

Charles Farnsley

Interviewed by  
Charles F. Harbison

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Tapes 245, & 246

Oral History Center  
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## Interviewer's Foreword

I did my research concerning Mr. Charles Farnsley at the Louisville Public Library which has "clipped" all articles pertaining to him and located them in the periodical section.

My interview took place in Mr. Farnsley's office in the Starks Building where he and his wife operate the Lost Cause Press. The interview centers around the life, time, and mood of the Louisville area between 1948 through 1953.

The initials "C.F." in this transcript indicate the words said by Charles Farnsley. The initials "C. H." indicate the words said by the interviewer, Charles Harbison.

C.H... The interviewer's name is Charles Harbison, interviewing Charles Farnsley--residence is Glenview, Louisville, Kentucky -- former Mayor of Louisville.

C.F... What can I do to help?

C.H... My interview is going to center around your time--the time that you had the post of mayor--'48 [maybe] go back a little before that and maybe . . . .

C.F... March '48 to first of December or early December '53.

C.H... What I would like to know--I want to find out what the average person in Louisville, in terms of the city, in terms of the state, in terms of the country, what was he thinking about at this time?

C.F... You're lucky, it's all in the library--you're lucky. We had Elmo Roper do surveys--several a year while I was mayor.

C.H... Now he was a man that you brought in

C.F... Yes, Elmo Roper, he was one of the top men then. His firm is still going but he is dead. He and Gallup were pioneers. He [Roper] did the first public opinion surveys as distinguished from market surveys for *Fortune* magazine and published the first one in (1935)in *Fortune*. I got him in here [the city] when Wilson Wyatt ran for mayor to make a survey which I financed and then when I got to be mayor I got [Roper]in several times a year. And, all of the surveys are in the public library and in the University Library. The party (Democratic) had some made now whether they were put into the Library I don't know. I hope so. You'll have to find out, but the ones you need are the ones done for the city. It won't be in detail what they thought about the United States or maybe the state, but I think so. And, I think [they ask] about the job the national government is doing. But, that is the best answer I can give you. I can guess as to what they thought, but . . . .

C.H... Well, if I was to answer that question right now about the people today, possibly the people in the city and county would be thinking about strip mining--might be thinking about lack of a good tobacco crop. And, on the national level they might be thinking about the economy or something like that. Can you think of anything that was prominent in the people's minds at that time or were they worried about making a dollar so much, or can you just dig back and think of what would have been on their minds?

C.F... You could ask them a question about something and get an answer. I don't remember the details; but when we asked an open-end question--Is there anything the city--what do you think of the job the city is doing. The other question is what would you like the city to do that they are not doing? There was very little response to that. Some, you know 3 to 4 to 5% would say--A place where the children can play safely--safety of the children, and they liked for the traffic to move but there wasn't a big response. People was pretty happy about what we were doing because we were doing what they wanted. But even when we started, it [safety of children and traffic] wasn't a big issue. Now there was the issue of integration. We were integrating Louisville all of the time that I was mayor, but never was a big factor in their [the people of Louisville] thinking.

C.H... It wasn't?

C.F... No we . . . , asked them every time, how do you feel the city is doing about integration? Too fast, about right, not fast enough? They usually said "about right" most of the time.

C.H... Now are we talking about the schools or the library

C.F... Two weeks after I was elected mayor we integrated the main library and then I had Dr. Keller advise on psychiatry, who had grown up in Louisville, who had gone to the University College and Medical School. They told him he could advise the mayor in his spare time and I would call him sometimes and ask him using Roper's surveys and his best opinion and

mine as to how fast we should go and which we should integrate next we went that way. But we did the golf courses and traffic square and Burke Park and most of the places. But, schools were down afterwards. Everything else was done while I was mayor. I couldn't control the schools. They did it after the Supreme Court [acted].

C.H... It seems as I read about the problems of the city. You had problems like pollution, which I wouldn't have thought that it would have been a problem at that time.

C.F... It was a lot worse then than it is now.

C.H... Pollution, traffic problems, recreational facilities - Can you think of any problems? You know those are problems we still have today, but can you think of any problems the city of Louisville had that were exclusively 1948ish -- that would be problems which no longer exist. Can you think of anything that . . .

C.F... Well, the kind of pollution we had. There were others, but I think the pollution figures, at least the best they had soon after I was elected and as I remember, were 20% of it was automobiles. Now it's 30% in the cities. There wasn't much we could do about automobiles except I found that if a car ran at a steady thirty-five miles per hour it made less pollution than any other way. But, while it was idling down or starting up it made a lot more. So for that and other reasons, partly to move the traffic conveniently and for safety, we synchronized the street lights and made a lot of one-way streets where it would have worked effectively and set the lights at thirty-five miles per hour. Now I didn't get the studies until afterward to know actually

if we reduced pollution from cars. We probably didn't because cars [the numbers] were going up very rapidly. While we might have reduced the gain in pollution or maybe even stopped the gain, the traffic was a mess. We had a study done by a Yale man that said in downtown Louisville you could average fifteen miles per hour during the afternoon rush in any direction, and this wasn't true in any other city in the world -- any other major city. We had the traffic thoroughly licked. It started getting out of hand again when they ran the North-South Expressway through. I was able to keep it out -- keep it from being built. Forced them to build the Henry Watterson first. You may know the original idea of expressways and public road was that the military wanted them to connect the cities then circle them. But, the merchants wanted them to come downtown. They thought it would be good for their business, and they are powerful in the community. Their voice is heard by the newspaper and Chamber of Commerce. They promoted the idea that the expressways are to go through the city and that really isn't answering your question. Let's go back to the question.

