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Luella Cook, Sanitation Strike Marcher, 1968

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Louella Cook- Same father, so this one that is living is my whole brother.

Carolyn Yellin- Did you have any sisters?

Louella Cook- I had one half sister.

Carolyn Yellin- And is your mother, I just assume that your mother is not living because I have..

Louella Cook- My mother has been dead since 43'.

Carolyn Yellin- She died in Arkansas before you even came here.

Louella Cook- West Memphis.

Carolyn Yellin- In West Memphis? How, what kind of grades did you make in school?

Louella Cook- I didn't get to go to school so much because we lived so far from school and we had to walk 5 or 10 miles to school.

Carolyn Yellin- Did you live out in the country?

Louella Cook- Half the time the weather was bad and through the fall we was picking cotton.

Carolyn Yellin- Did everyone in your family pick cotton.

Louella Cook- Yes Maam.

Carolyn Yellin- Do you remember how much you got paid then for picking cotton? Did they pay the children the same as they paid the grown ups?

Louella Cook- Yeah they paid them but we didn't get, we got 75 cents a hundred.

Carolyn Yellin- A hundred pounds?

Louella Cook- Yeah 100 pounds. 75 cents for 100 pounds. At some places. All places didn't give the same thing, some places didn't give but 50 cents a hundred.

Carolyn Yellin- How much could you pick in a day when you felt real good?

Louella Cook- I could pick 250.

Carolyn Yellin- So you would somewhere near a dollar and a half a day at 250.

Carolyn Yellin- And working how long, do you remember?

Louella Cook- From sun up to sun down.

Carolyn Yellin- Did you stop for lunch?

Louella Cook- Yeah we would stop for lunch and have baked potatoes and stuff like that.

Carolyn Yellin- Would you, there goes our steam iron. Could you, did you take your own lunch or how...

Louella Cook- We take our own lunch. We would have baked potatoes and biscuits and sliced meat.

Carolyn Yellin- So you would have to get up early in the morning and pack your lunch...

Louella Cook- Fix food and pack our lunch, and fix food to take with us.

Carolyn Yellin- And what were the months, I know August is a cotton, when does the cotton come in Arkansas, it's the end of the summer isn't it?

Louella Cook- August is usually about the first good big month of picking cotton.

Carolyn Yellin- Then it goes on into the fall?

Louella Cook- And then it goes on into the fall.

Carolyn Yellin- So would they just not have school during the cotton picking months.

Louella Cook- Well they had school but the way the colored people had to go to school they went to school, we went to school in the fall and the white children would go to school during in the fall, well they started ahead of us about 2 months ahead of us.

Carolyn Yellin- They would go about September.

Louella Cook- They would go, we would be picking cotton while they were going to school and they had busses for them to ride and we walked 5 and 10 miles to school.

Carolyn Yellin- Did they give you textbooks at school or did you have books at school or did you have to buy your own books?

Louella Cook- I don't remember. But we had books but they didn't read like they do now. It is better reading the books the children get now than the ones we had,

Carolyn Yellin- And about how many, were several different ages of children all in one room or about how many children were in your room when you went to school.

Louella Cook- About 60 or maybe 70 and about 2 teachers.

Carolyn Yellin- And they would be different ages like the 1st and 2nd and 3rd...

Louella Cook- 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th, and 6th. It would go like that.

Carolyn Yellin- And they would all be in together with 2 teachers?

Louella Cook- Two teachers.

Carolyn Yellin- My goodness, boy that is something.

Louella Cook- It is. That is the reason why you know I just didn't have a chance to get to school. I don't know where my mother got her minding but my mother got a pretty good education and she would teach me when I was at home..

Carolyn Yellin- She would work with you at home.

Louella Cook- She would work at home in night and rainy bad days she kept me up with my lesson and stuff and that was the biggest I got in learning. Because the schooling, I wouldn't get to go too much because the weather would be bad and I lived so far from the school and had to walk, it was about 10 miles I had to walk to school. It would be snowing or sleeting, well I couldn't go. Maybe that would go on and maybe get one day out of the week to go to school. Well she would take me and take me over my books.

