

**[Pause 00:00:00]**

**Stanley Grizzle:** Side two, continuation of interview with Tom Williams.

**Thomas Lawrence Williams:** So, I went to see Mr. Sugden, he was Assistant to the Superintendent Mr. Worthington.

**Stanley:** Yeah, okay. Yeah, okay. Go ahead.

**Tom:** And so, he said, "Yes, when do you want them?" I said, "I want them through afternoon." So, he gave us--

**Stanley:** What?

**Tom:** Asked me when I want the passes.

**Stanley:** Yeah.

**Tom:** So, I told him I wanted them that after-- same afternoon.

**Stanley:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Tom:** So he gave us the passes, and we got the train that night. And far as Saskatoon with sleeper in beth, and so from Saskatoon, we had to take a CNR to Norther Battleford.

**Stanley:** When did you be- begin to get- get to full-time work on the CPR as a porter?

**Tom:** Full-time work, I would be '39.

**Stanley:** So, you worked part-time from '31 through '39?

**Tom:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** And during that period, what would you-- what would be the- the most work you got? Is that in months or weeks?

**Tom:** Oh, it'd be from maybe to May until September, then I'd say which we'd lay- lay off a couple of months then go back to work in- in, at Christmas time, you know?

**Stanley:** All right. So, were you doing any other work, other than sleeping car porter work?

**Tom:** Ah, yes.

**Stanley:** The entire month when you went.

**Tom:** I worked-- did farm work.

**Stanley:** Farm work?

**Tom:** Yes.

**Stanley:** Okay. And what kind of farm work?

**Tom:** Any kinda farm work, ploughing with tractor, horses, a lot of horses in those days.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Right. Um, how long were you a porter? You retired when?

**Tom:** In '70-- '71 I think it was.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** January '71.

**Stanley:** During that time, I understand that there was an organization that was representing-- that representing the porters known as the Porters' Welfare Committee. Were you familiar with that organization?

**Tom:** No, I wasn't.

**Stanley:** I am referring to a document which I have here. Ah captioned "the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, Sleeping Dining And Parlor Car Department, rates of pay and rules governing the sleeping-- the service of sleeping and parlored car porters effective July 16th 1927." And the- the signatories to this agreement, ah, represent porters in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal. For the company, it was Mr. WA Cooper, Manager Sleeping and Dining and Parlor Car News Service. Now, the Winnipeg representatives were WC Jones, I Ward, and GT Johns. Do you recall now, ah, that they represented the Porters' Welfare Committee?

**Tom:** I knew they were, but they never did talk to us, you know?

**Stanley:** Oh, I see. Did this Porters' Welfare Committee have meetings of-- with the porters?

**Tom:** No, they did not.

**Stanley:** They didn't? Oh, I see. I see. Well, how did they get to these positions did they- they were they elected by the porters as the representatives?

**Tom:** Elected by the company.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see. I see. You're saying that before the-- before these representatives, these men were all sleeping car porters, were they?

**Tom:** They were.

**Stanley:** The ones I've named?

**Tom:** Yes.

**Stanley:** I see. And ah, they never had any meetings with the porters to discuss their grievances? Oh, I see.

**Tom:** They just- they just told us what the company said.

**Stanley:** Oh, oh I see. So where you aware of- of, um, this Porters' Welfare Committee, and it was-- as it was called, do-- doing any negotiating during the time that you were on the railroad, doing any negotiating on behalf of the company?

**Tom:** If they did, I didn't hear anything about, or do anything about it.

**Stanley:** I see. Well, did you ever see a collective agreement like this?

**Tom:** I have never seen one.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see. Alright.

**Tom:** Yeah. Turn it on now. Maybe some of the older men.

**Stanley:** Are there any men around now that you know of who were workin' for the CPR in 1927? July?

**Tom:** No.

**Stanley:** No?

**Tom:** No, no.

**Stanley:** Okay. But you wouldn't know who the officers of this Porters' Welfare Committee were then?

**Tom:** No, no.

**Stanley:** I see. Did you- did you pay any dues into any organization for representation?

**Tom:** No, I didn't.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see. Mm-hmm. Did you ever become a member of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters?

**Tom:** Yes.

**Stanley:** When?

**Tom:** When? I'm getting too old to remember what year. When it- when he first started, when he first came.

**Stanley:** I see. Did you ever hold office in the union?

**Tom:** No, I didn't. I helped collect dues when I came in but I-- but never had an office.

**Stanley:** I see you collected dues. Were you one of the organizers before the union that a contract with the CPR?

**Tom:** No, no.

**Stanley:** You didn't do it. Who were the key organizers then, to your knowledge?

**Tom:** Bob Jamerson, and JW Simmons, and Blanchette, and, ah, Philip. What's his name? Philip? He was- he was supposed to be happening. We found out he was a traitor to the union, even after Randolph came.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** You mean the fella with a nickname Trotsky?

