

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project and the
Southern Maryland Folk life Project

Eva Stucky Chesley

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Interviewed by Meridith Taylor and Alma Jordon
at the USCT Interpretive Center

Transcribed by Jazzie O. Gray
[this transcript has not been edited]

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(10:37)Eva Chesley: Well my name is Eva Stucky Chesley and I live here I was a Stucky cause after we moved to Charles county finishing school I married and gotten another name but when I left here I had just finished high school. I grew up in elementary school basically here in St. Mary's County. I began my elementary education in Baltimore County because my father and mother had left the south and came to Baltimore and I went to kindergarten there and first grade. Then he came to St. Mary's county and located in Drayden, that's when I began school in the second grade with my father as my teacher. [Laughs] Cause I already knew how to read and do all those things because I've been in school for a couple of years but I finished elementary school in there and went to school in Drayden but so did some of my, most of my siblings and he stayed there. Now I don't remember how many years he stayed there but he left Drayden and I think went to a larger school on the Eastern shore in Kent County but I don't recall the name of the school. By that time I think I had gone to High School but he did come back to Drayden. Well he never . . . He decided it was time for us to relocate so he got a job in Indian Head so that's when the family moved to Charles county. And it was there when I moved there I continue my education and went to Bowie, "Bowie Teachers College" at that time. Now it's "Bowie State University". After I finished I began teaching in Charles County. Married, had my family, grew up and well basically lived in Charles County most of my life because that's where I grew up with my husband and my children. And of course my parents were there too, my mother and my dad and they lived in the same house that they moved to in until he passed in 92'. I was following his footsteps and taught school and I retired from teaching in Charles County. And I did enjoy my years of teaching, I enjoyed it very much.

Alma Jordon: And you mentioned that when you went to Drayden school that some of your siblings weren't there. How many siblings do you have?

EC: I have-- there were six of us but there were five who lived in Charles County, in St. Mary's county excuse me. The sixth child was born but they moved to Charles County so my sister who was supposed to come today was one of them. My oldest brother just passed in December. So did my two brothers in between. Well just about all of us went to Drayden except my youngest brother because he was . . . to Charles County. We all remembered, I remember my closest

friends and going to school to greens and . . . (13:47) and Drayden's folk. I had good memories in Charles County. And the lady, who took his place when he left to teach in another area Ms. Hillman, was someone my sister was very fond of Ms. Hillman and married reverend Statesman was very fond of the family because reverend Statesman was our pastor. And we went to his church it was thought of a small empty group. And Ms. Mary Jenkins was in Great Mills right across the street from us. I remember all of those. They used to visit my home frequently. And when I went to high school Mr. Leers was my principal he died here not too long ago and were all good friends with my daddy. They used to pay many visits to my home they felt like they were family. I had a good childhood in fact now that I think about it I was sheltered a lot because there wasn't any place to go and I didn't go anywhere. I didn't. My life was basically school and home. I had friends and they didn't go anywhere much either because there was no place to go. [Laughs] But everybody was very polite, very kind and I will never remember anybody getting in trouble or having problems with the classes or children. It was a different type of growing up than you see now. But I did enjoy it.

AJ: Well you did mention Church now was that close to you?

EC: [interrupts] No.

AJ: How did you get to church?

EC: My daddy had to drive me. It was too far for us to walk. The church was in Valley Lee; I think it was called "Mark" . . .

AJ: St. Mark

EC: St. Mark thank you. St Mark because I missed a lot. I always felt like I missed a lot in church because I wasn't able to go to Sunday school. For a while now my daddy didn't have a car that he did a lot of miles in transportation. He did get a car later because I remember when he first came thereafter for a while he walked to the school and then after he got a car he would travel. He would take us on Sunday but I guess by being so far away from Drayden to Valley was quite a distance we didn't go to Sunday school. He did go when it was Church time, and we'll make it to church. Now I remember a lot about church, camp news and all those other things they went to. But my basic Sunday school was taught by my parents. I had bible and books and little things because my-- my paternal--my maternal grandfather was a Baptist Minister so my mother was much into church. And my daddy he was, his family was very much into church. I didn't lose out as far as it was being taught so but I missed out being with other children in the class. That's what I think. I think I . . . (17:28) [laughs] But I enjoyed the Sunday school lessons and my daddy was made sure we did little plays and little songs of the bible. It was mostly enjoyable.

AJ: That's interesting. Well can you tell me more about your day at school? What kind of activities did you have? How did you play?