Carolyn Yellin- And she did that with the other children too.

Louella Cook- Yes she did. But my oldest brother I guess maybe he was smarter than I was he had a better education than I did. He made it to the 10th grade I believe. My mother had a stroke years before she passed and she couldn't look after us.

Carolyn Yellin- What did you do then, did somebody else take care of you?

Louella Cook- Yeah, my daddy got another lady to look after us and she was not interested in us going to school so I just quit going completely and then I had to get out and go to work and try to support myself. Then my brother he left, my oldest brother he left and went to Chicago and he stayed in Chicago until he died.

Carolyn Yellin- how long ago was that, that he died?

Louella Cook- 52'.

Carolyn Yellin- Does he still have a family?

Louella Cook- He didn't have a family.

Carolyn Yellin- So you don't have any relatives up in Chicago?

Louella Cook- I have a cousin, first cousin.

Carolyn Yellin- In Chicago?

Louella Cook- In Chicago, oh yeah. I imagine about 15 or 20 of them up there.

Carolyn Yellin- Had your mother been from Arkansas, had she grown up in Arkansas too do you know?

Louella Cook- She was borned in Mississippi, Senatobia Mississippi she was born.

Carolyn Yellin- She went on out to Arkansas after she was grown up?

Louella Cook- Yeah.

Carolyn Yellin- Well how did you feel about Memphis? Did Memphis seem like a big city to you when you were in Arkansas? When you would hear about Memphis do you remember how you felt about it, did you think it would be good in Memphis?

Louella Cook- Well when I first would hear about Memphis I thought that Memphis was a big city and it would be a wonderful place to live and so much happiness and enjoyment because we are here about a lot of things here that we didn't have in Arkansas.

Carolyn Yellin- Like what?

Louella Cook- Oh, they had picture shows and we had what you called rabbit foot shows where they get out people would put up a tent and it had horses in it and maybe rabbits and dogs running around in it and things like that.

Carolyn Yellin- No picture shows.

Louella Cook- No picture shows.

Carolyn Yellin- When did you first see your first picture show?

Louella Cook- I don't remember my first picture show.

Carolyn Yellin- It was before you got to Memphis though.

Louella Cook- It was before I came on Memphis. I believe it was in West Memphis.

Carolyn Yellin- Well when do you remember how Memphis looked to you when you first saw it? Had it seemed big?

Louella Cook- Well, Memphis was a beautiful place when I first came here. The first place I didn't know how to get here I had to get another girl to bring me.

Carolyn Yellin- What did she ride the bus with you?

Louella Cook- Rode the bus here.

Carolyn Yellin- And she showed you...

Louella Cook- And she showed me around.

Carolyn Yellin- Did you know where you were going to stay when you came?

Louella Cook- No we didn't stay all night, we left and went back to Arkansas. Then 2 or 3 more days I got another girl to bring me back to Memphis. Then finally I kept going on and on and I said finally well I am going to Memphis by myself. So I came to Memphis and the first place I went was Beale St.

Carolyn Yellin- You had heard about Beal St,

Louella Cook- Beale St. and I went ole Beale St. and I liked Beal St. So after....

Carolyn Yellin- There was a lot going on and...

Louella Cook- Well I went to the New Daisy,

Carolyn Yellin- The movie?

Louella Cook- The picture show.

Carolyn Yellin- Do you remember what was showing by any chance?

Louella Cook- I don't remember what was showing, I don't remember what was showing.

Carolyn Yellin- Was it...

Louella Cook- Anyway I had saw it. Then I went back to Arkansas and I got my things and came to West Memphis and started living.

Carolyn Yellin- You kind of got down here in slow stages huh.

Louella Cook- Then I got a job, at the plantation union. I was making \$7 a week.

Carolyn Yellin- Was that in West Memphis?

Louella Cook- In West Memphis, I was working at night from 7 till 5 in the morning. I was making \$7 a week.

