

## **John Noronha**

### **Uganda Collection Oral History Project: Departure**

**Gladys Noronha:** “Finally I got a job with the United Nations, a project of theirs called the Smallholders Tobacco Project, and I worked with them until the time I left. As it happened, we actually—whenever the ministers were going up, because this was part of our Ministry of Agriculture, any time the ministers went out, we were always preparing their speeches for them, and this particular speech on August the ninth, right? I know I typed it and everything, but there was nothing about what Amin finally came out and said. That was something that he blurted out from the top of his head or at that moment, I don’t really know. Anyway, when that happened—I should just go back a little bit. Like I was saying, my dad came from a family of ten brothers that were actually scattered around the world. My dad had three other brothers, two in Nairobi, one in Mombasa, and actually one other brother in Kampala who also worked with the government in the audit department. When this thing with Amin happened, and there was just my mom, my sister, and myself, he came up to us and he said—“

**John Noronha:** “Your uncle.”

Gladys: “My uncle. He said, “I think you guys need to plan your exit strategy,” because the army people were not so good with young people. So around 1970, I had a cousin of mine who actually came to Toronto. She lived in Nairobi, they migrated to Toronto, and she wrote to me and she said, “You know, you’ll do really well here, you’d get a job very quickly. We’re here to support you.” When my dad had died in 1970 and things were beginning to be a little bit shaky in Kampala and Uganda, I kind of applied to some of the different banks and institutions in Canada. While they didn’t actually offer me a job, they were very favourable. They said, “When and if you come here, come and look us up and then we’ll be able to take it up from there because you are so far away.” So when this thing happened in Uganda and the Canadian government came in and said, “We are going to be able to take so many refugees,” I think I was practically one of the first ones that went there within a week or so because I had all those letters of recommendation. I didn’t have a job but—“

John: “You also had already applied to the Canadian High Commission. In those days, you had to go to Beirut. You already had an acknowledgement from Beirut before the Amin issue.”

Gladys: “Yeah, so I had an application in and I had to go to Beirut for an interview, but when the Canadian government came here, I’m not sure who it was, my uncle must have said to me, “You better take these papers and show them—“”

John: “If I can interrupt, you know how they talk about the numbers and the papers? She bypassed that because she had already got this stuff, so when she went in and showed it to them, they straight away signed her up for the medicals.”

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Gladys: "So you know, we bypassed a lot of the things and that was actually how we ended up coming to Canada on the second flight."