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An Oral History of Luther Stuckey
Conducted by Richard Richardson

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Abstract: Luther Harold Stuckey (1894-1992) was a teacher, civil rights activist, and a leader in the desegregation of public facilities in Charles County, Maryland. He served as the the President of the Charles County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for 24 years. In this oral history interview, Stuckey shares his experiences as a civil rights activist during the Jim Crow era in Southern Maryland. He discusses his advocacy work to remove the “white only” signs from public spaces as well as to ensure equal pay and fair hiring practices for Black workers. He describes the opposition he faced from both the Black and white communities in his battle for equal rights. Stuckey also talks about his relationship with freedom fighter Lillie May Carroll Jackson and provides his view on what he saw as militancy in civil rights.

Note on Oral History: Oral history is a methodology of gathering, preserving, and sharing the voices and memories of individuals and communities. As primary material, it documents personal reflections, commentary, and recollections, and is not intended to present a verified or “complete” history of events.

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Mr. Luther Stuckey was interviewed on August 12, 1976, by Richard Richardson in Baltimore, Maryland. Due to issues with the recording's sequencing, time stamps could not accompany the dialogue.

Richardson View with Mr. Luther Starkey for the Michael Jackson Oral History Project. Today is August 12, 1976. The interviewer is Richard Richardson.

Richardson Mr. Stuckey, please tell me about your early life.

Stuckey Well, my early life--I was born and reared in South Carolina. Out of a family of eleven children. And when I was a small boy, I attended Sunday school, and the preacher saw wherein I would be a good student. And my father's name was _____ (??) Stuckey, and he said, "_____ (??), I'd send Luther to college." And after some considerable years, going to the three-month elementary school down there, my father carried me to Lake City, on a wagon with a mule hitched to it; her name was Liz.

Stuckey And I caught the train and went to Columbia, South Carolina--the Allen University School. And so I did that for six years, after two years preparatory and four years of the regular normal school. And I came out of there, finished school in 1918 on the sixth of June. And came out, and taught school in South Carolina nine years. Then I went from there to North Carolina and taught for three years, and came to Maryland and taught ten years. During those times, I attended summer school at the State College at _____ (??), at P.D. Summer School in Marion, South Carolina, and then, when I came to North Carolina, I went to Fayetteville summer school. And then when I came to Maryland I went to Morgan State College summer school. And I taught here in Maryland ten years down in St. Mary's, and then Mr. Hoffman sent me from St. Mary's--I went over there in Somerset County, and taught--was principal of a school in Deal's Island. Then I left from there. I was afraid my family would come down with malnutrition--I guess I'm using the right word. My salary was so low. I drew all my retirement out and bought a home, a place where I could build. And then I went to work for the government, and I worked there until I retired.

Richardson Was that Charles County?

Stuckey Yeah, that's in Charles County.

Richardson You came back and went to Charles County then?

Stuckey Yeah, Charles County, Indian Head. I went there in 1942, and I retired from there in 1943. When I retired in '43, slot machines were in Charles County, and I was a bail bondsman for the county--for Charles County. And then in 1966, I was the first Black man to announce myself as running for a candidate of the General Assembly of the State Senate. I had twelve different people in various categories to run for the Senate in Maryland. So that was the first time that had been done since Reconstruction. They didn't want us to register so we could get on the tickets or anything of the kind; they tried to keep us off the ticket. But up until that time when I was president of the NAACP we had all kinds of trouble.

Stuckey And I had to--Well, they didn't want to put anything in the county paper down there in Charles County. They said if they did. the white people wouldn't take the paper. When I came up

here to attend these meetings, I told Dr. Lillie Jackson about it. She said, "Alright, you give me their name and address, and I'll write them a letter." And she wrote them a letter, and she kept writing first one thing and another and got on them until they finally put something in it about the NAACP. But it made it in small print, and somewhere where no one would notice it, and all like that. But, during that time--my goodness, there was segregation in the schools–

Richardson That was in Charles County?

Stuckey In Charles County.

Richardson In the 1940s?

Stuckey 1942.

Richardson 1942.

Stuckey White signs up--"white and white only"--on 301, on the reservation where I was working at Indian Head, at the cafeterias, and no Negro children could ride the school bus, no integration of schools or nothing like that at the time, other than the Catholic schools.

Richardson The Catholic schools were integrated?

Stuckey They were integrated. The Negro children could always go to Catholic schools, but they couldn't go to the public schools. So I began then to work to see what I could do to get some of these children to go to the white schools, the better schools where they could get better learning. At that time the NAACP, the membership fee was one dollar, but just before I get to that--They had elections in Charles County, and during that election there was five of us present. That was J. Wesley Key, who was the first president that I knew down there. And next was Mr. Samuel Freeman, who was the father of the president down in Solomon Island, Mr. Hilton Hubb, and Francis Brown. And out of the five people there, I got three votes. And Mr. Brown got two and so I was elected President.

Richardson When was this?

Stuckey That was in 1942.

Richardson That was '42, also.

Stuckey 1942. And Mr. Hilton Hubb was made secretary. I was president. And so we went from that. So later on, we had another election, and Ms. Lillian Butler was elected secretary--I think I've got that right. And all like that. But, we had so many problems--so many problems. First we asked that these white signs ought to be taken down on 301, and on the reservation at Indian Head. So my foreman down there told me that those signs had been there before I ever came to Indian Head, and he said if I knew what side my bread was buttered on, I'd better shut my mouth and go on because them white signs were going to stay there. I told him I was sorry, but I told him, "I don't know what side it's buttered on then." So then they had election of shop council, so I was elected one of the shop council stewards, so I brought it up in one of the council meetings, but nobody was afraid to discuss it, to say anything about it. They had change houses. The Negro girls at one change house, they was always sleeping on army cots and no fan, nothing of the kind, if they had

to lay down to rest or one took sick, or felt bad. But at the white change house, they had a nice cot to rest on, a fan, clock, carpet on the floor, and all like that.

Richardson Where was this?

Stuckey That was at Indian Head, on the reservation, where we were working.

Richardson Oh, where you were working.

Stuckey Where we were working. And you see, I was elected shop councilman, and so I brought it up in the council meeting before the captain of the station. And he said he'd check into it. So when the foreman on my job found it out, oh, he cursed me out, called me everything except a child of God. And so, everybody got against me down there then. and them that weren't against me, they were afraid of them, afraid they would lose their jobs.

Richardson Blacks were afraid?

Stuckey Sure. Blacks were very much afraid.

Richardson And what type of job was this?

Stuckey Well, at that time, I was (unintelligible) attendant down there, and some of those Negro women had good jobs, such as press operator, and they were getting good money. And some of them was attendants and some of them was (unintelligible) and all like that. And that was the most money they ever had, and that was the best job they ever had. You see, Roosevelt then had just taken over, and times were kind of good, and you were in a whole lot of debt, and you didn't have nothing and you wanted something if you had a big family. And they wanted to make what they could. They were trying to get a little cash, if they were financially embarrassed, so to speak.

Stuckey But, I still fought it, right on. So, later on they had me come to the office. They had me up about raising my mouth down there talking about these white signs about this change house. And so they recommended then that I be dismissed. So during that time, I had already reported that thing to Clarence Mitchell, director of the bureau of the NAACP in Washington. And somebody had written me a letter with all kinds of questions in it, asking me to answer those questions. And I answered them and sent them back. Incidentally, it so happened that they sent some inspectors down there to check this thing out.

Richardson The NAACP or the federal government?

Stuckey The federal government did that, see, this was on government property. And so when they did that, then they all got afraid then, and we left from there one afternoon. And the next morning we came back, every white sign was down. They were down. Then I told them I wanted that partition from out the cafeteria. In the cafeteria, they had a partition--nice big white clear sign and place to eat, clean, for the good white people to sit down and eat. And where the Negroes had to go eat, it was dirty--smoke and a narrow small place. And we had to sit down there to eat, very uncouth, very undignified, and all like that. And we had to eat almost like, second-class citizens. So I got tired of that thing, and I wanted to know when they were going to move it. And they said, "Well, we're going to move you." I said, "Well, alright, you can move me."