Carolyn Yellin- Did that seem like enough money then, or you had to work to get by on that?

Louella Cook- Well it, it seemed like it was doing fine because I was getting free meals and my rent was \$2.50. My rent was \$2.50 a week.

Carolyn Yellin- So that left you a little bit left over to buy some clothes.

Louella Cook- Little bit left over to buy some clothes and clothes wasn't as high as they is now.

Carolyn Yellin- And pay the bus fare into Memphis.

Louella Cook- Yeah and pay the bus fare into Memphis.

Carolyn Yellin- Well then how did you finally, I am still getting you to Memphis but did you have a job when you finally came here and moved here. Did you get a job first and then come here to Memphis or did you come here first and then get a job.

Louella Cook- I came to Memphis and this friend of mine this Ruby Coleman girl, I went to live with her when I first came and I went to live at her house two weeks

before I met the soldier. Then after I married him I got an allotment of \$50 a month and then I started to work for Mrs. Fisher.

Carolyn Yellin- Now I am going to skip way past a lot of things and I am going to get to if I can when if we could talk just a little bit about how Beale St. looked the day you marched with Dr. King. Beale St. was the first place and I know that, I just want you to just kind of tell, when we talked about you going to march for Dr. King and you decided to go and remember at first you weren't going to, you remember? You thought about it a long time. But then you were all set to go that first march before the snow if I recall, because you were working.

Louella Cook- Yeah I was set to go then.

Carolyn Yellin- Did anybody go with you, when you went the second time. The day of March 28th the day you really went Louielle.

Louella Cook- Did anybody go with me?

Carolyn Yellin- You went by yourself.

Louella Cook- I went by myself. That was the day when they broke up the march and it definitely was not Dr. King's marches it was a sideline. There was too many people on the street watching. And the peoples that were marching in the street they stayed in the line. But that side line was the one that was doing all the damage.

Carolyn Yellin- Well you had, where were you when you realized the march was breaking up?

Louella Cook- At Beale and Mulberry.

Carolyn Yellin- So you hadn't too far from the temple even, from Clayborne temple even before you had you turned the corner?

Louella Cook- I had turned the corner off of Indiana on Beale had passed 2nd up to Mulberry.

Carolyn Yellin- Oh yes Mulberry is the street...

Louella Cook- Mulberry and Beale.

Carolyn Yellin- Is the street between 2nd and Main. In fact, it is Mulberry that the Lorraine motel is on. The street right behind Main St.

Louella Cook- That's right. But something happened up front and the people...

Carolyn Yellin- Could you tell that something was happening up front?

Louella Cook- Something was happening because I heard a rumbling. People started hollering, get Dr. King, get Dr. King.

Carolyn Yellin- You mean get, how did they mean.

Louella Cook- I don't know if they meant get him in a car, but I know it was the marchers who were hollering because they must have meant get him before he is killed. Because it was the office rumbling out front. Now what was going on I don't know but it was rumbling.

Carolyn Yellin- Who were the people around, were the people around you mostly colored?

Louella Cook- They was colored and white. It was colored and white.

Carolyn Yellin- Were they scared? Around you?

Louella Cook- Was the people scared? They wasn't scared they was more mad. They was more angry than it was anything.

Carolyn Yellin- Angry that the march..

Louella Cook- Angry that the march was breaking up.

Carolyn Yellin- And angry at what they saw happening.

Louella Cook- Yeah what they saw happening.

Carolyn Yellin- I know that you, you called me because you got back home by bus when I got home. The first I knew I was here and I was listening to the radio and I heard it was breaking up and I was so worried about you because I knew and we had talked about whether you would or wouldn't march and you had never marched before you said.

Louella Cook- Well I had never marched before.

Carolyn Yellin- And you talked about getting your marching shoes, wearing your comfortable shoes.

Louella Cook- I marched, well mainly the reason I marched, I marched to keep my boys from marching, Isaac and Bryant. I marched to keep them from marching because if I hadn't march they were going to and I would have rather have been the one march.

Carolyn Yellin- You were a little concerned about what may...

