Leslie Jamerson

A Transcription of an Oral Interview

2602 Carrelton Drive
Champaign, Illinois
April 19, 1982

Interviewed by
Shirley Walker

Champaign County Historical Archives
Urbana, Illinois
1997

Introduction

This interview is with Mr. Leslie Jamerson, who was born in Champaign, Ill., on Nov. 28, 1908. Mr. Jamerson attended Champaign High School and the University of Illinois, where he became a member of the Kappa Psi Fraternity.

This interview was conducted on April 19, 1982, at his home, 2602 Carrelton Drive, Champaign. The interviewer is Ms. Shirley Walker.

Shirley Walker: Okay, Mr. Jamerson, in this interview we're concerned with primarily two aspects. One is the fact that your sister and her husband had a local newspaper, Illinois Times, and the other is that your family is one of the early black families that settled in Champaign-Urbana. I guess we'll start with your family and living here. If you will tell us something about your parents and when they first came here and how they came to Champaign-Urbana.

Leslie Jamerson: Well, my parents came from Huntington, Tennessee. They come here for work because the Illinois Central Railroad was here and that was the job program at that time that people were coming to Champaign, most of the people were. They lived on White Street right back of the Marquette School, the 400 block on East White, and they stayed there until 1908. And they moved out on Ells Avenue, 204 Ells Avenue, Champaign.

Shirley Walker: Okay, you say they lived on Ells. Were there a lot of black families, or should I say, were mostly black families who lived in Champaign-Urbana about that time living in that neighborhood, because I know with other interviews we've had Ells, and Stanage Streets and all that neighborhood mentioned.

Leslie Jamerson: There were no black families out there at that time. The only black family lived on William Street, on West William Street, around the 400 block West William, that was named Roeys. Their family and my family were the only two black

families out there. After a few years later my mother got Mr. and Mrs. R.M. Scott out there, and Mr. and, I mean, Dr. and Mrs. [Capay?].

Shirley Walker: What were your parents' names, and did you have any brothers or sisters?

Leslie Jamerson: My parents' names were Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Jamerson. I had two sisters, one Blanche Jamerson and Cudelis, who is deceased. C-u-d-e-l-i-s.

Shirley Walker: Mr. Jamerson, having lived in Champaign for so long since 1908, I'm sure you're full of information about life here, situations here, lifestyles for black people especially. How was your education in the Champaign schools?

Leslie Jamerson: The education was very good. I went to Lincoln School on the corner of Healy and Randolph. And from Lincoln School I went to Central School, next to the old post office uptown, and that was for eighth grade. When I finished eighth grade, I went to Champaign High School on the corner of State and Green, which now they call Central up on University Avenue.

Shirley Walker: Were the schools very integrated at that time or segregated or what?

Leslie Jamerson: No, the schools were integrated. We did not have no trouble on the integration.

Shirley Walker: Were a lot of black students compared to the white students in the schools? I know at one time the black population in Champaign was estimated at about 2 percent. I think it's about 10 percent now. So in terms of how many students were in the schools, approximately how many blacks were in compared to the whites?

Leslie Jamerson: The comparison was very low among the blacks. I cannot name the percentage really, but it was very low. I had a class graduating my senior year at Champaign High School, and there was only six of us graduating.

Shirley Walker: Six blacks or six people?

Leslie Jamerson: Six blacks.

Shirley Walker: Oh, okay. What about housing? You mentioned that your family was the only one here, was the only black family for a while when you lived out on Ells, so that was not a neighborhood that was highly settled by blacks.

Leslie Jamerson: No, because at that time most of the blacks lived at one section of the town that they called the North End. It's just like it is today, everybody lives in one place. Out on Ells Avenue we were the first black family for a number of years out there, only as I mentioned before that the Roeys lived on West William. And then later

there was about five families moved out there: the Hines, the Everharts, the Scotts, and the Wilsons.

Shirley Walker: The Everharts and Wilsons, who are they? The first names of them?

Leslie Jamerson: Well, the Wilsons was Mrs. . . . Dr. [Capay's?] mother, and he was . . . The Raymond Scotts lived next door and the Everharts lived down there. It was three families lived right next to each other.

Shirley Walker: And the Hines, was that Ruth Hines?

Leslie Jamerson: No, the Hines was Mr. and Mrs. Ray Hines was Mrs. Ruth Hines husband's family.

