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**Herbert Jones:** Okay, first of all I want you to tell me when you were born and where you were born.

**Beatrice Waldron:** On Montgomery, Alabama.

HJ: And what year?

BW: February 28, 1905.

HJ: Okay, and you moved to Tampa—?

BW: In 1923.

HJ: Okay, how were the living conditions of blacks in Tampa when you came in 1923?

BW: Very good. It was much better than what it is today.

HJ: Really?

BW: Yeah. As far as—you know, we didn't get paid like the people are gettin' paid now.

HJ: Umm hmm.

BW: Four dollars a day, but we was livin' pretty good at that.

HJ: Umm hmm.

BW: We could get a lot of groceries with a dollar fifty. You know? But now days you don't get that. You go to the store now with ten dollars, you've got nothin' or only a little

somethin'.

HJ: Umm hmm. Okay. Can you tell me anything about, in twenty-three [1923]? Was Dr. Mays here in 1923 when you came here? With the Urban League, Dr. Benjamin Mays, was he here then?

BW: (inaudible)

HJ: Okay, you were talking about the streetcars, I think.

BW: Yeah.

HJ: Okay, give me some—you know, how is it that—you said you got on there and you rode whatever you wanted to ride (inaudible).

BW: Yeah.

HJ: Tell me about the streetcars.

BW: Yeah, streetcars was a nickel at that time.

HJ: Umm hmm.

BW: And you can get on and ride from one end to the other if you wanted to, for a nickel. And if you wanted to go back, you pay another nickel on the way back, you know. You just ride all around sightseein' on there. We used to go even hay-ridin' at night, (inaudible) from the dam.

HJ: Umm hmm.

BW: Get on that open streetcar and have a (inaudible).

HJ: Okay, when y'all did that, did y'all have to sit in the back then, the black—?

BW: No, we sit anywhere.

HJ: Anywhere?

BW: Anywhere.

HJ: Just at sight-seein' times you could sit anywhere, or—?

BW: Yeah, but some of the time I have remembered the bus that say, "All colored in the back." I never did want to sit in the front anyway. I always like to sit in the back. It didn't make any difference to me. But that's what they said about—you had to wait till they get on first. I know nothin' about that. I got on when I got ready.

HJ: Yeah?

BW: Umm hmm.

HJ: Okay, do you remember anything about the land boom here in Tampa? You don't remember that?

BW: No. When I first came here Franklin Street was a dirt road. It was a dirt road. It wasn't paved. And the Citizens Bank was there when I came. That's the only bank I can remember—[it] was down there when I came to Tampa. And Maas Brothers [Department Store]. Those were the big stores in town, no Franklin Street then.

HJ: Okay, the land boom was when blacks and everybody went to buyin' land. The land was just out to be sold.

BW: Yes.

HJ: Do you remember that time?

BW: Yeah, I remember when people was buyin' a lot of land. And (inaudible).

HJ: Was there a lot of money here, then in that time then?

BW: Well, I'll tell you what it was. We was gettin' a low pay, but they was playin' games (inaudible). And where you didn't work to make that money, we win it. So—*bolita* [gambling game], you know. Cops (inaudible) things like that.

HJ: Okay, what were the housing conditions like when you came here?

BW: Well, the housing—it wasn't as good, but it was a low rent. I have lived right down in cesspool and we only paid a dollar fifty for an apartment. Yeah. It was very low.

HJ: What was the life—social life. What did blacks do, you know, during those days for social entertainment and stuff like that? What did you have to do?

BW: Well, we used to go on Central [Avenue]—Thursday evenin' dances. I went a lot of times. Thursday evening dances right there. And then you would have parties, house parties, at home and have a nice time playin' games like that, no fuss or nothin'. No fights. It was good, but now you can't do it.

HJ: Now— That is true. Okay, what about police brutality? Was that a lot? Were policemen rude to black folks?

BW: Yes.

HJ: Did they treat 'em real bad? Did you have any contact with them?

BW: No. They said they was rude. Mr. Frannick, they said he was rude. He always treated me nice. I've known Mr. Frannick was a policeman on Central.

HJ: Okay, Mrs. Waldron, do you remember anything about the Tampa riot in 1940?

BW: I remember it was, but I don't know even what happened.

HJ: You don't remember why it—what happened—what caused it to happen?

BW: No. No. I didn't do too much of anything at that time because I had eye trouble, and I have had surgery since then. I never knew too much.

HJ: Okay, what was the basic work for blacks to do when you first came here? What type of work—you know, black men, all of you—what type work were they basically doin'?

BW: Well, I did housework and I stayed on premises. And set up people. I worked for Dr. Virgil, Daniel Freeman. I worked for a lot of those rich people in my life now. I was helpin' 'em raise their children.

