

CLAUDINE ADAMS 1993 INTERVIEW

TRANSCRIBED BY GENE G.WOOD,PARK VOLUNTEER
MARCH 2,1999

I---STANDS FOR INTERVIEWER

INITIALS STAND FOR PERSON BEING INTERVIEWED

NAMES OF PLACES AND PERSONS ARE SPELLED AS HEARD,BUT NOT
NECESSARILY CORRECT.

WORDS WHICH ARE NOT EASILY OR CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD ARE IN
BRACKETS

[].....

TAPE IS IDENTIFIED BY WRITING ON ACTUAL TAPE.

TAPE MARKED "SIDE B" IS INTERVIEW WITH CLAUDINE ADAMS.

I---TODAYS DATE IS APRIL 12,1993,THE TIME IS 10 A.M.,THE LOCATION IS
AT 943 PLEASANT ST.;MY NAME IS RANGER TONI COOPER ALONG WITH
VOLUNTEER BILL BLACK AND THIS MORNING WE ARE INTERVIEWING
MRS.

CLAUDINE ADAMS.

I---MRS.ADAMS,WHICH BATHHOUSE,OR BATHHOUSES,DID YOU WORK IN
?

CLAUDINE ADAMS---I"M,THE LONGEST I WORKED AT THE ARLINGTON,AN'
THEN

I WORKED IN,WITH MY AUNT AT THE OZARK FOR A SHORT TIME,VERY
SHORT

TIME, AN' THEN MY MOTHER,WHEN SHE WAS ILL I WORKED IN HER PLACE
AT THE SUPERIOR,BUT I WORKED AT THE ARLINGTON FOR THIRTY YEARS.

I---WHAT WAS YOUR OCCUPATION AT THE OZARK,WHAT DID YOU DO ?

CA---OH,OH WELL,I WAS JUST FILLING IN FOR AS A HELPER....

I---AS A HELPER ?

CA---UH-HUH

I---OKAY,WHEN YOU WENT TO THE ARLINGTON,WHAT WAS YOUR
OCCUPATION ?

CA---I WENT IN AS A HELPER,BUT WE HAD TO WORK FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS
BEFORE WE WERE ELIGIBLE FOR TUBS. AND UMMM,AT THE MEANTIME,I,IN THE
SUMMER I WAS OFF AN' SO I WORKED WITH MY AUNT AT THE OZARK.
AN' THEN
WHEN MY MOTHER WAS ILL,I WENT IN THE SUPERIOR WITH,IN HER PLACE
AS
A BATH ATTENDANT.

I---OKAY... WHAT WAS YOUR AUNTS NAME ?

CA---DELLA GIBSON. AND THE ONE AT THE OZARK WAS ETHEL PHILLION.

I---ARE THEY STILL LIVING ?

CA---NO...

I---HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE BATH INDUSTRY ?

CA---WELL, MY AUNT WAS HEAD BATH ATTENDANT AT THE ARLINGTON,AN' SHE
GOT ME IN,TOOK ME IN UNDER HER WING.

I---MRS.ADAMS,WERE PHYSICALS REQUIRED TO BE A BATH ATTENDANT,DID YOU
HAVE TO TAKE A PHYSICAL EVERY SO OFTEN ?

CA---OH YEAH....WE HAD TO GO TO THE INTERIOR,UMMM,WHERE WAS IT THERE ON UMMM.....AT LIBBYS,WHERE LIBBYS IS NOW,IS WHERE WE
HAD TO GO EVERY
MONTH.

I---EVERY MONTH ?

CA---UH-HUH.

I---[BILL BLACK] FOR PHYSICALS ?

CA---YEAH,FOR PHYSICALS. THE DOCTORS.....

I---[BILL BLACK] CAN YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED,WERE YOU PAID BY THE BATH,OR WERE YOU PAID BY THE BATHHOUSE ATTENDANTS ?

CA---NO,WE, THE ATTENDANTS PAID US,HELPED US CAUSE WE HELPED EACH INDIVIDUAL ATTENDANT,AN' AT THAT TIME,VERY LITTLE,I THINK THEY WERE GETTING TWENTY CENTS A BATH,AN' I THINK THEY GAVE US A NICKEL OR SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT,UH-HUH...BUT IT WAS VERY LITTLE BUT.....

I---DID MANY BATHERS RETURN YEAR AFTER YEAR AND ASK FOR YOU ?

CA---BEG YOUR PARDON.....

I---DID MANY BATHERS RETURN YEAR AFTER YEAR AND ASK FOR YOU ?