**Tom:** Trotsky, yes.

**Stanley:** Oh, yes.

**Tom:** And Jim Walker. He was one but he was a trader to the company too. After Randolph came, we found out that both were traitors. And QT Turner.

**Stanley:** James Walker, was he active with the organizing?

**Tom:** He was active. He was a member and he was a third fine fellow, to have a Brother like Jim, you know?

**Stanley:** Yeah. Any other organizers you can recall on?

**Tom:** Oh, yeah. I'm tryin' to think [inaudible] -- who were then? Oh, Joe Hudson. Joe Hudson. Yes.

**Stanley:** Can you recall any other organizers?

**Tom:** Um-

**Stanley:** No?

**Tom:** No.

**Stanley:** Oh, because they- they was the Winnipeg organizers, right?

**Tom:** Yes, they were the Winnipeg, yeah.

**Stanley:** While we're on organizers, can you tell me about who are the- the organizers and the other districts were that you became aware of? Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal?

**Tom:** Well, I didn't know about Toronto and Montreal, but I know my Brother Roy, and, um, Mr. King and--

**Stanley:** Ted King?

**Tom:** No, Ted King's father.

**Stanley:** What's his name? John King?

**Tom:** John King. Yes, yeah.

**Stanley:** Calgary.

**Tom:** Yeah. And PT Clay.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Tom:** He was a Treasurer. Ge was PT Clay and Dick Bellamy. Oh, there's another one used to be there on the committee, used to go up and see the--

**Stanley:** Who, Proctor?

**Tom:** No. I don't think so. I don't think he was strong enough. Oh-

**Stanley:** I was told that there was [inaudible 00:09:37]

**Tom:** Yes, uh-huh.

**Stanley:** I was told that Proctor had meetings at his home, with the union organizing. I talked to his son yesterday at the airport, and he confirmed that the junior organizing of the Union-

**Tom:** At the meetings at Mr. Proctor's home?

**Stanley:** Yep.

**Tom:** If they did, I didn't know about, you know?

**Stanley:** Yeah.

**Tom:** And I was-- I went to Calgary a few meetings but I don't remember.

**Stanley:** How about Vancouver then?

**Tom:** I couldn't tell ya.

**Stanley:** All right, fine. Thank you. Um, what were the-- what was the joining fee at that time to become a member of the porters' union? What was the joining fee and the monthly dues? [unintelligible 00:10:14]

**Tom:** Oh, I can't Remember.

**Stanley:** Um, did you have any trouble, uh, signing up men? Was there any resistance from any of the porters to join-- in joining the union?

**Tom:** It was, uh, resistance because, uh, they didn't want to pay dues. But then when Randolph had their contract, so that the company would take the money out of the cheques, then after that, some of them, they came around pretty good, you know?

**Stanley:** You talked about the compulsory check off.

**Tom:** Yes. Yeah.

**Stanley:** I see. That was so many years later.

**Tom:** Yes, so many years later, yeah.

**Stanley:** Uh--

**Tom:** But before that was hard to cut dues.

**Stanley:** Uh, during this time, did the company, uh, show any evidence of trying to intimidate the porters, to discourage them organizing?

**Tom:** Yes, very much so. Yes.

**Stanley:** What- what sort of intimidation, would you say?

**Tom:** Oh, they in so many words, they didn't think it would go through.

**Stanley:** Well, what did- what did they do? I mean, what did they say? Who said what?

**Tom:** It was not so much what the company would do, but they would tell the conductors to, uh, be hard on you, you know? Yeah. Not really, not so much the company either, but they would put their co- their conductors to, uh, to be hard on you, you know? And they'd ask some of them-- I know that some if the would ask me, "Are you a union member?" You know? I'd say, "Yes." "Well, do you think it's gonna work?" I said, "I'm sure it will." And **[unintelligible 00:12:01]** you know, when you found out you, uh, a member of the Brotherhoods, he was in, they would-- uh, there's a lot of little things they would put on you, you know, just to, uh, to show that they didn't, uh, approve of it.

**Stanley:** Who, the company?

**Tom:** Yeah, but they would-- their representatives that the conductors and their sign-out men, you know?

**Stanley:** Well, you'd think that, uh, uh, think that if there was intimidation, when-when a company representative asked, if you belonged to the union, you wouldn't admit it. Why did you admit it?

**Tom:** Well, I was ashamed of it.

**Stanley:** [laughs] I see.

**Tom:** You know?

**Stanley:** A good answer. I see. Alright.

**Tom:** Uh, they never-- CPR never thought it would go through because they thought it'd be just union by itself. But after a Randolph, a conglomerate with the non-ops and all that, then they were surprised, you see.

