

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

ANN LLOYD THOMPSON

Interviewed by Brenda Coates
December 2, 1996

At Mrs. Coates home in Lexington Park Maryland
Transcribed by DWH Services on December 26, 2002

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[Begin Side 1, Tape 1 of 1]

BC: ...home in Lexington Park. Today's date is December 2, 1999. Miss Ann, I just want to let you know—

AT: 1996.

BC: 1996. Okay. I just want to let you know that if you are uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you know, you don't need to answer. We'll start by asking you: Where did you live? Where were you born?

AT: I was born down on the farm at Susquehanna. I really don't know what they called it then, so better not to answer.

BC: But, it's where the Base is now. Down in the area where the Patuxent Navy Base is?

AT: Yeah. It was down below St. Nicholas Church and, near the water...the river.

BC: You lived on—You said you lived on a farm?

AT: Yeah. It was a farm. My mother worked for the people that owned the farm. I believe they were Adams. I'm not sure. I better not to say that...That was where I was born.

BC: What kind of work did you father do?

AT: He was a waterman.

BC: Oh! Okay.

AT: And, my father bought the place over there. He said he was a part of Fairview. I don't know what Fairview is, was, but he bought the land from my grandmother's father...husband in Smallwood.

BC: So you said he bought the property where?

AT: Right over there. You know, where I used to live. Where Ernestine and them is now?

BC: Oh, okay.

AT: Yeah. He bought that piece of land from my grandfather, I guess, and that's where my mother and father moved up to there after they, after he wasn't able to work.

BC: Okay. And after you left from the area down on the Base where you used to live, then you moved up to where Ernestine has her house now. And then from there, you—

AT: Well, I left here and went to New York to live with Aunt Lucy and I stayed up there for six years. Got part of my schooling up there. Had a Catholic school called St. Peter Claver. Went to that church. And when I graduated from there, I went to what they call Girls Commercial High School. I went two years up there, and my mother wanted me to come home because she was alone and I was getting too fresh.

BC: [laughter] Okay.

AT: Don't put that down!

BC: [laughter] Okay.

AT: That's what my Aunt Lucy said. She didn't think I was—She thought I was fresher than I was.

BC: Okay. And, now you live off of Hewitt Road.

AT: Yeah.

BC: Okay. In Lexington Park. Okay. What year did you move here? What year did this house where you live now? Do you remember?

AT: I think it was around 1945 because Katherine was the first one born over here, and I think her—She was born in 1945.

BC: Okay. When you were a child, what were things like?

AT: Well, what I can remember we did an awful lot of walking. We had to walk from this house over there down to St. Nicholas Church every week. Saturdays, we come from—

BC: Confession?

AT: No. Well, confession, too. Catechism.

BC: Oh.

AT: And we'd come back and go back for Sunday church. I don't remember too much else. I've still got it in my mind.

BC: Now, you said your father was a waterman. Did you all—What you ate mostly was from the water or did he do a little bit of farming or what?

AT: I really don't know. I don't even know what we ate at that time. I know it wasn't a lot of meat because we couldn't afford it...That's the truth. I just don't think I—

BC: So when you were growing up, you went to St. Nicholas Catholic Church.

AT: Um hmm.

BC: And now you go to Immaculate Heart here in Lexington Park.

AT: Yeah.

BC: Okay. Do you remember your family taking any trips when you were little?

AT: They never—I didn't even remember my father because he died when I was two years old.

I have very knowledge concerning him except that I heard that he worked around the water. I guess oystering, crabbing, whatnot.

BC: Was your family involved in any community activities when you were coming along?

AT: I'm afraid not. None I can remember anyway. There wasn't too much activity down here then.

BC: Do you think, you know, from what you can remember, do you think the times are better now than they were then?

AT: Well to you the truth, I was too young to realize, you know, things like that, and I know we didn't have anything fancy to eat. My mother raised chickens and whatnot.

BC: Okay. I'm going to ask you some questions about your family's health concerns. Did you remember any special doctor that you used, and did they do house calls?

AT: Yeah. All I can remember is old Dr. Bean, and he used to come out on the house calls. He's the only doctor I remember.

BC: Did your mother have any special home remedies that she used?