Louella Cook- I was a little concerned about my children.

Carolyn Yellin- Had the boys told you?

Louella Cook- They told me.

Carolyn Yellin- That they wanted to march.

Louella Cook- Yeah that they wanted to march and I told them that I would rather march because if anything happened I would rather it happen to me rather than them.

Carolyn Yellin- you felt something might happen.

Louella Cook- I felt something might happen.

Carolyn Yellin- What did you think might happen Luella I know it is hard to remember now but...

Louella Cook- What did I think would happen?

Carolyn Yellin- Why were you concerned, were you afraid people would be, did you think what would happen is, had you expected that to happen?

Louella Cook- I expected Dr. King to be assassinated, that's what I expected.

Carolyn Yellin- And you just were scared something why? Why did you feel that way do you remember?

Louella Cook- Well the reason I felt that way Mrs. Yellin was because the most of the white people don't want the negro people to have their rights here. And that is the way (muffled).

Carolyn Yellin- And you feel this because of the things that have happened to you over the years?

Louella Cook- Over the years to come things have happened and what I have saw happen. And there was my feelings.

Carolyn Yellin- You felt that Dr. King was getting, was saying things that would make people all roused up.

Louella Cook- Well Dr. King didn't say things to make people rouse up. He would only tell the people what they should do. He didn't tell them what he was going to do for them. He would tell them what they should do you see. That is the reason why I thought he would probably be killed because the most of the people here wouldn't want the colored people to know what was to do.

Carolyn Yellin- I see what you mean? Did you go to any of the meetings, I forgot? Did you hear Dr. King speak in person, did you go to hear him speak?

Louella Cook- I didn't got o hear him speak in person, I heard him on television and I didn't miss a minute of it what he said.

Carolyn Yellin- And the radio?

Louella Cook- And he said, he didn't say to, when he said all the call of the working strike, it is enough for you all, he didn't say what he was going to do, he said it is enough of you all here in Memphis for everybody to stop working for one day.

Carolyn Yellin- Yes I remember that was to be the same day...

Louella Cook- That meant us. He didn't mean he was going to do that, that was for us that meant we could do it.

Carolyn Yellin- Was there a lot of discussion, were a number of people you know going to take that day off, people that had regular jobs? Or it is hard to remember now that so much has happened, do you remember how the talk was going at that time?

Louella Cook- Well I talked with one lady and she said that she wasn't going to be off that day because the lady that she worked for had a handicapped child and the child couldn't play with the other sisters and brothers and said that she had to be there to keep that child off to himself. She said she just wasn't going to miss work that day she was just going to go on and keep that child to its self. So it snowed that day and I wonder how she got there.

Carolyn Yellin- You thought about that. You felt like she could take the one day off.

Louella Cook- Yeah I felt she could take the one day off, she took all of them if the lady hadn't given her a job so I felt like she could take the one day off.

Carolyn Yellin- Did most of the other people you talked to they were planning to take the day off, or would have if the snow hadn't come?

Louella Cook- Yeah.

Carolyn Yellin- Were some of them planning on taking the day off even though they weren't going to march?

Louella Cook- Well the most peoples I talked with were going to march they was just going to march the most of them.

Carolyn Yellin- You had your mind, as I recall, you had your mind all made up to march that day of the snowstorm and then came the whole week and you had to make up your mind all over again because, and I am remembering myself now that in the weekend in between was when, had you would have expected as you said Dr. King to be assassinated if it had happened the first day, or would have been as worried as you were if the march hadn't been another week? When you first decided to march did you feel as much fear as you did...

Louella Cook- Yeah, if the march had been the first day it would have been an attempt on his life the first day.

Carolyn Yellin- You think so.

Louella Cook- I definitely almost know so.

Carolyn Yellin- So the second time too?

Louella Cook- The second time too.

Carolyn Yellin- What did you think when you were down there on Beale St., what did you think of the young boys that you saw. Well the ones on the, I don't know if you said they were young boys but the ones on the sidelines, the devilmen ones you said that were making the devilmen.

