

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions  
Oral History Documentation Project

REVEREND DR. RUDY CARNEL BROOKS

Interviewed by Brenda Coates

January 7, 1997

At the rectory in Valley Lee Maryland

Logged by Tania Jordon on July 18, 2005

A verbatim transcript is available

Original format is two cassette tapes

1 hour, 40 minutes, 4 seconds

Audio CD 1 of 2

Track 01

- 0:00 Introduction
- 0:30 Description of present residence and town where he was born/  
Circumstances that brought him to St. Mary's
- 3:50 Growing up in Georgia amidst fear and limited opportunity to attend  
school. Woke one Sunday to see a person hanging from a tree. Family had  
it pretty good.

Track 02

- 6:06 Relatives: Lived mainly with grandparents/ First memory – graduating  
from 'Head Start' to kindergarten. First church was Africa Methodist  
Episcopal Church or AME.
- 8:55 Traveled with grandfather every year to Detroit. Also went to Chicago,  
Miami, and many other places. Family activities.

Track 03

- 11:36 Times are better today – jobs, schools, more things for the youth, and  
better activities and services for seniors. People today less involved in  
community. Kids today have much more to do.
- 13:50 Family health concerns. Home remedies. Doctor King, a known  
pneumonia specialist, made house calls.

16:03            There was a hospital but blacks couldn't enter – even if dying. Next to the hospital was the "Sick Shack." Once you went there, you never came out. Only had nurses. More home remedies: whiskey on the gum, sugar cubes with whiskey, cut the eyes out of their shoes.

Track 04

18:35            Elder cared for in poor houses. He would rather not live than be taken to a poor house. They slept on the floor on straw mattresses, flies all over, a miserable place.

20:45            Relationship with siblings; games; chores. Swept the yard with Dogwood branches whenever the preacher was coming over.

Track 05

24:08            Treatment by parent and grandparents/ discipline/ how elders prepared him for life

Track 06

27:24            Schooling: 5 and 8 room school houses; walked to school

31:41            Aspirations as child = actor (Hollywood cowboy), mother wanted him to be a medical doctor. When traveling, they couldn't stay in hotels.

Track 07

34:34            A call to preaching – inspiration of Dr. King. Social outlets for teenagers – movies, etc.

36:01            "Colored Day" in town (Tennille, GA) and other segregation practices

38:10            Dating; teenagers were chaperoned

Track 08

39:43            Moving out on his own - moving to Jacksonville, FL: supporting himself, social outlets. Responsibilities with household. Tried singing for a bit – 50 cents per night.

Track 09

45:07            Attending college/ financial situation

46:30            Courtship and marriage

Track 10

51:30 Family life (it's a continual learning experience)

52:35 What part religion plays in his life.

Track 11

54:31 Involvement with other churches and religions – ministerial group/  
volunteer groups

Audio CD 2 of 2

Track 01

0:00 Volunteering/ getting involved in the community

0:56 Life in general in St. Mary's, land of opportunity, best place to live/  
outsiders are the ones who start the troubles

3:57 Changes in the county; there are more prominent and visible blacks;  
people have less concern for each other

Track 02

5:41 Biggest change in county – attitudes. More acceptance of blacks and more  
black in influential positions – sheriff, county commissioner etc.

Track 03

10:37 Teenagers today are more mature for their age (positive virtue)

12:19 Race relations; changes in the ministerial group during his 30 years in St.  
Mary's. Rural vs. Urban living

Track 04

15:33 Newcomers vs. locals

19:50 Differences between the residents in the various districts of St. Mary's

Track 05

21:35 Naval Base: first-hand experiences with underhanded practices

24:35 Direction the county is heading in/ changing to an urban environment  
Track 06

27:38 Recognitions and awards for contributions to county

29:48 Education is the most valuable thing he owns

Track 07

32:25 Has accomplished most everything he had ever hope to. Remembrances

Track 08

36:34 Biographic Data