

[Silence]

**Stanley Grizzle:** Essex Richard Salas Bellamy, take two. Bellamy, we're talkin' about improvements in uh, working conditions after the uh, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters arrived on the CPR property, can you continue.

**Essex Silas Richard "Dick" Bellamy:** Uh-uh, the working conditions [clears throat] after we-- the working conditions improved greatly after we joined the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car uh, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. For- for example, if I happened to be one of the members on the Grievance Committee and the Grievance Committee consisted of the following Brothers: JR King, Roy Williams, Odell Holmes, Lee Russell, and myself. Seemed like I missed- left a man out. I'm not sure.

**Stanley:** Okay.

**Dick:** But anyway, the working conditions improved vastly. Whenever we went up to see the Superintendent on any grievance, we worked, the committee worked in order to help solve so many problems that we never would've been able to solve ourselves if we had not belonged to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Dick:** And I can truthfully say that they helped solve a lot of problems that we never would've been able to solve if we hadn't belonged to the brotherhood.

**Stanley:** So management had a lot of respect for the union and its officials?

**Dick:** Absolutely. The management, I can truthfully say under the different superintendents that I worked under, gave all the credit and all the respect that was due us at that particular time, which we never had before.

**Stanley:** Right. During the organizing of the porters' union, was there any intimidation of the porters on the part of management to discourage the organizing of the union?

**Dick:** No, not that I know of. Not that I know of.

**Stanley:** I see.

**Dick:** The company always seemed to cooperate with the-with the Brotherhood and-

**Stanley:** Tell me who were the recognized, um, leaders of the Brotherhood in your opinion, in the other districts, other than Calgary. Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg?

**Dick:** Now just what do you mean by the stand? Uh, I want to get you.

**Stanley:** Who-who were the men who were-who were-were recognized as being the Brotherhood stalwarts in the various districts across Canada?

**Dick:** I believe starting at Vancouver, uh-uh, I believe it was EW Rutledge was one of the men there. Another man now, a very good friend of mine, I didn't know his first name. Everybody called him Boss Kelly, and another friend of mine, Joe Leslie. Those are the three in Vancouver.

**Stanley:** That completes the Vancouver group?

**Dick:** That completes the Vancouver group.

**Stanley:** You didn't mention Frank Collins, was he-

**Dick:** No, I'm going to-- That's right. Frank Collins was there and uh, it seems like his brother Dick Collins was on there too. Mm-hmm. But I know Frank was there. Now we move on to-

**Stanley:** Winnipeg.

**Dick:** -Winnipeg. My good friend JW Simmons. Is that on?

**Stanley:** Yep, yep.

**Dick:** Uh, Gilberry. I don't know Gilberry's first name.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick:** Simmons, Gilberry, Bob Jamerson, Tommy Williams. Yeah. Jack Wilson.

**Stanley:** [unintelligible 00:05:47]. Uh, anybody else in Winnipeg or do you wanna move on to Toronto?

**Dick:** I think I'd like to move on to Toronto now.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick:** In Toronto, Bob Willis. A very good friend of mine. Percy Jewel. Another good friend of mine. Lassiter. Another very good friend.

**Stanley:** Clifford Lassiter?

**Dick:** Clifford Lassiter. Another good friend of mine.

**Stanley:** Oh, yeah.

**Dick:** That's three. Willie Wright. That is four. I believe that's all I can remember in-

**Stanley:** In Toronto?

**Dick:** -in Toronto.

**Stanley:** And then Montreal?

**Dick:** Montreal, the man we were talking about in that letter there, Hogg. I forget his-- C Hogg, was it?

**Stanley:** Milton Hogg?

**Dick:** Milton Hogg, Milton Hogg, Montreal. Montreal now. Uh, Tibu.

**Stanley:** Tibu. Oh yes.

**Dick:** S2 Brown. I don't know the-- His initial Brown. Very, very quiet. Very quiet-spoken man. That's three. Uh, the great checker player.

**Stanley:** Oh you mentioned him, yes.

**Dick:** Yes. I can't call his name now. Isn't that wonderful? One of the, he was a great man and those four are about all I can re-remember in Montreal.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Dick:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Would you like to, uh, to, uh-- Well, first of all, there are a couple of names of-of, uh, of porters who, um, I'm wondering about their role in the organizing of the porters' union. What is Charlie Baldwin? Charles Baldwin. Do you know him?