EC: Okay. Well I went to school in the morning because it was a one-room school. Well I can remember daddy made sure when it was winter time heat was warm and we sat and I guess it's called "be-desk" the little benches we sat in according to our grade level. And he would teach us, and he would put us, soon after I began teaching, put us in groups according to what they knew or didn't know. I remember him going to the blackboard a lot explaining and doing math problems and showing us they didn't have **manipatus** and things like that but he used to draw, he couldn't draw, but he'll make marks. [Laughs] To show us how you got the quarters and the Ace, he was very good at demonstrating, very good at that. And we been through the day... but I think this may be a little more than a lot of children knew in second grade, because we heard

what was going on in the other grades. See he had everybody even though everybody wasn't being taught the same thing at the same time you would be there and hear what was being said. So you knew, I knew what was being taught up in the fifth grade because I heard it and I caught on, and I'll go home and pretend I was a teacher and teach it to my brothers and sister. It was a lot of fun and recess time we used to go out on the playground and play; I will never forget the little swings they had out there. But the main thing that they did, and I'll never forget, they used to teach the children how to play flag relay and another game, block relay, then dodge ball, you play dodge ball all. And the little children got in a little circle and sang "ring-around-the-rosie" and remember all that. We did those things at recess I think twice a day get out and he call you in. Then you get in do your work and... until the end of the day. But one thing I remember my daddy doing, cause he couldn't sing. [Laughs] He used to have my mother whenever we had a party we used to have like little clubs in the afternoon, and we used to have little clubs and mother would come in and teach little songs and teach them so we had opening in the morning. We would have something to sing because he couldn't sing "Star Spangled Banner" and we had but we learned it because my mother taught it. And, but she came had little groups and I think there were a couple other parents who came out and helped too, got a little club like and teach the children how to do things. And one other thing I remember we used to do a lot of they used to have something called "molding clay" and you rope it, and making little baskets and things with your hands. They had the clay and I'll never forget molding it and it wouldn't stick to your hands and if it did it was too soft. And you make pots and pottery. We used to have a lot of little fun things to do like that we didn't do a lot of plays but we did do a lot of reservations because at that time that was all segregation. The children when they went to Sunday school and had holidays you had to speak. You did poem-- you had a poem or something that you did in church so you learned how to do that in school and you when you went to church you know how to do. But it was more like a collaborative affair as working in the community. And the parents were very nice and those who could get they would come out and help him. He was good at teaching, he believed in teaching the hard stuff. All the little stuff that was . . . [laughs] that's why they had to go back and have teachers who were ...had to do special activities like music or speaking. Well speaking was but like singing and doing plays that wasn't him but he could get it done but he had little more help with it. So we used to have plays and little things like that and he was but-- and we used to have something called I forgot. I don't think it's called Fairground but it's like a group that got together in springtime and had field day! We used to have field day. I never forget one day I got-- one field day was so hot I got sick cause I couldn't stand all that heat when I went home I was a mess. But they had field day they had to play games, and they gave you little gifts and things like that for playing. And was competitive among the schools but I like the most was spelling bees. [Laughs] I used to-- and I won-- I used to win the spelling bees and I used to be . . . I never forget the word that I lost on "Sinew, S-I-N-E-W" I couldn't get the "E-W" to sound to save my life. I said "S-I-N-U" "S-I-N-Y-O-U" I did everything but "E-W". [Laughs] So that's the only one I ever lost. My last declamation contest that I spoke was the "Skyscraper" by Carl Sandburg. And like the skies and moon and the sun and . . . and had a soul. I used to love to tell it with the skyscraper how I did. My mother talked I couldn't get my daddy . . . (23:41) [laughs] But he sought to it that he made sure we went. But it was all the kinds of things that were fun. And every month we had something going on in the schoolhouse. We would do a play or do a poem or -- "how you like to go up in the air

in the sky . . . (24:02) but Henry W. Longfellow. That's why I love literature so he-- my father was a literary man he loved Shakespeare but he used to read us Shakespeare. And mother would give us nursery rhymes but he didn't like that. (Speaking as father?) "Why don't we do some Shakespeare and tell you about what happened?" He was literate but he was a-- like he belonged in high school or upper grade. Mother couldn't do that-- mother taught us before a year before we came to Charles-- to St. Mary's county but she had children and was working... Before we came here I found her teacher's certificate and where she taught for one year. But anyway, they worked together they were cooperative and Ms. Carrie Jenkinson, that's another lady they-- those two schools used to get together and they plan programs. And we would go up there and do things. I don't know if they ever came to Drayden cause our school is so small but we go up there and participate in the activities. The teachers and all worked together very well. So it was a nice affair, small school small setup but they-- nobody got left out. My daddy complaining because he didn't have enough money to support his family. And he said he used to go fight the teacher's salaries. I think that's why he left and went to Kent County because a larger school and he said he wasn't about to upset anybody school over here because everybody had places. People got their job they stay there till they retired, no one moved about like they did much. Anyway, he went there and taught and then he came that summer then the next year he went to Indianhead and gave up teaching because more money at the audio station.