**Stanley:** At that time, before the coming of the union, was there a pension plan in place for porters? Do you recall?

**Tom:** Uh, I heard something about a pension, but I don't know, just, uh, just how much it was, because, uh, the timekeeper, when you go there for your time, if you had any overtime, he would tell you, uh, "Well, I ain't got time to look at it now, come back later." So many times, you turn you away, you know? And, uh, if we had- we had to be at work six hours overtime before you got any overtime. It was-- uh, I found it very hard for the timekeeper 'cause I wasn't used to-- wasn't accustomed being spoken to that way, you know? And, uh, we had a timekeeper here. Was, uh, at that time we started, it was very, very hostile. And if we got-- supposed to get \$80 a month, we were lucky to get \$60. That is really truth- that is really truth. You're supposed to get \$80, and we were lucky to get \$60 because they're always taking something off with this and that, you know?

**Stanley:** Well, I see. Well, did you find that any changes in this condition and other conditions and rates of pay once the union signed a contract with the CPR?

**Tom:** Definitely, a big change. And it was uh, you got your full time and when you went and asked for your overtime, you got it immediately and they-they-- and your time, if you had standby, you got your time book signed right at that. Soon as the time is over, there's a big difference before they would tell you, "Wait, come back."

**Stanley:** They wouldn't signed it for your time if you went ahead and orked.

**Tom:** No, yeah. They didn't have time.

**Stanley:** What a shame. Sometimes they didn't sign at all.

**Tom:** That's right. Yes. But it's very humiliating because we were-- I wasn't brought up that way, you know?

**Stanley:** Alright. Alright. Can you think of any other conditions that would improved? Describe any 'cause this is very interesting.

**Tom:** Yes, because, uh, when we started, we had to sleep in the smoking room on that sofa there.

**Stanley:** Did you have a bed there you could use?

**Tom:** It was an old mattress underneath the sofa and a curtain you put up there and a blanket and you put over you there and you sleep in there. And the wintertime was so very, very cold.

**Stanley:** Did you want to dress to get to bed or just [unintelligible 00:15:29]

**Tom:** You had to. In the summertime you did, but in the wintertime, you couldn't because it was too cold and people coming in and outta the washroom all the time, you never had any sleep. But after the union came, then we had upper berths.

**Stanley:** The bed is assigned to you?

**Tom:** A bed assigned to us. Yes, yeah.

**Stanley:** Did you get any more sleep, uh, uh, legitimate sleep or-

**Tom:** We had, uh-

**Stanley:** -after the union?

**Tom:** We did. We had-

**Stanley:** How much sleep were you allowed before the union and how much after?

**Tom:** Well, you were supposed to have, uh, uh, whenever the conductor laid down.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see. It wasn't set out.

**Tom:** No, and, uh, if you had somebody getting off or getting on you would missed that sleep 'cause you know, and you wasn't supposed to sleep during the day.

**Stanley:** Yeah.

**Stanley:** Right, how much time did you actually get to--?

**Tom:** We were supposed to have three hours.

**Stanley:** Before the union.

**Tom:** Yes.

**Stanley:** And- and after the union?

**Tom:** Four hours.

**Stanley:** How about improvement in conditions, uh, once the Brotherhood Sleeping Car Porters arrived on the property of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company? Can you think of any other improvements of conditions you can describe?

**Tom:** Oh, it's just, uh, different atmosphere and you had more respect

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** And, uh, conductors couldn't ride you. Well, they-- I never did try to ride me 'cause I always did my work.

**Stanley:** Right.



**Tom:** And uh, if they come up with any stuff that wasn't right, I would tell them off. But afterwards, the union started with more-- you could speak to your peace as long as you was right and did your work, and that's something I always did.

**Stanley:** Um, after the main organizing of the union, you must have come across conversations about who was-- who the union men were in other districts, the strong union men, the leaders? And can you- can you tell me now, who-who you-you recall as being the leaders and supporters of the union? The leaders let's just talk about in the other districts.

**Tom:** Well, I couldn't tell you any about Toronto or Montreal, but in Vancouver, it was Co-Frank Collins and, um, Johnny Fair, and-- oh, Manny's gone outta. Another fellow, he was a porter instructor there. He was, uh, an old fellow. He's a very fine man with the union. Then my brother Roy.

**Stanley:** Who was this sort of old fellow you're referring to? Where in-in Vancouver?

**Tom:** Yeah.

**Stanley:** Was it McLaughlin or uh answer?

**Tom:** Uh, no it wasn't McLaughlin. McLaughlin did come to the porter instructor afterwards.

**Stanley:** I See. Bu the man before him.

**Tom:** Yes. Yes. McLaughlin was the, uh, a union member too. He left.

**Stanley:** But uh, I'd like to know the name of this other person. You can't recall?

**Tom:** Oh, these are old men.

**Stanley:** Okay. Fine. If you think of it later, let me know. Some other names have come up, uh, uh, of men who will, helped to organize a union. One name was Charles Baldwin. Uh, I was told that Charles Baldwin came across Canada in the early days with Blanchette to organize the A Triple. You know his-his name?