Louella Cook- The ones on the sideline. I thought they was standing on the sideline looking. Well I thought if they were on the sideline looking why don't they get in on the march and why don't we try to do, stop this garbage from piling up. Now that is what I was thinking.

Carolyn Yellin- But you saw them all along the way.

Louella Cook- All along the way.

Carolyn Yellin- Mostly negro?

Louella Cook- There was some white and some colored.

Carolyn Yellin- But you thought a lot of the colored you thought should have been marching.

Louella Cook- I thought they should have been marching. To try and demonstrate you know.

Carolyn Yellin- Now something I remember you told me at the time when they weren't picking the newspapers you said something about that the boys in the neighborhood that were delivering the paper, people were paying them their dime a week anyway.

Louella Cook- They were supposed to be paying them, but I don't know that they was paying them that dime.

Carolyn Yellin- But you heard that was if people took the papers, remember how you heard that, was that people just saying this is what you should do instead of taking a paper you should pay your boy a dime so he wouldn't miss...

Louella Cook- That was just rumors you know that you should pay a dime to since the boy didn't have the paper job just give him his dime on the paper.

Carolyn Yellin- I am remembering some of the things we talked about during all those weeks when you would come in and we would talk these things over and I am thinking back in my own mind of some of these things that I wanted to at some time either write down or get into the record so when we talk about what was happening here, so these things don't get lost that is really...When you called me you had gotten

home by bus, I am going back to March 28th. You had gotten home by bus. Was that the day and you got home and your boys weren't there.

Louella Cook- Yeah that was the day I got home and they weren't there. I thought they was helping with the trouble, but come to find out they wasn't. One of my boys he was gone to his girls house and the other one was on the school park playing. That was a football player.

Carolyn Yellin- He was playing in the park where he broke his ankle the other day.

Louella Cook- Yeah he was playing.

Carolyn Yellin- Isaac had gone to see his girlfriend. But you had a bit of a worried feeling when you, you had left the children, the younger children Ricky...

Louella Cook- I had left the younger children with the lady to keep them.

Carolyn Yellin- They hadn't gone to school that day.

Louella Cook- No I didn't send them to school.

Carolyn Yellin- Because that is also the day when, not going to work and not going to school.

Louella Cook- Now I didn't send them to school because I didn't know whether, I didn't know what might happen and I didn't want to send my children for to get hurt or something.

Carolyn Yellin- You kept them out more because you didn't know what was going to happen rather than just because you were nervous about what might happen.

Louella Cook- Yeah what might happen and I kept them at home.

Carolyn Yellin- Did they want to stay home? Did they feel that they, of course I guess kids always want to stay home from school.

Louella Cook- They didn't say whether they wanted to stay or not, I just told them they weren't going. Not that day, they were going to stay home.

Carolyn Yellin- So we got past that and then the day of the assassination.

Louella Cook- The day of the assassination.

Carolyn Yellin- Had you worked that day?

Louella Cook- Yes I worked, but I had got home.

Carolyn Yellin- Let's see that was a Thursday. Had you worked at the other lady's house where you...

Louella Cook- That Thursday.

Carolyn Yellin- You had worked at the other lady's house.

Louella Cook- Yeah, Yeah, I worked there that Thursday and I was home I just hadn't too long gotten home. And I was fixing dinner and I heard on the television they said special bulletin that Dr. King had just got shot. And I said oh no not Dr. King and I said to one of my boys, they said Dr., King has gotten shot. I don't believe it. Then I run to the television and the man said Dr. King has gotten shot and they are rushing him to the hospital. I picked up the phone to call some of my friends and I called one friend. I put the received down to call another friend and then my line had gone out.

Carolyn Yellin- It had.

Louella Cook- And everybody's line that I know off in south Memphis they line went out. We was two hours getting our phone, no phone calls. And I called and I went to one lady's house and her line was open and while I was there making the call the man said well Dr. King is dead. We all started crying and I rushed back and called you and told you.

