

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

EMMA V. MILBURN HALL

Interviewed by Merideth Taylor
June 3, 1998

At her home in St. James

Logged by Tania Jordon on August 7, 2005

A verbatim transcript is available

Original format is two cassette tapes

1 hours, 45 minutes, 28 seconds

[Disk 1 of 2]

[Track 01]

0:05 Introduction

0:25 Early Days: lived with aunt until age 10 when father remarried (Lillie Sewell) and brought family back together. Mother worked for Spence Howard, father raised hogs.

3:52 Earliest memory was at 4 years when an aunt took her into the bedroom to see her mother's dead body laying on a slab with a sheet over it.

4:35 Relationship with siblings

[Track 02]

5:48 Times were good then, had enough and made the best of it,

6:30 Father went to a market in Baltimore once a year to buy clothes for family, shoes were bought at Millicent's store, where Base is now.

8:19 Family attended Zion Methodist Church, walked to Sunday school. Lived in St. Mary's City at the slave quarters, where the archeological digs are. Father worked at Brome Howard farm.

11:25 Sunday meals

[Track 03]

11:29 Family health: Dr. Bean & Sophie Clayton (mid-wife), home remedies

15:02 Chores/ crabbing every morning to make money for school clothes.

[Track 04]

17:50 Relationship with parents/ discipline

20:29 Father: quotes, death, deeding property

[Track 05]

25:40 Formal schooling: Old Park Hall School (on Rt. 489 where True Holiness Church is now) until 6th grade Mrs. Louise Butler and Mrs. Meyers were teachers; Jarboesville (by bus) until 8th grade and transferred to other side of building for high school.

30:00 Wanted to be a detective.

[Track 06]

30:55 Other aspirations – get married, have a big kitchen and enough money to buy ingredients for baking.

33:56 Courting – and the first children.

[Track 07]

36:30 Went to the black movie theater in St. Inigoes, could not go to the one in Leonardtown and had to sit in the back at the one in Lexington Park.

39:00 Roomed in Carver Heights for \$5/month. Worked on Base as waitress and in the laundry, and then at St. Mary's College in housekeeping and in kitchen (Ms. Russell, Bobby Able and Mr. Redmond were supervisors). First job was washing dishes at the Pastor's House in St. Mary's City. Working at the College.

[Track 08]

46:18 Race relations at St. Mary's College

51:46 Working at St. Mary's College

[Track 09]

57:10 Wedding at St. Peter Claver Church

59:38 Family life: 6 children, husband owns septic systems business.

[Disk 2 of 2]

[Begins at 1:01:50 in the overall interview]

[Track 01]

0:10 Children and grandchildren

1:55 Religion; converted to Catholic religion after marriage

3:22 Community involvement – Ladies of Charity through the church

[Track 02]

5:18 Life in general/ entertainment outlets/ teenagers

[Track 03]

9:40 Race relations: mixed marriages, segregated bars and lunch counters and signs that read 'coloreds use the back door'

[Track 04]

15:10 Segregation in the Catholic Church – tells the story of her daughter sitting in the front and how the segregation line fell

[Track 05]

19:30 Segregation/ Integration in the schools

20:40 Difference between locals and newcomers/ outsiders

22:40 Views on county expansion/ land rights and paying property taxes.

[Track 06]

25:54 Contributions to community, retiring from St. Mary's College, wants to go to Hawaii, other travels

[Track 07]

32:04 Biggest changes in the county – dirt roads

32:57 Communications: got news from the radio, did not have TV

34:50 Old stories – Cousin, Mary Smith, ironing on the stove, baking biscuits

[Track 08]

36:02 Learning about slavery, older days and family history, value of knowing your history