Stuckey But, later on, somebody got behind the desk and tore that partition out and then we all got in line with trays. And got in line, walked around and got the food, and sat down and ate, all in the same place. So that took care of that.

Stuckey Alright. The next thing. There were certain days that those Negro women would come down to work, and the white men knew about that, and they would kind of have those Negro girls come the days their wives were away, or wouldn't be home. And they would come to work, and they'd get off the job and go on back. And be with those colored girls. Two or three of them were men's wives who belonged to our church and belonged to our organization and they all told me about it, and what could be done about it. I said, "God knows, I don't know." So, I thought about it, prayed over it, and the man I went to see about it, he's dead now, at Indian Head--oh he did curse and carry on, said he was glad of it because he said he wanted to see it stopped. He said, “It’s been going on and it’s getting worse. He said, “We can’t let unless some of you Black people open up your mouths to do something about it. I’ll tell you what I’ll do, I’ll set up a date with the captain, and you go see the captain and tell him about it, he’ll put a stop to it, we’ll try anyway.” I said, “Fine.” So he and I set up a date with the captain, we went to the captain, to the station.

Richardson Was this a military base?

Stuckey Yes sir, military base.

Richardson Where was it?

Stuckey At Indian Head. At that time, they called it, “The Powder Factory.” Then they changed it from Powder Factory to Naval Station, and that’s what it’s called now: The Naval Station at Indian Head. That’s where they make that there–all kinds of powder for boosting rockets to go up–they make all kind of powder there.

Stuckey So when we did that, he went along with us one hundred percent and said, “Alright.” He said he’d do his best to put a stop it, and he said to stay in touch with him, and let him know what day it is, and so on like that–he’d watch out for it. He checked on it, and found we was telling the truth, so when them men wanted to get off, he wanted to know what they wanted to get off for, and he fixed it so that at them meetings that they had at Indian Head with the white people and the white women, that whenever they had these colored girls at their homes, they’d be there. If they don’t be there, leave somebody there for their protection, and that soon broke it up. That stopped that.

Stuckey Well, now, the next thing. This Hart girl wanted to go to Blackley high school, that’s white. They let the boy go to Blackley school because he wasn’t in high school. The high school and elementary school were all in the same building, that’s why we called it Blackley High School. But, this colored boy had to walk. The buses would come right along, and pick up the white children–he’d be standing right there with them, but came down and to arrange with him and set up a big meeting and had food and had flags, floats, and called the “freedom riders” down. I don’t know how many busloads he didn’t bring down–white girls and colored girls and white men and colored. And what they would do, they would place a white girl and Black man and place a Black man with a white girl right on like that. And a white man with a Black girl, and they went into all these places where there was “white” on the sign. Alright–They got into there, they threw out all kinds of mists in there, something to stop you and blind you. Some of them they wouldn’t serve, and some of them–they had big fights–Well–they carried on so that they filled the jail up in Charles County, didn’t have room for them in the cage.

Stuckey But, anyway, we got them out, and had a trial. And the place was crowded. And even one of our preachers–he stuck with us, and he went in to hear. Reverend Rodney Young was right in there with the rest of them. So we won that case, and then we appealed from there and brought it on up here to court again–to federal court. So later on we kept on like that until they took the "white" signs down; but it cost money, some of them got hurt, some of them had to stay in jail, and we had to fight everything we could mention. But we had the white signs–today they're all down. And then we had another picketing. We'd picket the courthouse, we'd picket the Safeway store, we'd picket the A&P store or some of these places where most of the trade was colored. So, in one case, we went and got all the carts and didn't put the sides up and stuff in the cart, and nobody couldn't get nothing. Couldn't be waited on because that bunch that waves the picket held the cart and nobody could be waited on.

Richardson This is because they wouldn't hire Blacks?

Stuckey (unintelligible) kept on with that until we got them to hire Blacks. And then when they started the laundry–they wanted to know then who told them that they were paying this kind of a salary/ I told them, "I couldn't tell you." They said, "Well we can't do anything till you tell it." I said, "Well if we have to boycott the case, we'll have to take it further." They got awful mad and they called us all kind of names, but later on, they gave us some promise and assurance that if we'd go on and keep our mouths shut and don't say any more about it, so they could work, that they would give them more money. Because one lady that was working in the laundry–her name was Lancaster. She was a schoolteacher. She quit teaching and went in the laundry, and she was one of the foreman of the laundry. But she soon found out everything, from A to Z about white (unintelligible). And she was the one that told me, she said, "Please don't call my name." She's dead too, now.

Richardson Was she a Black woman?

Stuckey Yes, she was a Black woman. Because she said, "If you do, I'd lose my job." Because she had been teaching and consequently, she had drawn her retirement out, in other words, she was out of the system just like I did. I got out of the system and went to Indian Head. I drew all my retirement out in order to buy a few acres of land so I could build on it and get a job to work, and send my children to college. Because one of my daughters at that time had finished high school and she wanted to go to college. And did go. But, I told her, "That's alright, don't worry. I'll see to it that you don't lose your job." So we took care of that. They paid those colored women more, and it kept on like that until they did get more, and later on she retired. And after she retired, why, later on, she passed. But that's been now about twenty years. Now the laundry is in good shape. I think the most of them are working there now, because they're all getting along. They're all supposed to be getting the same salary.

Stuckey So then we went to work on the teachers' salary. The teachers' salary–what they did–they had it on the books–teachers' salary–the same. But, on the check it was different. And how we found that out, one smart fellow meddling and just kept looking and looking at the white salary check, and happened to discover that they had the same grade and rating, but it was about a hundred dollars different in the check. It wasn't an equal check, and so that was reported. We went into that. They had a big to do about that. So it kept on like that until later on before that straightened out.

Stuckey Alright, next was these banks. These banks wouldn't load Negroes any money, and if they did, they wouldn't loan them very much. They'd charge them more interest on it. In other

words, say now I've got a house and five acres of land, and I want to go to the bank to borrow money. Instead of them taking a mortgage on my house and an acre of land, or a lot, they would take a mortgage on all–everything I got. When it comes to the white, they won't take a mortgage on everything they've got; they'd just take a mortgage on the house and a lot. And if you're what they call a "default," then they put a judgment on you, and that judgment covers everything you got, in the judgment. Alright.

Stuckey So, it kept on like that until myself–when I got sixty-five, they pretended I was too old to renew my note, too old to loan money, too old to carry insurance, and the same thing with the Negro that had applied–they wouldn't let him have the money. So we had to take that up the H.E.W. and the way we happened to get that started–I was made president of the tri-county board, and by being president of the board, there was quite a bit of federal money that would come back in (unintelligible) and I had to write the checks. And I had to write the approval from getting this money from this community action project because I was president of the board.

Richardson This was a board of the NAACP?

Stuckey No, this was a board of community action–tri-county. But, see, I was still active in the NAACP. No–then, they didn't want to let me have the money, and some of these people who were working with the tri-county, they pretended that we were paying them too much money, and they shouldn't have that–more money than they ought to have. Some of them said they had to finish high school to get as much money, and so on. But, anyway, we got it. But I'm leaving the NAACP–I'm going back to the NAACP.

Stuckey Alright, we had to take all these matters to Dr. Lillie Jackson. Dr. Lillie Jackson had to get with these people and let them know that they were going to take this to the federal courts, and they were going to have a whole lot of this money cut off, and stopped, in Washington, that they wouldn't get it unless they treat us all the same–do the same by all of us. And by she getting in touch during that with Mr. Clarence Mitchell, we were able to work the community action–we were able to get the jobs in Charles County, and today we got deputy sheriffs, some of them got jobs in the courthouse, we got jobs in these different stores, and got jobs with the telephone people.