C.H... Is there any problem that you are dealing with in 1948, let's say Mayor Sloane is not having to deal with now?

C.F... Well, one that we didn't deserve any credit for curing it. There was a tremendous amount of pollution from open fires, burning of soft coal and furnaces to a lesser degree and stoves. In the morning, in the wintertime, most days, you could come downtown about at Third Street and there was a dark cloud, sometimes yellow over the whole downtown. And, in the morning anywhere in the city you got up in the morning there would be coal soot on the windowsill. And then the mother or the housewife would wipe it off and if this was in the wintertime it would

happen again. Then the snow would fall and get dark and black very soon. But I was worrying about this and I knew that one thing called a warm morning stove could stop pollution a whole lot. It's a Hopper stove. That is its patent name. There is a whole lot of them. And I even toyed with the idea of buying that kind of stove for anyone that would use one and those who were using open fire or other stoves. But then I found out, I guess W. Sanders, our Director of Works, brought me the figures that Louisville Gas and Electric got a lot of gas in from somewhere, I guess Texas, so people were converting to gas very rapidly and that was completed a year or two after I got in. But there was still a problem of pollution from factories, especially from Rubbertown, which blew across Louisville, It was a mistake for those factories to ever be up wind from Louisville, predominate wind is from up the river. So I didn't believe in the principle of these independent agencies. But I couldn't see anyway for the city to stop the pollution from the county when the county had no incentive 'cause it wasn't falling [pollution] on the county. So we created a joint city-county smoke abatement, which went to work on that problem. It's a lot better but it is still a problem. And I would guess that the automobile pollution isn't much different from when we [fought it] of course the cars are bigger and the engines are bigger. Now let's see. We had the problem of traffic. We needed a lot more playgrounds.

C.H... You, (city) had a money problem too, didn't you? I was reading about blacktopping the streets. You just blacktopped the middle of the street on the traveling lane instead of the parking area.

C.F... The streets were terribly bumpy. The city had been bankrupt or essentially bankrupt for a long time and in fact, still is. The fringe bleeds 60 or 80 million dollars out of the city every year.

C.H... How?

C.F... Well, they got various systems. . .

C.H... When you are talking about the fringe, are you talking about the country [county]?

C.F... Yes, most of "A" district and the "B" district. Well, for 100 years the country [county] has used the city's money to keep running. For 100 years the property tax was the country's [county's] only revenue and of which 90% when I was a boy coming out of the city. They spent 98% of it in the country [county]. Or let us say 90% in the country,[county] because the judges and the courts were applied to the whole. Then they invented a clever scheme, making a sewer commission that was country-wide [countywide]. The people of Louisville paid for their sewers by assessment and by overall taxation. Then they established, just before I was mayor a countywide sewer commission, which levied a tax -- a rate, measured by the amount of water people used--with no gradations. Of course the bigger the consumption of water the lower the rate so that the big boys didn't pay as much. It was a desperately regressive tax put in effort. All they used that to build sewers mostly out beyond the built-up area. Mostly for the people in an "A" district because the people in the city already had sewers. So that problem has and is draining a couple billion dollars out of the city. The estimate that I think I gave you a while ago, Roy Owsley made for me not long after I was mayor that it was 60 to 80 million a year going out. The water company's building a 100 million dollars worth of stuff out in "A'-' district. I don't

know how much of it is for people already there and how much of it is for developers; but that money is mostly coming out of the city. Out of the poor people.

C.H... Well, the property tax is sort of -- I don't have any statistics -- hadn't the property tax sort of equaled itself out now that the county pays more property tax than the people in the city. (By this question I meant that there are more county., dollars going into property tax than city. I would think now that less county. property tax money is spent in the county--than in prior years. The city's getting back more money than it pays in.)

C.F... I don't know what you are saying.

C.H... Is there more property tax paid in the county than in the city?

C.F... You mean county property tax? That's what you must be talking about.

C.H... Oh -- In other words everyone pays a property tax in Jefferson County.

C.F... Yes, Louisville is a part of Jefferson County except when it comes to spending the money. I helped get the countywide . . -. I guess I was the spark. Well, I am sure I was to get a countywide occupational tax. They thought I was going to run for mayor again and I was getting a tax in line. I didn't run and didn't know at that time whether I was going to or not and the legislature passed the county tax. That helped some because it collected from people in the county.

C.H... That was 1% right?

C.F... Yes, I don't know what it is now.