CA---OH YEAH,OH YEAH,AFTER I GOT, BECAME A BATH ATTENDANT,YES,WE HAD REGULAR CUSTOMERS THAT WOULD COME EVERY YEAR,AN' THEY WOULD BRING THEIR FRIENDS,THAT'S HOW YOU BUILT A TRADE UP,THEY WOULD BRING THEIR FRIENDS WITH THEM AN' THEN THEY WOULD BRING THEIR FRIENDS,YOU KNOW,SO IT JUST WENT ON.ROUND AN' ROUND.....

I---WHERE DID MOST OF THE BATHERS COME FROM ?

CA---OH,OUT EAST,AN'THEY WERE,THEY WENT ALL OVER,THEY WERE ALL FROM

CA---[CONT'] ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES,SOME OF 'EM FROM CANADA, CALIFORNIA AND ALL AROUND.....

I---DID YOU EVER BATH ANYBODY FAMOUS OR WELL KNOWN ?

CA---WELL,I BATHED AH',MISS [MERRILL OBRA], SHE WAS IN THE MOVIE INDUSTRY,AN' IT WAS QUITE AN' EXPERIENCE. WE HAD TO WORK AFTER HOURS BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WOULD WORRY HER TO DEATH,YOU KNOW,WHEN SHE WOULD COME DOWN STAIRS. SO WE WOULD HAVE TO BATH AFTER,EITHER THE NOON OR LATER WHEN THE PEOPLE WERE OUT AT THE RACETRACK OR SOME PLACE ELSE,BUT SHE WAS VERY NOTED AT THAT TIME. SHE'S STILL LIVIN', I THINK,[MERRILL OBRA]....

I--- DID THE HEAT IN THE BATHHOUSE EVER BOTHER YOU,MRS.ADAMS ?

CA---NO,IT WAS VERY PLEASANT AT THE,AT THE ARLINGTON,BUT AT THE OZARK

AN' THOSE PLACES,BOY,YOU'D BE WET TIME YOU GET IN THERE GOOD,BUT AT THE ARLINGTON, IT WAS ALWAYS VERY COMFORTABLE...

I--- THEN YOU WERE A BATH ATTENDANT AN' THE OZARK AN' THE ARLINGTON TOO,

CA---NO,I WAS A HELPER AT THE OZARK,I WAS HELPING MY AUNT,UH-HUH....

I---WERE ALL THE ATTENDANTS BLACK ?

CA---OH YEAH....UH,HUMMM

I---OKAY....WHAT ABOUT,DID THEY HAVE ANY MASSEUSES OR MASSEUR,WERE THEY BLACK ?

CA---OH,NO,THEY WERE MOSTLY,WELL,MOSTLY WHITE,ALL, MOST ALL OF 'EM

WERE WHITE. I THINK THERE'S A REASON,I DON'T KNOW,WHEN THEY STARTED,

BUT THEY HAD COLORED AFTER I LEFT FROM UP THERE,WAS EMMA,MISS EMMA

[STOOD],SHE CAME IN AS THE FIRST,I THINK,BLACK MASSEUSE AT THE ARLINGTON,AN' I THINK MISS UM...MISS PAYTON AN' OH, SHE WENT AROUND

DIFFERENT PLACES,UH-HUH.....

I---WHEN WERE THE BLACKS ALLOWED TO BATH ALONG BATHHOUSE ROW,DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN THEY STARTED LETTIN' BLACKS GO TO BATHHOUSE ROW ?

CA---UMMMM.....I DON'T KNOW,I CAN'T REMEMBER THE YEAR.

I---THERE WERE A COUPLE OF BLACK BATHHOUSES TO USE.....?

CA---YEAH,THE PYTHIAN AN' THE WOODMAN OF THE UNION.....

I---OKAY.....WHAT KIND OF UNIFORMS DID YOU WEAR AS BATH ATTENDANTS ?

CA--- WE WORE WHITE UNIFORMS,LIKE UMMM...NURSES UNIFORM WHITE,AN' UM WHITES,WE HAD LIKE TENNIS AN' WHITE SHOES,WE ALL DRESSED IN WHITE...

I--- DID YOU HAVE NAME TAGS ?

CA---YEAH,WE HAD BADGES. MINE WAS 711.

I---[STATEMENT UNCLEAR]

CA---YEAH,UH-HUH,OUR BADGES.

I---DID THAT 711 STAND FOR ANYTHING ?

CA---OH NO, IT WAS JUST A LUCKY NUMBERS,THAT WAS ALL.