Stuckey But, what all we went through is pitiful. In one case, a white man took a gun, shot a Negro boy down. They tried him, didn't do nothing with him just because they were all riding the same bus and they got into a fight. He took a gun and shot and killed the poor colored boy. So we had all that to fight and contend with, but we are nothing like getting justice yet–so many things that we have to try to do and have to say something about. It was pitiful.

Stuckey Now during all this past week, one lady living in our community near a white man–he runs a sawmill. He's getting on his feet now, he's got a little bit of money and he doesn't want his children to play with these white children–don't want his white children to play with these colored children. He put up a big fence on the line of the land, so those colored children couldn't play with his children. But, a colored man had bought this place right nearby him–he had paid for it. And so, they had to check the courthouse but they couldn't make a move–couldn't foreclose–so it was his. So one of his men that worked for him, this white man had him go over there one night and take an ax and throw it through the window. If that ax barely missed a child–knocked that window down, frightened them, but they got in touch with the sheriff and whatnot. They got his name and knew who he was and all. So they just warned them. And some of them had a little more spunk and told them that he'd do that–they were going to get him in his house and whatnot. So, so far it has stopped for a little while–it's kind of cooled down, but we tried to do in on a nice basis. We tried to

be amiable. We tried to be Christian to him, friendly to him, brotherly and sisterly love, in having him to stop that.

Stuckey But that's because whenever a Negro–especially if they are poor and can't live up to the standards that the white man is living up with who has plenty of money and who can get more, who's got more–and the Black man, he doesn't have the education, doesn't have the money, and they don't like the way children what they call to be with this inferiority complex–They will not have that. At least with a rich Negro, a Negro would have plenty and living in a big home, and children with much more–well, let's say, the degree of intelligence was greater, and all that kind of thing probably wouldn't be as bad.

Stuckey I realize all these things, but anyway, so far we have gotten that adjusted and everything is quiet now, and moving along lovely. We had another case wherein that a Negro boy had a job where there were quite a few whites and he was the only one. And they thought that this Negro shouldn't have that job. So, some of them kicked him, and called him all kinds of names, trying to make him mad, get mad so he would say things that he shouldn't say, to lose that job. He came to us one night, so we told him what to do and we got into it with the authorities, and we begged him to talk, and they went along with it. And so far, held his job

Stuckey We worked hard trying to get the telephone people–a man by the name of Mr. _____ (??) to hire some Negro operators, and somebody to work in the telephone office. Most all the Negroes around there had telephones, and they wouldn't hire nobody. We worked hard on that.

Richardson How long did it take to get Blacks hired at the Telephone Company?

Stuckey Well, I guess it took ten or twelve years, to tell you the truth. Took ten or twelve years. We didn't get it until we had three Republican county commissioners to run for county commissioner and consequently we had–And these whites, who were Republicans wanted us to have a meeting with the NAACP. They found out it was getting awful strong and was strong opposition in the county because they felt the white people they could get in the Republican party, and with all the Negroes in the Republican Party in Charles County, that they could get Republicans in. And so things happened. We elected three county commissioners, every one of them were Republicans, for the first time I think it said, in fifty years. They had three county commissioners, and they were all Republicans and they gave the NAACP credit for it. And so when that was done, we got quite a few jobs.

Richardson What year was this? Do you remember?

Stuckey Yes sir, that was in 1966, if I'm not mistaken. No, I'm wrong, it must have been–19–because I came out in 1963, and this was before I came out. Well we had and election in odd years and ticket even years, so four from sixty-three would be what–three from seven–that would be fifty-seven, something like that.

Richardson So in the late fifties to early sixties.

Stuckey Yes, now you're talking.

Richardson This is when the telephone company started hiring Blacks?

Stuckey Yes, right. Now and so these county commissioners went along with us, and they saw to it (unintelligible) and they felt like a whole lot of this to-do was wrong, and (unintelligible) in that the NAACP put more Black people to work–in different jobs, in different positions during that time during them three Republican commissioners were in than any time in history. It was the best we had since the Reconstruction days. And later on, when I retired, they made me bail bondsman for the county because they had slot machines. And I was very successful as a bail bondsman for the county. And they did that to reward me for so much work that I had done, and we had done along that line. But Negroes began to move up then, with better jobs, better positions, and better pay, and then we began to work on the integration of the schools.

Stuckey Then we had that bus, a hot situation in the county then, because they started out at that bus station and tried to have it so that they'd go around and pick up all the white children first, so they could sit in front. And then the other children– Black children–last, so they could sit in the back.

Richardson What year was this?

Stuckey That was round about '59, '61, or '62. And they had a pretty good school. And they worked at that a little while, and after a while, that fell through. So it kept on and kept on until we just had to get a bus and just pick them up as you come to them.

Richardson Were the conditions that you described on how the Blacks were treated in Charles County in the last thirty years similar to the way that Blacks were treated in St. Mary's County and Calvert County? Was southern Maryland sort of all the same?

Stuckey Right, very much so. Absolutely. The same.

Richardson Recently, a prominent white politician in southern Maryland told me that in the 40s and 50s that Blacks didn't have to do much demonstrating or much action to get integration of schools, to get jobs, to get teacher equalization in southern Maryland–that it was all done voluntarily by the whites. Is this true?

Stuckey No, praise God, no! My, my, my! We had to fight for it and fight hard for it and had to take them to court to make them do it. And it took them a long time then. We just had to keep carrying them to court. They had to be made to do it. My goodness, no! That's what all that big fight was about in 1961 and 1962. That's when we had Mr. Clarence Logan down there and the "freedom riders." And they did carry on; they fought down there and did everything and we had to carry them to federal court. The records is there–the records are at the courthouse, here in district court, federal courts. And the same thing, even the judges down there didn't want to go along with it, in Charles County, St. Mary's–neither county. No sir.

Richardson When did you first meet Dr. Jackson?

Stuckey I met Dr. Lillie Jackson in 1942.

Richardson How was the relationship between the Baltimore NAACP and the Charles County and southern Maryland NAACP branches?

Stuckey It was just fine. Well, to tell you the truth about it, the Baltimore branch, under Dr. Lillie Jackson, made these Charles County branches, and Calvert County, and St. Mary's. It wouldn't

have be none, if if hadn't been for Dr. Lillie Jackson. Dr. Lillie Jackson had to go down there and in person and preach, pray, and do everything that a woman could do to wake these people up. They were afraid, they were cowards, they were bashful.

Richardson These are Black people?

Stuckey Yeah, Black people. Certainly. And really, Charles County was the one that led out. I don't want to pat myself on the back, but Charles County was the one that led out. And then St. Mary's county caught it, and then Calvert County. But, when we used to pay the freedom fund, way back years ago, Charles County and Montgomery County were in the (unintelligible). Them was the two countries–the only two counties after you leave Baltimore City–at that time to pay the freedom fund. And they was the two best counties–two best chapters in the state out of the forty-three counties: eleven, I understand, on the Western Shore, nine on the Eastern Shore; Montgomery County and Charles County were the best two in the state of Maryland. And since then, most of the counties commence waking up and commence doing. I remember well, Garrett County at that time didn't have any chapter at all. Didn't have any branch–any kind of NAACP branch in Garrett County. You see, Garrett County at that time didn't have but one Negro child in it, in the county.

Richardson Did Mrs. Jackson go to the other counties, too?

Stuckey Yes sir.

Richardson Was she responsible for getting them organized and started?

Stuckey Absolutely. She was very much responsible for it. And then she wanted a report from them counties once a month; she wanted to know what they were doing and why–she wanted to know why.

Richardson She was very forceful, then.