Donald Barber: [Interrupts] at the base

EC: At the base, that's where he ended up. Then it was time for me to go to high school. But that's basically how it was.

MT: I bet you won some prizes.

EC: Oh I loved it, and I kept, and I... I won a great big dictionary the "Winston"... "The Winston Dictionary."

AJ: "Webster?"

EC: It had all the words in it, how to spell, all the-- See I always say this if I could tell them that. I said "daddy did a good teaching, he taught me how to use the dictionary." [Laughs] Been a long time fore' I figured out. He didn't know his phonics as well as he should've known. [Laughs]

DB: Well okay. Did y'all have textbooks?

EC: Yes, we had textbooks. Yeah, we had textbooks because I found an old textbook during the summer. I was cleaning up the stuff at the house. Yeah we did but they were old but we read from them. Daddy made sure you read every-- and we had reading twice a day believe it or not. See that's why I don't understand why they say kids can't read but they only have reading once a day sometimes. In the morning they have all this other stuff by the time they go home they forgotten what they did first thing in the morning. But we had it twice a day. You

had to introduce verbs one time then you read this the next time, you did both, you did sentences all like that but yeah we had textbooks.

AJ: Where did you get your textbooks?

EC: I don't know where daddy-- daddy had to go somewhere and get them. I will never forget the state superintendent Mr. Huffington came to our school one day when daddy was teaching and he brought some books. And there was another man and he was the supervisor, Mr. Huffington was the White supervisor of all of the schools, Mr. Blair was the immediate supervisor. He had physical challenge if I'm not mistaken, I think his name was Mr. Bland. He used to-- he and my daddy got to be very tight and he made sure we got books and stuff. And then my daddy I think had books that he had where he was travelling around the place and he had books, my mother had extra books by teaching. So we would get those extra books and they believed in using the encyclopedia and dictionary. So I would think... we probably didn't have the latest books but we had books. I remember sharing books in the grade level because there weren't that many in the grade. So we had books for your needs at that particular time. Now my sister would be able to tell you what happened in Drayden when she was there because she went to Drayden too and I found her certificate. This when Ms. Tillman had took over...

AJ: ...When she was there.

EC: Mhmm. then Ms. Tillman was there. I remember Ms. Tillman very well, she used to come visit then she married the statesman.

AJ: Now you talked about field day, where did you have field day? Was it other schools, locally or what?

EC: No, we had a big place it was up, it was up, I don't remember where it was but it wasn't at our school. It was at a place where was large enough to accommodate all the schools coming there and you had a special time that you participate. You played dodgeball and something else you played too but I didn't play all those sports I wasn't very sports inclined, never have been. But I had to do what I had to do, whatever the boys would do they made me, I kept score.[laughs] I know I'm not athletic. If I never played anything it would be alright with me but anyway I had to do it. I had to do it to get a grade but-- We went some place where they had all of the schools to get together at a particular time and (I'll never get put in the fight stuff where you can go outside. . .**Incomprehensible 29:50**)I'll never forget all that. And you had your hand behind your back and you take the stick out of one bottle and put of here and run it and take this here and run back hits somebody head and get in the back of the line.

DB: (incomprehensible 30:06)

EC: Yes! I remember all of that. [Laughs] Yes. That I didn't mind, but don't have me at hitting the ball because I cannot play softball. I didn't play dodgeball too well but I quit on from getting

hit. Well you know I guess the children felt sorry for me because I was shorter and smaller than they was. But anyway they wouldn't hit me very hard, you know kids can be cruel. [Laughs] They can take that ball... [Laughs]

DB: Plus you were small you were a hard target and they couldn't get you. [Laughs]

EC: (incomprehensible 30:40) ... My daddy was the teacher, so I don't know. [Laughs] But I never had a problem other than I didn't want to do it, but I had to do it. And I didn't give any slack. If somebody told you to do something you did it. There aint no "I don't want to do it" and "Why?" you just did it, and that's the way it was so I did it. But it wasn't because I wanted to. I hate sports. When I went to high school I'll got to play volleyball. Had to hit that volleyball-- and while I got to make my hands sore, hit my hand to get a ball over a net. [Laughs] But that was the exercise and I had to do that too. Had to-- had to play basketball.