AT: Yeah. At the time, she used to—when we got a cold, she'd make a called a mutton tallow pad and put it on our chest, mostly all of the winter. And of course, they gave us—[phone rings]

BC: So you remember her putting that on your chest in the winter. Okay.

AT: Yeah, because they believed in castor oil for a cold. We could go [get] remedies from the store: cough syrup and stuff like that.

BC: Okay.

AT: And they—She used to give us turpentine with sugar on a spoon. That was a remedy for colds. If it turned into pneumonia, then the old hospital was over there in Leonardtown.

I don't—I think Paul was the only one that has been to the hospital for pneumonia.

BC: So, the family didn't use the hospital that often.

AT: No.

BC: Okay. Where there any other medical facilities that you used besides Dr. Bean and the hospital? Do you remember anything else?

AT: Uh uh [no].

BC: Okay.

AT: No. I can't remember any place we went for medication or anything like that. I think Dr. Bean was the only doctor I know of that tended us.

BC: Okay. How did the black folks get there news at that time? Were there newspapers that you remember or—?

AT: There used to be a—Let's see. What was the name of that black paper that came out of Baltimore?

BC: *Afro American?*

AT: Um hmm. Something like that. That we used to buy that every week and that was all.

BC: Do you remember listening to any particular radio shows?

AT: Grand Old Opera. That was our company in the radio because that's all we had was the radio, and I can remember Grand Old Opera: I used to listen to it every week. After that, I don't remember.

BC: What types of things did you do as a child? You know, what kind of games did you all

play?

AT: Mainly, we just jumped rope and play—What was that thing? Squares, you know.

BC: Hopscotch?

AT: Yeah! [chuckle]

BC: Okay.

AT: That was all. There were all the games we played.

BC: Did you get along well with your brothers and sisters? Did you all used to play together or—?

AT: Well, I was—Most of my brothers and sisters had left home when I come along.

BC: Oh!

AT: Because, see: I'm the baby girl. Paul was next to me and I think he—I know he had left home. All the rest were gone, too. I was by myself.

BC: Okay. What kind of chores did you have to do?

AT: Well, just try to keep the house clean, tend the chickens, watch out for crows and things like that. I don't know. I can't—I just don't too much remember anything special that we did.

BC: Okay. How did your parents treat you? What do you remember best that they did with you? Do you remember your mother disciplining you and for what particular things did she do that?

AT: I was a good girl. She didn't have attack me or make do things. She'd tell me what to do and I would just about do it...

BC: Do you think she prepared you well for life?

AT: Well, I don't know...I can't say she didn't prepare me, but mostly what I think I picked up from going school and whatnot, quite a few things I wasn't told that should I have been told.

BC: Now, you told me that you went away to New York when you were how old?

AT: Well, I was still in grade school.

BC: So you did start the school there in St. Mary's?

AT: Yeah. I went to the old Jarboesville School.

BC: And you had to walk there?

AT: Um hmmm [yes].

BC: But, about how far was that from where you living at the time?

AT: Well, I think most of my schooling was after my father had died. I'm sure it was because he died when I was two years old, and my mother was living Uncle Ben's place. You know, where, back of Piney Hill. You ever heard of that?

BC: No! [laughter]

AT: Well, that was where the Barnes is on there mostly: Andy Barnes, Zena Barnes. I know you heard of them. Now, Zena was married to brothers and you ain't heard of Hailey Barnes?

BC: No. No. I really haven't! [laughter]

AT: Zena was—trying to—Do you remember Rosalie Barnes?

BC: I think I remember the name. Yeah.

AT: Yeah. She—She married Arnville Thomas.

BC: I think I remember that name.

AT: Yeah. And, Miss Annie Barnes: She was Zena Barnes' sister. They married two brothers. Gene Barnes, Paul, Pitty. Their house—The brick house right there on the same road where a tree's here now...

BC: Okay. 'Bout two houses from the end. It's further out towards 235 and Theresa's house.

AT: Well, when you came in here, you know there was a little turn. Well, that brick house right to your right was Pitty Barnes' house.

BC: Okay.

AT: If you remember, his family got killed coming from—I don't know where they were coming from, but it was down South somewhere. But, Pitty married Ollie Cliveburns' daughter.

BC: Okay.

AT: I can tell you more about other people than I am about myself!