C.F... Well, another way the county steals from the city and steals is the right word . . . . The school district lines is where the city line was fifty years ago. So that part of the city is in the county school district. It just happens that is where most of the money is generated but very few children are generated in outer Highlands, outer South End where people don't have many children, but the property is valuable. So the county schools have been bleeding the city schools forever. Now the city schools say we just quit, but [of] course just because they are all in one district doesn't mean they can't be bled. Just like we are all in the same water district, [and] all in the same sewer district but they bled us. This is one reason why the city is dying. And, of course, the state bleeds the city. I have a book here somewhere in the office [that states] in 1940 the city paid 50 million [dollars] to the state in taxes and the fringe outside the city and county paid 15[million dollars.] And, the state put back one [million dollars.] So you can see what the state was doing. It may not be quite as bad, but I talked to a man the other day who had been in the legislature and was very knowledgeable about this. He said on anything where there is an option, where the state spends money, the city doesn't get any. The only money that they spend in Louisville is forced on them by Federal law or state law. They give our schools some, but I don't know. We used to be under the constitution. The state money had to be divided per student and then the "do gooders", and I voted for it -- I was naive. This was before I was mayor, to allow them to give more money to some districts than others. So this meant that Louisville was going

to get less. And we passed this bill even in Louisville. And the University -- the city -- put in a couple of 100 million and we used to charge the fringe people more 'cause they weren't putting out any tax money. Then the fringe people got control of the board of the University and made it (the tuition) equal. Before the water company was merged the people in the county paid 50% more on their water bills 'cause the city people had built the whole works. But then they got it countywide and made it equal. We had that problem then and we still have it today. I helped a little but not much. In fact, that is the city's problem -- a rip off.

C.H... By the county?

C.F... By the county or the fringe. Not just the county government, [but] the state and the Federal government. The Federal [government] put a good deal back in welfare and expressways, [and] in things that do harm in redevelopment,[things] that are very disastrous. But everybody bleeds the city. Now this isn't so true in the South and West where the establishment still lives in the city. In the Northeast, as in Louisville, the establishment has moved out and then they organized everything. They control all the media, the Chamber of Commerce, the power structure. So they set it up so the fringe get the money, and the poor people and the city pay for it.

C.H... It seems like to me you were trying to help the city out as much as possible to keep people from moving out of the city when you were mayor.

C.F... That is right.

CA... Well, you are doing the same thing now. I watched you on television. Is there hope?

C.F... Yes. Well, like I said on television, I think there is a cure but it has to be done right fast when its (city) once dead I don't think we can bring it back. I think you ought to get visitors in here from Europe. But we ought to have started it twenty years ago. But we certainly ought to start it. That night I was on television, up to now, I see no signs of getting any money to work on it. Various agencies send delegates to see me and they say we cannot help you but maybe somebody else will. It could be done. The cities of the world that have a list of visitors are doing alright. Now they have other advantages and they are not bled by the fringe like we are.

C.H... Is this a typical problem with the city [being bled]?

C.F... It is only typical in the Northeast part of the United States and only the big cities. When I was seven years old, my father told me, when we lived down on Third Street the house I was born in, he said this neighborhood was beginning to die. Well, that was sixty years ago. I felt terrible, because I couldn't do much as a child and I can't do much now. But I did register to vote in the city. My family voted in the same precinct out in the county since 1780. My father started voting for Jefferson and never scratched the Democratic ticket. So he was kind of hurt when I registered in town. [That was] when I was twenty-one -- I am sixty-seven, so that was quite awhile back. But my reason was that I hoped that I could be an alderman or mayor and do something about it and I was . . . Walter Crease, who is a great authority on suburbs, was lecturing the other day at the university. He said it started (white flight) in the 70's. That's right.

That is when it started. But it never has happened anywhere else in the world but in the cities of the Northeast. Now there is some flight that was begun to copy the Northeast part of the United States. There is an article in *Harper's* last month that was an attempt to rate [according to the amount of white flight] the fifty cities in this country, and [there is another] good one by an editor of *Fortune*. He put Louisville thirtieth--Seattle and the Western cities at the top and then the Southern cities [and] Southwest particularly. And then the worse were Detroit, Cleveland, St. Louis, Newark, Chicago (where the Establishment has moved out [and] contributed to this bleeding of the city.) I don't mean everyone of them gets together every week and conspires, but that is the effect. They control the banks. They control all the power.

C.H... In a 1948 newspaper, you mentioned that cities can become depression proof. How can you make a city or how did you make a city depression proof?

C.F... Well, I had it going good when I got through. It was all intact. There hasn't been much destruction and there were no major shopping centers.

C.H... That's pro-depression, a large shopping center?

C.F... Well, if you build a shopping center outside the city to encourage people out. When the North-South Expressway went through it, tore it (city) all to pieces and then it was all downhill. We had the per capita income going up. Yes, Louisville was depression proof then. We had - I'd studied at the University of Kentucky with Professor James Martin, who was a great authority on taxation. I said what do we do to get industry into the city. Well, he said there wasn't any book

on the subject, not even an article. I have some ideas and there are some small paragraphs in articles. I'll dig them out. -And then he and I worked out a rationale of things that we thought would bring industry and it did. G.E. and . . . we had a tremendous industrial growth and then what to do about the downtown and we covered that. Sure, Louisville was depression proof then because we had a mixed economy. It had a nice balanced. It would take an awful depression. . . Oh sure, the 30's hit everybody and we stood up this time longer than the others

C.H . . . Even now [right]

C.F... Even now. Until six months from now we didn't have any troubles at all. Our automobiles factory was fortunately trucks instead of automobiles. Now that was luck. We didn't plan it that way. But G.E. was one of the last to go. But when it goes every -- thing goes. But we got things that don't go off - distilleries do well in hard time and tobacco, cigarettes. Theory being people drink and smoke more when they are worried. It isn't much more, but they (cigarettes and liquor) don't go down. And the printing - there is a good printing industry here. And a lot of service industries, which are big and large depression proof.