AJ: Well tell me about you home while growing up. Did you-- you had lots of brothers and sisters, did you have chores or what kind of things did you have to do at home?

EC: I didn't have too many chores. I guess my daddy didn't have-- mother was the one who did most of the stuff at home because daddy was out teaching and doing stuff. Now we -- only thing we ever had was a garden maybe. You know living in an area where everyone sort of knew each other even though you weren't that close together. They would give him vegetables and like things. So we never had-- I never had to get up and work at all. But I do remember them having tomatoes and I think I remember one year (incomprehensible 32:28) had string beans, I don't know. But we didn't have big gardens because daddy wasn't doing any gardening, he was too busy teaching. He didn't... that wasn't his cup of tea, he didn't do that. And I remember different people in the community bringing him fish and oysters because he didn't do that either. But basically daddy had to go and purchase, he purchase a lot of stuff in "Big storage", you remember? And he used to buy wholesale. I'll never forget him buying great big bunches of bananas and putting them up in the attic. And keeping apples, he'll buy apples and mother would give it to us for breakfast or lunch or whenever we need it like sugar. They didn't go to the store everyday like they do now, every week, they went by the month. And they had enough vegetables to last a month. They used to can in the summer time people gave them vegetables. She would can string beans, I would never forget that, she would can tomatoes. I guess that's about all. I do remember one year-- well that was after they moved to Charles County that he had pigs. That's cause the boys got big enough to help out and feed them, daddy wasn't doing that either.[laughs] But when we were here we didn't-- all the chores we had like keeping the grass-- had the boys, I didn't-- I just helped mother inside the house. She showed me how to make the bed, I knew how to make the bed, hold the sheet up and then (incomprehensible 34:00). Now my daddy was big on making sure the house was clean. You better had clean that house, he didn't like anything dirty. So he would get up-- if you didn't sweep he would seep, he would clean and help mother and stuff like that. But I used to help her with the dishes, I did the dishes. Didn't have dishwashers back in that time we were here. And that was about it, I didn't have-- we had to do our-- they didn't have homework per say but

we did because we had to read every night, do something. You just didn't sit around and do nothing, mother-- We had radio, and we would listen to the radio and mother would as what we heard and what was said and something like that. But I didn't have a lot of chores. There weren't nothing to do to have chores, really.

AJ: What about-- did you have any health problems then? If you did what did you take--?

EC: I don't ever remember having anything except chicken pox.

AJ: Ah okay

EC: I never even have the measles. I remember my brother, the one who just passed, he had pneumonia every year. [Laughs] Maybe that's the only one I could remember being ill in the family, he had pneumonia. Why that boy has pneumonia? But every year-- other than that I don't remember any of us having any type of health issues. Some problems-- I guess we would just bless God to cure us and -- and see I have to be thankful. See my parents are from the south both of them, we had no relatives, we had nobody just us. So knowing nobody except for who went to school with and my dearest friend was Mary Francis Greene. You know the Greene's?

AJ: Yes

EC: Yep those are my friends. That was my mother's best friend Mrs. Louise Greene, Kaneisha, my brother's friend. So it was life-- it wasn't much to do with it. I remember helping mother wash the windows in the summertime and she want to paint and help and daddy would help her with paintings. Christmas time I got to -- I love that Christmas tree. I try to help her make a cake, she tried to show me things like that. I didn't have any real big...

AJ: Well how did-- we were talking about your home life. How did your parents discipline you? Did you ever get in trouble?

EC: (makes noise in disagreement) [laughs] I never-- You know I was thinking of the people was talking about the beatings they got. You see my dad never hit me, I think I was daddy's girl. I never ever in my l-- my mother got me one time cause I lied. [Laughs] And she got-- But that's the only time I remember getting in trouble because she took me-- and I said "no I didn't do it" and she knew I had done it so she got one of those--. Now my brother-- I don't think they started acting up until they were in Charles County, then they got it. They would life on the road and everybody was coming up, and by that time I was going off to Bowie. So I left them there, my sister was there and they stayed at the house then go somewhere, go somewhere at night. (Incomprehensible 37:17)... Place to go, then get home. I never wanted to go to no place to go because I lived-- we lived in Drayden. And we lived, you know where the greens are upon that hill? Well we were two miles down that road, the place with the Milburn house.

