

INTERVIEWEE: Athalie Range

INTERVIEWER: (Shanae Lovett?)

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INTERVIEW LENGTH: 00:10:29

Unknown: Four, three, two, one.

Lovett: Good morning.

Range: Good morning.

L: My name is Shanae Lovett and I am in the Twisted Pencil. I want to take-- I want to take the time to thank you for coming here this morning. Throughout this interview, we'll be discussing some of our-- some of your childhood experiences- where you was born, but mainly, we are going to be focusing on the Civil Rights Movement. Okay, can you please state your name and spell it please?

R: Yes, my name is Athalie. That is spelled A-T-H-A-L-I-E, the last name Range, R-A-N-G-E.

L: Okay, thank you, Miss Range. The first question will be where were you born?

R: I was born in Key West, Florida.

L: Can you tell me when did you move to Miami?

R: Well, my family moved to Miami about 1923.

L: Nineteen twenty-three? Did you-- did you really want to move or--?

R: Well, I was just a very young child then and it didn't matter too much to me whether we moved or not. I wanted to be wherever my parents were and, naturally, they were moving to Miami so the family had to come along.

L: Okay. Did you have any siblings, like, brothers or sisters?

R: Yes. Yes, I had I believe it was five of us-- six of us totally and I am the last of my family now, all of my sisters and brothers have passed away.

L: Okay. What school did you attend when you came to Miami?

R: The first school I attended when I came to Miami was a little private school, it was named the 'Carey B. Anderson Primary School', that was located over on Northwest Thirteenth Street and about First Court and I went there until I reached sixth grade. That is when we transferred over to Booker T. Washington Elementary and High School.

L: Can you tell me what was the most-- was it more colors than whites?

R: You mean in the school?

L: In the school.

R: Oh yes, that was during the period of complete segregation so we had no whites- no white students, no white teachers- at our school at all.

L: How did you feel about that? Did you feel proud about no whites, like, no whites coming or being in school?

R: Well, it really was not an issue at that time. Because of the segregation laws, white children went to white schools, the communities were separated, you didn't live together, you had your own section, you had your own school, your own churches, so it did not create what we considered a problem for us.

L: Okay, can you tell me anything about your grandparents or your mother or father?

R: Yes, certainly. My father and mother were both born in Key West, Florida. My mother's name was Grace and my father's name was Edward. Their parents were born in Nassau, Bahamas and my grandmother's name- my paternal grandmother- was (Sophia?) Roberts Wilkinson, and my grandfather was Samuel (Lampier?) Wilkinson.

L: When you grew up to understand more about Civil Rights, did you participate in any Civil Rights Movement?

R: Oh yes. Once the Civil Rights Movement came into being, I participated in all of the local Civil Rights Movements- the organizations that came about as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. I was then a young woman, possibly married by that time with children in school, so I was very interested in the Civil Rights Movement.

L: Did you-- do you know the young woman name?

R: [pauses] No, I said I was.

L: Oh, you was.

R: Yes, I was a young woman at that time.

L: Okay. Did you know anyone that were touched by Civil Rights Movement?

R: Yes, I knew many people who were in the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. J. O. Brown who's an optometrist [ophthalmologist], Reverend Graham, Reverend Father Theodore Gibson, these were leaders. There were very many people who joined the Civil Rights Movement, but these men were outstanding because they more or less led the way.

L: Okay. As you were growing up, did you have any jobs that you participated, like, for whites, like, if they made you do any jobs like that?

R: I don't think I quite understand your question, ask it again.

L: Did you have any jobs that the whites gave you?

R: Jobs.

L: Yeah, like working in the field, nothing like that?

R: Well, no. Those things did not come across because you see you're speaking of a very far back period, you know? You're speaking---

L: Mm-hmm.

R: I was born in 1915, I'm eighty-six years old.

L: Oh.

R: So, you're talking of years and years ago when children did not go to work in Miami or in this part of the country, you may find children in other parts of the country who were forced into farm work or menial jobs of that kind, but children in my neighborhood and community at that time went to school and came home, did their chores at home but there was no such thing as a pre-teeners or very young teenagers having to go to work because it was a family affair and you accepted whatever your mother and father were able to give you and it wasn't a matter of going out to earn money so you could buy school clothes as it is in this day in time. You're speaking of a completely different (area?).

L: Okay. When you was in Miami, can you describe your, like, community?

R: Can I describe my community?

L: Yeah, how was it like?

R: At what stage are you speaking of?

L: When you first moved to Miami.

R: Well, when we first moved to Miami I was- as I told you- I was a very young child then. Miami was cut into very definite segments, by that I mean we had an area that was

called 'Overtown' where black people settled. Now it wasn't-- we were not known as black people then, we were simply 'colored' people and that area took in Northwest Fifth Street to Northwest Twentieth or Twenty-First Street, Northwest First Avenue which was the railroad tracks and Northwest Seventh or Sixth Court. We were more or less always separated by the railroad tracks east and west, and north and south it was Fifth Street and Northwest Twentieth Street. Now this was where all of our schools, our churches, whatever entertainment we had, movie theaters, stores-- [loudspeaker comes on] --on the east and west and by Fifth Street and Twentieth Street by the north and south. And what I was actually saying to you that here is where we had all of our activities. Our schools, our churches, our neighborhood grocery stores, places of entertainment, movie theaters, they were all found in what we call the 'Overtown area'.

L: Right. Okay, well thank you very much. I know this tape has been very short but is there anything else that you would like to say to us as black children now?

R: Well, you're living in a completely different circumstance. The opportunities presented to you were never presented to us as children. I went to schools that were segregated as I told you, we had double-sessions which some of the school children in Miami were not subjected to because they had ample schools and I speak now of the whites. And we used second-hand books, we didn't have the large science libraries like you have here at Turner Tech and other schools. So the only thing I would want to say to young people today is to embrace the opportunities that you have because, you see, you have the privilege of succeeding in any field that you are interested in. Politically speaking, we have now we have commissioners, legislators, senators, and in other fields we have many, many people of leading-- in leading areas, you know, in television, in

radio, those things were not thought of when I was a child or even a young woman, even as a young mother, those things were not thought of so you are living in an age where it only takes you to want to succeed and to put your minds to it and that is what my advise to you and any other young persons with whom I come in contact would be.

L: Well, I want to take this time out to say it has been an honor and thank you again--

R: Thank you.

L: --for sharing these memories with me.

R: Thank you.

L: Have a great--

END OF INTERVIEW