C.H... In terms of your election what did labor, how did labor influence your election?

C.F... In the beginning when I was elected by the Alderman?

C.H... Yes, sir.

C.F... See, I was elected by the Alderman. A.F. of L. was for me and I don't think the C.I.O. took any stand. I passed the occupational tax. The man died. That's how he came the mayor. The alderman elected me. And I appointed the legislature to authorize the occupational tax.

C.H... Were you considered a dark horse at the time? It seems like you just appeared . . .

C.F... I came from nowhere, that's right - I think the newspaper, which was important then and now would have been for Eli Brown. No, first, I think they would have been for Dann Byck, who was president of the Board of Aldermen. But I don't know this for sure, but he was ineligible.

C.F... The aldermen could not have elected a member of the aldermen mayor. So that the paper was for Eli Brown. But he couldn't get enough votes from the aldermen, and then I was third choice.

C.H... Didn't he just resign at the last minute? [Eli Brown]

C.F... Well, when they found they couldn't elect him.

C.H... They couldn't muster enough votes?

C.F... They couldn't get a majority. They just had a majority of one for me . . . . It was the middle class against the machine. The organization--I had been a passive member of the organization so I wasn't anti- the organization.

C.H... Now about labor, on into your term.

C.F... I started fighting for the occupational tax and the A.F. of L. supported me partly because they were trying, I believe, to organize the police. I think they were trying to organize public workers. And then they were trying more, I don't know how you say it -- Anyway they supported the occupational tax and the C.I.O. fought it. But, I didn't have any trouble. The tax went into effect, 1%, ninety days, before I had to run. I had to run for one year. I went in March and I won by 11,500 and the man that I succeeded had only won by 300 plus some. [That was] the Democrat that had died. And, then I had to run for four years and then again I won by 11,500. If I hadn't had the occupational tax I think I would have lost because the city was in so bad of shape they couldn't fix the chuck holes and they couldn't collect the garbage. I mean they did it but it was all kind of half-baked. If you read the files, they had hearings for the budget and everybody was asking for a lot more than they had. We helped build up sentiment for the tax. Our Roper Survey didn't show a majority for the tax, but we were closer to getting an occupational tax than any other. And I was consulting Dr. Martin about the tax all the time and we thought the occupational was the best and I still think so.

C.H... Is this something new for a mayor -- you consulted a lot of people and brought a lot of experts in. Was that considered very progressive at the time?

C.F... Well, it's never been done before or since. They bring in a lot of experts, but they are physical planners and I had social and economic planners. Some didn't call themselves that. They called themselves economists. Dr. Martin was a business economist. Dr. Keller was a behavioral scientist. You would call it [that] now. It has been invented since. He had studied with a great psychiatrist named Adolf Meyer of Johns Hopkins who believed psychiatry should be involved in the decisions of the community. My position was that everything the mayor did was a matter of human reaction to human action. And this was sure psychology and psychiatry. I said I had been going to school and then I went away certainly every two months. I spent a week or ten days at a different university studying with the social scientists, and I got Roy Owsley who was a Ph.D. in public administration...the weakness of the city manager was only good in small cities. I won't go into complicated details and a strong mayor was too busy administering and not having enough time for policy. So by getting a city manager in effect to administer the city but leaving policy to the mayor . . . Owsley was a trained public administrator.

C.H... You had to pay him a pretty penny, though, didn't you?

C.F... Yes, He said "you couldn't pay me enough," and at that time the constitution said you can't pay over \$5,000. I was getting \$5,000 as mayor. There was some allowance for expenses, maybe \$2,500, but I contracted with him, personal service contract which has come into dispute because it has been abused. I didn't call it personal service. I had been contracting with engineers and lawyers and I just contracted with an administrator. I paid him \$18,000 and he was magnificent, just magnificent.

C.H... What about the "beef sessions?" This again was something new.

C.F... Yes, this was suggested by a *Courier-Journal* reporter named . . . I can't remember his name. . . He had been a Niemann fellow at Harvard and one thing that he learned about was "tot lots." And we did "tot lots." (little playgrounds for children) He suggested that I could see more people faster if I had a public open place, and let them have some. It also made him a good story, but I don't think he was selfish. I even found that the terrains in the Near East, the Sultan had at least a theoretical time every week when one could go up to complain. So we set it up that I would be in the aldermanic chamber every Monday at ten. I wanted it easy to remember and the first Monday in the month so people that worked in daytime could come. So I had the department head with me. They would tape the session and play it on radio. Anybody wanted to complain or wanted to tell the mayor anything or had problem, could come there. We knew from the Roper's survey that people appreciated it and even if they didn't come they said I know I could come if I want or needed to come...I didn't invite the department heads down but the burden of proof was on them. The person complaining was assumed to be right until proved otherwise.

C.H... The balance between the help farming got at the time you were mayor . . . and the business community, you say all the businessman gets is regulations but the farming community get everything. Do you still believe that was true at that time?

C.F... Yes, it was true and it's still pretty much true. I wasn't able to do too much about it, although I did my best. I did set up something that corresponded to the Home Demonstration

Agent, which you know where a housewife could go and learn to cook and make budgets and sew. I tried myself. I was really their county agent trying to help protect business -- small business from harassment and undue regulation. But it is still true.