AJ: Two miles down where the school is or past the greens?

EC: No, come back to where the school is come back and make that turn going to great mills on the left, you make a right turn, and go straight down that road past. That's where we lived, bout two miles. Cause it was out there were no children were around, it was just us. There was another family, the Smiths, who lived but they didn't have any children. I wasn't around children growing up so I guess that's why I never got in any trouble.

DB:.. Because you behaved yourself right?

EC: I had to behave myself. [laughs] I didn't-- I didn't get in any trouble. No trouble to get into.

AJ: So is there um... is there-- Do, were you in the area when the base opened up?

EC: No, no.

AJ: So you don't remember too much about--

EC: No I don't remember that. The only trouble I do remember I got into trouble one time. When I went to high school, Mr. Milles was the principle, and there was a guy there-- well I remember his name very well. For some ol' reason-- I don't know if he liked me or not, he used to tease me and always trying to tease me and I didn't like it. I used to-- he used to make me so mad. You know how-- if he was-- he would get close to me and I would always try-- One day I threw a rock at him. When the rock didn't hit him guess who it hit? The teacher's car. [Laughs] They teased me about that thing. Mr. Fiddley (incomprehensible 39:20) Got teased about that until, it was about a few years ago at a reunion and he was there. He got up and told everybody about it. [Laughs] He didn't forget it. That's the only time doing anything. I didn't get punished-- I assumed my daddy-- I told him what I did he said he shouldn't have been bothering you. (Incomprehensible 39:45) We were outside and I didn't want to be playing ball, and he came out there and never ... You know they had little rocks and things by the pole where you play volleyball and stuff. I picked it up and... and he ducked.

DB: And it hit the car. [Laughs]

EC: Car had to be parked in the area where you played there. [Laughs] It was different back then. But that's the only time I'll ever remember doing anything getting in trouble. But ain't nobody did anything, ain't nobody bother.

AJ: How did you feel about life in general in St. Mary's county growing up?

EC: Well, at that time I didn't know what life was all about because I wasn't going anywhere or doing anything. Now I realized that I was sheltered, there was nothing to do nowhere to go. Had it not been for having good grandparents and people around this foundation, I could've ended up doing nothing or being-- or not having anything around. Because that was the way life was at that time, but the people were all very very good people. And my friends with whom I

associated were in the same boat I was in. So therefore none of us complain we didn't visit each other in the evening or at night, we didn't go around, we didn't do those types of things. You went to your home, you had your dinner, you did what you had to do, you make the bed, you get out. I never was tired, I guess that's why I never had health problems either. Now sometime mother did make us-- she made me because I wouldn't have done that either. You had to go pick what you call huckleberry, blackberry something, I just pick that. Then she make jelly and I loved that but I didn't want to go pick them because you get scratches and she used to tell them how to pick them so you wouldn't get scratches on your leg. And she would just put stockings or something on and then a night time she will put something on to keep from itching or hurting. Now I had to do that in the summer time and she used to make preserves and jelly. And I never forget Mary Francis Greene, and her brother and we used to get together and we used to pick them and my mother do that... Now that I remember doing but the people were very nice very cordial and Mary Francis and her family went to a Catholic church where we went to a Methodist church. So then the only people that went to the Methodist church from my area I think were the Dyson's and maybe the Armstrong's I'm not sure. But the rest of them seemingly went elsewhere to church. They didn't go to "Valley Lee" we went to "Valley Lee" to church. There was no church and the only store I ever remember going to was the (incomprehensible 42:44) store, there was nothing else to do. But I didn't know it, see when you don't know any better and you don't know what you don't know, there's nothing else you can do. So there's less to complain about and we were a happy little family, we read books. And I'll never forget the principals and the teachers were there, they would go place us and bring us back checkered games that's why I (incomprehensible 43:12) and my momma would have us sitting up at night playing bingo and I did not lie. See I knew all my numbers that was a nice way for teacher and children to play along. Write this number-- they had checkers-- we had little games, little games that we played. Nice little games. One thing I can say about my daddy that I can appreciate, I am never in my whole life heard my father curse or use a curse word. And after I got bigger I realized that people said this--I never heard my daddy say anything like that. He would say "Dang Blammit, horn foundit" or something like that, but he never said a --

DB: Never said a curse word.