Shirley Walker: Oh, okay. So that the North End as it's called today was the same North End then which most of the black people settled?

Leslie Jamerson: Settled in the same location.

Shirley Walker: What about, you mentioned before that in terms of eating, and going and black people pretty much did what they wanted here.

Leslie Jamerson: In the early stages of Champaign they did, but later on in years as I said that they kind of brought it on themselves. And I think I shouldn't say this, but they did, by the way they went into places dressed and everything, and they segregated it. And there was some restaurants that they couldn't go in. The majority of the restaurants, all the restaurants, there wasn't a restaurant in Champaign or Urbana that they could go in and eat. Well, I don't know about 1914, but my mother told me 1913, '14 clear up to when I was in University in '27 that I know that they couldn't eat any place. Even over on the campus they couldn't eat in the places.

Shirley Walker: So that was more so due to the conduct and appearance of the blacks who went to these places.

Leslie Jamerson: Well, maybe they made that excuse at first, but it wasn't suppose to be an excuse in later years because the same people weren't there then. But over on the campus they couldn't so you know it had to be something different.

Shirley Walker: How do you feel that with the greater number of blacks who came into Champaign-Urbana, I think it was in the '40s, how do you feel that contributed to the continuance of the segregation?

Leslie Jamerson: Well, that was about the time of World War II that the segregation wasn't no better because you still had segregation in the Armed Forces. And

segregation didn't change a little bit until after many years with the Civil Rights Movement, then it changed everyplace naturally.

Shirley Walker: I know in interviewing some other persons we've heard the word "influx" used in reference to all the blacks who came up from the South, and some black people here hold the opinion that conditions changed when so many blacks started coming in.

Leslie Jamerson: It might have changed for them, but I didn't see any improvement of . . . Really, there wasn't any improvement. The only chance that a black had here was day work or construction work, or that roundhouse, which they had a roundhouse here. That was the only jobs that was here, and the University, cooking on the campus. It wasn't the buildings. There was no jobs in the buildings. If you worked for people, you servants, or there was just about three or four chauffeurs here in the town at that time. Why that was the only occupation. The influx they did come North, and it wasn't only North. If they couldn't find it, they'd go on to Chicago. But there wasn't any more work then, well, I should say that there wasn't any more work for them than usual. It wasn't no different.

Shirley Walker: There weren't many like professional jobs or teaching jobs, that sort of thing?

Leslie Jamerson: There was no teaching jobs at that time. We had one doctor here. The first doctor here was Dr. Rowan. The next doctor here was Dr. Ellis. Dr. Rowan was a very good doctor, and Dr. Ellis, but the thing about it, their fall was that they could not collect from the people to survive in the money part. Dr. Ellis was a University man, he was a Kappa brother, he did various things with students over on the campus and the people, and he did everything he could, but later on in years he transferred from black to white customers, because he didn't get any money.

Shirley Walker: You mentioned that he's a Kappa brother, so you're a Kappa?

Leslie Jamerson: Right.

Shirley Walker: How big were the fraternities and sororities? How much importance was attached to them when you were at the University?

Leslie Jamerson: The fraternities and sororities play a founded part among the black students over at the University of Illinois. The reason they say that, that was the way of communication, _____, there was no place for them to go only that they go to the people's houses in the town, which they did, and visit people on Sunday, have them for dinner and everything. On a Friday night they would have Lyceum at Bethel A.M.E. Church where all the students went to get together and they went to have a lot of fun. They were writing papers for school. The boys and girls on campus the Kappa House was here at that time and Alpha Phi Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, and Alpha

Phi Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, and the Sorority House, AKA, Alpha Kappa Alpha and the Omegas didn't come in 'til later years. The Omega fraternity, it was down on . . . See, the Kappa House was in Urbana on Clark Street. The sorority house was on Stoughton Street. The Alpha House Fraternity was on the corner of Clark and Sixth. The Omegas, they didn't have a house, but they stayed with a family named Williams. And they kept the boys, because there was only six boys then in the house at that time. But it was a very good relations among the townspeople and the students, which some of it should of rubbed off on some of these students of today.

Shirley Walker: So the fraternities and sororities, in addition to Bethel and Lyceum, provided a kind of social outlet for the black students. My understanding is there weren't many black students at the University of Illinois during the time you were there, which was about '28?

Leslie Jamerson: Oh, there were more students there.

Shirley Walker: Okay, did you say that was 1928?