**Tom:** No, I can't remember.

**Stanley:** And how about Harry Gairey? Do you know his name?

**Tom:** Yes, yes.

**Stanley:** Do you know if he was an organizer with a union?

**Tom:** I believe he was, but I remember the name.

**Stanley:** Uh-huh. Are you sure?

**Tom:** I remember the name, but I-I couldn't be sure.

**Stanley:** Yeah, yeah. All right. Um, now how, let's talk about the Ladies' Auxiliary, um, Calgary, Winnipeg Division. Do, you tell me who the leaders were.

**Tom:** Uh, beginning my, uh, my sister Helen Bailey was the President and Mrs. Mabel Brown and, uh, Mrs. uh, Simmons. But, uh, I just can't think of all of 'em now, but, uh, my sister'll be here after a while and she'll give you the, she-she had the names, she'll have the names up and down.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. How many of those original-original members of the Ladies' Auxiliary are still alive?

**Tom:** Just my sister I think, oh yes- and my Stella Brown, she joined later.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** And, uh, Mrs. Gilberry and Mrs. Kathy Sumpter.

**Stanley:** They're all living?

**Tom:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** I understand Mrs. Sumpter's not well?

**Tom:** No, she isn't. No.

**Stanley:** Give me her full name- can you gimme her phone number and address after a while?

**Tom:** Yes, I will. Yeah.

**Stanley:** Okay.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** All right. Um, do you think the Ladies' Auxiliary is, uh, was a good idea to have a, uh, an Auxiliary?

**Tom:** Very much so.

**Stanley:** Why?

**Tom:** Well, they, uh, I think they kept the husbands on the toes to pay their dues. A lot of 'em were, would- would forget, you know, and, you know, and then they gave, uh, uh, parties and, uh, dinners and things like that to, uh, to spread the men along. And to, as Mrs., uh, Mabel Brown is saying, uh, to stick together, keep together, you know?

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. And the, uh, the, uh, raised funds, didn't they?

**Tom:** Yes, they did.

**Stanley:** What did- what were the funds used for?

**Tom:** I- it went in the-the, uh, Brotherhood treasury. Yeah.

**Stanley:** Did you know what they were used for?

**Tom:** Well, when, uh, Brother Randolph and Benny Smith came here, they, it went for expenses for them, you know?

**Stanley:** Oh, yes. Yeah.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Funds for entertaining them?

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

**Stanley:** Would you say that the Ladies' Auxiliary was very supportive to their men?

**Tom:** Very much so.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Um, did you ever attend a porter's convention?

**Tom:** No. No.

**Stanley:** I wanna get back to the, uh, just briefly to this Porters' Welfare Committee. You say you never paid dues to the Welfare Committee, but do you know if anybody else who would pay dues?

**Tom:** No, I don't. If we paid dues they were taken out of our cheques, as I tell 'em, we didn't know how much cheque, money we got those days.

**Stanley:** No. The three men who I- whom I named earlier as being representatives in 1927 of the Porters' Welfare Committee, um, you knew them?

**Tom:** I knew them, yes.

**Stanley:** Did you ever meet them on the road or off the road?

**Tom:** Uh, WC Jones was our Porter Instructor.

**Stanley:** Oh, he was?

**Tom:** Yes.

**Stanley:** Uh-huh. I see. How about Ward? Did you meet Ward and Johns?

**Tom:** Uh, Johns, he was a porter on the train.

**Stanley:** Yeah. Mm-hmm. But what I wanted, or what I'm leading up to is you had conversations with them at one, some- one time or another?

**Tom:** Yes. So, you know?

**Stanley:** And they never mentioned to you just they were [crosstalk]?

**Tom:** Never, never. No.

**Stanley:** I see. All right. What did you think of the practice of tipping? Did tips, uh, receiving tips, uh, offend you? Did it, uh, or did you look forward to receiving tips?

**Tom:** Well, when-

**Stanley:** Do you have mixed feelings?

**Tom:** Well, I, uh, at first it was, uh, it wasn't very good, but after the wages were so small and we started, I'd look forward to the tips. And in those days, uh-

**Stanley:** What were the wages when you started? Can you remember?

**Tom:** It was supposed to be \$80- but it was supposed to be \$80, but I'm sure we didn't get, if we were lucky to get \$60.

**Stanley:** I see. A month?

**Tom:** Yeah. At least they told me it was \$80.

**Stanley:** Do you have any cheque stubs or anything left?

**Tom:** No, I haven't got anything left. I just- after I got quit, I was just so gotta get away, I just threw everything away.

**Stanley:** I see.

**Tom:** Yeah.

**Stanley:** So, anything more-more to say about tipping?

**Tom:** Well, uh, the, uh, when we first started the, uh, the tipping was, uh, uh, supposed to be, um, your advancement of our salary. And those days the tips were early days in the '30s, the tips were very, very good 'cause the only people that traveled those days had money.