EC: Never, ever ever. And so we didn't do it, boys didn't do it of course I wasn't going to do it. It was that type of thing we grew up about. Now he went to Charles County, he went to Indianhead and working out there. Maybe my siblings, especially the boys had a different type of lifestyle because they came in contact with other children and they begin to do things and get in-- They didn't get in trouble, but begin to--(interrupted) They began to show where they could do. I didn't I was off to Bowie. And when I went off too Bowie those boys and girls were just as dumb as I was. [Laughs] So I was fine, I was fine. I made it on through and made it, got out of there, got married, had kids and just kept on moving.

AJ: So were there-- can you remember any race relation problems that--

EC: Nothing I can remember as a child growing up, no. I didn't know a thing about any races because I didn't come in contact with other races. I didn't come-- Only people that I saw came

in contact with was the (incomprehensible) store. I didn't know any white people... and they didn't know me.

DB: Right

EC: But when I-- I met Davis after I began teaching because he went to Bowie. Didn't have that problem but when I got out and began teaching see, when I first start teaching and I went to get some clothing and get something to eat and told me (incomprehensible 45:16) I said "what?" I didn't know what this all about. Then I began to realize that it's a different world out here that I got to grow up. But no I didn't have that until I began teaching and my mother had to go with me to open up an account so I could buy clothes so I could teach here. Until that time my mother made all my clothes until I went to high school, and I was making them in Bowie. We had homemade-- I made my own suits. See you were taught that kind of stuff, they don't do that now. I sewed my children how to make suits, and make pajamas I knew how to do that but ... don't even know what a sewing machine is. [Laughs] But it was a different time. But I don't blame anybody, that's just the way times were and you lived accordingly. I happened to grow up in that time.

DB: That's right.

EC: But I was thankful that I made it through it, that I didn't have any problems, haven't got into trouble and I had no regrets.

DB: Good.

MT: Did your parents have newspapers or other newspapers?--

EC: The "Afro-American"--"Afro-American"--"Afro-American" paper, was what he got. He got um, it was another little paper--"The Grit". There's a paper called "The Grit" (incomprehensible name) used to sell them. He used to-- there was another one, two or three little papers he used to get. And one thing I forgot it was a magazine my mother used to get too. I forgot which one it was. But they did get paper and daddy would-- he got the "Afro" every week.

DB: So you--

MT: They didn't talk about the problems that they were reading about to you?

EC: Only time I remember we were discussing this with father, was when Joe Louis came to fight in Washington D.C and my mother was great radio listeners. They didn't have T.V But they listened to the radio a lot. They found out that Joe Louis was going to be in a fight in Washington D.C. My daddy took off from work and had us to take off from school and I went to go see Joe Louis.

DB: oh you went to go see him?

EC: Yes I did! Yes he took-- and Yes-- I, oh I was in love with that man. [Laughs]

DB: Do you remember where that fight was?

EC: huh?

DB: Do you remember where the fight was?

EC: Rufus Stadium. I think it was called Rufus is there... In Rufus stadium? It was in D.C. I forgot they-- I've been asking-- I found a picture where he autographed for my mother.

DB: no kidding

EC: Yeah I have it at the house. You know what he say he shook my hand and said "Why aren't you in school little girl? Why aren't you in school?" [Laughs] I said "I'm a big girl". (imitating Joe) "Little girl why aren't you in school?" [Laughs] I want to see him, he was a good looking man. Oh yes he was. Hair just as soft he shook my hand--they took us backstage to see him after he had the exhibition. Exhibition, one of the night fight, he took my hand and he was just as nice as he could be. I'll never-- that was a highlight of my... They took off from work and had us leave from school. We never missed a day of school, they used to take us to-- summertime in Leonardtown to see something that "k"...

AJ: Carnival?

EC: Daredevil Oliver-- Daredevil Oliver, K (incomprehensible name), Ferris--

AJ: Carnival?

EC: Carnival! They used to take us to the carnival every year at that time. We used to-- things like that they used to do for us. Things we'd enjoy. And usually on Saturdays my daddy in his car would take us for a ride, we would just drive up to the story ride around see houses and turn around and come back. He would do that for us every Saturday. Then Sunday go to church and then if notice didn't come to the house then-- Mother used to raise chickens I forgot. She raised chickens a little bit, but she didn't it mostly in Charles County. Now I helped her with the chickens, I would pluck the feathers off the chickens. Yeah I would do that, I would do that then I... That's mostly what I did was. She would cook tomatoes I would take em' and pull the skin off. But I didn't do any cooking. She didn't have me doing any cooking, I don't know why guess she thought I-- She didn't even teach me how to iron cause' when I made it to Bowie I couldn't iron my clothes. And Mr. Taylor would-- "Ms. Dobbly (incomprehensible 49:57) [laughs] Oh boy. But people were always good to me, always. But mother ain't make me Iron cause' I'll burn up stuff. At that time you had to put the iron on the stove... (Incomprehensible 50:17) I would burn up the dress cause' it was too hot. -- So she would just-- I didn't do that either.

