

5760121-004

Date: Jan. 21, 1956

Interviewer: Anna Holden

Place: 701 N. McDonough St.

Respondent: Mgr. J. H. Bagley

Occup: Manager Montgomery City Lines Offices ~~INTERVIEWER~~ V. D. King, Chief Clerk

Sat., Jan. 21

General Statement: Arrived at offices about 11 AM and asked man at outside desk if it were possible for me to speak to Mr. Bagley. He said that Bagley was in the adjoining conference room talking to his "boss" (or one of his bosses, I am not sure) and that he was pretty busy. I gave him my name and said that I would wait a while. He called them on outer office phone, Bagley came out to see what I wanted - I told him would like to talk with him and that if he were busy perhaps I had better make an appointment - He said he could talk with me then and wanted to know what I wanted. I explained that I was working on a community study in Montgomery and that I was interested in the bus situation as part of the total picture and would like some information from him about it.

Bagley looked about in his mid-fifties, spoke like a Southerner - will try to get more on his background. Showed wear and tear of the situation, physically, but was under complete control - gave impression of tired, _____

Respondent: I am sorry, but we have orders not to talk about that anymore - Everybody in the country has been down here asking questions and printing articles and it hasn't helped matters any - We will never get this thing settled if people don't quit coming down here.

Interviewer:- I know you are tired of reporters and questions but I did want some information that I don't believe I could get from anyone else (shakes his head) I might also say that we are just trying to study the community as it is and are not taking sides in the bus matter, we are trying to find out ~~what~~ what is happening -

Respondent: I can tell you that we have 67 buses and that 42 of them ~~are~~ are laid up now, but that is about all.

Interviewer: That was part of what I wanted to ask you - We are interested in getting the old lines and the changes that have been made in the routes and schedules - if you could give me that -

Respondent: We haven't made any changes except to drop the South Jackson and Washington Park lines - those were our only buses going into their part of town - they carried about 90% Nigra passengers.

Interviewer: I understood you had changed some of the other routes and that you had added a new line out in the Peary? Hills Homes section.

Respondent: I'll show you the maps and you can see those changes -

Interviewer: Would you have any figures you could give me that would show how the traffic ran on different lines - that is how many passengers you carried on how many buses you ran.

Respondent: No I couldn't give you anything like that - but you can figure it out from the no. of buses we have laid up - that should tell you how it ran.

Bagley, p. 2

Interviewer: One other ~~xxx~~ point, I was wondering if you had had many complaints from Negroes about the bus service and treatment they got on the buses - that is before the Parks incident-

Respondent: Oh, We had had some - we have complaints on all the lines, but nothing to make us think they would do this -

Interviewer: Had there been any committees or delegations about treatment on the buses.

Respondent: Well, they ~~xxx~~ came down ~~xxxx~~ after a guy was arrested last summer- They came down and asked us to change the seating arrangement and we told them to go to the city commission and change the city laws and go to the state legislature and change the state laws, but not to come to us - We don't have anything to do with making the laws - you see we operate under the city commission and they regulate the seating and what they asked for is against the law - We do what the law says and if they change the laws we will change - this is between them and the city commission and the laws of Ala., the bus company has nothing to do with it.

Interviewer: You mean this ~~xxxx~~ back to front and front to back seating they are asking for is against the law?

Respondent: Oh, yes, it's against the law. The city commission gave our drivers police power to enforce the law - We ~~xxxxxx~~ didn't ask for that, but they gave it to us and our drivers can have the power to arrest on the bus - they can't do it off the buses and they don't usually use it on the buses - they generally send for the regular police - In the ~~xxx~~ case the girl was involved in, they sent for policemen to arrest her, the driver didn't do it -

Interviewer: The seating arrangements are the heart of the matter, aren't they?

Respondent: (Who has been backing away to get back to his business) They asked for more courtesy from the drivers too. But if you check the court record you will find that they got a statement from her saying the driver and the police were both courteous - That is in the record -

Interviewer: One more question -

Respondent: I think you have gotten enough now (makes excuses; ~~xxxxxx~~ leaves)

I was given x maps of the old and new bus routes by a Mr. King who must be Asst. Mgr. to copy and began writing at a desk in another office adjoining the conference room - I don't know whether the same man who was in the office before was doing the talking with Bagley, but I could here snatches from time to time "white" and "niggers" and "nigras" - in practically every sentence. They talked about 45 min. and I remember these phrases coming ~~xxxxxx~~ thru the door.

"Well in Michigan -----

"You have them in your kitchens and around the house but that's not the same as sitting by them on the buses -----"

"If they can do it in South Georgia -----"