**Stanley:** When you say very good, what, uh, what do you mean?

**Tom:** Well-

**Stanley:** What would tips be-be? What would your tips be per month say?

**Tom:** Well, the first year I came down here, I, uh, lived off my tips, but did not cash my little cheques. So-

**Stanley:** Would tips be more than the \$60 or \$80 a month?

**Tom:** Yeah. If you were working steady, yes. Oh, yes.

**Stanley:** Okay.

**Tom:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** You got most of your tips during the tourist season, I suppose?

**Tom:** Tourist season, yes, that's right. Yeah. Mm-hmm. We had people from all over, England and all over the world, and our best tippers was from, uh, uh, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco.

**Stanley:** I see.

**Tom:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Did you meet many Black passengers in those days travelling on the train?

**Tom:** Not in the early years. No.

**Stanley:** Did you meet any?

**Tom:** We met some in the later years. Yeah, mm-hmm. And, uh-

**Stanley:** Did you ever meet many? Or was it always just a few, sprinkling?

**Tom:** It's a few. Uh, one man I met, uh, in the later years he was the, uh, conductor of the, uh, uh, Salt Lake City Orchestra.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see.

**Tom:** And him and his wife, they were on a trip to Vancouver and all that. And we had a few, uh, uh, celebrities, you know. Then I had a doctor and his wife from, uh, Chicago, and they- that was during the- that was the early '40s, I guess.

**Stanley:** Did you ever meet any Black Canadians traveling on the sleepers?

**Tom:** No, I don't remember. No

**Stanley:** Because they couldn't afford it.

**Tom:** No.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** No.

**Stanley:** Who were some of the interesting people you met, Black or White, uh, outstanding leaders? Or do you recall the outstanding people you carried on the?

**Tom:** Well, uh, many leaders and movie stars. Uh, Ms. Bette Davis. I had her from Toronto to Winnipeg. She was a very fine person. And Mickey Rooney-

**Stanley:** Okay.

**Tom:** -and he was a fine person. Joan Crawford. And Clark Gables's a fine person, but he's a very poor tipper.

[laughter]

**Stanley:** He got by on his looks?

**Tom:** He got by on his looks, yes.

**Stanley:** [laughs]

**Tom:** And, uh, I met some very fine people from Australia and, uh, he was, a Mason and she was an Eastern Star. And my sister got on at Calgary and I told her that my sister was Eastern Star. And so, they had a quite a conversation. My sister went from Calgary to Vancouver with me.

**Stanley:** I see.

**Tom:** And then we, uh, met, um, doctors, uh, from all over the country and they were very fine. We met some doctors that, uh, gave two days a week to the Black in Harlem, you know? Free, you know? And I had some people from India that gave me, uh, some, uh, tea-- They gave me a beautiful teapot for my mother. And I kept it for years and years. Somebody took it away. I don't know who took but-- I read a lot [unintelligible 00:27:52] meeting people and I got along with the public very, very well.

**Stanley:** Right.

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

**Stanley:** Did you have any ill-treatment from any passengers?

**Tom:** Um, once in a while, but I always got them straightened out.

**Stanley:** Did any racism ever [inaudible]--

**Tom:** Well, uh-

**Stanley:** --rear its ugly head on the job?

**Tom:** Well, uh, coming out of Banff one day, we had a tour from, uh, the south. And this lady had a little girl. So, I asked her if she wanted to make her bed down first, she said, "No, I don't want it made down now." So, I went down the other side starting, when you go down one side, you finish that side before you go to the other, you know. So, she said, uh, I got halfway down, she says, "I want my bed made down now." I said, "Well, as soon as I finish this side, I will come back up the other end and make your bed." She said, "Nigger, I want it made now." So, I-- that's something I always, never could take, you know? So, I said, uh, I said, "Your friends on you, they- they think you're a lady." I said, "But you're just a tramp. And I bet before you were lucky enough to marry your husband, you was a prostitute." I said, "Now you see your friends there, they're ashamed of you." I-I put it that way to-- so they all were on my side. I said, "They're ashamed of you 'cause I've been doing everything

in order to make their trip comfortable for them and then you act up like a prostitute." So, she cried and cried and-and everybody's on my side after that, you know? [laughs]. And then another, oh-

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Go ahead.

**Tom:** Another lady I had on there, she was from the States, an American tourist. So, she asked me to make her bed down. So I made her bed down and while she go to the washroom. When she come back, she said, I stole her watch. And I said, "No, I-I haven't seen your watch." So, we had a- a very nice, uh, Pullman connector on this, we were running from Vancouver, Chicago at that time. And, uh, I went and got him. So, he said, "Me, look, look at you, look, I know this man. I know he didn't took your watch." "Oh yes, he did. I left it right on the bed here." He said, "Look at me when you look in your bank." She said, "No, no." And he said, "I'm gonna look in there anyway. And in your purse, if don't open it, I will open it for you 'cause I'll go get the train conductor." So, he went and got the train conductor. They came back. And they opened her bag up and her watch is right there.