**Dick:** Charles Baldwin?

**Stanley:** Charlie Baldwin.

**Dick:** I don't think I remember him.

**Stanley:** I see. And how about, uh, Harry Gairey?

**Dick:** Harry Gairey? Were these CPR men?

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick:** I don't remember him. What district were these men working out of?

**Stanley:** Toronto?

**Dick:** No, that's-that's I can't remember those men.

**Stanley:** Now, the, uh, Brotherhood had a Ladies' Auxiliary?

**Dick:** Yes, yes.

**Stanley:** And, uh, can you tell me who the, uh, the-the leaders of the Ladies' Auxiliary in Calgary were?

**Dick:** At that time--

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick:** The ladies of the porters' Auxiliary were as follows. Uh-

**Stanley:** This is the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Calgary Division.

**Dick:** Yeah. Calgary Division. The ladies were, uh, Cordie Williams. Roy Williams's wife.

**Stanley:** C-O-R-D-I-E?

**Dick:** Yeah. Mayola uh, Richardson. Uh, that was, uh, my sister-in-law and Willis Richardson's wife. That's two. Uh, uh, Gauchie Sneed, three, was married to Napoleon Sneed-

**Stanley:** G-A-U-C-H-I-E. Got you.

**Dick:** Yeah. Mm-hmm. That is three, Rachel Mapp.

**Stanley:** Right? M-A-P-P, right?

**Dick:** M-A-P-P, that is four. Joan Armstead, J-O-A-N A-R-M-S-T-E-A-D.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Dick:** LG Armstead's wife; that's my niece. Loretta Jones. Uh, L-A-R-E-T-T-A, I-A. That's my niece also, was married to James Jones Jr. Uh, uh, [unintelligible 00:10:44] Uh, Winnie Turner, W-I-N-N-I-E-T-U-R-N-E-R, Turner. Her husband was, uh, uh, he's a Brown. Uh, I can't call the first name of her husband now, but she was a Brown. Mm-hmm, I may be able to call it a little later on. Now let's see. Who else can-- Oh, LC Hicks. Larry Hicks. His wife at that time was Lucille Hicks. Uh, Frankie Mayes, M-A-Y-E-S. He was a porter for a short time and then he became a red cap. And, later on, a station master.

**Stanley:** Well, we're talking about the Ladies' Auxiliary.

**Dick:** Uh,

**Stanley:** Oh, how does he fit into the auxiliary?

**Dick:** Uh, Frank Mayes.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick:** Uh, his wife, but I can't call her name.

**Stanley:** The lady who was here last night.

**Dick:** Helen.

**Stanley:** Helen?

**Dick:** Yeah, Helen. That's right. Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** She was a member of that, the Auxiliary?

**Dick:** Yes, mm-hmm. Now, I believe that is about all the ladies that I can recall.

**Stanley:** Who was the President of the Auxiliary? The first President?

**Dick:** Of the Ladies' Auxiliary?

[pause 00:12:30]

**Dick:** I believe the President at that time was Joan Armstead.

**Stanley:** Uh-huh, I see. You don't know who the other officers were?

**Dick:** No, no, I don't.

**Stanley:** What role do you think the Ladies' Auxiliaries played in supporting the Brotherhood?

**Dick:** I shall never forget when Brother Randolph came to Calgary and Brother Benny Smith. He says, "There is no organization will ever be successful unless the ladies are permitted into that organization." And I have never forgotten, and I don't believe you can find very many organizations who the ladies are-are not affiliated with the men in these various organizations. They seem to be able to give the men, uh-uh, a little more incentive to- in-in order to help them out.

**Stanley:** Right. So you feel the Ladies' Auxiliary was a great supportive instrument for the porters' union?

**Dick:** Absolutely, yeah.

**Stanley:** How did they raise-- Did they raise funds? Uh,

**Dick:** Now I'm not sure about that, but I think they did. Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Tell me, what do you think about the practice of tipping?

**Dick:** Practice of tipping?

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Dick:** [chuckles] As I stated before, when we first started to work, we were only getting \$75 a month and that didn't go very far in so far as keeping up- keeping the family together. Now, the tips that we made was very helpful. Two of the ladies for these brothers to bring these hips- these tips home, in order to keep milk, bread, and food and things on the- on the table for the wife and the children. We had to have some tips in order to-to, uh, help keep up the expenses. Because if a brother was renting and at that time raising a family, you just could not make ends meet.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Dick:** You had to have some tips.

