thought about it. That's where I got my trade union education, working among people fighting for rights, better conditions, fighting for health needs, seniority, pension plan. When I got here in San Francisco at the hotel, as I become a porter, I began [inaudible].

[tape skips]

Fifteen of us, who were night porter, all the brothers were very friendly. We talked. We had lunch. They starting off, it was given us precooked food, and not - we started talking about we would like to stop, have time to cook, to fix our own food, because they didn't want the precooked food what the cook leave there. They been there, made from

other food, and he give it to the help. And I began to look in the union books, and I see in the union books where you had the right to have job stewards. Some call them shop stewards. I call them shop stewards, but that's what I like in New Orleans, job stewards. Shop stewards to see that the company carry out the working agreement that the workers get a fair. And I say, "We need a shop steward. We have some problems that we need to solve." And they say, "What about you?" One of the brother say, "What about you, Brother Brown? Would you take it?" I says, "Yes." "Seemed like you talk like you have some experience." I say, "I had a little experience working in New Orleans on the docks, working in the union. I also was on the negotiating committee, shop steward, vice president, executive board member, advisor to the president." I say, "I had a little experience, and I'll be willing to try to work so we can solve some of these problems." We talk to the steward, to Mr. Ward. We bring him our problems, our grievances, and ask him to work with us.

So we did. We signed up. We say, "Now you have to sign your name, and then I'll call the business agent, Mr. Daniels." We still's in Local 1, attend the Culinary Workers' Union. And he said, "You all wants a shop steward." I say, "The mens have signed." He say, "Yeah. Bringing in all [inaudible], and we would elect you shop steward, and we will notify the company. Notify Mr. Ward." So we went to the union hall, was still on 6th Street. I can't [inaudible] the address. The number, but it was on 6th Street, Local 110. So we went upstairs when Mr. Daniel come. He come about 8:00 o'clock that morning because we had to go home and sleep. He said, "I'll be there early, so you call can have the meeting." We had the meeting. We propose things that we wanted to discuss with Mr. Ward. And so when the brothers, like me, Mr. - Brother Sam Daniels. I say, [inaudible] "Now you all elect - who you all elect for your steward?" We say, "We elect Brother Lee Brown." So that was - OK. Brother Daniels say, "Now, Brother Lee Brown, you a shop steward at the Fairmont Hotel to take care of the grievance and see that the company carry out the contract and that none of the brothers will violate the contract." He said, "This will work both ways." I says, "All right, Brother Daniel," I say, "I have had . . ." He say, "I know you have had some experience in the labor movement." I say, "I will do the best I can to work with the brothers, and I hope the brothers would work with me."

Yes. Getting back, I was here in San Francisco still working at the Fairmont Hotel here at the Fairmont. I have by a release. I made and I find my work. But I'd like to say that I got into San Francisco, I arrived here in 1960, and I joined the Local 110 with my traveling card, which was my book, and a letter from the United Packing Workers' Union from Brother Thomas West. Now I'm a member of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union, and I at the Fairmont Hotel. I become the first shop steward in any hotel in San Francisco during the year [inaudible]. I was involved in the Civil Rights struggle with the NAACP, continue my fight against racism in employment.

I am going to talk and my car
when I was brought before the
Un-American Activity Committee in New
Orleans in the early Fifties

Lee Brown, 3/2/94--10

Brother Nelson passed, and the next thing I was subpoenaed. I was working at a cotton compress, and the marshal, U.S. Marshall, served me one day with a letter, a subpoena, to appear before the Un-American Activity Committee, which was a Friday. Between those years, the early Fifties. And I appeared that Friday before the Un-American Activity Committee, and they asked me over fifty questions. And I refused to answer them. I told them, "Until I be able to make a statement," and they asked me - one of the committee members asked me, say, "What is your statement?" I say, "Before I - first, I'd like to ask you a question." 362

"Was Senator Eastland a member of the Klans?" And he said, "Nah, we ain't got you here to ask question. We have you here to answer question." They refused - when I asked them that question, they refused to let me make my - I say, "I would like to make a statement." I was before Judge Scally Wright for November the 4th. Scally Wright court. Facing the possibility of ten years, Brown say, "And I want to say again, 'I refuse to answer any question,' and I say, 'Until I make a statement.'" 379

And we went on with that. And I didn't answer none. They recessed. And I thought it was all over-with. I happened to go to the lawyer's office, one morning passed by, and I was in that area, and I stopped. And they say, "Brown, you walking around here. You have been indicted," cuz he used to kid with me a lot. James Mac, McCain, and I said, "Been indicted, Brother?" He said, "Yeah, you indicted by the grand jury. They gonna bring you before court and try you for being a member of the Party, the Communist Party of the United States, as a trade union." He say, "When you sign that

affidavit, that anti-Communist affidavit, you was a member of the Communist Party. You were at the National Labor Relations Board." I said, "I was not." 398

So they finally brought me to trial on November the 4th, said that I was the member of the Communist Party. I was indicted, March the 7th, 1957, served with a subpoena, was mailed to the wrong address. On March 29th, 1957, I reported there, to sign up my unemployment insurance. I was served there at the office to appear before the judge the same afternoon to post bond. I was unable to obtain bond. I was held until Monday, April 1st, 1957, and reject my claim, Division of Unemployment. My being not available, they claimed that I was not available for work March the 29th. So I told them what happened. I was picked up, the Unemployment office that morning, March 29th. I were arrested later that same day. Continued to harass me. Attempt to frighten me because I was a militant labor leader. 429

I was proud to be a member of the ILWU, one of the two, few unions which Negro had full emancipation, share leadership responsibility with white workers, anti-Communists did nothing but excuse that, the Eastlands, to frighten the paid informers. All important to take over and destroy the union. I fought to the best of my ability, with some support from unions, individuals, church members, some other trade unions, even from the Catholic priests, helped me. Some black Catholics helped me. Some visit where I was in jail before I went to trial. 449

So I went to trial back November 4th in front of Judge Scally Wright. We had only one black American and the District Attorney

had three District Attorneys, I think. I know it was two. Refused to set on the jury. Was a, was a female. And they got her off, and it was an all-white jury. I was in court a whole week from testimony. They brought in a Chinese guy, and I never had see'd but one Chinese in New Orleans, and that was on the dock while he was running a restaurant. And I know - and they find some young Chinese, about in his thirties, to come to testify and say that I tried to get him to join the youth Communist Party. Never see'd him before.