Stuckey Yes, oh my! She was a power. She was very much so. She wanted to know why. And if a president down there–who was the president–and he wasn't doing nothing and wasn't getting something done, she'd go down or have somebody go down, or she'd ask somebody that she thought had some potential of leadership to go down and organize and start to doing something. Get some of it done.

Richardson Do you think that Dr. Jackson ever believed in separate but equal?

Stuckey I don't think so. I noticed, reading history, the U.S. Supreme Court back there some years ago, handed down a statement: "separate but equal." But in 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court, under Mr. Warren, handed down a different decision–that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. That means it's no longer separate and equal.

Richardson But you don't think Mrs. Jackson ever supported it?

Stuckey I don't think she did, to my knowledge.

Richardson Did you ever know her to become politically involved? Was she involved in either Republican or Democratic politics?

Stuckey Hm?
Richardson Did you ever know her to become politically involved? Was she involved in either Republican or Democratic politics?

Stuckey Yes sir, she was very much involved in politics, and it was hard for me to guess her. Personally, I didn't know whether she was a Republican or a Democrat. I didn't know what she was, but I noticed that she was very much ingrained in politics, because she believed very much in getting in touch with the mayors of the city, and the governors of the state, and the higher officials, and it was a long time before I could guess her. I didn't know whether she was a Republican or a Democrat. But, I come to find out she was a Democrat, but the wrong time.

Stuckey But, the thing that she was after was equal rights. That was her main objective: was what was right. She–Regardless of race, creed, or color, she wanted something done that would help everybody. I remember well, she said that she wanted to see the time come when tehre would be no more colored schools and white schools, just be schools–just be schools. She say when it gets like that, then we'd have a decent school, you'd have a decent education–we would be one, and we probably would get our equal rights. And we would be better morally, spiritually, intellectually, and financially.

Richardson Were there any white elected officials in southern Maryland that were sympathetic to Black civil rights in the 30s, 40s, and 50s that come to mind?

Stuckey Well, yes there was. But, they were afraid. They would talk to you, but they'd say, "Please don't call my name."

Richardson Who were some of them, could you mention?

Stuckey Yes sir, I could mention several of them. One of them was a man like Mr. Sheehan, one was a man like Mr. Cooksey, and one was a man like Mr. Welsh.

Richardson And these were elected officials?

Stuckey Yes sir, they wanted to see this thing done, but the opposition was so strong.

Richardson Who was the opposition?

Stuckey Well, in other words, they said that it was not a popular thing. They said when your opinion is not a popular opinion and you try to carry it over, you wouldn't be elected. In other words, I could give you an example. Now, take Mr. Carter, down in Atlanta, Georgia. Alright, the Black Caucus brought out the decision that it's best not to have a Black man running with Mr. Carter for vice-president, or anything else because if you do, chances are, you'll be defeated. So, let the Black man be quiet, and let Mr. Carter be elected–we want Mr. Carter. And then after he gets in, then maybe the next time, some Negro will come out. Now, at the time that I ran for the State Senator from Maryland to the General Assembly in Charles County, I knew I wasn't going to be elected, but I did it to break it down. Maybe that someday somebody could run, and be elected. Well, in the state of Maryland we do have some elected–quite a few–but we don't have none from other counties, but we have somebody on the ticket every year. But we do get a whole lot of recognition, so that's the result of those kind of things. And say now, like they're against this busing, especially like in St. Charles City where all those good white people moved out of

Washington–in a place like St. Charles City, I don't think there are but three families in the whole place.
Richardson Three Black families?

Stuckey Three Black families, right in the whole place. This one good white man spoke to me about what a shame it was, and wanted to see more Black families move there. Then he advocated that quick building of places like St. Charles City: "Don't build all those forty-five, and fifty, and sixty thousand-dollar houses." He believed that lower-income houses ought to be built, and all these places where people with low income can buy, just like those in the high. And he said, "If you did that, you wouldn't have so much trouble with this busing." Well, he said, "I don't want to be quoted, and I don't want to come out in front this thing." He said, "My wife has got a job–"he told me his wife had a job, where his daughter is trying to get, where his son is trying to get, and he said, "This would kill my future and this would hurt me financially. But, that's what I believe in. You people go ahead and work on it, and you speak out on it. And I'll stay in the background and do whatever I can for you, until this thing comes to be a popular opinion. And when this thing comes to be a popular opinion, certainly, then I can come out in the front."

Richardson Were there any elected officials in southern Maryland that were really opposed to this civil rights movement, that really spoke against the NAACP, or spoke against the advancement of Black people in southern Maryland that come to mind?

Stuckey You mean white?

Richardson White.

Stuckey Yes, my goodness.

Richardson In the 30s, and 40s, and 50s?

Stuckey Yes sir. Why, one white friend there–good friend of mine–told a member of the county board of education–he said, "The minute that _____ (??) handed down his decision about these Black children in Charles County can ride the bus with white children," he said, "I'm resigning and getting off the board." And he did. He got off the board. He was strictly against it, and there were several others like him, but they wouldn't say nothing much about it, because some of them had big farms and these Negroes were working for them–these Black people. And some of them had them in their kitchen, some in the wash-tubs, and other places. And they got so bad there in some cases, that they made them move off the farm, they made them move out the houses they renting. And some of them–These houses that these Black people were living in–I know one man was county commissioner, he had five houses below the standard that he was renting to colored people. And he said the money he was making off those Black people renting those five houses, he and his wife and his family could live happily off of that–off the rent from these five houses. He didn't want to make them mad and get them to move, he wanted them to stay there. And he said that he wouldn't do anything at all to hurt their feelings. He said when one come in his kitchen, or come around, starting discussing this civil rights issue, and talking about their children riding the bus and all like that, he said, "I won't say anything. I'll keep my mouth shut because I don't want them to get mad. Because they could do me a whole lot of harm, if they get mad and all of them would move off my place."

Stuckey And the banks were the same way. At one bank there that we had, they said, "Half of our customers are Black, but we don't want them to know it. We want you to keep your mouth shut, we

want to keep them. But, we can't afford to make them loans like we're making to whites." They tried to explain to me why, but they said that their jobs was not as safe, and they don't have as much, and their source of income was not as great. And they tried to give reasons for it. And I told them, "Well, don't you think that if you help them, that their jobs would be just as great? Don't you think that their chances would be just as good if you help them?" They said, "Yes." But they'd rather not do it. And I said, "Well, all you've got to do is just do the right thing. Just do the right thing."

Stuckey I had a daughter-in-law of mine. She bought a place. The woman that loaned her the money at the bank wouldn't carry insurance on her–pretended she was going to carry a little insurance. And later on, that house caught afire and burned down, and that poor girl lost everythign she had. Had they carried insurance–she had taken out the money for insurance on it from the payment. But yet, they claimed that the law and the way she had it and the way it was done, she beat them to it, and she got by with it, and there was nothing done about it. So that's the way they do. There was so much of that kind of a thing was done.

Richardson When did you first become aware of Theodore McKeldin?

Stuckey I come aware of him in 1932, when he was secretary to the mayor of the city, at that time. Governor–he wasn't governor then, but Mr. McKeldin came out to Stemmer's Run, and I was the chairman of a meeting out there at Stemmer's Run, in Baltimore County, not very far from Martin's Airport at Back River. And Mr. McKledin came out there to speak, and I called on him to talk. And that's when I first met him. I'm trying to think of the Mayor's name that he was–

Richardson Mayor Broening.

Stuckey Mayor Broening, right. And Governor McKeldin was secretary at that time. And from then on, I worked on the NAACP in political affairs until I left from there, and went down to St. Mary's County, and still kept it up and have been keeping it up to this day.

Richardson What did you think of McKeldin?