C.H... Is this harassment from the Federal government . . . ?

C.F... No; every government. Not that they (government) have had motives but there is just all kinds of regulations. You have to get a license to do everything. Somebody who gets a glint in his eye like he's going to be a farmer--a dozen bureaucrats rush in and try to help him and if he tries to start a drug store they rush in and ask why he doesn't have this or that license. This is destroying small business and service industry because they cannot fight, they're through. Zoning, you name it.

C.H... Reflecting on recreation, you blocked streets off [so children would have a place to play].

C.F... Yes.

C.H... Were these dead-end streets?

C.F... No. A lot of times the people that lived on the streets would come and fuss at these beef sessions and I was delighted cause it would get on the air and in the newspapers that I was fighting for the children. Gradually, we replaced them with small playgrounds, the play streets, but it gave us something to do fast and inexpensive. We didn't have a lot of money. We had

enough - to do a job with the occupational tax but you are out of money right fast. As of now, the city is bankrupt.

C.H... I believe with these blocking of the streets, setting up different places for people to have recreation, that the crime level dropped and this is one thing that is attributed to your administration that the crime dropped. Exactly, was crime a problem then as it is today?

C.F... It has been forever in the slums mostly.

C.H... What about downtown? What about Fourth Street?

C.F... It wasn't a problem then. Nobody knows for sure why the per capita income went up and the crime rate went down. I think fundamentally the people's morals were good. They were convinced that the government was their friend. Things were going good and they were getting a fair shake. All our surveys indicated that they liked the job we were doing. And, of course, we put a lot of street lights in to reduce crime and they still do. I sent out 300,000 copies of an article that the Library of Congress wrote for me when I was in Congress. I sent them to county judges, bankers, newspapers, radio stations, and television stations -- anybody that might have some power. And now they are putting lights all over the country. It always reduces crimes of violence. The playgrounds helped. See, you get the streetlights going and people come out on the street. Jane Jacobs pointed this out later -- you know the great lady author of *The Death and Life of the Great American Cities* -- that pairs of eyes prevent crime. Now when it is dark in the poor neighborhood, the people are afraid to go out at night and when it was light at night in the

summertime they would go out and sit in the front yards, or the children would visit on the street and talk to each other. I would go from an area that was dark to an area that was light and there was nobody out in the dark area, and they would be all over the place in a light area and that cuts down crime. My theory was, and Dr. Keller agreed, that crime comes about from ...people want to be respected by their peers and if the good people are in a big majority and then the street crimes are reduced. There was one story in *Horizon* not long ago that thought that crime was always a problem when there are a lot of boys between fifteen and twenty-five, and we had a big baby boom. In the city the only place they could go where there were lights was in a tavern or go riding in a car, and five boys riding in a car just looked delinquent—they are just going somewhere to get into trouble. When we added lights and the little playgrounds or the little tot lands or little swimming pools as a place where they could go and meet a nice girl and visit with their friends and not get into mischief and not get into trouble. Yes, it can be done but it is not being done.

C.H... No, it is not -- not today.

C.F... And there is no city in the world that is being run by social and behavioral scientists. I was a trained technician, but I got men that had a better training than I did. I didn't have my doctorate, I was close. And I said I was going to the university and studying with the top men -- not only taking a course but asking and visiting and consulting. And, they would bring them in and they would spill their guts. You don't need a hundred and eighty studies, we didn't have any of those studies. I spent some money-on a traffic engineer, not much.

C.H... Yes, I always wondered about these studies, [what] they do, and all the money they pour in and you might not get anything, there is nothing assured of it.

C.F... You can almost be sure that it won't help any because it is all physical planning. [The] Ford Foundation broke that code forty or thirty years ago, while I was mayor . . .that the problem of cities were social and economic and not physical. They are building again and it is almost too late. They asked me the other night on TV, trying to pin me down, how long did I think it would be before it would be too late to try in Louisville. And I think one year, and that is optimistic. The cities that go bad, the downtown becomes a slum. It blights the whole state and certainly the whole metropolitan area. Nobody wants to live if they can help it in St. Louis, Detroit, Cleveland or Newark.

C.H... You said that city planning should be on a neighborhood basis. Is that still true?

C.F... Yes.

C.H... Meaning what? Meaning the little drug store?

C.F... See, city planning doesn't mean to me planning a city physically, it means planning to let the people make a living and live a happy life. My big job was trying to make people happy cause Jefferson said "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." That is what Kellar and I were doing.

C.H... Trying to make people happy?

C.F... Yes, and set things so they would be happy -- not just tell them you are happy... See, we ran out of money and toward the end I got an architect to help me by proposing street furniture for these little shopping areas and colors would be painted around light pole and etc. and put in good street lights but it was too late, we didn't get much done on it. We tried to give playgrounds in ail the areas to get them all equal treatment on everything, garbage collection, street lights, . . well at one time there was a theory and I toyed with it that you would create a green belt between the different neighborhoods but I don't think that's necessary and desirable. I think it would have made matters worse. Another approach was to let the neighborhood people make decisions about their neighborhood. That is a different approach. Now I think this. It is beginning to be realized that Louisville is traditionally a Southern city.

