

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

JOAN GROVES BRISCOE

Interviewed by Merideth Taylor
Videographer Aaron Brusset
August 8, 2007

[unknown location]

Logged by Tania Jordon on August 15, 2009

A verbatim transcript is available

Original format is digital video

23 minutes, 15 seconds

Audio CD 1 of 1

Track 01

00:00 Joan Groves Briscoe moved to St. Mary's county from East Elmhurst, New York. She lived with her parents William and Rebecca Groves in California, Maryland. Her parents had five children. There were two girls and three boys.

03:15 Her father was a member of the NAACP who wanted to help with the integration process. They filed a court case against Great Mills High School and Ryken Catholic School. Mrs. Briscoe was in the 12th grade when she integrated Great Mills High School.

Track 02

04:55 Her father was a licensed electrician. He wanted to make a difference in the community.

6:50 She had always gone to an integrated school in New York. Joan did not realize at the time the significance of them being the first blacks to integrate a school in St. Mary's County.

Track 03

8:21 She remembers that she and her brother were the only children on the bus. They were escorted to school by a state trooper. Some of the kids would say "ugly things" to them. Most of the teachers who were not originally from St. Mary's County were nice to them. Her father told her that the principle Mrs. Mattingly was opposed to integration.

Track 04

12:24 Her brother Conrad told her that the kids were meaner to him then to her. He told her that they tried to beat him up. He was affected differently by the situation.

14:30 Her parents were concerned that nothing would happen to their children. Her parents were very active about resolving any situations that occurred at the school. Mrs. Groves graduated in 1959.

Track 05

15:39 The highest points with her experience were that the students and teachers were nice and helped her during that school year. She still keeps in touch with some of the students that she went to school with. The children who parents were in the military were different from the local people.

18:50 She is glad that she had a chance to attend Great Mills High School. She feels it helped her to get jobs in Washington, DC.

Track 06

20:01 At the time she started working in DC the offices were not that integrated. The white schools had better supplies, facilities and good teachers.

22:30 She hopes that the children now are taking advantage of the opportunity to get an education.