Stuckey He was a real man. He was one of the best governors–in my judgement–that they had in Maryland. Well, he was such a friend to the Black man. I remember when I was over in Calvert County to a meeting one night. McKeldin was over there in Calvert County, and the people looked and saw me and said, "Here's Stuckey. He's the president of the NAACP in Charles County. I want you to come up and take a seat with Governor McKeldin." And Governor McKeldin recognized my face and name, at the time we were at Stemmer's run in Back River, way back there in 1932. And we sat on the rostrum together. Governor McKeldin made a ringing speech that night, and gave everybody attention int he meeting and whatnot and so forth.

Stuckey So, he and I had several friendly talks and whatnot together, and we were in several meetings together, Governor McKeldin. And once or twice, Dr. Lillie Jackson had us to come to Baltimore, and I shook hands with Governor McKeldin, and so on like that. Dr. Lillie Jackson had him come to–What's the name of that church? St. Stephen's Church? To that church, oh–several of those meetings. He'd come and whatnot. He was just a nice man. He worked with Dr. Lillie Jackson, Clarence Mitchell, and all those Mitchells.

Richardson What do you think was the source of his concern for Black civil rights?

Stuckey Well, it was very great. I notice now, this Montebello Hospital, out here in Baltimore, where I got a son in there now–he's a total paraplegic–and Governor McKeldin was the one that had that hospital built–three stories and it's there, all integrated from the three floors. And those people are well being taken care of there. And that's due to Governor McKeldin's work. And when you come to this civil rights, why there's so many of these Negroes got jobs and were placed in positions, and so on like that in Baltimore City, that if it hadn't been for Governor McKeldin, they never would have gotten. And there were so many things happening, where there were rapes, and where Negroes committed crimes, some things seriously would have happened to some of them. Maybe would have gotten killed, or maybe been found dead–that was prevented by Governor McKeldin using his great influence and being compassionate and knowing what to do, and how to do it, when and where. He was a great leader! God bless him! He was a great leader.

Richardson Do you remember Marse Calloway? Does that name sound familiar?

Stuckey Well, the name is about all I remember of Calloway. I can't tell anything about him right now.

Richardson He was a Black gentleman who was an advisor to McKeldin in the 40s and early 50s.

Stuckey That's correct. I remember that much too, right.

Richardson What has been the role fo the Black church in the civil rights movement in southern Maryland?

Stuckey Well, it's been good, but at one time the church was very backward. They were afraid of civil rights.

Richardson The Black church?

Stuckey The Black church, that's right. They were afraid of it. But, I can't think of the name of that Bishop–We had a Bishop who came on the scene, and I want to tell you that bishop, he didn't bite his tongue about the civil rights issue. And the next man who helped us out so much on the civil rights issue was Grand Master Allen, of the Master Masons–A.F. and A.M. And those men came out along with Clarence Logan and the "freedom riders–"why the civil rights issue in our city, caught on fire. And the church was a great asset. Now some of these members in the church–if the bishop hadn't got into it–the bishop down to the district superintendent, the district superintendent to the pastor of the church–hadn't got into it, we wouldn't have gotten the membership.

Stuckey In other words, Mr. Roy Wilkens always preached and said to us that he wanted to see civil rights at the grassroots. That's one way we could get to the grassroots, is to get to our preachers. Out preachers and the pulpit was getting civil rights to the grassroots. Wherever you have a good preacher, you'll find more members in the grassroots of the lower income. And in general, our members of the NAACP at any place you'd find, that's where you've got a good preacher who believed that. And I can say, thank God, in my church today we've got an all-out civil rights preacher. And I guess there's not many members of my church today that's not a member of the NAACP. And even within our lodge and in our churches, we've got them taking out life memberships, due to the work of our pastor, who's in there. We've got a good pastor, and to the bishop, and to Grand Master Allen. Now some of these names I can't call, it's been too long and, consequently, I'm eighty-two years of age, and my mind is not like a crystal ball, like it used to be, can't think as fast.

Richardson You're how old?

Stuckey I'm eighty-two.

Richardson You're not eighty-two.

Stuckey Oh, yes. I was born in 1894, that's correct.

Richardson My God. That's really something. How about the role of the white churches?

Stuckey Well, the white churches–they're nice but they don't have much to say about it.

Richardson How about back in the 30s and 40s and that time?

Stuckey Oh, at that time they were bitterly against it. They thought that any Negro– Black man who was a member of the NAACP–they felt like that that person, that Negro, was against white people. They felt like that about like we felt about the Ku Klux Klan. We feel that the Ku Klux Klan is something that is against Blacks, and in that day and time, the white people felt like the NAACP was something against whites and it was bad. Which, the NAACP is a friend, to the good white people. Now, I being one of the workers in the NAACP, as president, when I was bail bondsman for Charles County, I had on one side of my card, "Bail bondsman, night and day," and on the other side, "the NAACP." And I handed that card to several white people and they said, "Are you a member of the NAACP? I'm surprised, anybody who is a member of the NAACP, I didn't know you'd do anything to help white people." I said, "We are your friend." They didn't know. They always thought that anybody was a member of the NAACP did things to hurt white people, and was against white people.

Richardson How about the Roman Catholic church–was it integrated in the 30s and 40s, 50s, like you said Catholic people were integrated?

Stuckey Yes, now the Catholic schools had a better attitude than any of the schools and churches. I could give you a very vivid example of that. In South Carolina, at that time, there weren't but two Catholic schools in the whole state; they were in Charleston, South Carolina. Here at Indian Head, in Maryland, most of the churches were Catholic, and when I took over the NAACP in '42, one such white man, who was a Catholic, said that the one thing we can't do–said, "Years ago here, we'd have had a lynching here in southern Maryland, just like they have down in your state, in South Carolina, on the eastern shore, but the Catholic priest wouldn't let them do it." And he said the Catholic priests, all of them, are bitterly against lynching and that's why we can't get a lynching. And he was, "If you had more Catholics in South Carolina, you'd never had the trouble with lynching down there that you had then." And I didn't know no better. During the time that Hoover ran for president of the U.S. and Al Smith was a Catholic–They said Hoover was a Quaker and Al Smith was a Catholic–why, the people in South Carolina carried on and talked about it was the worst thing in the world to be thinking about a man like Al Smith. And we didn't know any better. And we come to find out the Catholic people were our best friends.

Stuckey And right now we find more Catholic people are members of the NAACP than any group of white people that I know in this state. Right now, we have in our meeting at St. Joseph's Church–and that's a Catholic church–they are good. They are fine, they are swell, they are good people. I'll tell you the truth about it, I'm a Methodist, but I love the Catholic people. Take Kennedy,

look at what a fine man Kennedy was, and Kennedyy convinced the world–the whole entire nation–what Catholic people could do. And I know a lot of Catholic people, even withing my–down there in Charles County wouldn't even vote for Kennedy, but Kennedy was a good president.
Richardson What impressed you the most about Mrs. Jackson?

Stuckey That forceful way that Mrs. Jackson had to talk and say things. My, she was so forceful! Seemed like to me she could say things that would go through you. So often, in Charles County, I'd come up here to these meetings up here on Dolphin Street, to tell Mrs. JAckson I wanted to resign, please recommend somebody else who would come down and have the election and get somebody else. But, when Mrs. Jackson got through with me, I was ready to go back and fight, with all my heart and mind. And I worked and fought there with her for twenty-four long years. The way she said a thing, the comparisons she made, the things that she told them what had been done, and the way she'd quote the Bible and talk about the signs of the times, and then she spoke about what Black people had done, before the Reconstruction I think it was, and where they had been–and how they had allowed themselves to fall. And then I can't help but think of this, she said that some of them were too Black to be colored and some of them were too colored to be Black, and all that kind of a thing. She really could say that. She said, "It was the ability, it was the man, not the color of the skin, it's the ability." And she had a way of saying–well, Martin Luther King even said it, "Judge me not by the color of my skin, but by the content of my character." It's the character that makes a person, not the color of his skin.

