

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

ALBERTINE THOMAS LANCASTER

Interviewed by Merideth Taylor

May 22, 2000

At her home in Wildwood Maryland.

Logged by Tania Jordon on September 26, 2007

A verbatim Transcript is available

Original format is one cassette tape

1 hour, 20 minutes, 46 seconds

[Tape 1 of 1, Side 1]

[Track 01]

0:00 Introduction

0:23 Moved to St. Mary's County November 1971. Married John Lancaster at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Met husband through brother-in-law. Was a social worker in New York. Grew up in Manhattan.

4:25 Biggest obstacle was learning how to drive when she moved to county. Albertine ran into woman's house when she first learned to drive. Woman built a better house with the insurance money from the accident.

[Track 02]

6:09 Worked as a supervisor for the Department of Social Services (Child Welfare Unit) in Leonardtown. Worked for 13 years before she retired.

7:58 County residents appear to be less motivated than the clients she worked with in New York. St. Mary's clients needed more encouragement to help themselves.

[Track 03]

12:52 She did a lot of traveling with husband. Her husband's children were grown when they got married.

14:40 Grew up with both parents and two sisters. Mother worked in a dress factory and a domestic on Saturday's after children became older. Father was a longshoreman, elevator operator and bookkeeper. Father moved to the United States from St. Kitts when he was 19.

16:00 Graduated from Hunter College in 1949. Received a social work graduate degree from Fordham University in Manhattan.

[Track 04]

19:25 Initially wanted to be a history teacher or a lawyer. Decided to become a social worker because you only needed two years of graduate work versus three years for law school. Worked in social work for over thirty years. Worked as an adjunct professor at Fordham University and University of Maryland.

21:40 Got married at St. Patrick Cathedral with 25 guests attending. Had a sit-down reception. Guest left her wedding briefly to met Jackie Kennedy-Onassis who was attending another reception in the same facility.

[Track 05]

23:55 Mother was also from St. Kitts. Her parents met on the ship on their way to Ellis Island. Mother was 15 and father was 19. Mother did not marry father until she finished high school. Albertine was in a two year courtship with John before they were married.

25:30 Was on the State Board of Education from 1976 through 1986. Member of AAW, Margaret Brent Professional Women's, League of Women Voter's, Tri-County Home for Boys, Library Advisement Board, Community College Board.

[Track 06]

31:24 Husband was a Baptist. Attended Immaculate Heart of Mary Church.

33:08 Received Margaret Brent Woman of the Year Award. Was a member of Who's Who before she left New York to live in St. Mary's County.

36:14 She and her husband had busy community service lifestyles but traveled often.

37:20 Still active in the Links.

[Track 07]

39:35 Changes in St. Mary's County: There is more participation from blacks in county now. They sit on boards and are active in organizations. There is less awkwardness with the races interacting together. People grow and change with time.

[Tape 1 of 1, Side 2]

[Track 01]

0:00 Has not witnessed any overt racism in the county. Thinks that diversity comes from people exposing themselves through travel has caused them to grow more accepting.

3:52 Route 235 was a two lane road when she moved to the county. Feels growth should stop at this point. Would like to see more high-end stores rather than the typical box stores.

[Track 02]

7:14 Liked county life even without public transportation.

9:52 County offers more services that help all the residents.

[Track 03]

12:59 Feels that young children are exposed to more things through the actions of their parents. Parents expose their children to more negative behaviors.

15:00 Senior citizens have more benefits now with senior centers and activities.

[Track 04]

16:54 Health care has changes because the hospital and clinics have expanded there services. Dr. Chase was a black dentist who came to the county after her arrival.

[Track 05]

21:45 Bias in real estate. Told story of person looking for a moderately priced house being shown a house that would be categorized as a shack.

24:22 Use to attend concerts at St. Mary's College. They don't drive after dark because of difficulty driving at night.

[Track 06]

26:27 News Source: Enterprise, Washington Post, Black Enterprise, Ebony, Essence, Prince Georges and a Virginia newspapers, local metropolitan news and Nightline. At one time subscribed to the Afro-American newspaper in Baltimore.

[Track 07]

30:44 Have you done everything in life you wanted to do? Would have liked to gone to South Africa. She went to Ghana and Senegal. Had a nice life growing up and had nice friends. Would have liked to had children. Would have been a lawyer instead of social worker.