But uh, not too many trouble because uh, I know another man was, I was, uh, gonna wash up my smoking room at night and I asked him, "Would he move over?" He, "No, I don't wanna move over." I said, "Well, everybody's gone to bed. I wanna clean this up, you know." So, he said, "Well, if you say anything more to hurt me, I'll slap your face." I said, "You must be a very good man or a fool, but I think you're a fool 'cause I don't think you're gonna slap my face." So, he went to bed.

But you know, uh, it's a way of talking to people and uh, uh, sometime they'd get a little out of a line. Like a lady would want you to wait. I said, uh, "Madam, there's other people here to look after." I said, uh, "As soon as I-- I can't just look after you all the time. There's other people to be waited on." I said, "You'll get--" One time I was quite angry, and I said, "You'll get everything you paid for. Because uh, you'll get me running all the time this and that, you know"-- but it's the way of talking to people, you know?

**Stanley:** I want any humourous incidents.

**Tom:** [laughs] Well.

**Stanley:** Can you tell it?

**Tom:** No, I couldn't tell.

**Stanley:** You can't put it on tape?

**Tom:** No, no I don't think.

**Stanley:** I see, I get that message right.

**Tom:** No, because--

**Stanley:** Do you have anything that you could put on tape, humourous nature. That way of an experience that you've had or somebody else has had as a porter.

**Tom:** I don't think should put on tape.

**Stanley:** No, okay. All right. Um, uh, perhaps you'd like to make a summary of your experiences of Brother of the Brotherhood of sleeping car porters, uh, uh, as to what good it did to the community, to the, uh, porters as well. For any comment like to make it--

**Tom:** It was very well for the community because the, uh, the Brothers got more money then, and that was the time when they-- when we started-- could be able to buy homes, you know? 'Cause, we were makin' more money and we had, uh-- and we knew where we were going. At that time maybe to go down to, to the-- before the union, you go down and report for duty. Well, he hasn't got nothing for you now. But you come down the station, he might may have something for you and things like that.

**Stanley:** Those trips were made with a-- a lot of, littled competition, right?

**Tom:** Yeah, yeah, mm-hmm, yeah. And, uh, then they would, uh, they'd get a-- I got a call, uh, I was running Evanton at that time, I was serving, uh, meals. And this man came on there and he wanted a bacon tomato sandwich and a pot of coffee. So, they-- at that time, the tobacco-- tomato and bacon sandwich was a dollar and the coffee pot was 60 cents a pot. So, I gave him the bill for it and so he paid it. So, he came on back here to Winnipeg and, uh, his niece was working down here in, and they used to have the office down in the yard here and the superintendent that time was, uh, oh, he was a chairman fellow. He had a funny name. He's very ignorant man anyway. So, he calls me up, do I wanna come down and see him? I said, "Well, I just got in." He said, "Well, I wanna rest." So, the union was in then, you know, so I didn't go that day. So, I went the next day and he says, uh, "A passenger was on your train and you charged him 60 cents for a pot of coffee and a dollar for, a bacon tomato sandwich." "Uh, yes, I did." Heisler, his name Mr. Heisler. So I said, uh, "Yes I did." Well, why did he charge him that? So, um, his assistant, I said, "Would you bring me the menu please?" So he brought the menu and I said, "Mr Heisler, is this your name down to the bottom?" Yes, yes. I was looking there, see what this--" That's what it was a dollar for the sandwich and 60 cents for the pot of coffee.

**Stanley:** Which he had authorized.

**Tom:** He had authorized. But he'd call me down there to bomb me out about it. So, I said, "Now, uh, I had no time book with me." I said, uh, "I want four hours." "Oh no, no, no." Oh, I'm thinkin' of his sister. He's Bill Hutton, Bill Hutton. He said, "Mr. [inaudible], you have to sign the-- to sign four hours." He brought me his home down here for nothing. So, he signed four hours. But then after, before that, you wouldn't get nothing. But the union would've got four hours. They called you down there sometimes. So, for nothing, you know, and he told me I couldn't go out unless I came down to see him.

**Stanley:** Right. Okay. Well, this interview has been very enlightening. You said a number of things that others haven't said.

**Tom:** Yeah. I had a very beautiful mother out of Toronto. She had a bedroom out of Toronto and I picked up the car here at Winnipeg. So, she was up, the porter already had the bed made down when the train got in here. So, she said, uh, "Will you come back and see me?" I said, "Yes, I'll come back and I'll see you." She says, uh, said went in, she said, "Will you have



a drink?" I says, "No, I- I'm getting ready to go to bed now." And she says, she, "Just have a drink with me, have a drink." So, she poured me a glass of whiskey, and then she-- when she went to pour the whiskey, she had nothing on at all, but just a leisurely, you know?