**Stanley:** But tipping didn't bother you. Did it hurt your pride or your dignity?

**Dick:** No. No, it didn't.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Dick:** Not one bit. I was glad to receive those tips.

**Stanley:** It helped the pocket- the pocketbook.

**Dick:** Exactly. [laughs]

**Stanley:** Did you ever attend any of the conventions of the- of the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters?

**Dick:** No, no.

**Stanley:** Can you tell us of, uh, of some humorous thing that happened to you as a Porter?

**Dick:** Yes, I can remember one time I was running from Vancouver to-to Chicago, and, uh, on 13 and 14 known then as the, uh- known-- the 13 and 14 were known as the "Mountaineer." And uh, when we arrived at the- at Portal-Portal, North Dakota, the mounted police came on and told us to pull all of the buoys down. And I told him, "Who's going to help me push some of these buoys up?" He said, "Don't mind that we will help-help assist you in pushing up these buoys, if they're too hard for one man to push up." and there were about four or five buoys, it would take two men to push 'em up. After pulling all these buoys down, I asked him, "What are you looking for?" He said, "We have been told that there is whiskey on the train, and we not only asking you to pull down the buoys, we asking all the porters on that train, to pull their buoys down." They reached under the mattress, they didn't find nothing. They reached under the blankets, they didn't find nothing. They reached under the pillows and they didn't find nothing. And at that particular time, there were over 1,300 passengers on that train. So you can imagine the time that it took these mounted policemen, looking for this whiskey, and they never found not one bottle of whiskey. That was one of the most humorous [laughs] things that I ever--one of the most humorous things I ever encountered.

**Stanley:** I'm interested also in the names of- the nicknames of porters.

**Dick:** Nicknames of-

**Stanley:** Nicknames that they use between themselves.

**Dick:** Oh, uh, 13 and 14.

**Stanley:** That's a [unintelligible 00:18:26] train number.

**Dick:** Yeah. Is-is-is known as the "Mountaineer." They pass each other at just a little outside of Banff, and one of the porters on there was named E Ward, better known as Colorado Ward. And he leaned out the vestibule win- door. He said, "Hey, Dick Dick, I'm sitting on ice." That meant that he had an air conditioned car. At that time, we used to have to hang sheets at the windows. Pull down the blind- blinds and-and-and-and-and-put- hang these sheets up. And in the morning, when these passengers got up, you couldn't tell what some of 'em looked like, because that coal dust and going through the prairies all in the bed and everything else.

**Stanley:** Yes, I remember that.

**Dick:** There was another porter there, by the name of Chief Mitchell and, uh, Chief Mitchell was known as the chief because he always wore a blue-- a-a well- a very well-dressed man. And he wore his-- Always twirling his cane coming down the streets, and everybody looked at him, and he was better known as Chief Mitchell. And, uh, he was on-on-on-on the "Mountaineer" as well.

**Stanley:** Where did Colorado get his name from?

**Dick:** Now, I don't know where Colorado got that name from. I cannot remember.

**Stanley:** I would think he, he would be, uh, from Colorado.

**Dick:** Could be, could have been.

**Stanley:** Mr. Bellamy when you started on the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company as a porter, was there a pension plan for the porters?

**Dick:** I don't recall any, no.

**Stanley:** I see, when did the pension plan come in [unintelligible 00:20:35]?

**Dick:** I cannot remember.

**Stanley:** You you like to, um, make a concluding statement about the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters or you would like to evaluate the leadership given by A. Philip Randolph, Benny Smith, Uh, and Blanchette. Make a summary in any way you'd like.

**Dick:** Uh.

**Stanley:** Of your experiences with the union, the work they did. Good or bad--

**Dick:** As I can, uh, recall some of the- some of the high points in summarizing the, uh, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters on the Brother Randolph, Brother Benny Smith, Brother ER Blanchette. I can truthfully say, these men were instrumental in, um, helping us to overcome some of the-the difficulties that we had to go through. They helped us to evaluate some of the ups and downs that we had to go through. They gave us, uh, uh, perspec- a perspective on life that we never had before, in order- in order to uplift us so that the company would appreciate the-the- good men that excelled in all walks of life while we were members of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. That is my summary.