Stuckey And she said, "We've got to prove ourselves." She said, "We can do." And that;s what she wanted us to do, and we were on our way to it. And "Don't give up." And she spoke about so many things she'd done in the city. She said one time right here in Baltimore City, people called her "Old Crazy Lillie Jackson." They said she was crazy. But, she said it wasn't long after that wore over, that they were calling her to Morgan College and they made her "Doctor" Lillie Jackson. Found out she wasn't crazy then. And right on like that. And they had meetings at Annapolis with the Governor, and they had meetings in Washington with the U.S. Senators and the Congressmen, and on and on like that.

Stuckey Until just–Well, things–And then anytime they ahd these great meetings in the day, once a year. They had Dr. Jenkins, the President of _____ (??) colleges and these speakers, and, my, it was so great and it was so nice that–well, I just couldn't see stopping. I just had to go on. And then I noticed the young people then, was all (unintelligible). And that's when we had the youth group and my, didn''t they carry on, and didn't they do things! And then these young people were so brave and, well–they didn;t know what it meant to be humiliated and embarrassed, and they didn't have that inferiority complex like I was reared up in, in South Carolina. And they didn't have as much of that in them. And they were so brave, adn how they could carry on. And it was just good. And I just admired it, and I've always felt that I didn't want any of my children or grandchildren to have to come up and do things that I did, and have to come up like I came up. Because I actually came up the hard way, and I didn't want to see them.

Stuckey And I figured, working with Dr. Lillie Jackson, as forceful as she was, and as much as she wanted done, and the way she saw it, I wouldn't be only helping Dr. Lillie Jackson, helping somebody else–I'd be helping myself. And I found out that I had to help the other man in order to help myself. Just like when we was talking about the lynchings in the South–we had to stop the lynchings out there, when they were lynching other men–to keep them from lynnching my boy ot lynching me. You had to stop it out there, it begin to get rough,

Richardson How was Dr. Jackson at meetings? Did she allow a diverse opinion to take place, or did she sort of try to control things? Was she a very dominant force?

Stuckey Oh yes, she'd want their opinion. That gave her something to talk about. That would give her a chance to show you up. When you passed your opinion, there were several of them did that, but when she got through with them, it was like a looking-glass. You'd take that looking-glass and look in it, and see yourself. You'd find out how far they were off, and how backward they are thinking–and how inferior they were thinking. In other words, you take a fish in a glass bowl, he thinks he;s the biggest thing in the sea or anywhere on Earth. But, you throw him out in the sea with them great big fish out there, where there are some out there that weigh a ton, and there's one little fish that weighs a few ounces, he'll see how small he is.

Stuckey But that's just what Dr. Lillie Jackson would talk about these civil rights and talk about these issues in the state–in the county that she wanted us to go out and do. She'd show us how small we are, and then we didn't have that forceful way, and that conviction of opinion–we didn't know as much as she knew. And we couldn't talk like she could talk, we couldn't convince people. We just couldn't put it over. That's why we wanted her to come to our county. That's why we wanted her to come to our meetings. That's why we wanted her to talk to our district superintendent. That's why we wanted her to talk to the preachers, why we wanted her to talk to the congregation. Because she knew how to put it over. She was so forceful. There were so many things she could say. And she knew how to say it, when to say it, and we asked when she'd come down, we would even ask quite a few of our good white friends to come and hear Dr. Lillie Jackson. And when we got a chance, we'd carry them around and let them meet her, shake hands with her.

Stuckey Now, in my county–(huffs) we couldn't get anything in the county paper about the NAACP or nothing of the kind. We had three county papers down there, and none of them would carry anything about the NAACP until we got Dr. Lillie Jackson in it. And they said that if they started writing anything about the NAACP and putting Black Negro's pictures in the paper, the white people wouldn't take it. So what we did then, we went ahead and worked on all three of them. Now that was one thing we did. Mr, Crist was a white man down there who was in charge of this place there where–in other words, he said that in breaking down this segregation, break it down in all the places. But he said to just break it down in one place doesn't mean much. So that's the way Dr. Lillie Jackson was. She got in touch with all of these newspapers down there, and told them all the same thing–had them all to see the same thing. But somebody had to start out.

Stuckey So when one started, they had two of them to make a start. And writing things about the Blacks and about the NAACP and the two of them began to write. And then that left one. That means all the white people weren't going to leave and go to one because there were so many things that were said in the other papers, they would still buy that other paper on account of their curiosity. So they'd still buy it. And the paper that didn't carry anything about Blacks found out that he was losing–he came over then didn't want to even carry the write-up, but then wanted to take a picture of the Blacks, so somebody could see what it looked like. And he sold more papers, and then all of them showed the pictures. And now all of them try to get everything they can.

Richardson Was there much conflict in the NAACP, the whole state organization over the years, or was it fairly united for the goal of civil rights?

Stuckey Well, there was a grave conflict in it. We found so many people had this old "fogeyism" and they felt like that it wasn't time for it–that the time wasn't right for it. I know a man that–well, we

even had a Black man on the county board of education and he came to me and said, “You all slow up a little bit. You’re going too fast. I’m on the board now, I know. You’re going too fast.” And I came and told Dr. Lillie Jackson about it–why, she blew up. She said, “That man is so dumb he ought to be kicked off the board. You don’t need a Black man like that on the board.” And I notice through Mr. Roy Furah–he was a wealthy Black man down there in Charles County, one of the wealthiest Black men down there. I wanted to have a meeting of the NAACP at the courthouse, and he saw the sheriff and the authorities at the courthouse, and they held the first NAACP meeting at the courthouse. And everybody had that to talk about. That was the “breakfast talk.”

Richardson What year was that? Do you remember?

Stuckey I believe that was in 1959. But Mr. Roy Furah was the man that was the cause of that. Before then, we went to Knights of St. John’s, went around to these churches, and these little halls and held–but when Mr. Roy Furah got into it, then we could go to the courthouse and have our meeting in the courthouse like everybody else, the other citizens and taxpayers. And to get that and can do it now. So here lately they felt like we were being bugged by having it in the courthouse. And so we had it at the Knights of St. John’s–St. Joe’s–St. Joseph’s Church, we have it there now. That’s at a Catholic Church and the president is a member of that church. And even the priest is all out for it.

Richardson Was the Ku Klux Klan and other white racist groups active in Charles County in southern Maryland in the last thirty years or so?

Stuckey Well, they weren’t too active, but they were in there. Their presence was heard and felt in Charles County, very much so. I remember well when one man who claimed he was a friend to the colored man–colored people–and we voted for him. And he was a superintendent of the sunday school, in the white church–a white man. And when the Ku Klux came in Charles County to organize, he was the man they made chairman, but the others didn’t want him. And they stood back and they wouldn’t come forward. And this man is dead now, his name was Charlie POsey. But it didn’t hold up. If I understand it right, the priests, the Catholic fathers–they were bitterly against all the kind of attitude they had toward Black people. And consequently, basically, the Catholic people don’t have that (unintelligible) attitude against Black people, and they wouldn’t go along with it. So it died out, it doesn’t stand up. But they do have it in Maryland, but in Charles County, it doesn’t carry any weight.

Richardson Were you ever personally threatened or caused harm during your civil rights activities?

Stuckey Absolutely! They threatened me, oh yes! They threatened me, said what they were going to do with me. and threatened my children, threatened my on the job.

Richardson In person, or through letters, or through telephone calls?

Stuckey Well, on the job they threatened me to my face. They threatened me in person. And at one time, on account of my civil rights acts, I couldn’t buy gasoline, I couldn’t get credit at the store, and I couldn’t borrow any money.

Richardson This was in Charles County?