AJ: So you are married and had children, how many children did you have--?

EC: I have two children...

AJ: two children

EC: ...Two children. I got married my second year I came out of school out of Bowie and I had two children. They both grown now of course and some grandchildren, four grandchildren.

AJ: Wonderful. Okay is there anything else you would like to share with us? Or anything anybody would else like to ask?

DB: I think you did a great job

MT: Well I-- On the-- You were talking about making the heat in the school house. How did they do that? Can you tell us more about that?

DB: What kind of heat?

EC: What kind of heat? Wood.

DB: Stove?

EC: A wood stove and the bathroom is on the outside. You would go out the back way to get outside bathrooms. Yeah but we had woodstove. Somebody used to come to the schools in the morning if you didn't get there real early--

DB: To get the fire going.

EC: To get the fire going before he got there. But a lot of times he would get up early and walk there. That's why he probably had arthritis so badly, he used to complain about his legs hurting. But that's-- I'll never forget that woodstove that sat up there. -- But you never got cold, you had plenty of heat. Its funny how those woodstoves gave out heat, no one ever got burned or nobody did anything, but they did the woodstove.

MT: What about water or food during the day?

EC: You carried your own lunch and I don't know where the water came from but you had water. I guess someone bought it and had a pail. What did I... drink from? I know there was a dipper in the pail but I can't recall... See I only remember not drinking water, my mother used to get on me for not drinking water maybe that was why. But they did-- there was a water bucket and there was a dipper but I don't remember any glasses or anything to drink from. But -- I always had a thermos. Mother always had something hot. I think if I not remember seemingly somebody or daddy would put some hot cocoa on or something like that and we had

something hot to drink. I think we always had something hot like hot cocoa, I didn't drink milk but I drink hot cocoa, we had that, I think that's what they did.

MT: What about first thing in the morning did you have a special way the day began?

EC: Yes, yes. They began to ring a bell to go out to the step, outdoors you wait, you ring a big bell you come inside and you get your coat, hang it up back in the closet back there they had little hooks on there. Everybody had a place to hang their things and you sat in a seat. I t was one person supposed to be in charge of devotions, they hold the flag, salute the flag and you supposed to sing, cause' I told you daddy couldn't sing but we learned to sing some songs and everybody had a solo. Then you had poems, poetry or a duet or something like that, that's how you began your morning and that's how you-- every morning we did that. If I'm not mistaken we had the Lord's Prayer, I think we had prayer every morning too. We had prayer and Lord-- I knew that prayer was there when my daddy was there. Yeah I remember having prayer, but o-- But not together we had prayer. And salute the flag, do a poem or a reading something like that then he would tell you what you would do, sit, and what you going to do for the day and that's how you got your day started. In the evening we had recess he'll ring the bell for you to go, and tell you when it's time to come in he would ring the bell and everybody would come back in.

MT: Do you remember any of the songs? Where they hymns?

EC: They were patriotic and ... Patriotic. The only song I remember that wasn't was I just think the other day. Everybody knew that song the kids loved it. A tisket a tasket my green and yellow basket, I loved that one. I I think we sing a few religious songs "how Jesus loves me". Things like Christmas time we sang Christmas carols. And some of the parents had taught their children the older ones that they would teach to the younger ones and we would learn like that from each other. And he would put some of the older ones in charge like when no one else was there to teach us the songs, "My country tis' of thee" and "National anthem" we had to learn those. And there were some others we had to learn too that I remember but I can't remember off hand, but there were quite a few others that we learned and whomever was in charge told you what to sing or ask to sing a song. If they would have learned anything differently they would share it. That's how we did that.

AJ: Anybody else?

Lady: I just have question about your father's arthritis, did he do anything for it?

(Collection talking at once)

Lady: Where I grew up my next door neighbor whenever there was anything wrong my mother would go to Ms. Benny's and Ms. Benny would say "put a penny and some vinegar and that would take care of whatever". So I was just wondering if you did anything like that. If your family did?