**Stanley:** To get back to the PMBA, the Porter's Mutual Benefit Association. Um, clarify, uh, the reason for its existence. Do you know when it was organized, by whom, why, and what purpose did it serve?

**Dick:** I cannot--

**Stanley:** Were you a member of it?

**Dick:** I must have been if it was when you said it started, but I-I cannot remember very much about the PMBA?

**Stanley:** I see. [Pause] Thank you very much, Mr. Bellamy, your information has been most enlightening and interesting.

**Dick:** Thank you very much. And I appreciate being-- I hope I have been a little help in helping you to evaluate some of the things that uh- some of the questions and things that you have asked me. Brother Stan Grizzle, thank you.

**Stanley Grizzle:** You're quite welcome. End of interview with Mr. Richard Bellamy. [Tape recorder clicks on and off] Interview, uh, by Stanley G. Grizzle of Floyd Douglas Tiller on the 4th of November, 1987 at the Marlborough Inn in Winnipeg, Manitoba, at uh, 5, uh, 4:35, uh, PM. All right, so just for the, for the record, what is your name?

**Floyd Tiller:** My name is Floyd Tiller.

**Stanley:** Yeah, and your-your address or your address is, uh, you said, uh-

**Floyd:** 151 Arden Avenue.

**Stanley:** All right, and in Winnipeg?

**Floyd:** Winnipeg.

**Stanley:** And you were born where Mr. Tiller?

**Floyd:** Memphis, Tennessee.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. And, uh, you came to Canada when?

**Floyd:** December 1943.

**Stanley:** I see. What were the circumstances which brought you here?

**Floyd:** Uh, as a porter, they were looking for porters. And I had the job arranged and I came.

**Stanley:** I see. How did you hear about the job?

**Floyd:** Hm, it was in the paper and a friend of mine told me about it.

**Stanley:** What paper?



**Floyd:** Uh, American paper, a commercial appeal, I suppose.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see. When is your birthday, by the way?

**Floyd:** My birthday, 19-- October the 5th 1912.

**Stanley:** Right. And, uh, so you, you came here, uh, as a result of this, uh, advertisement for sleeping car porters on the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

**Floyd:** Canadian Pacific Railroad.

**Stanley:** And you, when you, you started in, on the job in 1943,

**Floyd:** In 1943, yes.

**Stanley:** Yes. Did somebody from the Canadian Pacific Railroad come down to recruit you?

**Floyd:** They did. I-- It was an inspector. I can't remember his name.

**Stanley:** It wasn't Winfield?

**Floyd:** No, it wasn't Winfield.

**Stanley:** Uh, who-- did any other men accompany you up here to work on the job?

**Floyd:** Uh, several fellows or group of us came, a big group of us. Some went to Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg. At that time, no one went to Vancouver.

**Stanley:** And the name, any of the man that come up with you?

**Floyd:** I- right now, I don't believe I can.

**Stanley:** Any of men that came up with you still here, do you know?

**Floyd:** Uh, no, not with me.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see. What were you doing in-in Memphis at the time, were you going to school or?

**Floyd:** Uh-uh, no, I just returned from the US Army.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see.

**Floyd:** I returned in, uh, end of September and came here in December.

**Stanley:** I see. And how long did you work as a sleeping car porter for the Canadian Pacific Railroad?

**Floyd:** Until my retirement, uh, I was 62 years old. I don't know. I don't remember the year.

**Stanley:** I see. And, um, did you enjoy the job of-of sleeping car porter?

**Floyd:** I enjoyed the job very much.

**Stanley:** What did you like about it?

**Floyd:** Well, traveling mainly and meeting different people.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Um, do you have a family here?

**Floyd:** I don't have a family here.

**Stanley:** I see. You're not married?

**Floyd:** No, I'm not married.

**Stanley:** I see. Your relatives are all in--

**Floyd:** All in the States.

**Stanley:** Right. Did you become a member of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters?

**Floyd:** I did become a member of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

**Stanley:** Why did you join the BSCP?

**Floyd:** I thought that it would, uh, help, uh, the progress of the porters. And, uh, I figured that we-- at that time, we needed help and I always believed in, uh, unions and, and unison.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Floyd:** So I joined.