Stuckey Right here in Charles County. I was the worst Black man in Charles County and some of these Black people went right along with the white people—some of my church members that knelt down here at the communion table and sipped wine with me—on account of my civil rights acts, they went to Washington and up here in Montgomery County, and Baltimore, and joined the NAACP and wouldn't join down there in Charles County, because I was the president. Because they said that the sheriff was going to advertise my home, it would be for sale, said that they weren't going to loan me money, won't renew my note to the bank and they were going to fire me on the job. And so they just predicted that that would be the end of it. They heard those white people talking, and they told it. Jenkins, that's a white man, told me to my face and he said, "You're not going to stay here. If you stay here, I'm leaving. Don't you think we can't get rid of you? You know we can get rid of you." See, when he made those threats, I reported it right then to the proper authorities, but he didn't know it. I got it right then, if you threaten me today, the next day they already knew about it. And one of the smart men that help me to get this thing over was Mr. Clarence Mitchell in Washington, D.C.and Dupree monk in Charles County and another white man by the name of Mr. Wright. Course all of them were white except Mr. Wright, help me to get this thing over, because they felt like those threats were wrong, and they were wrong. And today, I'm feeling the effects of it. I'm getting about $300 less, per month, for retirement, then I should be getting, on account of my civil rights' acts.

Stuckey You see, they weren't able to fire me, and they weren't able to run me out of the county, and I bought three homes and paid for them. And they wouldn't renew my notes, because they kept me in a lower income bracket. And so, when I retired, I'm drawing $300 less than the average person that retired. Now, that's the truth, today—that's in those same papers.

Richardson How do you feel about McKeldin speaking in Black churches?

Stuckey Well, it was nice. It was a good thing. It was a great asset to the colored people, we felt uplifted about it. We did, but some of these whites didn't think much of it, because they just didn't believe in it. But it was a grand thing. It went a long ways down the line and—it went down to the grassroots. It was a thing that stayed with it, and a thing we admired. Governor McKeldin was so diplomatic with it until it didn't defeat his purpose with the white people. Governor Nice was good, but they defeated Governor Nice in one instance when Governor Nice had the election sewn up to be governor, and would have been.

Stuckey Some of those colored people had some papers, and had those papers with Black pictures on them and jobs they were going to get if Governor Nice lost being governor overnight. That thing spread just like wildfire, and next day they voted for somebody else, and Governor Nice was not elected again. And that was one of the worst things they could have done. And that's one reason why today, I admire this Black caucus today that they have down there in Atlanta, Georgia—about "leave Carter alone and let Carter elect all white, because if you start to (unintelligible) Mr. Carter now, like things are now, the Republicans will go back in." But if they let things go, the Democrats are going to run and get the thing by a landslide. Due to this Watergate and all like that, we want to see Democrats win.

Richardson Do you think Governor McKeldin was sincere on civil rights?

Stuckey I believe he was. If he didn't, he put on a big front. As a fact, I believe he was serious. To be perfectly frank about that, God, seems like to me, even in the Bible, that he was sending us a man. God sent the Black man a man that would lead us out of the land of Egypt. He sent us a pharaoh to lead us, and I felt like Governor McKeldin was one.

Richardson Could you discuss briefly, the relationship between McKeldin and Dr. Jackson?

Stuckey It was very good. It's my understanding the relationship between the two was very good– there was quite a bit that transformed, or however you put it, between the two. She was rearing her family, she was sending her children to school, and trying to do what I was doing in Charles County, trying to buy a home, trying to educate the children. And just like I was trying to stay in with the county commissioners and with the leading authorities, in order to get help, in order to get by, in order to put our objectives over–she did the same thing with Governor McKeldin. I remember, years back, when I used to come up here to meetings, Governor McKeldin now was about the only white man, he and the Catholic priest that they had at the meeting. And a good many times he couldn't come, and he'd send somebody—a representative and he'd get up there and bring greetings, and that would be it. But the kept on and kept on, until later on it became so great, that he would come in person. And we'd get a chance to meet him in person. We had a meeting with him in Annapolis in the State House, as well as we did in Sharpe Street Methodist Church, here on Dolphin Street. It was very good, and I admired them. Don't know how she did it, because she was a "God-sent" woman, and she had that magic touch, and that forceful way. She had some way of getting around it, and getting to him, and asking him and proving herself to the extent that she got his attention.

Richardson Could you comment on the role of Dr. Carl Murphy, and the *Afro-American* newspaper in civil rights?

Stuckey Yes, it was very good. Dr. Carl Murphy was somebody. He always presided at these meetings when we had these meetings once a year, but they carried headlines in civil rights, Dr. Carl Murphy. And I saw to it that we had different people in our county to sell the *Afro*, sometimes it went at my expense, as poor as I was. And I carried it to the church. And several times I got into my car and went around to different churches when it had all these headlines and so many things about civil rights, and put them in churches. Just left them at the door, and at the vestibule, and at the prominent places where they could read them. And that thing meant, something there.

Stuckey But Dr. Carl Murphy, he knew how to run it, he knew what to say, he knew how to say it. And the thing that interested me so—I hate to mention this—at the time, there were certain numbers they would play (unintelligible) we'll play them (unintelligible). And that *Afro* carried those numbers, and colored and white caught on to that, and they would buy them papers and play those numbers that came out of the *Afro*, and I declare to goodness, they'd win. And at Indian Head and all over Charles County, the white people buying the *Afro* and (unintelligible) on account of the numbers. And doing that, they'd read about what the colored mand was doing, and his attitude, and what they wanted, and has happened, and what they're trying to do, and it was an asset (unintelligible). But I admired the way that - (unintelligible) if I was a capitalist, I know I'd give any amount of money to that *Afro-American* newspaper here in Baltimore, for what it has done. And they carried it so, it was so good until some of them told them to stop it, because they were playing those numbers, and they were colored and white. And I'd have them call me up, and come to my home wanting the *Afro* paper, and wanting those numbers so they could play those numbers.

Richardson Did Carl Murphy and Dr. Lillie May Jackson work together?

Stuckey Yes sir, they really went together. They worked together as I call, hand in glove. They worked together, and he would do the presiding, and she would do some of the talking and planning and outlining, and he would put the whole—well, we presidents of these different

branches were key-men that they would contact—Dr. Carl Murphy, in order for the civil rights' issue, and for the *Afro* to be sold, and all like that . We were the ones they would contact. And I had several people that really had waked up, and had caught the spirit in Charles County, and they rallied right along with me one hundred percent. And I'd get them in busloads, and bring them up here, and I'd be coming to these meetings. Day and night, I'd get busloads, and bring them up here. And I got pleasure out of it, and sometimes, my wife was a good worker, sometimes the bus couldn't take them all. Sometimes we'd have over a busload, people got interested in it and wanted to know and wanted to see and wanted to hear, and they'd simply buy tickets. And give money and take up their time to come and see, and to hear what was going on, and to hear Dr. Murphy, and to see Dr. Lillie Jackson.

Richardson Were there any times, in the last thirty or forty years, that Blacks were discouraged or prevented from voting in southern Maryland?

Stuckey Oh, yes sir. At one time they were very much discouraged due to the fact that they wanted to see some Black men elected, to office. And them Democrats down there, they always beat Republicans to it, and they'd some way of getting around keeping a colored man from getting any job. And they really knew how to maneuver. Because at one time, the thing happened so–Mr. Barker in Charles County, is chairman of the Republican party. And something happened in Annapolis where they had a Republican governor, and at that time, he made the same Mr. Roy Furah one of the commissioners to write warrants and issue papers. But he didn't stay very long before the Democrats had maneuvered things around so.

Stuckey They got a Democrat in there, they eased that colored man out, and stopped him from getting other positions that he would have gotten, and stopped him from being promoted like he would have been promoted. Then that's when the colored people became so disheartened. And disgusted. And then, on white man down there by the name of Mr.–can't call his name now, well as I know it–told us the way to break that thing up: "You colored people quit being Republicans. Let half of you colored people join the Democrat party." He waked us up. And all these young people, I've got three boys and all three of them registered, joined the Democrat party. And now we've got a good many colored Democrats down there in Charles Co., and all the colored people used to be republicans. But, he did something there too. And really, in breaking this down. He wanted more of them to join that Democrat party. Now he really said something, you know. And I couldn't put my finger on it. I didn't know what to do about it. I didn't know what to tell the people. But, he said – "That's the solution. Half of the Negroes who are Republican, you'll need to leave the Republican party, and join the Democrat party. Then, you'll get somewhere."