375

And they brought in a sister by the name of Sister Clara. Said I was a member of the Communist Party. I used to go to her house and sat down, we talked, we had a few drinks, but we never did discuss political affairs. We always discussing - she was asking me about the Nation of Islam. We were talking about Elijah Muhammad, black history, but we never did bring up the political issue or any issue or discuss the American Communist Party. And she said that I was a member of the Party. 491

I knew her husband a long time ago. He belonged - he was belonged to the Progressive Party during 1948, with Henry A. Wallace, which I worked. I was also working with the Progressive Party, getting people signed up, registered so they could vote. We would go out in the rural area and from the - we had one from the [inaud.-502] tobacco workers, a representor, one from the leather [inaud.-504] workers. We went out in the rural area at night, and one night that we were shot at. We was on a [coughs] the way coming back to New Orleans, and the man by the - one of our friends was driving the car, and he was shooting. He said, "Oh, I forgot. I got

a pistol in here," so he opened his drawer, glove compartment, and he shot back about three times in the back while he was going. And they turned off. We didn't have no more trouble with them that night. 516

That's what was happening. We was very active, getting, organized people at the feed mills. We had a place out in Souzberry because it was fertilizer plant. We had the - a number of other - cotton compresses, textile, Blenko Company, which we had close to fifteen hundred employees at, at the um Flenko Plant in New Orleans, on Gravis Street dock. We had the rice mills, the fertilizer plants, and other mills. We was making some progress. 535

We also got - we got a trophy. One Labor Day parade is when labor used to parade in New Orleans. We got - the mayor was standing on the steps, and we stopped, and I made a few, said a few words. And that year we got a trophy. The mayor presented Local 207 with a trophy. 547

They find me - find me guilty, and Judge Scally Wright - when I went before the Judge November, they - they find - I have to stay about that - I stayed in jail a whole year before they brought me to trial. They find me guilty that week, and I was - the judge say, "I'm going to give you five years." They had give me ten, but I say, "I'm going to run them concurrent. You only have to serve five." This was Judge Scally Wright. Was the - he give me five. And I say, "This is an order." I was struggling, and I was indicted, find guilty. They sent me back to the parish prison there in New Orleans, and I stayed there a while till they come got me, and I was speaking through the bars there to the rest of the inmates. In the night, the word got

around that I was going to leave that morning. The old buzzer was around, pulled around my cell. I was in a cell all alone. They didn't allow no one, even when I go to the shower. 589

They would clear the day room to put fright into the people that I was some dangerous character. By being a Communist you are dangerous! Even if you're black, you're dangerous! I want to say I spoke that night all the, a lot of the inmates. I made quite a bit of friends cuz during the time when I was going to trial, it would come on the radio inside the jail. And all the inmates there was, would clap for it, wish me good luck cuz I was standing up fighting for the rights of my people and working people as a true trade unionist. I wanted to see better conditions. I wanted to see better health meetings. I wanted to see better houses, better hospital, better schools, better education for our people, and particularly for the seniors, the retirees. I wanted to see decent homes, homes and public domain, that we all could live in peace. We all could have decent food, decent health, decent houses, decent education, in particular to study our history, black history. As a matter of fact, I'd like to see all nationalities have knowledge of their history. That's what I was fighting for. 631

And I went on after I talked that night, had one little guy, he kinda couldn't understand too much. He didn't know what he wanted to say. Sometime he'd start off right, and then he'd forget. He was there. I told him, I said, "Let him talk. Let him bring it out." He clapped his hands after he couldn't get out what he say, he just, he clapped. Other brothers in there clapped with him. I learned. When they picked me up in Houston, I, I happened to - to leave,

jump bail. I was on the bond. I left there. I went to Houston. And I met some people there, and I talked. I raised funds. And they picked me up. They put me in Houston about - I was there about five days, and I was talking to the brothers the place I went out. Made friends. When they find out that the black folks, the young black folks, were not scared of the word "Communist." They'd read it in the paper. They'd say - some of them ask me what do it mean? What are they saying? I'd say to them I was fighting for the rights of my people, fighting for the rights of working people, trade union, decent home, decent education, decent jobs, and definitely get rid of race discrimination. 670

In those times we would call it segregation and Jim Crow. And I made friends, and they hated to see me go that morning, when the marshalls come to get me. It made me feel good. The brothers was clapping, saying, "Good luck, Brother. Good luck." And I used to talk to them, and some of them wanted - they come to Houston. They let them come in my cell's open after - they would come in and talk and one by one ask me questions. Some guy was in there for - I met all kinds. Murder, all kind of - talked with them. And they accept my advice. To give me strength, give me courage, and give me experience. And bit of the love and the respect from my people and the trade union as a whole, true trade unionists as a whole. 701

I want to say I learned much. I understood when I went. They taking me to Galveston, laid me over a night and a day in Galveston, and I also . . . 708