BC: [chuckle] The Cliveburn is the one—He used to drive a school bus. Lived down off of Pegg Road.

AT: Yeah, that's where they lived. I like Ollie lives in the home now. I don't think she's dead.

BC: Okay. But you said this area was called Piney?

AT: No. Down back of where Uncle Ben's farm was, that was—Back of where he lived was called Piney Hill.

BC: Okay.

AT: And that was down there near the Jarboesville Way.

BC: Where the old school was or where the, in the South Hampton area where Carver School

is now? Back there?

AT: No.

BC: So, this was on the Base.

AT: Yeah.

BC: Okay. So this farm was on the Base.

AT: Um hmmm [yes].

BC: Okay.

AT: Yeah.

BC: And it was an area on the Base called Piney—

AT: Piney Hill.

BC: Piney Hill. Okay. Okay. So, that's where you lived at the time that you went to Jarboesville School.

AT: Yeah. My mother was living with Uncle Benny and my grandmother.

BC: Okay.

AT: And Beverly Hurdle from the day, too, because I never remember seeing no man around the house. So, Uncle Ben was married twice. He married a girl from Hollywood Way.

BC: So to get to school, you only had about—About how far did you have to walk to school? Wasn't very far, right?

AT: My _____ to go to school. See, I was living with my Uncle Benny.

BC: Right.

AT: And it wasn't too far, you know, to a main highway and walk to the old Jarboesville School. And, we walked—I guess we could do it in less than a half hour.

BC: Okay. Do you remember any of your teachers? Okay. So you went away to New York to school, what, about the 3rd Grade? Something—the 3rd Grade—something like that?

AT: It was probably, yeah, 3rd, 4th. Yeah. That sounds about right.

BC: And you were in New York for about six years and you went to St. Peter Claver in Brooklyn, New York, and then the Girls Commercial High School. And then, you came back home.

AT: Yeah. Came back here and I didn't a chance to get to go to school any further. No. When I came back here, I, I didn't get anymore schooling.

BC: As a child, what did you dream of becoming?

AT: I really hadn't made up my mind at that time.

BC: Okay. Once you got back home and you were a teenager, did your mother let you court?

AT: Yeah. A little. She would still courting herself. I can remember old man Tom Harris used to come us to see her and to tell her he was a undertaker. And, Larry took up coming to visit me.

BC: Well, when you were going out, where did you go and what kind of things did you all do?

AT: [chuckle] I don't remember doing anything.

BC: What type—What places did you all go to?

AT: Well, now and then they used to have a dance, church dinners. Over at St. Francis and St. Nicholas Hall, they had the Benevolent Societies, you know?

BC: Um hmm [yes].

AT: I can remember going to those once a year.

BC: Okay.

AT: Wasn't anything else except stay home, listening to the radio. Didn't get a chance to get around nowhere.

BC: What was it like when you first went out on your own?

AT: First went out on my own?

BC: Um hmm [yes]. [pause] Where did you move to?

AT: I was still at home when I got married. See, I was married rather young. Married at 18. I hadn't, more or less, left home. I can't remember any place else.

BC: Okay. What--What kind of--You tell me the types of work that you did to support yourself. You told me that you worked, did day's work up at Long's?

AT: Yeah. At that time, it was--You know where Tennison's store is going toward Cal Farm?

BC: Um hmm [yes].

AT: Well right across from that, that's where the Longs lived, and I used to do day's work up there.

BC: Okay. And then after you did that, then you went to work on the Navy Base at the laundry.

AT: Um hmm [yes].

BC: And, you said you worked there for awhile.

AT: I came over to the Main Exchange Tailor Shop. Took up sewing.

BC: And you retired in 1975 from the Navy Exchange.

AT: Um hmm [yes].

BC: While you were at the Exchange, do you remember--I mean, I know this is quite awhile ago, but do you remember about how much you used to make per hour, or--?

AT: Salaries were very low then, and the Exchange was one of the poor-paid placed to work. I had to, signed up for several work, you know. But the first thing that came along, I took. So, that was why

[End of Side 1, Tape 1 of 1]

[Begin Side 2, Tape 1 of 1]

AT: First thing that came along, I took. So, that was why I was with the Navy Exchange, and I never got into government work which I had applied for.

