

## Transcribed Excerpts from Interview with Vivian Morris from Harlem, New York, June 29, 1939

Yeah, mam, we ain' been doin' so well in this here coat n' dress job. An' I kin say fum my own person'l experience us cullud people ain' been doin' so well in other kinds a wuk. I kin see y' knows that already, an' I kin not tell y' so much 'bout that. Y' know how we does fer ourselves in any kinda business. Well, if y' wants to know my experience I'll tell ya.

I been wukkin' in this coat establishment fer onta twelve years ...

I gets \$16 a week now. Been wukkin here for 12 years an' gets a dollar raise — only one goddam dollar. I knows the job. I known it inside an' out. I practic'ly runs the place. The foreman's outa the place gabbin' wit' th' boss for hours an' says to me — "Man, y' take care of the wuk. I depends on ya. I knows y' kid do it!" An' so he leaves an' I gotta go trampin' up n' back fum th' shippin' room to th' fact'ry, fixin' machines an' shippin' and dishin' out wuk fer about 25 folk. They ain never give me a chance t' wuk on 'me machines. Why? 'Cuz they keeps me fer th' laborin' [end?] a the wuk. An' why? 'Cuz I know as well as you becuz a my culla. I ain' never got a half chance t' make some [?] decent dough ...

I know I'm worth more. I knows every job on my finger tips an' I even shows others how t' do the job but I ain' never got no chance an' I don' expect none fum this joint. — The foreman comes in about 10 every day when he's supposed t' be here at 8:30. An' me? I knows the wuk's gotta get out so I comes in at 8 instead a 8:30 like I'm supposed to t' get the wuk done. He gets \$75 a week t' be foreman an' I gets \$16 an' I does some a his wuk. First he asks me t' help him out wit' his wuk an' I wants t' be agreeable an' does it. That's a long time ago. Now he never asks me but expects me t' do it, an' I gotta or else ...

Once I needed a coupla bucks an' asks th' boss t' lend me 2. He lend it t' me very nice. Next week I comes t' pay him back an' he says fer me t' keep it 'cuz I deserves it. I says no I don' want it. I ain' askin' fer a han' out. If he thinks I deserve it why don' he give me it every week at th' proper time on Saturday. He didn' like it much. I tol' him jus' like that. Of course I didn't get it.

Yeh, mam; I'm on my vacation for a week. This's been the first one since I been here ...

No, mam; you knows this ain' fair t' us but whats y' gonna do, huh? Somethin's gotta be done — I knows that. This here's discrimination t' us cullud people. We gotta do ev'ry thin' an' get paid least. We knows th' job as well as any an' 'me but they don' give us a chance t' do th' same wuk. The situation ain' good. Somethin's t' be done.