C.H... We consider it a Southern city?

C.F... Was! No, it is a border city. You see the Negro population, their families have been in Louisville for almost a hundred years. There has been no migration.

C.H... Do you think you were too progressive for the time as far as credibility goes?

C.F... No. I was getting these surveys... and I went right along with the people, but they were usually ahead of me. The people are smarter than the government, especially in the city.

C.H... Is that right?

C.F... Sure. I watched those surveys in Portland from 1935 until they quit having them, while I was mayor, I guess. The Roper survey but I have been reading Harris, they were always ahead of the people. They were always ahead of the government, the people. In the city there was a grapevine. Some kind through the barbershops, the taverns, and beauty shops. Back then somebody bad in city hall or something the people know about it before the newspapers. They know what is going on - thank goodness.

C.H... I would like to just touch on, you touched on it a little bit more, the race issue, the integration. Can you just tell me a little bit about it. It wasn't much of an issue but ....

C.F... Because we never let it get out of hand. We knew what we were doing.

C.H... You mean to tell me that the black person could not go into the library. Right? is that what it was? Couldn't go into the library?

C.F... Or the main or the branch. Or couldn't play golf or couldn't go in almost all the parks.

C.H... Tell me something about that they couldn't go into the parks and they couldn't go into them.

C.F... There had been no segregation roughly in the South the turn of the century, and then there was some kind of wave of it. Here there was some kind of ruckus out in the entrance at Iroquois Park in 1907 when they segregated the park and bought out an old amusement park that they closed and turned it into Chickasaw park and segregated everything and passed a law called the Day Law and white children couldn't go to school with colored children. We got a fraternity brother of mine who Lawrence Wetherby elected governor. While I was mayor and he helped get the Day Law and then we could integrate. We integrated the university that summer I guess it was the second summer I was mayor that there was several four or five hundred black children going to school out here on 7th Street belong to the Municipal College I believe. It had been a colored school that had come on hard times . . . Simmons University. They had taken it over or bought it and Simmons then continued it-as a theological school. That summer the board of trustees voted to close that school. These black children went into a white school with 800 white children. It was no problem. Now we had some help. The foundation gave us some money—the man that instigated this later became the sheriff of Cook County.] He was a professor. I cannot remember his name. He gave us some money to start the Southern Police Institute here in Louisville. To prepare the police of the South for integration. I do not mean all of them -- just a select few. We got the money and started and they did [begin to teach the policemen]. He said they won't just teach him about integration they will also teach them general policing but specially on how to handle problems of integration. Part of the deal was that Louisville could have two men in their [school] all of the time. It was very expensive. It costs as much per student as the medical school and still does. But that is one reason they had so little trouble in the South and so much trouble in the North. Most all Southern cities had policemen that were educated here. We had them during our integration. They were plainclothesmen around and if

any trouble started they could nip it in the bud rather than make it worse. And, when I understand that integrated the schools some people were held back manually -- they could of had some trouble. But our police knew how to handle it. Help, not hurt . . . . No, we didn't have any trouble, really -- this is hard to believe.

C.H... I know it is hard to believe.

C.F... But we knew what we were doing and we were playing it straight. Now I think this -- it's beginning to be realized that Louisville is traditionally a Southern city.

C.H... It is? You would consider it a Southern city?

C.F... Was! Not now. It is a border city now. But it was border but it also faced the South pretty much. You see the Negro population -- the families have been in Louisville for almost a hundred years. There had been no in-migration. There hadn't been much in-migration of anyone in Louisville since -- that is except from Europe. They thought there were a lot of mountaineers here but there wasn't. They had a "Bloody Monday" riot in 1840 that stopped migration from Europe cold for fifty years. Then it started again. Louisville was a stable population. Most of the families have been here for a long time. The Southern white and blacks were not enemies. They weren't afraid of each other, because in most Southern cities the living was mixed. Not helter skelter. The Louisville central area it was called in this study earlier on when I was mayor just before. And each block they made proportion of the block -- of the people in that block that were black, they indicated with black and the white people were red. And big majority of the

blocks had colored people. No, some of them lived in the alleys and you can see that wasn't good. Sure, they weren't rich but there were mixed in. The children played together when they were little and so forth. Now it is more segregated than it was then.

C.H... Now it is more segregated.

C.F... Now, sure. Government ran people out of the alleys. I tried to get them to run water to them. The landlords would put water in the houses, but the water company would not. And the water company said we will do it if the health department tells us to do it. And they wouldn't tell them. And they said if the welfare asks us to do it . I found what it was all about. It took me two or three years and then I would go back at it.

C.H... What part of the city was this?

C.F... All over. All over the old parts. Alleys were only built for a period of about thirty years in this county. And we were built up in that period. 70's, 80's, 90's and maybe after the First World War. They were servant's quarters in the beginning and carriage houses. They lived over them and a lot of them rented them. And now the white people are just dying to live in them -- the carriage house. It's against the law.

C.H... Industry?

C.F... What about it?

C.H... What did we have here in Louisville?

C.F.. What had industry. We had a pretty good mix. While I was mayor we got a lot more.

C.H... For instance. Can you give me any examples?

C.F... Yes, General Electric.

C.H... We got General Electric! Was it because of negotiations on your part?