I--- DID THE NATIONAL PARK INSPECTORS COME AROUND TO CHECK THE BATHS ? CA----OH YEAH, UH-HUH....

CA---YOU DIDN'T EVER KNOW WHEN THEY WERE COMING IN. AN' AH,WHEN THEY WOULD COME,YOU'D HAVE TO BE ON YOUR P's AND Q's AT ALL TIMES, CAUSE THE INSPECTORS WOULD COME THROUGH EVERY NOW AND THEN,SHE WAS VERY NICE.

I---[BILL BLACK]---WHEN YOU WERE GIVING THE BATHS,DID YOU HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL THAT WAS TAKING THE BATH,THEY WANT THE WATER HOTTER.....

CA---SOMETIMES YOU GET CRIPPLES,OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT,WE HAD A HARD TIME GETTING THEM IN AN' OUT,BUT THEY HAD TO HAVE SOMEONE TO HELP THEM,AN' AH,BUT AH,SOMETIMES THEY'D WANT YOU TO MAKE THE WATER HOTTER BECAUSE IT WAS FROM 98 TO 100 DEGREES,AN' SOME OF 'EM WOULD, OH THAT WASN'T HOT ENOUGH,YOU KNOW,BUT AH,WE COULDN'T, WE COULDN'T GO OVER THAT.

I---[BILL BLACK]---DID YOU HAVE SOME OF THEM THAT HEATED IT UP WHEN YOUR BACK WAS TURNED ?

CA---OH,BEG YOUR PARDON.....OH YES,SOME OF 'EM WOULD TURN THE FAUCETS ON,BUT WE'D HEAR IT AN' WE'D COME BACK AN' ADJUST IT,RE-ADJUST IT,UH-HUH. BUT AS A WHOLE IT WAS JUST WONDERFUL WORKING UP

THERE,WE WERE JUST LIKE A HAPPY FAMILY. THERE WERE 8 ATTENDANTS AN'

5 OR 6 HELPERS,EACH ATTENDANT HAD A HELPER,OH,I GUESS THEY WORKED

BETWEEN TWO,THAT'S WHAT IT WAS. THERE MUSTA' BEEN FOUR HELPERS OR

SOMEBODY,BUT ANYWAY WE JUST HAD A GOOD TIME. IT WAS JUST,WE WERE

TOGETHER MORE THAN YOU WERE AT HOME,TELL YOU THE TRUTH,WITH YOUR

FAMILY,AN' IT WAS JUST.....

I---[BILL BLACK]--- YOU LOOKED FORWARD TO GOING TO WORK ?

CA--- YEAH,OH YEAH,AN' EVERY MORNING AT SIX-TWENTY, WE WENT DOWN THIS HILL,MY HUSBAND AN' ME WERE ALWAYS THERE ON,EARLY. EVEN WHEN

THEY HAD THE FLOODS WE WERE THERE BEFORE THE WATERS COME THROUGH.

WE GOT DOWN AT THE ARLINGTON,WE HAD TO TAKE OUR SHOES OFF TO WALK

INTO THE BASEMENT,BUT AH', A LITTLE WATER WHEN WE GOT THERE,WE WERE

THERE,IN FACT ANOTHER COUPLE WERE THERE,AN' FINALLY THEY HAD TO SEND

US HOME BECAUSE OF THE WATER WAS CONTAMINATED,YOU KNOW.....

I---[BILL BLACK]---DID YOU TAKE BATHS YOURSELVES ?

CA---OH YES, WE TOOK BATHS EVERY DAY.....

I---[BILL BLACK]--- EVERY DAY ?

CA---UH-HUH....

I---[BILL BLACK]---WHAT,AT NOON OR AFTERWARDS ?

CA---AT NOON,OR AFTER NOON,AFTER,SOMETIMES BEFORE,IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE TIME THAT YOU WANTED TO TAKE,BUT YOU WERE ALLOWED TO ALWAYS TAKE THE BATHS. IN FACT, THEY ALWAYS TOLD YOU,YOU KNOW,THAT WAS SOMETHING YOU COULD DO AT ANY TIME,WE DIDN'T BATH WHEN THE PEOPLE WERE THERE,BUT WE'D BATH AFTERWARDS.....

I---WERE THE BATHHOUSES OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED ?

CA---YEAH,UH-HUH.....

I--- YOU HAD TO WORK ON SUNDAYS ?

