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DATE: January 20, 1956

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Respondent: Mrs. Beatrice Charles

TIME: 9:00 a. m.

Interviewer: Willie W. Lee

PLACE: 650 South Decatur Street

Job: Maid

Age: 45

Sex: Female

Interviewer: Mrs. Charles, as Mr. Pierce told you last night, I am interested in getting directly from the people and not from the newspapers what is happening here and what has been happening here. We appreciate it if you'd tell me all about it.

Respondent: "No Miss Lee, I don't mind at all. I had heard about Rosa Parks getting put in jail because she would not get up and stand so a white man could sit down. Well, I got a little mad, you know how it is when you hear how white folks treat us. And after that day it just sort of slipped my mind. So things rooked on 'till that Sunday night, (the Sunday following Mrs. Parks' arrest) and the man next door who is a Mason went down to the Tijuana Club. When he came back, he came by my house and showed me these slips of paper that somebody gave out at the club. It said that one of our ladies had been arrested and the next time it may be you, so don't ride the buses Monday."

"I felt good. I said this is what we should do. So I got on the phone and called all my friends and told them, and they said they wouldn't ride."

"I didn't have to work the next day and my insurance lady came by, and I asked her did she ride the bus and she said yes. Then I showed her the slip of paper. She said she hadn't seen one and asked me if she could have it so she could pass it along to her friends. That's why I don't have it. If I did, I'd let you see it."

Interviewer: Thank you very much for what you've told me, but now tell me this. Had anything like this ever happened before Mrs. Parks was arrested?

Respondent: "Oh yes, honey, this stuff has been going on for a long time. To tell you the truth, it's been happening every since I came here before the war (World War II). But here in the last few years they've been getting worse and worse. When you get on the bus they yell; "Get on back there" (very emphatic and expressive person), and half of the time they wouldn't take your transfer, then they make you get up so white men could sit down where there were no seats in the back. And you know about a year ago they put one of the high school girls in jail cause she wouldn't move. They should have "boy-cotted" the buses then. But we are sure fixing 'em now and I hope we don't ever start back riding. It'll teach them how to treat us. We people, we are not "dogs" or cats."

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Interviewer: You have been very helpful, however, there are just two more questions. I'd like to ask you.

Respondent: "Go right a head, I'm glad to help."

Interviewer: Are there any colored people against this thing?

Respondent: "Oh yes, there is Rev. Wright's wife. She talks about 'these niggers' don't know what they are doing, they are going to get in trouble.' She's with the white folks. Altho she needs is for someone to fix her back end up with a nice board so she can't sit for a while and she'll be alright. I'm going to give you her address so you can talk to her. You'll have to be sneaky to get the truth out of her though."

Interviewer: Tell me how do you think things will be between white and colored when the colored start back riding the buses?

Respondent: "I tell you the truth, I think for a while they'll be very nice 'cause they'll be getting out of the hole, but after that they'll probably get worse than before, 'cause they are building up hatred in their hearts right now. That's why I go to all the meetings and pay what I can so we can stay off the buses. I didn't ride but a little when they were running. Most times except one or two my boss picks me up."

Interviewer: Mrs. Charles, you have been most helpful, and I appreciate your taking time out from your work to tell me all about this movement.

Respondent: "Didn't mind at all and if I can help any more do come back."

Interviewer: Thank you very kindly. Good-day.

General Statement: Mrs. Charles keeps all Negro papers and Magazine in order to keep up with what the pressen say about Montgomery. She sends clippings to her children in California. She also subscribes to one of the Montgomery dailys.

She is a tall stately woman, expressions are very impressive; appearance neat, complexion dark-brown.