

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

VIOLA CUTCHEMBER

Interviewed by Carol Locke-Endy
June 1, 2002
at St. Mary's College of Maryland Kickoff Event
Logged by Tania Jordon on September 11, 2005
A verbatim transcript is available
Original format is one cassette tape
31 minutes, 26 seconds

Audio CD 1 of 1

Track 01

- 0:00 Introduction by Carol
- 0:23 Born in Pierson, MD (where Base is now in 1932)
- 0:37 Attended Patuxent Beach Elementary (1st through 7th grades), Patuxent Beach Rd. in California. School, built by grandparents, one room school, teacher, Beatrice Bowie Jackson, boarded with grandmother, Sarah Hayden
- 1:30 Attended that school until 5th grade (school closed), then went to Jarboesville until graduated, went to Bowie State College. Taught at Carver, then Park Hall (thinks it was sort of built to replace Carver) until integration, then went to Town Creek until retired.
- 2:56 Old Jarboesville was located on Base where the EMA building is now: Frank Knox School
- 3:57 Patuxent Beach School: description of desk, children walking to school, Cumiberti family would make hot soup and bring in to school, she went to grandmother's house for lunch. Had a wood stove.

Track 02

- 5:06 No resources except books that had been marked in, school had recess where students played usual games (hop scotch etc.), boys would make balls out of old clothes/stockings and get piece of wood for bat

6:40 Lessons: only had one book for all the grades, each grade read on a different pages; not many books for students to use; most lessons came from what teacher told them or put on board; no maps on walls only what was in books

8:01 Someone later used the schoolhouse as residence, did not take a picture before it was finally torn down; physical description of school, really small

Track 03

8:42 Outstanding memories of Patuxent School: Teacher's manner of teaching inspired her to be a better person and become a teacher; Repasts on Fridays

10:33 Jarboesville; gate must have gone around the building after the Base was built; Julian and Grace Meyers, only had 2 teachers during entire time

12:34 Graduated in 1949, 16 in the class, 23 when started, had 30 year reunion in 1979 and has a picture of a portion of the class

Track 04

13:50 Was taught history (Black History) that wasn't in the books; Mr. Meyers taught math & science, Mrs. Meyers taught English and social science; two other teachers who taught Home Economics and Agricultural; at college felt she could hold her own despite basically having only 2 teachers

15:50 Attended Bowie College until 1954

16:16 Teaching - 1st years: Mrs. Bryant (Ms. Gatinly) and Mrs. Jamison were the older teachers; teacher's pets

17:45 Taught all grades until went to Town Creek where she had 5th grade, taught Social Studies until just before retiring when taught math

Track 05

18:58 Carver; old renovated dormitory rooms, walls were knocked out and made long, taught everything to 5th grade also at Park Hall

19:55 Teachers were integrated before the students; '64/ '65

20:55 Teaching Civics in the segregation school: There was a curriculum – US History; used book titled *Building the United States* (?) as a guide; sharing books, students couldn't take books home

22:11 As teacher dealing with segregation – couldn't change it, accepted it and moved on

Track 06

22:48 Outstanding memories: Sent to Town Creek in September, children gave her a party in October simply because they liked her. Parents were very cooperative; Got along well at all the schools; Famous for bringing mashed potatoe salad to the repast

24:27 Bought saving stamps from Post Office and sold them to the students; when they accumulated enough stamps, would go to bank and buy them bonds. Irving Dyson would buy a bond every Monday; Stamp Day at Carver: Wrote to company at end of year for awards for students who bought bonds

26:12 Remembers reading out-of-date books, including the *Book of Knowledge*

26:51 Similar experience: Mrs. Gaskin's teacher also boarded with grandparents and the overall influence led her to become a teacher also

Track 07

27:25 Teachers: 1st teacher, Ms. Jackson, also taught eldest daughter in 1st grade at Carver. Was teacher at Carver same time as Ms. Jackson but in separate buildings

28:25 Cautioned daughter, teacher at Oakville, that she won't be paid much money. Other children work in government

28:52 Mrs. Meyer stressed importance of doing things right, being clean, not following the crowd, etc.- learned a lot from her. Told girls to not go into the ditch to find a husband. Mrs. Meyers was concerned about students' morals; she tried that example when teaching her own students.

30:20 Made Home Visits in April to get federal forms signed