Carolyn Yellin- That's I had just that minute Tom had come in, my son Tom had come in the back door and he was telling me and while he was telling me the phone rang and it was you. Were you calling from your friend's house?

Louella Cook- I was calling from a friend's house. Well I was trying to get my line, my phone line. Then I called the phone company and I asked the lady clear my phone or some thing because my line is dead and I can't make a phone call. And she said, well just about everybody's line is dead in south Memphis. Because we don't have enough operators to operate the phone, we are getting so many calls. And my phone was out 2 or 3 hours before I could get the line.

Carolyn Yellin- Well we just couldn't believe it. I know you were one of the first ones I spoke to and I just, I still will never forget it. I was worried about you and I was worried about what might happen.

Louella Cook- Well I had asked you sometime earlier, and I felt this, I asked you sometime earlier if anything happened to him what would happen.

Carolyn Yellin- I remember.

Louella Cook- Because I felt....

Carolyn Yellin- And I remember I said I didn't think anything would.

Louella Cook- You said you didn't think anything would happen then but I felt it.

Carolyn Yellin- How did your boys react to...

Louella Cook- My oldest boy when he, when they said Dr. King was dead for a few minutes he went into the back and I don't know what he was doing, but he stood there a few minutes in the back and then he said well golly if I could then he listened

to the television and he heard they kept raising the reward from \$50,000 to \$100,000 to \$150,000.

Carolyn Yellin- Oh yes.

Louella Cook- And so he sat there for the one to catch his killer. He said mother, I was just thinking. I was just thinking if I could catch his killer I wouldn't even want the reward, I would just go out and catch the killer and bring him back so this could be cleared up. He said, and I wouldn't even accept the reward.

Carolyn Yellin- You never told me that. And how about Frank. Now Frank doesn't take things as serious as Isaac does.

Louella Cook- He don't take things as seriously. Frank don't have a word to say. He never said a word, not a word. He just went on and on and on.

Carolyn Yellin- He just went on playing football. How about Patricia now she is 12. Was she old enough...

Louella Cook- Patricia is very concerned.

Carolyn Yellin- She is 12?

Louella Cook- 12, and politics and different things that are going on. She goes around and gets the scraps from the paper and different things and she sews them on a needle and thread together and she keeps these things. So now she wants a movie projector, a movie projector and a camera and she is very interested in books and different kinds of books to read. She tries to find out what is going on in the world and Washington and things like that. She wrote to every state in the united states for different books and maps and things.

Carolyn Yellin- Well she must have some reaction to all this that was going on?

Louella Cook- I guess maybe she did.

Carolyn Yellin- Did she talk about it ever?

Louella Cook- She didn't talk about it too much. She did say Dr, King was a wonderful person. And she also said that Robert Kennedy was a wonderful person. And she said that Robert Kennedy was for all young people, and she was very fond of all the Kennedy's. President Kennedy, she was very fond of him.

Carolyn Yellin- Now your much younger, well now Ricky your next son is 9.

Louella Cook- Ricky is 9.

Carolyn Yellin- Did he, that night when the news came was he watching the television with the rest of them?

Louella Cook- They all watched, they all watched. They all watched and they watched the film.

Carolyn Yellin- On the Monday, Little Alfrita is 6.

Louella Cook- 6, 6.

Carolyn Yellin- Little Alfrita is too young. Do you think all of this will affect her, do you think she understands what, and will remember all the things that happened this year?

Louella Cook- Well, I think she will remember the things that will happen this year, but I always tell my children this. That when they ask me questions and things and they be talking and discussing you know asking about the white peoples and things. I always tell them that all white people are not alike just as well (muffled). Not all are alike, there are some good on both sides, good and bad. I want them to know these things and that will grow up with them and then they can accept it you see.

Carolyn Yellin- But you had a feeling, that your boys weren't going to accept this at one point and didn't you have a feeling that unless some thing happened to change them that they weren't going to accept this so much.

Louella Cook- Yeah, I have had a feeling that, Things have just got to change for better because if it don't change for better I don't see we will be able to tell the children anything.