Leslie Jamerson: Yes, there was oh, I would say there was about 150.

Shirley Walker: About 150 black students. I guess it might be about the same ratio as it is now because they're about 35,000 students at the University.

Leslie Jamerson: Yes, well, the ratio is very low here now.

Shirley Walker: Yes. The last count that I had from the minority affairs director, there were about 1500 black students.

Leslie Jamerson: So, comparatively speaking.

Shirley Walker: And you mentioned, well, the camaraderie between the University students and the people in the community, so the division as we hear about it now between town and gown where the students don't really go into which would basically be the North End community didn't always exist.

Leslie Jamerson: Well, you take today, these students, they do not have fraternity and sorority houses. They have dormitories, residence halls rather, and the students do not go out and meet the town people, which it would be better for them, more experience for them and to let the town people know what their needs in the community would be, and it would help them.

Shirley Walker: Now you mentioned a Williams family that took in Omegas. Several families either took in students or fed students and it was at that time students couldn't live in the dorms. Is that right? Or they had no place to go?

Leslie Jamerson: They did have dorms. Mostly they had was fraternity and sorority houses on the campus. There were people that rented rooms to students. If the students didn't want to stay at a fraternity or sorority they stayed in town with the townspeople.

Shirley Walker: I know there's a Mrs. Pope, Carrie Alice Pope.

Leslie Jamerson: She was a AKA.

Shirley Walker: Right, and used to take in students. Mother Jones would take in students. About Mother Jones . . .

Leslie Jamerson: She would entertain all the students in town to come out there and party and enjoy themselves on the weekends.

Shirley Walker: And I've heard that at various times that people in the community and the students used to really have a very good, warm relationship, and once they started building the dorms and they had so many apartments that the black students quit socializing so much with the community people, and really don't go among . . . And when I think about community in the North End, they really don't visit the North End that much. It's almost like it's taboo, a taboo area.

Leslie Jamerson: Well, your community people, I wouldn't all say it was just the North End, because they could go anyplace if they make themselves available. But the thing about it, the students of today do not realize what their parents have went through when they was in school. The parents had hard times and they didn't have the money and things like that, that they had to . . . In other words, if some of the town people hadn't fed them, they'd have starved.

I had a many of persons right now, good friends of mine used to call from New York and things, that have thanked me all the time because on Sunday I would bring some of the guys and some of the girls out to the house for Sunday dinner and they would associate with me. The students of today have got a feeling of, they are too much above the people in the community, or the people in the community are too dumb that they don't want to associate with them, and they will not speak to them on the campus. And so the people in the community do not feel like that they want to be bothered either. There are times over there, like they have breakfast each year for the football team and they ask the men in the community to come up to practice. Bruce Nesbitt does and have Mike White, and have the conditions they want the people in the community to take a interest in the students, but the students don't give themselves any way that the community could take interest in them. They do not communicate, do not call, don't give them cards or anything, and a lot of times they can't help.

Shirley Walker: Yes, I know that you've seen like changes between University and community over the years. In education, going from schools that were fully integrated

to segregated schools, and back to integrated schools. Like you mentioned the restaurant and jobs. What about other places like the theaters? You mentioned once the Buzzard Roost.

Leslie Jamerson: Buzzard Roost. The reason I called it the Buzzard Roost where they sat up in the balcony, way back up in the balcony.

Shirley Walker: This was at the movies?

Leslie Jamerson: Yes, this was at the movie theatres. It was the Orpheum, the Rialto, the Virginia, all of them were like that. And they used to have _____, until later years they stopped that and the Civil Rights was the cause of this stuff.

Shirley Walker: Civil Rights, you mean like Civil Rights Movement around the late sixties and early seventies?

Leslie Jamerson: That's right. I mean you didn't have, I shouldn't say it but you didn't have the freedom to go until the sixties.

Shirley Walker: So, now, since you mentioned the Civil Rights Movement, how did you see it as affecting Champaign-Urbana or in terms of jobs, housing, employment, education? Did you see many gains made after, say 1968?

Leslie Jamerson: I personally myself, I did see a lot of gains. First I would say that Champaign-Urbana are very prejudiced. They are very prejudiced. It opened up a lot of jobs, a lot of people really hadn't come in contact with as many blacks as it did during the Civil Rights with much team rage about the privileges that a black person wanted, and should have had, and which they were so far behind in having these privileges up to the sixties when they were in effect. But also that the people didn't take advantage, which it is now just as bad as it was before the sixties. In other words, we haven't made it in the way that jobs are going anyplace they want to. But your privilege to jobs for the black unemployment and everything, we haven't gained a thing.