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** Uh, so I took the glass and went on out. When I came, then I just climbed in bed. She rings me again. I went in there and she's crying, she's crying, and crying, crying. She said, "Oh, I don't [inaudible]. I need somebody to comfort me."

**Stanley:** Yeah.

**Tom:** Well, I didn't want to touch her, you know. So, I went over and she's sitting on the bed then she crying and went over and talked to her, says, "Well, what is the trouble?" You know, she wouldn't tell me something about her husband and all this, you know. And then she'd get ahold of me. So, I, I said, "Lady, I can't, I've gotta go to bed, you know." So, I got out of that. But a year later, I catch the same woman on the train. She's going back to Vancouver, she'd bought, uh-- she'd separated from her husband. She got a big estate out of the English settlement out in Vancouver, that's where the rich people stay at. She had her daughter- daughter with her and they were walking and I came up and she's, "Oh." So, her daughter says, "Oh, that's the [inaudible], eh?" You know, but I hadn't-- I didn't-- but even that-- at night after they called me in to have a drink, you know, and the daughter had the bedroom together, you know. But, uh, she was really after me, you know?

**Stanley:** Even on the second trip too?

**Tom:** Yes. Oh yes. Yeah, yeah. But you know, I've had other cases that I would say, "Well, wait till I get into Vancouver."

**Stanley:** Yeah.

**Tom:** And I've had to get them a hotel room, but I've never, not because I was like goody, goody, I never did it on the train.

**Stanley:** No. Any nicknames of porters?

**Tom:** One was uh, Dolove and uh--

**Stanley:** Why did-- what did that name come from?

**Tom:** Well, he used to play cards and he- he do love to call, you know, call anything. And you know, I didn't know for years what his real name was. And I can't think of his name now. And uh, oh, there's so many, uh, there was a fellow, name of, uh, Colorado Ward. Bob would know his nickname. He had a nickname too. And then--

**Stanley:** Colorado? Colorado?

**Tom:** Ward.

**Stanley:** And why'd they call him Colorado?

**Tom:** Um--

**Stanley:** Is that where he's from?

**Tom:** I guess he was from there. Yeah.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** His name was Ward. They called him Colorado. I don't know. Um, there was lot of fellows that had, uh, nicknames, you know.

**Stanley:** How about you? Did you have a nickname?

**Tom:** Well, in the years I was in Calgary duringt the winter months. I had-- they called a nickname of Talespin Tommy.

**Stanley:** What did that mean?

**Tom:** Well, it was used to be, um, uh, uh, shh-- uh series on the, uh, TV at that time with Talespin Tommy the air, you know. And then, uh--

**Stanley:** You didn't have TV that time then?

**Tom:** No, no, uh, radio.

**Stanley:** Oh.

**Tom:** Radio.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** And uh, then I had a lot of girlfriends and so they started calling me that. So I don't know.

**Stanley:** You don't know why?

**Tom:** No, I don't know.

**Stanley:** I see.

**Tom:** Yeah.

**Stanley:** Anymore?

**Tom:** Oh, there's some more then there's another fellow they called Doug Butter, but I don't know what his name was either real, real.

**Stanley:** Doug, what?

**Tom:** Doug Butter.

**Stanley:** Doug Butter.

**Tom:** Yeah, but uh, I don't know his real name was, uh, his real name was Clayburn.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see.

**Tom:** Oh, there's quite a few on the CPR that, uh, had nicknames, but I can't think of 'em right now.

**Stanley Grizzle:** End of interview with, uh, Tom Williams at, uh, 10:45 AM. Interview of Helen Williams Bailey, uh, of Winnipeg, Manitoba on the 4th of November, 1987, commencing at, um, 11:47 AM. All right, give me your full name, please, uh.

**Helen Williams Bailey:** Oh, it's Helen Williams Bailey.

**Stanley:** Alright. And, uh, Helen, you were born where?

**Helen:** In, uh, on the farm outside of North Battleford, Saskatchewan, about 30 miles.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm And, uh, how long did you live out there?

**Helen:** Uh, I was about four years old when we moved to town.

**Stanley:** Yes, and by the way, when is your birthday?

**Helen:** December the 18th, 1919.

**Stanley:** Right. You're brave. [laughter]

**Helen:** I don't mind telling my age. [laughter]

**Stanley:** And you came to-to Winnipeg when?

**Helen:** In 1942.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. And you are the sister of, uh, Tom Williams, Roy Williams, and Lee Williams, and Carl Williams, all of whom I know, right?

