

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

CLARENCE LEO YOUNG, SR.

Interviewed by Bob Lewis and Merideth Taylor
April 6, 2004

At Bayside Care Center in Lexington Park Maryland

Transcribed by REV.com on May 26, 2025

Edited by Bob Lewis on May 29, 2025

Logged by Tania Jordon on February 29, 2008

Original format is two cassette tapes
1 hours, 18 minutes and 34 seconds

CD 1 of 2 (Tape 1, side 1)

Track 01

0:00 Introduction

00:42 Originally from Budd's Creek, MD. Has lived in Lexington Park and Charles County.

1:50 Grandparents: Steven Young and Susie Bowman was mother. Farmed and lived in St. Mary's and Charles County. I was 21 when my mother passed away. I grew up on a farm.

Track 02

4:58 Farm life: Tough work done by hand.

6:59 Other jobs included equipment operator and landlord.

Track 03

7:25 Integration: Was on the school board when the Grove children integrated Great Mills High School. Phillip Grove, Lancaster and Steven Young were very active in school administration. "Mattingly from Hollywood put him up to for the board." A lot of people didn't want him on the school board including the Superintendent Lettie Dent. She said she would not serve with a Negro on the Board of Education. He could handle the job because he had been in the Army. Compared to the war this wasn't a big thing.

Track 04

14:17 What was the fear: Didn't want to mingle with Negroes. James Boyd would not stand up for what the Negroes wanted. He didn't want to go through Lettie Dent to get what they wanted.

17:30 What were the things you were able to accomplish serving on the board: To get more black people on the board of education. Hope for all children going to school.

Track 05

21:40 Was involved with Grove children attending Great Mills High School.

Track 06

24:32 Became such a fighter for the integration of the schools because he always got the short end of the stick in the military no matter where he went in the service. Segregation was also witnessed in Japan.

Track 07

29:09 Was still on the negro school board when schools integrated. Negro military companies treated different from white companies.

30:40 When were you on the school board: 1955

Track 08

33:59 Family was not worried about him standing up for the rights of Negro students.

35:50 Only Negro appointed to the Board of Education at the time.

CD 1 of 2 (Tape 1, side 2)

Track 09

36:58 Some of the teachers resigned during integration. More integration controversy. Felt like he did the right thing. The fight was well worth the effort. Efforts to convince others to integrate. What did it take to get Negro children to attend school? Superintendent Lettie Dent threatened to resign if a Negro served on the Board.

Track 10

42:05 More about the Groves children. How they got there. Who help the Grove children enroll in GMS? Mr. Grove and Mr. Lancaster. Legal fights and the uselessness of Courts.

46:26 Who were the first children to integrate the white schools: First schools integrated were at the elementary level. [After the Groves]

Track 11

47:07 What did the Governor do? Had no choice in appointing him to school board. He had no choice because it was part of his job and he feared what would happen to him.

50:39 Didn't get much help from outside the county through the NAACP? They were afraid.

Track 12

52:00 Robert Young was grandfather. He felt his hands were tied regarding integration. There was nothing his Grandfather could do to end segregation.

56:25 No other struggles in the county except the school system.

Track 13

58:00 Was there a struggle opening landscaping business? Yes, when he wanted to use someone else's moving equipment but had trouble.

59:51 Steven R. L. Young: Started the NAACP in St. Mary's. He had a girl and boy who went to elementary school in St. Mary's County. He was a leader. Was not related to me.

CD 2 of 2 (Tape 2, side 1)

Track 01

0:18 Discussion at Board Meeting: Readiness about integration whether it was accepted or not.

3:10 Mr. Mattingly who was a County Commissioner who helped him get on the school board.

5:09 The biggest change in the county was integration in 1955.

Track 02

7:41 What did it take to get a landscaping license: He was told he couldn't get one.

10:14 Mrs. Young: Alice Carolyn Young. Maiden name was Young.

Track 03

11:40 Did God play an important part in your life? No, Roman Catholic.

13:16 Children: Five (3 boys and 2 girls). Clarence Leo Young, Jr., Olli, Alice Carolyn, Nick and William Thomas, Mary Lee, Patrick