**Stanley:** Right. Mm-hmm. Do you remember what the joining fee was when you joined?

**Floyd:** I don't remember what the joining fee was at that time.

**Stanley:** Do you remember what the dues were, the monthly dues?

**Floyd:** Uh, no. I-I don't remember the dues, I wouldn't want to give a figure and it'd be wrong.

**Stanley:** Alright. Um, do you-- Refresh my memory again, what day did you start on the CPR?

**Floyd:** I started, uh, I'll give you the exact date. Uh I'll uh, December the 16th, I believe.

**Stanley:** What year?

**Floyd:** 1943.

**Stanley:** So you joined the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, how long after you started on the CPR?

**Floyd:** I don't know exactly how long, but soon as the union came to Winnipeg, I joined.

**Stanley:** I see. Uh, so when you started on the CPR, there was no union.

**Floyd:** There was no union.

**Stanley:** And, uh, can you dis- compare the conditions of work before the-the, uh, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters arrived on the property of the Canadian Pacific Railway company and after?

**Floyd:** I don't know if I can describe it, but I know it was a lot different, uh, from the time before the union to the time, uh, during the union, was a lot different, uh-uh, for the porters, especially.

**Stanley:** What do you mean different? Did the conditions improve after the union arrived or did [crosstalk]-

**Floyd:** Uh, the dition- the condition were much better after the union arrived.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. The conditions of work improved. Uh, you speak of the conditions of work?

**Floyd:** The conditions of work improved.

**Stanley:** How about the-the money?

**Floyd:** Uh, the money, uh, improved also.

**Stanley:** Do you recall during the organizing of the porters' union, whether or not the company used to- any means of trying to discourage the men from the organizing? Was there any intimidation?

**Floyd:** Right now I don't, uh- uh, recall any intimidation or discouragement. Uh, it is that, uh, all companies that don't want a union might discourage, but it wasn't that bad to me.

**Stanley:** Do you recall who the names of the men and possibly women who were involved in the organizing of the porters?

**Floyd:** One person sticks out in my mind, Bob Jamerson,-

**Stanley:** Uh-huh.

**Floyd:** -Jack Wilson.

**Stanley:** All right.

**Floyd:** I said one, but uh, that's another. Bob Jamerson, Jack Wilson.

**Stanley:** All right. Any others?

**Floyd:** There are many others, but right now I can't recall their names.

**Stanley:** Right. Do you recall if there was a pension plan in-in place, uh, when you started at the CPR? Was there a pension arrangement?

**Floyd:** Uh, right now, I'm not sure if there were a pension plan. I think it was, but I- I- I'm not very sure.

**Stanley:** What did you, uh-- Do you know the names of any of the organizers of the union in other districts, other than in Winnipeg?

**Floyd:** Uh, Calgary. Hold on, I remember they tell me that, uh, the Odell Holmes was, uh, from Calgary, Roy Wilson and, uh, Roy Williams.

**Stanley:** Uh, huh. All right. Any other districts? Vancouver, Toronto, or Montreal?

**Floyd:** I don't remember the names right now.

**Stanley:** I see. Well, what did you think of the leadership given by Blanchette and Randolph and Benny Smith?

**Floyd:** I think they were superb. Among the highest that could, uh, be.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Right. You met each one of these men. Did you?

**Floyd:** I met each one of them. I knew some of them personal. Blanchette worked with him.

**Stanley:** You don't recall the names of any of the union organizers in Toronto?

**Floyd:** Right now I don't remember the names. I came in contact with the people, talked with them, but I don't remember their names.

**Stanley:** I see. How about the Ladies' Auxiliary? Do you know of anything- any of the women who organized the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Brotherhood?

**Floyd:** I don't know who the organizers were, but I do know some of the women who were in the Ladies' Auxiliary.

**Stanley:** Who were they?

**Floyd:** Uh, uh, Olivia Hicks.

**Stanley:** Oh yeah.

**Floyd:** Ollie, Whitney Jamerson.

**Stanley:** Is that Bob Jamerson's wife?

**Floyd:** At the-- Yes.

**Stanley:** Any other women?

**Floyd:** Uh, Turner.

**Stanley:** QT Turner's wife?

**Floyd:** Yeah. I can't think of her name.

**Stanley:** Was he active with the union, Mr. Turner?

**Floyd:** Very much so.

**Stanley:** What did you think of the practice of tipping?

**Floyd:** Uh, I think tipping is, um, is very good. Uh-

**Stanley:** Did you like to be tipped or did it- did it offend you in any way?

**Floyd:** Uh, no, tipping didn't offend me. Uh, anyway, if I got a good tip, I was proud of it. And if I didn't get a good tip, uh, it was just one of those things.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Now you've named the names of some of the porters who were involved in the organizing. A couple of other names have come up, and I'm wondering if you recall them as organizers out of Toronto, Mr. Harry Gairey?