BC: Okay. When you were working at the Exchange, how did you get to work?

AT: Well, different persons. I never was able to get to work from home because my husband was working at night, and he didn't get home in time for me to have him take me to work. So, I caught different people. One of them was Oliver Sampson. And then, there was my brother in-law, the one we call "Diggy." Heard of that?

BC: Yes.

AT: And then, there was a fellow from Hollywood, but I forget his name. That's about it.

BC: Okay. You'd catch rides to work. Okay. And, you said you had applied for regular government work, but you never got called on that.

AT: Yeah.

BC: So, you went to work at The Exchange doing that kind of work. Okay. And, you ended up in a tailor shop. You knew how to sew.

AT: Well, I learned a lot after I got in there. Well, I could sew, you know, because my mother did a little sewing. Wasn't professional sewing, but I picked it up right easy, you know, repairing clothes and that kind of stuff.

BC: Um hmm [yes]. Okay. How did you meet Mr. Harry?

AT: Well, he came to the house visiting. My mother said he used to stop by different times and talk with her, and she said she figured that he would be coming by when I come home! [chuckle]

BC: Oh okay. So before you came home, he used to stop by.

AT: Uh hmm [yes].

BC: I mean, stop by and visit your mother.

AT: Um hmm [yes.] Occasionally.

BC: Oh. Uh hmm [yes]. Okay. You said you were 18 when you got married. Why did you decide to get married?

AT: Forced to.

BC: Okay. What do you remember about your wedding? Do you remember who was your Best Man, Maid of Honor?

AT: It was Leo and Louise Smith.

BC: Oh okay.

AT: Maid of Honor and Best Man.

BC: Okay. And do you remember the day? Your wedding day?

AT: April 30th.

BC: Okay. And the year.

AT: I can find that, I guess, but I don't have--1933, I think.

BC: Okay. 1933. Okay. Did you all have a honeymoon?

AT: [chuckle] We honeymooned! [laughter]

BC: Okay. Okay. What has your family life been like? You know, describe your relationship with your husband and your children and grandchildren?

AT: I think it was rather smooth.

BC: Rather smooth. Okay. What part has religion played in your life? You tell that you used to attend St. Nicholas Catholic Church and you now attend Immaculate Heart Catholic Church. Do you participate in any of the church's activities?

AT: Well, unfortunately I haven't been able to. The fact that I couldn't get around on my own because I didn't drive, I never got too into it activities that I would have liked to have gotten into for the church. That was the main reason because I just couldn't afford to have, pay someone to take me different places. That's what I'd have to do if I'd have gotten. So, I really haven't participated in too many activities at the church.

BC: Okay.

AT: I used to try to help with the, over there, you know, the--

BC: Church dinners?

AT: Dinners and things like that.

BC: What does the church mean to you?

AT: Well, being a Catholic, I try to stick with my religion and try to live halfway Catholic!
[chuckle]

BC: Okay. Are you involved with any other churches or religious organizations? Okay.

What community activities do you participate in?

AT: What?

BC: What communities activities or, you know, do you?

AT: I don't.

BC: Uh hmm [yes]. How do you feel about life in general today in St. Mary's County? In what ways is it different than it used to be?

AT: Well, I don't know. I don't know that it is so different in some, which activity but the Base being here. I think that's the main thing that has changed a lot down here. It's brought more people in.

BC: So, do you think that the, that the Base is the biggest change in the County in your lifetime?

AT: I know it is.

BC: What are your feelings about the Navy Base? Was your family hostile to the government taking the land to build the Base?

AT: No, I don't think so. Not really.

BC: But your family was affected by the Base coming down here and having to move off the land?

AT: Yeah. That made a difference. We came up here and made our home [at this] old place.

BC: Okay.

AT: Really, we bought this piece of land...Course at that time, land and things weren't so high. We got it for \$50 an acre. [chuckle] I think it was seven acres in all.

BC: So, did any of your family—you know, your sisters or brothers, whatever—Did they have

to move off of their land because of the Base coming?

AT: No, they were gone.

BC: They were already gone. Okay. Now, what are your feelings about the changes in the County because of the new growth on the Base?

AT: Well, I don't think it's bothered me to any amount.

BC: Do you think people are different from what they used to be?