Carolyn Yellin- You know the night that your Isaac called our son, after we had been in the march that meant a great deal to him.

Louella Cook- That meant a great deal to him.

Carolyn Yellin- And I was about to get to this memorial march where we decided but it was the first time I had ever marched...

Louella Cook- Well it meant a great deal...

Carolyn Yellin- Mr. Yellin and I and Tom went down to march and we saw you down there with all those thousands of people, I will never forget that Louella and you came and marched in the line with us. That was quite a day..

Louella Cook- It was. Well it meant alots to him when I told him that Tom had marched. And see (muffled) had to clear up some thing within him. I said Tom, he marched with me today. He said, he did. I said yes and Mrs. Carolyn too. He sais, you had told me about them but I didn't know that Tom was going to march. He said, I better go call Tom right now and thank him for what he done.

Carolyn Yellin- Was it his own idea?

Louella Cook- It was his own idea. I didn't give him that, his own idea.

Carolyn Yellin- Had you, you know Tom was in the ABC picture, they cut us out but did you see that, did we call you or did you see the picture on television?

Louella Cook- I saw the picture but I didn't see Tom at least I didn't know him...

Carolyn Yellin- We told you about it the next day.

Louella Cook- Yes, but it was his own idea. That was wonderful for him.

Carolyn Yellin- That meant a lot to Tom too.

Louella Cook- It would really mean a lot if a lot of white people would come out to the colored people and show that they mean, instead of just staying behind saying and come further and let the colored people know what they are doing, it will mean so much to the colored people.

Carolyn Yellin- Well instead of just so much talk.

Louella Cook- Come out and let them know what they are doing for them see. Then the colored people they will be able to accept, they are able to accept. But all talk and no seeing none of this they want to know these things and see these things and if they come out and march well that would be the greatest thing in the world.

Carolyn Yellin- Listen you know what I want you to tell about and I really want to get this story. You remember when you told me about the bus driver, when you said this was after it had all happened, all the things that had gone one, you told me about the bus driver...

Louella Cook- Oh yeah this a bus driver he is drives number 9 normal up here.

Carolyn Yellin- Oh that's a good, I remember the day that happened and you came in with that story.

Louella Cook- The bus, I caught the bus at 4:20 that afternoon and it was the bus driver one white man and a white lady got on. They was talking about this something that had happened at Forbes School. Anyway this colored lady got on there and she forgot to get her transfer, when she got on she paid her 30 cents and she told him, she went back and sat down and then she went back up there, you owe me a transfer. He said you have to put some more money in, and she said I had just paid 30 cents. He said yes I see it in there you have to put some more, you got to sit down. She said yes but I want to transfer and I put my pay in there for a transfer. He said, you don't do a transfer. She said, oh yes, I need a transfer because I have to catch another bus. He said, well I cant let you have a transfer. She said, well I can't I don't have any more money? And she said I can't catch another bus and he said well I can't give you a transfer. And it went on and on and on from word to word. So I saw that they was going to get into an argument and she had gotten mad, and he had gotten mad and it went on and on. She came back and sat down and she was hollering and arguing and he was too and he as looking back, you won't ride this bus and you won't ride no busses anymore. I kept sitting there and I kept thinking what

could I do to stop this. And I went up there and she got off the us she got off before she got off a the bus stop.

Carolyn Yellin- And he never did give her the transfer.

Louella Cook- He never did give her the transfer. I went up there and I says white brother, and he looked around at me. I said look, you all is into a fight and you are wrong. And he says oh no I am not wrong. I said, yes, look you can't get no where by being many, a lot of blessed you if you would be nice. And he said, Yes but I am not wrong. I said, oh yes, you were wrong the lady didn't have nay more money and she paid her 30 cents. You said you seen her 30 cents, yeah I see her 30 cents. Well, I said, you should have given her a transfer for her money. I said, now you, Lord will bless you for being nice. You can't get nowhere being like that. He stopped and he didn't say anything and he dropped his head and I said I am going to pray for you, I said I am going to pray for you. White brother. He sat there and he said lady, I was up on Main St. up at Main and Madison. I stand there behind him and he said lady, where do you want to get off at, and I said I want to get off at the next stop. When I got to my stop I said god bless you and I thank you but I ain't going to pray for you white brother and he just sit there, and the bus driver behind him pulled up and he had to blow his horn and he was still sitting there.