Shirley Walker: One of the things, observations, I've made in talking with various people is depending on the person with whom you talk, their age and where they lived in Champaign-Urbana, their perception of racism, segregation is so different. I talked with one lady who's about 87, 88 years old who led a very rather sheltered life, so she didn't feel that there was that much segregation and racism in Champaign-Urbana. Talking to somebody else who got out in the streets a lot, was around in different places, that person could see it much differently. This one person mentioned that her children played with whites, the kids thought they were white. An incident where some white kids mentioned to her kids that there were some colored people in the neighborhood they didn't realize they were the colored people because her children were fairly integrated. In terms of an overall picture of, I'll say racial relations in

Champaign-Urbana, did you see it on the side that there was really no racism and segregation or were you much more exposed to it?

Leslie Jamerson: I was exposed to both parts because I got around. When I was a child, I mean young, around 10, 11, 12 on up through high school, I didn't play nothing with nothing but the wealthiest kids in town; I still knew that I was black. When you really realize that you are black is when you get in high school. The kids play together until they get in high school, then you notice a change where they think that they are better than you. And you notice the difference that people in this town that says that they didn't know the difference, they hadn't been any place or they were satisfied whatever they had had. And we have people in the town today that whatever they get, they're satisfied with it and they do not speak out loud.

But I really know I have had some awful times in this town on the different athletic teams that I played on, and I was the only black that played on the teams the year when I graduated. I was spit on, I had a curtain pulled around me to eat in restaurants. I was said that in Chicago, that I couldn't sleep at the YMCA down the Loop, I had to go on the South side.

Shirley Walker: In athletics, this was at the University?

Leslie Jamerson: No, this was at Champaign High.

Shirley Walker: And what sports were you involved in?

Leslie Jamerson: Baseball, basketball, track and football.

Shirley Walker: So, were you generally the only black on the team?

Leslie Jamerson: I was the only black at that time, four years I was there. My four years, I just went right on through four years.

Shirley Walker: How was that handled by the coaches and teachers and all when each happened to you?

Leslie Jamerson: Well, I could say one thing about my dear mother. The first time I went to Chicago to play Harrison Tech. in basketball, and I was up at the YMCA. The coach come up and told me that if I wanted to stay there I had to go on the South side. Now that was at 12 o'clock at night, and that was the first time that I ever was in Chicago.

Shirley Walker: This is the coach of your Champaign High School?

Leslie Jamerson: Les Morgan. I'm going to name his name.

Shirley Walker: Les Morgan. And he was the coach of the Champaign team. So he didn't look out for you?

Leslie Jamerson: No, but the boys on the team said, "No," that I could sleep with them and that's where it stayed. I told them to send me back. When I got back to Champaign I told my mother. She went up there and "jacked" the principal up and he give the coach heck. But to me he was for segregation anyhow, because I went over to Wilsons Cafeteria in Decatur and played baseball. And after the game, they took us to Wilsons Cafeteria to eat and they wanted to put a curtain around me in the dining room.

Shirley Walker: Well, who is they, the people at Wilsons?

Leslie Jamerson: The Wilsons Cafeteria.

Shirley Walker: So nobody white would see this black boy sitting in here.

Leslie Jamerson: And the coach didn't say nothing about it. He didn't do nothing about it, and so I didn't either.

Shirley Walker: So what made you continue to play for Champaign given all these things that were done to you?

Leslie Jamerson: I don't know, it would call me crazy. I was crazy about athletics, or that somebody had to do this to let it be known what was happening. My mother used to . . . I wouldn't let her come to football games, but her and Erma Bridgewater went to

all the basketball games. They always went to the basketball games. But anything that happened, my mother would tell the principal. The principal was very good, C.S. Dale, and he was very good, and he would jack this coach up about it. In later years the coach got so weak and he was about ready to die and he asked me for a drink one time and I threw it out.

Shirley Walker: You mentioned the name Erma Bridgewater a couple of times. I know that's Erma Scott Bridgewater. And then you mentioned the _____, the Hines, so along with the Jamersons, these were some of the early black families who lived in the Champaign-Urbana area?

Leslie Jamerson: Yes, in 1927, the Forees moved out there.

