



# Video Story Transcript

## NEXT TOWN

**By: Storyteller Diane Ferlatte**  
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**Link to YouTube Video:**  
<https://youtu.be/57EQyy9Cc8U>

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Note : The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

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Hi, my name is Diane Ferlatte, and I am a storyteller. I'm gonna tell you an excerpt from a longer story of my life, a true story. In the 1940's and 50's, many black people just left the south because of Jim Crow laws. They were just sick and tired of Jim Crow laws and the segregation in the south, and my family was no different. My daddy put us on a train and we left Louisiana, going all the way to California, where I live now. And things were different in California.

I liked living in California. But, guess what? Every summer, my only summer vacation, my whole family would get in the car and drive all the way back to Louisiana to visit family, you know, grandma and grandpa. But can you imagine that? Driving thousands of mile across that desert, in all that heat, in a car, with no air conditioning. And we couldn't stop, you know at hotels, get a nice rest, take a quick shower. No, the only time we stopped is to get some gas or to use the bathroom, you know, to get rid of some gas! We couldn't stop at restaurants either to get something to eat because we didn't have a lot of money. But before we left, my mother would fry chicken; we had sandwiches, we had cookies, we had grapes, we had apples—I mean, the car was stacked up with food and pillows. We were on our way, to Louisiana! It was me in the back seat, next to the cookies, my two knuckle-head brothers, my mama and my daddy, and off we went.

But before we left California of course the food was gone. As soon as the food was gone, my brother started hollering, "Daddy, I'm hungry. Can we stop and get something to eat?" My father said, "Next town." But the next town, "Hey, Daddy, there's a place! Can we stop, can we stop?" He said "Next town," and pretty soon there we are at the next town. He said, "Daddy, Daddy, I'm hungry! Can we stop, daddy?" He said "Next town, boy!" I don't know what happened, my daddy, he must have got hungry himself because he finally

stopped and when he stopped, my brother was Mr. Happy, “Oh man, I’m gonna have me a hamburger, I’m gonna have me some French fries!” And I said, “I am having some biscuits!”

I jumped out of the car, I ran to the front door of that restaurant. I opened the screen door, I was just about to go in and get my biscuits, and my daddy said, “Get away from that door, girl, can’t you read that sign?” And I looked up, and there was a sign above the restaurant door that said: “Whites only.” Black people couldn’t go in. I was ten years old when that happened. Ten. And I got so angry, I picked up a rock and I was gonna chunk it at that sign and my daddy said, “Put that rock down. Don’t you pay any attention to that sign. Don’t you worry, we’re going to get something to eat. Put that rock down. Put it down!” My daddy took me by the hand and he led us around the side of the building all the way to the back of the restaurant. It was so hot outside, you could fry an egg on the sidewalk.

My daddy was talking fast, like he does when he is upset and he made me a little nervous. When he walked through the back door of the restaurant, he had a big smile on his face. He walked in and he said, “Morning, how’s everybody doing this morning?” But I looked around: we had to eat in the kitchen. We thought it was hot outside, try eating in that hot kitchen! Because, see, all the fans were up front in the restaurant, for the white customers. We sat down at two old, wooden tables in the kitchen, and I will never forget what happened next. It was a tall, brown-skinned woman, my color skin, standing behind the stove. She was the cook, you know, apron tied high, scarf tied around the hair so that the hair wouldn’t fall in the food she was cooking, and there was a window behind her that went to the restaurant, and the waitress would call all these orders to her through that window. She would say, “Eggs over easy! Bacon crisp! Biscuits!”

But the cook looked over at me, and she saw my lip was poked out, and my daddy was trying to calm me down. And she said, “Biscuits not ready yet!” Then she looked back at me and said, “Don’t you worry, baby, I’m gonna feed you all first.” So who got the first biscuits that day? We did. But as a little girl, I learned a lot about prejudice. As a little girl, I learned a lot about how people can hate you, they don’t even know you! But I also learned how some people handle it, because even though my daddy was just as angry as me inside, he didn’t let prejudice spoil his day or his meal. And we did get something to eat. My daddy was just like he liked his eggs—sunny-side up. Everybody liked my daddy, who took time to get to know you. He was always able to keep on the sunny side of life—because there is the other side! But that’s the story, a true story from my life.