HJ: Are any of their children livin' now?

BW: Yeah. Except for Goldberg. Him and (inaudible) he got killed. And he's the cause of me gettin' my Social Security. He always paid that for me, because that'd do me good in later years.

HJ: Oh. Okay, do you know if there were any organized unions here for blacks during that time? You know, workin' unions.

BW: No.

HJ: You don't know. What about the churches, you know, what were the black churches—you know.

BW: Well, I joined (inaudible) Trinity Baptist Church, over there. Reverend Scott.

HJ: Where there any more churches here when you came?

BW: Yeah, there were more.

HJ: Can you remember any of that one?

BW: Beulah Baptist was here (inaudible) that one. And there was several churches here and (inaudible).

HJ: Okay, how was the attendance? Was it as great as it is now? Was it greater? You know, were people more enthused about church then than they are now?

BW: Yeah. There were more people then. There are not so many people who go to church now like they used. Church used to be full. They'd have to stand up. But nowadays it's not like that.

HJ: And what would y'all do, you know, after church—you know, just—?

BW: Well, sometimes we'd stand and talk, you know, after church, talk with one another and go home and eat and then go back to church, you know. I went to Sunday School, eleven o'clock service and night service. Because I brought my children up in the church. And you know when you bring up there they stay (inaudible).

HJ: Right.

BW: They don't go.

HJ: Sometimes.

BW: Uh huh.

HJ: Sometimes they (inaudible).

BW: Yeah, that's right.

HJ: Because my father was a minister.

BW: Yeah?

HJ: Umm hmm.

BW: What'd you say your name was?

HJ: Herbert Jones. Okay, do you remember where blacks went for medical help when they were sick those times?

BW: I didn't take 'em. Had (inaudible) myself. I didn't go. And when I—first time I went to the welfare for help in raisin' my children was in 1950, because I washed and ironed for different people to make a living. And I wasn't gettin' much Social Security. My husband passed before my last child was born, and I had to work hard. And I didn't get it from him.

HJ: Okay, can you just tell me about any lifestyles in Tampa, you know, anything—just anything you'd like to tell me about Tampa in general?

BW: I (inaudible) was terrible. The important stuff— That's the only thing I know. And afraid to go in the streets on account of it. Afraid I'm gonna get knocked down or my pocketbook snatched. That's (inaudible). I have never encountered

HJ: Black people or white?

BW: (inaudible)

HJ: Okay, is there anything else that you want to share with me about Tampa since you've been here? Do you know anything you want to tell me about life in general in Tampa since you've been here?

BW: No, I don't know what else to say. What was the differences, I (inaudible).

HJ: I want to hear about from back when you first came here.

BW: Way back.

HJ: Yeah, you know.

BW: Oh, it was good back in that time when I came. We all had a nice time. When you go out and you wasn't afraid. We could sit out on the porches and talk until late at night, but now it's different. It was real nice a long time, when I came here. And you wasn't afraid to walk the streets.

HJ: Okay, then Mrs. Waldron, I have appreciated that. And thank you very much.

BW: I'm glad I could tell you that much about it.

HJ: Yeah.

BW: I've been sick and I can't remember a lot now.

HJ: And you said— When did you start registerin' here in Tampa to vote, do you remember?

BW: You remember when— You don't know my (inaudible). Now, I don't remember. I think— It might have been on my card, but I don't have it with me. I believe it was in 1950, because I had that card the day when I registered, when I voted. I think it was in 1950 when I signed up to vote.

HJ: You been votin' ever since?

BW: Umm hmm. Ever since.

HJ: Were black folks allowed to start voting then, in the fifties [1950s], or it's just when

you started registering to vote?

BW: That's when I started. I don't remember now just when they did start votin', but that's when I registered to vote, in 1950.

HJ: Okay, what were the schools like in Tampa then?

BW: Well—

HJ: Did the teacher seem to be more involved in the children, more interested in the children, or were the children bad children and stuff like this? Did you have to go to the school for your children a whole lot?

BW: No. I went for one. I had one child that gave me a lot of trouble. You know, sometimes— Yeah, one gave me a lot of trouble. And I went to all PTA [Parent Teacher Association] meetings, and then I worked with the PTA and tried to encourage other people to go, and that didn't work out too good. Said that wasn't gonna get that child promoted by me askin' them to go to PTA meetings. I said, "Well, it will help to find out." And I would always go. I found out if my child was in school or the neighbors here or was he late or anything like that. I kept up with that. But some of those people, they—"Already got mine, better try and get yours."

HJ: Right.

BW: I know several of 'em like that. Now, Ms. Lester taught my children; so did Mrs. Berry. She taught my children.

HJ: Okay. All right, thank you very much.

*end of interview*