Shirley Walker: Would you repeat that name?

Leslie Jamerson: Forees, F-o-r-e-e-s. The Forees moved on Charles Street, at the old Hines home, and the white people didn't want them out there. The Ku Klux Klan come out there and burned a cross. The blacks uptown and the North End, Walter Smith was one of the leaders. He got a gang to march down the railroad and to come out there on Charles Street and to drive them Klans away.

Shirley Walker: So was the Klan very active in Champaign-Urbana?

Leslie Jamerson: Yes.

Shirley Walker: How active? Did you see them all the time? Did they march?

Leslie Jamerson: No, you didn't see them all the time, but anytime they said they were going to have them they'd put on their gowns and parade around and burn a cross.

Shirley Walker: So they actually did that, paraded up and down the streets?

Leslie Jamerson: Oh, yes.

Shirley Walker: I mean, when did that kind of thing stop?

Leslie Jamerson: Well, they stopped after they seen that the blacks weren't going to take no more and all of them had guns.

Shirley Walker: So was this before . . . did they stop like before the big Civil Rights Movement?

Leslie Jamerson: Oh, yes, yes.

Shirley Walker: That's interesting, because the Klan is generally associated with the South, but after having moved here to the Midwest, I find the Klan to be much more active around here.

Leslie Jamerson: The Klans are much more active in Illinois and Indiana.

Shirley Walker: And they burned? Did you see many other cross burning incidents that involved Klans?

Leslie Jamerson: Well, no, that's the only one that . . . the reason I was associated with it, I was sick in bed and I was _____ and couldn't get out. And I knew all that, and that was just only a block from where I lived.

Shirley Walker: So that was in, say, 1927?

Leslie Jamerson: Yes.

Shirley Walker: And the Forees were a black family.

Leslie Jamerson: That's right, and they didn't want them on Charles Street.

Shirley Walker: So the Starks, the Hines, Forees, _____ , Williams? That lived in that area? Wilson. So these were some of the early families, along with the Popes and Banks.

Leslie Jamerson: Well, the Popes and Banks lived on the other side of town. What Banks?

Shirley Walker: Dawson Banks, and I don't know, but it might have been his parents.

Leslie Jamerson: Yes, well, Dawson Banks . . .

[End Side A]

Leslie Jamerson: The Joneses, the Popes, Ervin Jones. Well, I guess there were some more older people that I just can't think of.

Shirley Walker: Well, some of these names keep coming up again and again about families who've lived around here for quite some time. Do you recall hearing your parents say anything since they came here about 1880, that initially blacks weren't allowed to settle in Champaign-Urbana, but lived in outlying areas and came in to work?

Leslie Jamerson: I never did hear it. There were blacks living around the county, like Mrs. Cecil Nelson. She lived in Sidney.

Shirley Walker: Is that Mrs. Carrie Nelson?

Leslie Jamerson: Carrie Nelson. I think that the Nelson family - I mean it was Carrie lived in Sidney - they lived there because they wanted to live there. That's where they moved when they first moved up here. I don't know where they come from, I don't know, but they were good friends of my family. And there was different families lived around. Well, it was Carrie and Earnest, that's who it was.

Shirley Walker: So, but there were blacks who settled like in say Loda . . .

Leslie Jamerson: Oh yes, there was one family in Loda, and Loda didn't have black families, but there was one black family in Loda. And oh, out here in Broadlands, the Smiths were very wealthy people. Down here in Neals, his parents . . . and he was on the Board of Trustees at the University of Illinois. Now he is, yes. He hasn't retired yet, he's supposed to retire in . . .

Shirley Walker: This is a black man.

Leslie Jamerson: This is a black man, and the Neals were very wealthy farmers. They were black.

Shirley Walker: And do you remember where they lived?

Leslie Jamerson: The Neals lived in Broadlands. The Smiths lived out here by Mansfield. That's where it was.

Shirley Walker: Okay.

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Shirley Walker: I'd like to ask you some questions about the Illinois Times, the paper that your sister and her husband had. When did the Times start? About what year?

Leslie Jamerson: I would say that the Times started around 1931 or something like that.

Shirley Walker: So what prompted them to start a newspaper?

Leslie Jamerson: Turn it off. (Laughs.)

Shirley Walker: You said that Mr. Harris was just a newspaper man, and you said it started maybe around 1931, and we can find out exactly when. What was their audience, I mean, were they directed primarily at black people or at the community in general?