C.F... They came in here in disguise. Nobody knew they were here. They didn't even have their name in their pocket or even any laundry marks -- two men. I think I and Jim Martin worked out something to make industry feel it was a good place to come. He said they don't want tax exemptions, they just want fair taxes. He said if you give them free taxes, you'll have runaway industry. And that we found . . . .

C.H... What's runaway industry?

C.F... Sweat shops -- flee from unions -- and then when the tax exemption runs out they run away some place else. They run away to the South to get away from the unions. He showed me an article out of some scholarly journal. He said that they have had trouble during the Second World War getting graduate engineers to go to Oak Ridge. The social amenities weren't there.

There wasn't a library, there wasn't orchestra, there wasn't good schools. People didn't want to go there, and they didn't want their families to live there. The arts are very important. So I was trying to help the arts anyway. I had been elected president of the orchestra. Before I took office as president of the orchestra, I was elected mayor, so then I could help them.

C.H... I don't see how you found time.

C.F... By getting Owsley, I had time to work on this stuff, don't you see. 'Cause he was administering the city, and I wasn't in my office -- I was out at the university, out at the library, orchestra, parks, and riding through the alleys.

C.H... I laugh because they got you a key to those boxes for the signal light, didn't they -- for you to work with those.

C.F... Yes, I called up the traffic engineer at 10:30 or 11:00 -- said how do we work them -- they were little computers. We were the first city in the world to have their signal lights synchronized or treadle operated, so that they did have some connection with traffic. And the traffic moved.

C.H... Did we have a large influx of big industry coming to the city proper, for instance, Falls City Beer?

C.F... They were here. We didn't think there was any need for a lot of industry coming into the city, or tearing people's houses down. I only tore down five or six houses while I was mayor. Just a few little cottages in order to open some streets. I hated to do that. I fought off redevelopment. We had had a token plan that consisted of tearing down a few cottages. down around Eighth and Chestnut. But then the next mayor held off redevelopment for three years altogether and then turned it loose and then it went crazy. And the same thing went for the expressways. Yes, we got other industry in -- part of Rubbertown came.

C.H... It seems to me that you were so progressive that your credibility would have been affected. You say no. I tend to agree with you. They doubted you at first. But once they saw you in motion and saw the results then they were with you. You were a dark horse and people didn't know what to expect and when elected you came out with all these . . . .

C.F... Like I said, people are as smart as the devil. You can't beat them. You get out there and get into the library and get those surveys and you'll find out. I still could get elected for anything I want to run for in Louisville.

C.H... I believe you could, too.

C.F... Most of them that would vote for me would be older people but they would tell the younger people. I knew what I was doing. Nobody else knew what they were doing. I studied, I had gone to school, I had been in the legislature, I had been in politics all my life. I had run for Congress when I was a kid. I almost won.

C.H.... Can you give me sort of a survey of when you were a Congressman?

C.F... I had an awful good time.

C.H... I will be real frank with you. I haven't done any research on this at all -- I didn't expect . . .  
..

C.F... You couldn't have done any research. The paper would not cover me. Because, I was saying to them that downtown Louisville was going to be inherited by the blacks who can't support it and who don't want it. It will be segregated. The paper decided that I was a racist. The head of the paper told all the reporters that I was a racist.

C.H... I don't see how he figured that.

C.F... Well, he was a nut. He is running a paper up in New England now.

C.H... What was on the mind as a Congressman? Weren't you still on this idea of bringing foreigners in?

C.F... See, I was trying to bring visitors into Louisville. I went to the manager of the Brown and said, "suppose I try to get visitors—tourists" -- and he said "no. No, don't do it. I don't want them cluttering up my lobby." So I didn't set up any bureau or try to advertise. I was trying to

bring students from the University of Louisville from all over but I didn't know then that I should have. I really didn't know they recruited students to universities. I had been at Male High School when I was in high school, and I wasn't going to college so I didn't. I guess I hear over the announcements that a man from Yale or Harvard would be here, but I really didn't pay any attention. I found out later that you recruit students into the universities the same way you would recruit them into the Army or anything else. But I tried to make it a nice town to visit. I tried to make it so people would be happy. There is not too much change of getting people to live in the city if it is off of the coast. Fifty-three percent of the Americans live within fifty miles of a seacoast or the shores of the Great Lakes. The center isn't going to be crowded in the foreseeable future.

C.H... What were some of the other things that were bearing on your mind at the time you were in Congress?

C.F... Well, I was on the committee of Interstate and Foreign Commerce. It is the most fun committee in the House. It is not the most powerful, but the most fun. We had all kinds of things, automotive, safety, tobacco, and airplane safety. It was a small committee. They made us a committee of the whole, but they don't do that any more. So, we had these exciting things to do. If an airplane flew into the ground we had the guys in the next day from the FFA [FAA], and they were to tell us about the crash. See, I was very much for all the so-called legislation that Johnson was doing. One reason I didn't stay in Congress I thought we passed all the bills that you could and I still don't know what else they would need.

C.H... In terms of social legislation?

C.F... Yes, Yes! I thought we done the job. We had a big majority and we just pushed everything through. There were a lot more social legislation done in my time than in Roosevelt's time.

C.H... Can you give me some examples?

C.F... Gosh! There were 150-200 bills. Automotive safety.

C.H... Is that the seat belts?