CA---ON SUNDAYS,IT'D BE SOMETIMES IT'D BE TWO O'CLOCK WHEN WE'D GET HOME,AN' AH, PEOPLE,THE GOLFERS,THEY WOULD ALWAYS COME IN THE LAST MINUTE AND YOU COULDN'T LEAVE UNTIL THEY WERE OUT,AN' SOMETIMES IT WOULD BE,SOME OF 'EM WERE VERY UNREASONABLE,THEY'D COME AT THE LAST,ONE MINUTE BEFORE CLOSING TIME, AN' THEN YOU HAD TO STAY,T',T' SEE THEM OUT.....

I---HOW ABOUT TIPS,DID YOU RECIEVE ANY GOOD TIPS ?

CA---OH WELL,SOMETIMES,SOMETIMES THEY WERE VERY NICE AND SOMETIMES THEY WERE NOT,BUT MOST.....

I---[BILL BLACK]---WHAT WERE YOUR LARGEST TIPS ?

CA---I DON'T REMEMBER....BEEN SO LONG,I'VE BEEN OUT OF THE BATHHOUSE TWENTY SOME YEARS.....

I---OH,HAVE YOU ?

CA---OH YEAH,I WORKED THERE THIRTY YEARS AND I'VE BEEN OUT TWENTY SOME YEARS,SO I TELL YOU,MY MEMORY'S KINDA' SHORT ON.....

I---DID MANY PEOPLE COME IN WITH DOCTORS PRESCRIPTIONS ?

CA---OH YEAH...AND YOU HAD TO GO BY THOSE PRESCRIPTIONS. OH WHO WAS
THAT DOCTOR,WE JUST HATED HIS PRESCRIPTIONS,THEY,CAUSE YOU REALLY HAD TO,IF YOU DID ONE LITTLE THING THAT HE DIDN'T HAVE ON THERE,
WELL,BOY O' BOY,BUT I'VE FORGOTTEN HIS NAME.BUT HE WAS NICE OTHER
THAN THAT,WE ALWAYS HAD,IT WAS JUST,JUST A NICE PLACE TO WORK.
OUR,OUR MANAGERS AND ALL WERE SO NICE.....

I---WHAT WAS YOUR MANAGERS NAME AT THE ARLINGTON ?

CA---AT THE TIME I WENT IN THERE,MRS.WILSON,ELSIE WILSON WAS OUR BATHHOUSE MANAGER,AN' THEN AFTER SHE RETIRED,WELL THERE'S MISS
HAMMOND,AN' THERE'S BRADY,MISS LAMB,OF COURSE,MISS LAMB WAS A DOLL, AN' EVERYBODY LOVED HER,AT LEAST WE DID.....

I---SO YOU WENT THROUGH A LOT OF MANAGERS ?

CA---SHE NEVER WOULD ASK YOU TO DO ANYTHING THAT SHE WOULDN'T DO..
SHE WAS ALWAYS,WE'D,I'D LOOK UP AN' SEE HER COMING,AN' I'D SAY "OH LORDY,SHE SHOULDN'T BE DOING THAT",YOU KNOW AN' WE'D GET UP
AND HELP HER,YOU KNOW,BUT SHE,SHE WAS ALWAYS A LOVELY PERSON. SHE'S STILL LIVING TOO,SHE'S.....

I---RIGHT.....CAN YOU THINK OF ANY DRAMTIC CASES OF HEALING THAT YOU'VE WITNESSED YOURSELF ?

CA---OH YEAH....WE'VE HAD PEOPLE COME IN WHEELCHAIRS AN'ON STICKS,
WALK ON CRUTCHES AND THINGS,THEY'D LEAVE OUT, THEY'D BE ALL-RIGHT,
YOU KNOW.UH-HUH.... THAT WATER WAS REALLY WONDERFUL....

I---[BILL BLACK]---DID THEY COME BACK ON A REGULAR BASIS ?

CA---OH YEAH....UH-HUH....AN' THEN THEY WOULD TELL THEIR FRIENDS HOW,

WHEN YOU ARE GOING INTO BEAR COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY GRIZZLY COUNTRY, YOU SHOULD WEAR BELLS AND CARRY A CAN OF PEPPER SPRAY.

TO WARD OFF THE GRIZZLY, AND SHOULD YOU COME ACROSS SOME BEAR DUNG

HERE IS HOW YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BLACK BEAR DUNG AND

GRIZZLY BEAR DUNG. THE BLACK BEARS' WILL HAVE BERRIES MIXED IN AND THE

GRIZZLIES WILL HAVE BELLS AND SMELL LIKE PEPPER SPRAY.