Carolyn Yellin- I remember that you said you decided you would use some Dr. King....

Louella Cook- I thought that I would use Dr. King's message to see if that wasn't the best way. Because Dr. King always said, that nonviolent means more than anything to us. And I thought that if I would talk to him and show him and tell him, I thought that was the best way to get to him.

Carolyn Yellin- And you really kind of reached him, you could tell..

Louella Cook- Yeah I had reached him. I had reached him.

Carolyn Yellin- you could tell it, he wasn't mad by the time you got off?

Louella Cook- I don't think he was mad I think he felt more sorry for himself. I think for really he had felt he had wronged us and he had, he thought that was probably the best way out and her didn't say anything and the bus driver behind him was just blowing for him to move on so he could get back and he was still sitting there. But no madam is yelling how I have been treated over these years. I have all the care in the world for white people. And I don't hate nobody, I don't hate nobody. I just would go on living and living like IO am because I am alright with god. Now that is my story.

Carolyn Yellin- Well it is a good story.

Carolyn Yellin- We have had Mr. Yellin listen and there is one other story.

Louella Cook- Let him listen at that first little number.

Carolyn Yellin- He will hear that later.

David Yellin- But I want to hear the story of curfew.

Louella Cook- Mr. Yellin I can't tell that...

Carolyn Yellin- First tell how was it first of all. What did happen during curfew. Did your boys stay in?

Louella Cook- Well yeah they stayed in. They get in about 5 minutes to 7.

David Yellin- Of course we didn't really have it up here, of course a couple of nights we stayed in.

Louella Cook- Y'all didn't have a curfew?

David Yellin- Well Yes, I guess we obeyed it because we didn't go out.

Carolyn Yellin- There were some cars out on the street but I don't think, we didn't see troops out here in this part.

Louella Cook- Oh y'all didn't see troops out here?

David Yellin- Did the national guard come around?

Louella Cook- They was riding and walking through the colored neighborhood.

Carolyn Yellin- In jeeps or?

Louella Cook- Riding in jeeps.

Carolyn Yellin- Did you see any tanks?

Louella Cook- No, I didn't see any tanks. But they were in the jeeps and the big trucks with 7 or 8.

Carolyn Yellin- What were they carrying in the way of arms?

Louella Cook- Guns, they was carrying guns, ammunitions.

David Yellin- What did they do?

Louella Cook- If you come out on the porch for a cool breath of air they say get back in the house close the door.

David Yellin- They didn't say back in the house please maam did they?

Louella Cook- No, they said get back in the house and close the door.

David Yellin- What was your impression of that whole curfew, what were you thinking about?

Louella Cook- Well, I thought that the curfew was to keep us from on the street because the mayor thought that we may do some wrong. Keeping us in the house.

David Yellin- Now you described this with your friends on how it was with you and the mayor and the curfew can you remember how you described that?

Carolyn Yellin- What was mayor Lobe saying, you said mayor Lobe with the curfew what he was saying to you.

Louella Cook- Mayor Lobe says get in the house children, all my black children get in the house and close up the doors. Then he put out the national guard and when we come out to catch some fresh air they like get back in there, mayor Lobe said get in there.

David Yellin- Then what did you do when you went behind the curtain.

Louella Cook- What would we do?

David Yellin- No when you went behind the curtain he would catch you.

Carolyn Yellin- Oh if you would look out at the curtain he would say...

Louella Cook- Get back in the house if you look out, get back in the house.

Carolyn Yellin- The reason we are asking you about it Louiella is because you described this one morning when you came in saying it seemed to us it was really saying how it must have seemed how it was in the black neighborhood. (Tape End)