C.F... Well, that was something they decided to do. But the bureau that we sat up . . well all kinds of improvements in the welfare set up. You better get this out of some book because there was so many. A tremendous amount of social legislation. The committee was just hammering on everything--various pensions, various protections. I figured that the job was done and I was homesick, and that was a crazy place. I couldn't see how I could raise any money without being in conflict of interest, especially with the committee I was in. It just touched everybody.

C.H... Now this was in tobacco and alcohol.

C.F... Yes, it covered everything--all the industry. I specialized on the radio and television industry, alcohol, tobacco, automobiles, airplanes. It had been Rayburn's committee and he just

grabbed all of the power. They had two committees in the Senate trying to do the same job we were doing in the house. But a lot of the social legislation didn't go through my committee--it came out of other committees. And it was a tight fight, sometimes. It would be one vote that would make the difference. And we had tight fights within our committee even with the majority we had. Conservative Southern Democrats would gang up with the Republicans and it was rough.

C.H... I have one question on my mind. This idea of Rebel Yell. Can you tell me something about blending whiskey?

C.F... I used to own the brand [brand]. I invented it. And, it was a blend of straight whiskey. Seventy to ninety percent of the whiskey made before Prohibition in the United States or Kentucky was spirit blends, as all Scotches are. Blend neutral spirits, with whiskey, but I didn't go that far. I just blended whiskey on the theory that you could make it uniform. I thought the name was good. I sold the brand for \$20,000 just before I was married.

C.H... Now that is the Rebel Yell.

C.F... Yes. The guy that's got it now got it for nothing. The people I sold it to went broke and didn't bottle it for years so he just picked it up. He called and asked me if I would object. I said no. I probably could have done this all myself, but at that time I thought that there were some overtones that people might think it was racist, [the name Rebel Yell.] It wasn't. Like the Confederate flag -- a racist symbol.

C.H... Now, I saw a picture of you in the appear-- while in the library and your name was on the label of one of the bottles, but is your name on the label now?

C.F... It was on some labels. It was on the one that were bottled for me. But most of it went into stores. I never did sell very much of it. It was bottled for the Deep South. But I had a theory that if anyone wanted to order a case, he could have his name put on it. That wasn't original.

C.H... Yes, it has been done before.

C.F... I could have gotten rich on that whiskey. I had the highest ceiling in the country. During the Korean War, they quit making whiskey and everything had a ceiling on it. You couldn't charge more than on a margin, forty-two, I believe it was. And my whiskey was very expensive.

C.H... What are you doing now?

C.F... Well, Miss Nancy and I are running the Lost Cause Press, which is a micro-publishing business. We publish microfiche; it was micro cards for a long time. We sell to college and university libraries ... nineteenth century out of print books. I was doing it part-time when I was a Congressman, and when I got out I started doing it full time. It's a good business, thank goodness.

C.H... Can you tell me about confusions?

C.F... Yes! I was a Jeffersonian. And Jefferson was for laissez-faire and Smith was. I worried about them not being for welfare. And I was studying Jefferson when I was back in school and I learned that Jefferson was influenced by the French physiocrats and now I read in Pearington's, *Main Currents of the American Thought* that Jefferson was physiocrat and so was Franklin. And the Declaration was based on their thought. Then I went to Columbia one summer. There I met a Chinese. He said "what is the matter?" I said that I am sad. I am a physiocrat and they don't seem to like physiocrats around here. "Aw," he said, "sure they don't. Chinese people are physiocrats." He told me to look up *Europe and China*. And sure enough. The physiocrats were taught by Jesuits. The Jesuits ran the good schools in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. They had sent missionaries to China during that time. And they were very impressed with the ancient Chinese sages, Confucius. I couldn't find any democracy in Grecian thought but it is deep in Chinese thought. It was wrong to call him an emperor. Should have been called chief administrator. And the theory of revolution, Locke, got it from the Jesuits. Maybe he didn't know, their idea was if the emperor loses the decree of heaven "heaven sees as my people see, heaven hears as my people hears" which meant that they had a public opinion survey going on all the time. I showed Roper how they made a survey and he said it was the same way he did it. This was 1500-2000 years ago. And the theory was then that they would ask a cross-section of people now they thought the emperor was doing, and a majority said he was doing poorly. He was supposed to quit because he had lost the decree of heaven because he lost the confidence of the people, and then the ministers would ask him to quit. This was nothing more than a revolution. It was a funny way of changing the government. They were voting through these surveys. You know how a public opinion survey tells you who is going to win an

election. Well, they didn't bother to vote and it worked pretty good. Better than governments in the West did. Until the West went in a and mixed them up. When I was mayor, I was telling everyone that I was a physiocrat, which I was. I guess the closest thing to it now was the populist. They believed in laissez faire because they were fighting the guilds. The guilds said that one man could make the pants and the other could make the coat but one couldn't make both. So they didn't want to let anybody make what they wanted. They wanted to let make not let do. The English translated it wrong. They thought it was the government's job to keep down unfair competition. Then in China they said if anyone is poor, unhappy, or sick, it is the government's fault. So it was a welfare state hitched to a laissez faire economy, which is half democratic and half republican. This is the reason why we get into such a mess. When the Jesuits got in China, they were so impressed with what was going on in China that they started writing home about it and teaching it at home. I am talking your arm off. Got any other questions?

C.H... No. Thank you.