**Floyd:** Yes, I knew him. Uh, yeah.

**Stanley:** Do you recall if he was an organizer of the union?

**Floyd:** No. I didn't know whether he was organizer or not.

**Stanley:** How about Mr. Charles Baldwin, Charlie Baldwin? Do you know him?

**Floyd:** I knew him. I didn't know whether he was an organizer or not.

**Stanley:** I see. All right. Um, did you ever attend any of the conventions of the porters?

**Floyd:** I didn't attend any conventions.

**Stanley:** Were you ever in-in an office? Did you ever serve in an office of the union or a position?

**Floyd:** I was on the local, uh, organizer, when, ah, local organizer after-after the union started.

**Stanley:** I see.

**Floyd:** I was organized.

**Stanley:** What- what does that mean? What did you do as an-as an organizer?

**Floyd:** Well, uh, talk to the fellows, uh, about the union. Tell them the benefits of it and those who before they were forced, those who weren't in it, tell them the benefits of, uh, bein' in the union.

**Stanley:** All right. Mm-hmm. Did you ever experience any resistance from the men to join the union or pay their dues?

**Floyd:** No, I didn't, uh, encounter any resistance, but, uh, until they were forced on us, a lot of them didn't care to pay the dues.

**Stanley:** Do you, can you recall any humorous incidents that took place amongst the porters or which you experienced as a porter? I'm kinda-kinda making the-the story of the- of the union, uh, you know, not too heavy, like you said, inject a little humour if possible.

**Floyd:** No, I didn't encounter any humours. It was all pleasant and business.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Um, do you recall any nicknames of porters? Nicknames the uh porters used between themselves?

**Floyd:** No, not particular.

**Stanley:** Didn't they have a nickname for you?

**Floyd:** No, no.

**Stanley:** I see. Would you like to make any conclu- concluding statement about the benefits of the union or what good the union did in our community?

**Floyd:** There are so many, uh, good deeds until I wouldn't- hardly know where to start. I know that, um, if one was accused after the union had started, one was accused, it would have to be proven and not just hear-said.

**Stanley:** Oh, yeah. Mm-hmm. Alright. Is that it?

**Floyd:** Well, that's, um, there's so many more. And, uh, you wouldn't be dismissed or-or put out of service unless it was, uh, warranted-

**Stanley:** Right.

**Floyd:** -with the union

**Stanley:** Before the union, um, specifically, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters arrived on the CPR property, I'm told there was a Porters' Welfare Committee. Do you know anything about that?

**Floyd:** No, that was before my time.

**Stanley Grizzle:** End of interview with Floyd D. Tiller. 3rd of November, 1987, 5:00 PM. Interview with Tom Williams at his home in Winnipeg, 391 Magnus Avenue, on the 4th of November, 1987. Interview conducted by Stanley G. Grizzle. All right, Tom. What is your full name, Tom?

**Thomas Lawrence Tiller:** Uh, Thomas Lawrence Williams.

**Stanley:** Right. And, uh, where were you born, Thomas?

**Tom:** I was born in Oklahoma, on the 13th of January, 1906.

**Stanley:** Come to Canada?

**Tom:** Uh, December 1910.

**Stanley:** And, uh, why did you come to Canada?

**Tom:** My father come here a year earlier, uh, to work on the Grand Trunk Railroad in Battleford, Saskatchewan.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see. And, uh, you were- you came to Canada at what age?

**Tom:** I was, uh, four years, just past four years old.

**Stanley:** And, uh, we went to school where?

**Tom:** I went to school in Battleford, Saskatchewan, for, uh, one year and then we went to my dad's homestead in 1912, I believe. And we stayed a winter and came back to Battleford and my dad went--was working in the city to get more money. We went back to the homestead in 1914, I believe from--I think that's right. And, uh, we stayed there until he passed. And, uh, then we left the farm in 1924, the fall of 1924. We came to North Battleford, we bought a home in North Battleford. My mother, my sisters lived there with me and my brothers.

