

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

CATHERINE BLACKWELL TRAVERS

Interviewed by Brenda Coates
September 26, 1996
At Mrs. Travers home on St. George Island Maryland
Logged by Tania Jordon on May 23, 2007
A verbatim transcript is available
Original format is one cassette tape
1 hour, 43 minutes, 52 seconds

CD 1 of 2 (Tape 1, side 1)

Track 01

0:00 Introduction

0:23 Born on St. Georges Island at current residence next to Evans Seafood House.

1:10 Men raised catfish and caught oysters. Purchased most of their food. Had plenty of food, clothes and heat.

4:00 Got along well with siblings but stayed with grandparents next door most of the time.

Track 02

4:25 Went to Bethany Baptist Church on St. Georges Island until it was destroyed in flood of 1933. Attended St. Luke's Church in Piney Point, MD.

6:08 Took trips to Marshall Hall, MD as a child.

Track 03

7:40 Most senior citizens were taken care of in private homes.

8:45 Home remedies made by Dr. Brown (lived in Redgate area); Dr. Bean and Dr. Lynch (lived on Drayden Road). Mother made onion syrup for sore

throats, and soaked rags in vinegar and place on head for headaches.
Rubbed chest with mutton powder for chest colds.

Track 04

14:36 Games played as child: jump rope, steal good (two teams running back and forth to place a pile of sticks from one location to another) baseball, jacks and dodge ball.

16:00 Chores – dishes and folding clothes. Boys gathered wood. They had a small garden and a few chickens.

17:45 Parents activities with child: Grandparents took kids on boats trips and told stories about their lives.

Track 05

20:21 Went to St. Georges Island School (1933 destroyed in flood) and Piney Point (located near St. Luke's Church) for elementary school. Secondary School - Banneker and Jaboresville.

25:47 Favorite teachers: Miss Hancock, Miss Ascot and Miss Butler

Track 06

27:40 Aspirations: Wanted to be a nurse or nurse's aid.

28:50 Courting: Movies (Leonardtown), dances and church.

30:32 Moved with cousin when she first left home. Made approximately \$15 as a domestic in Washington, DC (for a couple of months). Worked as a domestic for a family in Piney Point for \$5:00 per week (summer jobs). Worked in house cleaning department at Harry Lundenberg School.

Track 07

34:30 Meet husband at church functions. He lived in Drayden. Got married on Christmas Eve at St. Marks.

37:51 Good relationship with husband and family.

38:56 Attends St. Luke's Church in Piney Point and a member of Stewards Board, Senior Choir, Kitchen Committee and Assistant Secretary.

Track 08

41:27 Life in St. Mary's: More opportunity now.

45:05 People in the County: Teenagers today are more outgoing and have more things to do. Kids now would not do the things that we use to do.

Track 09

47:08 Race Relations: Same as when she was a child.

48:48 Living in the County: Rather be in wide open area of the county than in the city. City was too close and crowded.

49:41 Difference between locals and people born outside county: People from outside are more outgoing.

CD 2 of 2 (Tape 1, side 2)

Track 01

51:03 More on courting and social life. Activities: Most functions are related to church.

53:24 Are people different in the County: White people are less friendly in Ridge and Hollywood.

Track 02

54:02 Influence of Naval Base: More opportunity and domestic wages increased. People had more opportunity to interact.

56:06 County Growth: People are beginning to live on top of each other.

57:33 Biggest Changes in County in Lifetime – Seamen School, Naval Base, Fuel Station. More opportunity.

Track 03

59:07 Contributions to County – Volunteer work.

59:54 Certificates/Awards – Grey Ladies

1:00:56 News – The Grit and Outback

Track 04

1:03:34 Most Important Thing – Family

1:04:56 Regrets or something didn't do: Would like to see more of the world.

Track 05

1:08:45 Father was a waterman all his life. Grandfather was a waiter at hotel, caretaker and waterman. Husband worked on water, farm and base.

Track 06

1:11:16 Torpedo Base was in County for at least ten years. Bought a lot of work for locals and outsiders. When base closed, most employees moved to Naval Base.

1:14:01 Harry Lundenberg opened in late 1960's.

Track 07

1:18:11 Weather – 1933 hurricane resulted in flood on St. George's Island. The bridge, church, school and most houses were destroyed. Hurricane Hazel (early 1950's). Left St. George's Island at least ten times due to weather. Flood of 1933 was the worst. House has been flood at least four feet.

Track 08

1:26:42 Biographic Information [read by interviewer]