EC: I don't remember him having anything like that because (clears throat) excuse me. I think across from the school there was a lady an older lady and when she finally came ill seemingly one time he sent someone over to her or she came over, something of that nature. Well he didn't do any of that. He was not the cuddly type person. [Laughs]... That would do things-- but he wouldn't want to see you suffer he would make sure that you were get some sort of treatment. I think, children didn't miss much time from school, but he would tell them if they were sick to stay home because there no way to get them home. And there was a gentleman I think Mr. Armstrong who had a car if he needed something he would send somebody to him and he would come over that type of thing. But there was no place for you if you were sick, really wasn't.

MT: You didn't go to a doctor? Was there a doctor that come to the houses?

EC: Not--not... I don't remember a doctor coming to school when I was at Drayden. I don't remember that. I did when I was in Baltimore city, that's why I got two vaccinations that's when I was four years old cause he came in the morning, and was home for lunch and my mother fixed me up for a program. Put me hair up, put me up in a different dress and fix me up as a different child and vaccinated me again. [Laughs] I had two.

DB: didn't recognize you.

EC: They all--they all and I'm just eating it up (imitating woman) "Oh look at this cute little girl" ... They had vaccinated-- My mother was so mad when she got home she took the car, she took me to the doctor and doctor said it's not going to do any harm. [Laughs]
(Incomprehensible) I got two vaccinations, I was four years old, I wasn't nothing but four years old I didn't know.

MT: Did the doctors come and do that vaccinations, or check, or nurse come to the school at all?

EC: Back when I was at Drayden? I don't ever remember that. I don't remember.

AJ: Do you remember any doctors, any names of doctors when you were a child.

EC: Not at Drayden no. I don't remember the doctor who was there, who did me. I remember doctor Beane in Leonardtown (incomprehensible) but I don't remember anyone coming or close to the school. I don't remember that, maybe my sister would remember that but I don't.

MT: Did she have her babies at home or go to the hospital.

EC: My mother did. But they had midwives but my mother always went to the hospital.

MT: In Leonardtown?

EC: No, she didn't go to Leonardtown. My mother-- they had friends by him being in the field of education they had friends in a lot of areas that they knew. And he delivered most of her babies after she came from the south. Was it doctor Maloney, he was in D.C, Lionel Maloney, he delivered-- he didn't deliver me because I was already here when here. But he delivered my baby sister and baby brother, doctor Maloney.

AJ: NO one was actually born here in St. Mary's?

EC: (noise of disagreement) they weren't born here-- while we lived here-- And (incomprehensible)... Born in Shreeman's hospital. Just like my children. I was born in a hospital... I was born with m-- my birth certificate. Just like my children they were born in a hospital in D.C. they were born there.

Lady 2: Did the kids stay in school once it was summertime, spring planting and things like that? Did the kids stay in school or did they have to go home and help with the planting or help with the harvesting or anything like that?

EC: Not to my knowledge. Everyone stayed all day, because this was elementary see they probably did that in high school but elementary they stayed all day long. Everyday. I don't ever remember use loosing time for bad weather like I guess we did because they put boots on you, gloves and mittens and didn't take the caps off till you got to school then you were warm and home. I think a couple of times daddy sent us home early if he thought it was going to snow or get too bad but basically when you got there you were there till bout 4 o clock in the afternoon. I think the school day was from 9 to 4 if I'm not mistaken everybody at the same time. And you had an hour for lunch and you a couple of recess.

Lady 2: Anybody walk to school?

EC: Mhmm, everybody walked to elementary school. When I went to high school I took the bus but in elementary everybody walked

AJ: Now did your school start in September and went through to when?

EC: mhhm... June

AJ: okay

EC: ... It was in June... Yeah it was in June. Is June on there?

DB: Third day of June.

EC: It was about the first week in June, yeah we did.

AJ: Is there anything else you like to share with us?

EC :(incomprehensible) I hoped I help, had enough

AJ: Thank you very much.

EC: I just hoped I helped I didn't know what you were looking for somebody... I'm sure my sister became ill because she probably remembers more after me and Ms. Tillman taught her. Things were get like this, shaping up a little better by the time I went off to Bowie, she continue her high school in Charles county. I was through high school and was off to Bowie and she would say more. And I'm sorry Alfred he would have loved this, cause he was the one. And I had promised him he didn't (incomprehensible) we were going to come down because I heard about this school in Drayden he wanted to see so badly he was stricken Christmas day and died on the first.

DB: Jesus

EC: Ain't that something, it just wasn't his time. So that's the way it goes.