**Stanley:** When your father and your mother came to Canada were they homesteaders?

**Tom:** Well that's-- I really don't know, but after he came to Canada, he found about this Homestead Act. He was working in, uh, on the Grand Truck-- he was building the Grand Trunk Railroad in old Battleford, Saskatchewan.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** And I think he got the idea then from the Homestead, but when he come into Canada, I don't believe he knew about the Homestead Act, you know.

**Stanley:** Did he take advantage of the Homestead Act?

**Tom:** Yes. Six--160 acres, uh, free if you-you had to do so much, uh, improvement for one year, you know.

**Stanley:** I see.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm. Build a house and I think it was, uh, 40 acres and a barn, you know.

**Stanley:** Was it all he got? [Tape recorder stops and restarts] Tom, um, when did you start on the, uh, on the railroad, on the Canadian Pacific Railway?

**Tom:** 1931.

**Stanley:** And, uh, what month, date? Can you remember?

**Tom:** I can't really remember. I think it was the month of June, I believe.

**Stanley:** Why did you start to work with the CPR? How did it-how did it come about?

**Tom:** Well, there was no other work to be had for us at that time.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** And uh, I had worked on, uh, the CPR was building a freight line out of North Battleford in there. And I was working for this man up there. I was, ah, tapping ties there. And so he told me about-- After I got finished, he told me about I could get on his porter. So he gave me a pass to come to Winnipeg.

**Stanley:** You know. Yeah. Yeah.

**Tom:** Uh, when I came to Winni-- came to Winnipeg, I was interviewed by Mr. CC Jones.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** Then he took to see Mr. Warburton and, uh-

**Stanley:** Warmington?

**Tom:** Warmington. Yes.

**Stanley:** W-A-R-M-I-N-G-T-O-N.

**Tom:** Yeah. And we had a run around for-

**Stanley:** Who's- who was Warmington?

**Tom:** He was the, uh, agent for- Platform Agent.

**Stanley:** Oh.

**Tom:** Yeah.

**Stanley:** The CPR?

**Tom:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Tom:** And he, uh, handled the porters and all that.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** And they gave us a run around until- for a couple of months. And it was very hard then, because, um, if you had a-a mind of your own and wanted to be a man of your own,



they would pass you by and put somebody else in front of you that was- uh- would cave to their whims, you know. So, uh, there's, the first year I worked, uh, four months and then in the fall I, uh, asked for a pass to go back and, uh, I asked the wrong person. I asked Mr. Warmington. He said, "No." I wouldn't get a pass.

**Stanley:** To go where?

**Tom:** Go back home to North Battleford.

**Stanley:** Oh yeah.

**Tom:** So, uh, and I-- The money I'd made, I wanted to save that, you know, to take home to my mother and the sisters and so. I [unintelligible 00:45:46] back to North Battleford.

**Stanley:** You made money doing what?

**Tom:** During the summer months.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see.

**Tom:** From, uh, June until September.

**Stanley:** As a porter?

**Tom:** Yes. Uh-huh.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see you. You were running where?

**Tom:** Everywhere. Extra.

**Stanley:** I see.

**Tom:** Yeah. And then I, uh, hoboed back North Battleford and stayed there the winter and the, uh, spring I, uh, wrote Mr. Warmington for a pass to come back, which he denied, which I wrote to the wrong person, it was my fault. So I hoboed down again, 1932. We worked about, uh-

**Stanley:** You say, you hoboed. Describe that hoboing.

**Tom:** By low riding freights. Yeah.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** And uh, so we worked, uh, three months that year, 'cause, uh, they-they, um, Depression's coming on.

**Stanley:** What year was that?

**Tom:** 1932.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Tom:** And, uh, then we-- I went to ask Mr. Warmington for a pass. He said, uh, "No, you wasn't working long enough for your pass." So a friend and another porter told me, he says, "Go and ask Mr. Sugden."

**Stanley:** Who was this other porter?

**Tom:** Uh, Carr, his name. He's not living here anymore. His name was Carr. He said, "Go and ask Mr. Sugden," he was the Assistant Superintendent there. And Mr.- And Mr. uh-

[pause 00:47:23]

[00:47:56] [END OF AUDIO]