**Helen:** Right. Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Alright. And there were other in the family but-

**Helen:** That's right.

**Stanley:** -I didn't know so well, right?

**Helen:** Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** Um, when did you get married?

**Helen:** 1944, in August.

**Stanley:** Was your husband ever a sleeping car porter?

**Helen:** Yes, but he worked for CNR.

**Stanley:** Right. Now, you, uh, became involved with the Ladies' Auxiliary, uh, to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, uh, Winnipeg Division, didn't you?

**Helen:** That's right.

**Stanley:** When was that?

**Helen:** Well, uh, I was the first president, so the election I believe was in the fall of 1942.

**Stanley:** And why did you join the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters?

**Helen:** Mm-hmm. I guess basically because it was in support of my brothers.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Who were in them?

**Helen:** Uh, my brother, Tom. I lived at home then and, uh, Tom and my mother. And so, it was basically in support of, uh, of them. And I was interested in the-

**Stanley:** Well, you mentioned, uh, your brothers, they were sleeping car porters on the CPR?

**Helen:** Yes. Yeah.

**Stanley:** You've only mentioned Tom though. Who's the other one?

**Helen:** Roy.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see.

**Helen:** Uh, the reason I didn't mention Roy was Tom lived in Winnipeg and, um, he lived, uh, at home with my mother and I, and that's the reason I mentioned Tom.

**Stanley:** Alright. Um, can you tell me-

**Helen:** And-and for years he had supported me, you know, and encouraged me to go to school and-

**Stanley:** Right.

**Helen:** -I guess that's why I mentioned him.

**Stanley:** Right.

**Helen:** Of course, the other brothers did too.

**Stanley:** Sure. Well, you say you were the first president of the Ladies' Auxiliary here in Winnipeg?

**Helen:** That's right.

**Stanley:** Can you give me the names of the other officers as well?

**Helen:** Yes, the first Vice President was, um, Yvonne Blanchette, and the second Vice President was Alva Mays and the executive members were, um, Mrs. Mabel Brown, Mrs. Edith Simmons, Mrs. Violet Fischer, Miss Florence Williams, Mrs. Hilda Ferguson, Mrs. Edna Turner, and Mrs. Grant Smith. And the member-- other members were Mrs. Bessy Williams, Mrs. Willa Branch, Mrs. Alice Edwards, Mrs. Cecil Bellamy, Mrs. Estelle Phillips, Mrs. Laura Gilberry, Mrs. Ollie Whitley, Mrs. Olivia Hicks, Mrs. Marie Alexander, Mrs. Girdy Blackman, Mrs. Ruth Sled, and Mrs. Marie Wilson.

**Stanley:** Oh, that's quite a good-good group in here.

**Helen:** Yeah, we had a real good group going.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Alright. Mrs. Cecil Bellamy, was she related to, uh, Mr. Dick Bellamy of Calgary?

**Helen:** Uh, that would be his sister-in-law. She was related to Joe Hudson, who was the first-- I think he was either the first Vice President or the second Vice President of the Brotherhood here in Winnipeg.

**Stanley:** I see. Mm-hmm. What were the-- what was the joining fee to--to the Auxiliary and the monthly dues?

**Helen:** Oh, dear. I don't know if I remember. It was, hmm-- I don't think I remember, probably \$1 and the fee was probably 50 cents, but I can't-- I better not say 'cause I don't remember.

**Stanley:** Mm-hmm. Um, how long did you hold office?

**Helen:** Hmm, I can't even remember that.

**Stanley:** Was the presidency the only office that you held?

**Helen:** Yes, that was the only office I held. Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** How long did the Auxiliary last? Uh, did you-- Can you tell me that?

**Helen:** Um, there was a split and there was little problems, and then, um, some of us pulled out, and then, um, then there was another executive, but when that came about, I'm not sure what year.

**Stanley:** What caused the split?

**Helen:** Oh, I just think conflict of interest. Yeah.

**Stanley:** Or personality?

**Helen:** Yeah, probably personalities- probably personalities. I don't really remember. But I think it was more, it had to do more with personalities, yeah.

**Stanley:** Why do you think it was important to have a Ladies' Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters?

**Helen:** Well, I think with anything, um, the women should support the men in their lives. And um, I guess you've heard that old phrase behind every good man, there's a great woman. [laughs]

**Stanley:** I've heard the other one too behind every good man is a-- Behind every good woman is a great man.

**Helen:** Yeah. Right. So, it can work both ways, can't it? Yeah. [laughter]

**Stanley:** Right. Um, what kind of work did the-the Auxiliary do, tell me that?

**Helen:** Hmm. Well, for fundraising, I know we-- we held, um, we held a spring tea. Um, we met and, um, we had regular meetings and, uh, it was mostly just to support the cause of, uh, the Brotherhood.

**Stanley:** Oh, I see. You had fundraising events as well, didn't you?

**Helen:** Yes. Mm-hmm.

**Stanley:** And the funds raised were used for what?

**Helen:** Mm, that I can't even remember.

**Stanley:** I get the impression-

**[00:47:51] [END OF AUDIO]**