Leslie Jamerson: Well, the paper was directed to the community in general, and they wrote a lot of Civil Rights news, too. They were for both the community and the Civil Rights.

Shirley Walker: In looking at a copy of the Times, I see that they have advertisements from some businesses in town, and it has all kinds of advertisements for the First National Bank, so it seemed to be pretty much established in the community. Now, the Gazette and the one was called the Gazette and the other was the News . . .

Leslie Jamerson: The Courier.

Shirley Walker: The Courier, okay. They were both in existence at the same time?

Leslie Jamerson: Right.

Shirley Walker: Were there any other newspapers around about that time?

Leslie Jamerson: No, the Courier was in Urbana, and the News-Gazette was in Champaign.

Shirley Walker: Now, how was the Times received? Did they have a pretty high circulation?

Leslie Jamerson: They had a good circulation.

Shirley Walker: It was a weekly or daily or . . . ?

Leslie Jamerson: No, it was a weekly.

Shirley Walker: A weekly newspaper. Did anyone other than the Harrisses work for the paper, or did they hire?

Leslie Jamerson: No.

Shirley Walker: So they did everything?

Leslie Jamerson: They did everything.

Shirley Walker: Reported the news, typed it, edited it, printed it, and then distributed it to people's houses. What kinds of things other than Civil Rights, what kinds of things did they cover? I know many times a small weekly will cover the things that are kind of social or, who was born, who died, and who got married.

Leslie Jamerson: They covered who was born, who got married, any dirt . . .

Shirley Walker: The dirt. They covered the dirt, too?

Leslie Jamerson: Society, all sorts of . . . there wasn't no one thing, they just covered the news like it was supposed to be covered, because you didn't have a black newspaper here, and the people showed interest in it when they had such a good circulation, and a lot of it was out of town they say.

Shirley Walker: Yes, that happens a lot of times with minority papers, that people who used to live in the community will still want to get it to see what's going on. Do you

think the larger papers, the Gazette and Courier ever felt that there was any threat for the time, or were they just neglecting black folks altogether and it didn't matter?

Leslie Jamerson: I don't know if they thought it was any threat. I never did hear of it and it never was shown.

Shirley Walker: The major papers, the dailies, didn't provide much coverage of black people and activities unless you robbed a bank or something.

Leslie Jamerson: That's right, and it doesn't still today. It doesn't show anything. I mean any of your marriages, you notice in the paper, or your society, or anything that you want to have that's decent here in town, the News-Gazette doesn't put it in there unless you beg them to come out there and send a reporter, and sometimes he may not come.

Shirley Walker: So the Harris' paper gave it more of the coverage that black people wanted to see, what was going on with black folks.

Leslie Jamerson: Right. Right.

Shirley Walker: _____. So, about how long did the paper last? Now this one issue we have here is 1965.

Leslie Jamerson: (Pause). I would just make a guess and say about 1970 or 1971.

Shirley Walker: I know that Mr. Harris is dead, and it stopped when he died, or did she keep it going?

Leslie Jamerson: No, it had to stop.

Shirley Walker: So he did most of the actual printing.

Leslie Jamerson: Well, the way it was, they would get the news. They would send it to another place to get it printed see, and then it come back to them. They had a printing company to do the printing.

Shirley Walker: It seems that he was more responsible, as far as you know, running it, and more involved with it than Mrs. Harris.

Leslie Jamerson: Well, in the finance, well, I would say it was a fifty-fifty in both of the people.

Shirley Walker: So, down to money on one side and getting in there and . . .

(TAPE IS TURNED ON AND OFF AGAIN)

Shirley Walker: It seems like the Times was a rather political paper. It had the Illinois Times' platform for Illinois, and among are sidewalks and pavements for all sections of our city, and sanitation conditions and all our cities, and end segregation and discrimination in public places to make Illinois the finest state in which to live. So it was more like a political arm?

Leslie Jamerson: Well, you take . . . most papers are political.

Shirley Walker: Right.

Leslie Jamerson: Their platform is what she did daily, what we need. See, that was after the sixties that they still had their platform. Particularly what they're talking about is the North End of Champaign.

Shirley Walker: Right. Did they get much opposition from that?

Leslie Jamerson: No, because they was telling the truth, and the people wouldn't argue with them. Harris was very smart, intelligent, and where he would put a question to a lot of these white people that they didn't want to answer.

[End Side B]