AT: Well, you know, I mean: Unable to travel on my own, I didn't get places to really socialize with other people, you know, other than the same old things except, you know, taking to church and whatnot. That was our main entertainment. And of course, some things that they had was mostly given by the church. That was all we got. All the people we met were the ones that we already knew.

BC: Okay.

AT: That sort of stop—Just—I just didn't get around to...I couldn't carry myself so therefore, I didn't get too far.

BC: Do you think race relations are different than what they used to be?

AT: Well, in some places because some sections, you know, they don't the blacks in there. We have to be careful where you set up residence. They try to make it uncomfortable for you. They didn't want you there. So, I can't say too much about the people I came in contact with.

BC: Okay. Now, for awhile you lived in the city, in Brooklyn. Which one did you like the best: the city or the country? And you know, why?

AT: I liked the city better.

BC: [chuckle] Why?

AT: Well, I don't know. Because I spent quite a few years in my younger life in the city; and when I did come home, it wasn't long before I was married and took on the marriage chores. [chuckle] I don't know no other reason.

BC: [chuckle] Okay. What do you think of the direction that the County's going in today? Do you believe that St. Mary's will become a urban rather than a rural county?

AT: I don't know. I think it's being built up really fast. But, that's mainly because of the Base realignment. They sticking a house every which way.

BC: [chuckle] Yeah.

AT: So many housing projects around.

BC: What do you consider to be the most valuable thing you have ever had? You know, something that you believe that you could never have done without?

AT: I don't know what that would be. I really don't.

BC: Have you done everything in your life that you ever wanted or planned to do?

AT: Well, I tell you. I never made any big plans of what I'd like to do. I've lived my life quietly and take it as it comes.

BC: So, you really never, sort of, planned to do anything else?

AT: No. I was rather timid and slow.

BC: Now, if you had a chance to go back and live your life over again, what would you change?

AT: Well, I'd probably change the idea of getting married so young. I'd probably try to work at something where I would have improved my intelligence. I don't know. I just think I

would have wanted to have improved my living in a much better way.

BC: Okay. Can you share any old stories about your life or, you know, how life was in the country when you were coming up?

AT: Well, I don't think I can because, like I say, when I left here, I was rather young. And not being around the home folks, I just didn't concentrate on things like that.

BC: Okay. Well, I think that will end that part of the interview.

BC: Biographical Data Information:

__1 Thompson Lane, Lexington Park, Maryland 20653

Telephone Number: 862-3139.

Birth date: March 20, 1915 at Harrison, Maryland

Harrison is one of the sections of where the Base is now.

X She attended Jarboesville Elementary School; Claver Elementary School in Brooklyn, New York; and Commercial High School in Brooklyn, New York.

X She did day's work and retired in 1975 from the laundry at the Naval Exchange. She also worked as a seamstress there.

X Her husband's name was James Harry Thompson.

X Her mother's grandparents were Barbara Ann Smith Smallwood and she doesn't remember her mother's father. She does not remember her father's parents at all.

X Her mother's name was Sarah Ella Smith Lloyd. Her father's name was Ernest Lloyd.

X Her brothers and sisters are Edward Lloyd, Francis Lloyd, Reginald Lloyd, Minette Lloyd Chapman, Bernadine Lloyd King, and Paul Lloyd.

- X Her children are Elizabeth Chase, James Thompson, Jr., Jean Thompson, Theresa Johnson, Shirley Gordon, John Thompson, Paul Thompson, Catherine Hernden, Ernestine Lynch, Rayfield Thompson and Linda Woods.
- X Elizabeth's children are Darlene, Barbara, Kevin, Paula and Mark.
- X James Jr.'s children are Myron and David.
- X Jean's children are Angela, Eugenia and Francis.
- X Theresa's children are Terence, Phyllis, Laurissa, Sonia and Francis.
- X Shirley's children are Linette and Gregory.
- X John's children are Gary and Sharon.
- X Paul's children are Paul, Kurt, Troy and Angela.
- X Catherine's children are Thomas Jr., Duane, LaShawn and Corlan.
- X Ernestine's children are David and Damien.
- X Rayfield's children are Dwight and Tony.
- X Linda's daughter is named Storm.

That's the end of the biographical data information.

[End of Side 2, Tape 1 of 1]