Stuckey And, oh–Mr. Barker, the chairman of the Republican party, he got so mad about that thing. He got mad enough to fight. Oh, he carried on about it. And another woman, she was a Republican, was Fanny Wilks, she got awful hard about that thing. They didn't like it, that these white people were persuading these colored people to join the Democratic party, when the white people didn't want to leave the Democratic party and come to the Republican party. (Unintelligible) But we found out that was good thinking–very good.

Richardson What was Mrs. Jackson's attitude about other areas of human rights? I believe she was interested in the whole realm of human rights, not just Black rights. Do you agree with this?

Stuckey Absolutely–you're right. Now, that's the thing she tried to put over. I notice that–and I didn't know that–she said there were more poor whites on welfare and in ghettoes than colored. And I notice a man who was superintendent of our schools down there in Charles County, his

name was Mr. Jenkins, he said the same thing. And he said in being a good NAACP worker, and a good civic worker, you held the whites as well as well you do the colored. And try and get the whites to see it, and have them attend your meetings, and come in with the whites, join with them. And I found out that she was right about that. And I notice Mr. Jenkins, who was superintendent of schools down there, when I was president of the tri-county local board, he said, there were more whites on welfare and in the ghettoes than colored. Now I didn't have the least idea that that was true, but he said it was.

Richardson What was your reaction to the Black "militants" of the 1960's–the Black Panthers and CORE, and the other Black "militant" groups? Was there much of that in Charles County?

Stuckey Yes, it was. Them Black "militants" came down there and I tell you, I like them and didn't like them. They were ready to fight. They made threats to burn down schools, burn down churches, set fire down in different areas, and sound the alarm. And go to different places all over the county setting these fires out and set schools afire and burn them down. Well, I didn't go along with that. But, they spread that kind of doctrine. Well, that part of it was too forceful for me. I didn't want to see nothing like that done.

Stuckey But, I will say this: I'll have to agree with Roy Wilkins in one case. After they come with all that kind of a force, wanting to fight, knock down, pick up and drag out–in some cases they did more good in one year than we did in 20 years, because they were violent and we were nonviolent. So, it helped in some instances–it really helped. And I noticed down there in Alabama–I'll have to give you an example that came to us: a bunch of them Black Panthers or whoever they were down there had cows, and had a big place of their own. So, it helped in some instances, it really helped. And I noticed down there in Alabama. I'll have to give you an example that came to us. A bunch of them Black Panthers or whoever they were down there had cows, and had a big place of their own. And those Ku Klux people down there poisoned the cows, and passed by their place of business, threw Molotov cocktails in there, and burnt their place down, and shot some of them.

Stuckey Well, they went to the mayor of the city and the authorities, and they were very reluctant about doing anything about it. So they got together the last time and they went to the mayor of the city. They said, "If you don't do something about it, I'll tell you what we'll do. We're going to do something about it because we're going to burn down everything that fire will burn down. And we're going to kill your horses and your cows, too, and we're going to do the same thing." And they started out doing it. And when they found it out, they went to them, and called them in, and told them to stop it, that they'd take some action. And they took it. They took it. So I will say that. And I told some of them about that. Now, there's Judge Diggs in our county, got a great big farm.

Stuckey There's still down there. But, I don't like their attitudes. That's quote evil for evil quote. I still like Martin Luther King's attitude—nonviolence. But, they were violent. Now, when they came down to Charles County, they only set about three schools afire at the same time. there's still down there. But, I don't like their attitudes. That's "evil for evil quote. I still like Martin Luther King's attitude – non-violence. But, they were violent. Now, when they came down to Charles county, they only set about three schools of fire at the same time. well, I didn't go along with that. It probably might have helped, in a way, but there would've been a lot of harm in one way. And one time down there, they moved a colored principal of a school we didn't want to move to, and wanted to send a white principal there. so they told the state's attorney and the state superintendent what would happen if they did, they were going to burn the school down. And they came down in the county, and they were watching for them and looking out. But anyway, they put a Black principal there and so it went along; nothing ever happened

Richardson What was Dr. Jackson's reaction to the Black "militants"?

Stuckey It was pretty hard for me to guess Dr. Lillie Jackson along that line. Dr. Lillie Jackson was awful deep. She was a deep thinker and she could see a long ways, and she was pretty hard to guess. I could never guess her along that line, and I wouldn't pass an opinion on it. She was like that, like my pastor used to be about sex. There's a whole lot being said about sex in the newspaper, on the radio, and all of our (unintelligible) and we've got a good pastor. But our pastor don't touch that. He doesn't touch that, and what they say about it pro or con. Well, I don't remember Dr. Lillie Jackson saying anything about it. Some of them kind of thought she went along with some of it. And some say she didn't, but we couldn't get her. I couldn't. And all those that I talked with about it couldn't guess her. She just fought for civil rights in a peaceful way, and believed in that and wanted us to go ahead. And do what she said to do and do it like it to be done, and not harm anybody. Do it peacefully and in a nice way, sit down and talk to people. Do the right thing.

Richardson So she was non-violent and peaceful?

Stuckey Peaceful. And I guess she felt like that we were so limited, and if we had tried anything else, chances are we would have fell through with it, because we are very limited. And I know that was the right thing to do, because we are limited. That is to say, guns, ammunition, power and enough people to do something and to make it stick. And so I don't feel like–well, we just couldn't have gotten enough of our colored people to do it. (laughs) They are not going to do anything in other words we've got Black people not going to do anything in this world to hurt a white man. That's born in them, between the marrow and the bone. And I don't blame them. I'm not—wouldn't hurt a white man. And we've got plenty of Black people, women and men, and they are not going to hurt a white man.

Stuckey When I was coming up as a boy my father'd tell me–often tell me now, "If they're white and they tell you to do it go ahead and do it," because he was afraid of what you called, appraisals, this oppression. We lived on a white man's place for 40 or 50 some years, raised cotton, corn, peas and tobacco. And my father lived on (unintelligible) of land, never knew him to move, but one time. And they told him he was better off renting and working this big farm, then he is by having something of his own. And he didn't have nothing of his own. And of his 11 children, I was the only one he sent to college and sent to school.

Stuckey All the rest of them, fourth and fifth grade, they stayed home and worked on the farm. I'm the only one they sent to college. And in that day and time, you'd say that you send a Negro to college, "You to spoil our plow hand. Luther will never want to plow anymore. You sent him to school." And they said, "Who's going to work the farm?" And they believe that. And that thing is in them today, hasn't gotten out. You'd be surprised how far that goes on today, be surprised. The effects are still here.

Richardson Could you name any other elected public officials, other than McKeldin, in the last thirty or forty years in Maryland, who had the same stature on civil rights as he was?

Stuckey I don't believe I can. I thought Governor Nice was pretty good. We went before Governor Tawes, and he went along in some things–But I didn't keep up with the state affairs, I'm afraid to say.

Richardson How was Governor Nice sympathetic to the Black struggle?

Stuckey To tell you the truth, in my judgement, Governor Nice I think, was somebody that really went too strong. Because I felt like in one case–I don't know what time it was, when was it, that's why he was defeated. If he didn't do it, he allowed them colored fellows to do it, or allowed the *Afro* people, paper to do it, and it caused his defeat. When if he had not gone so strong, it wouldn't have been. Now he's not as forceful as he set out to do a thing like say a Roosevelt–like Delano Roosevelt. Delano Roosevelt would stand on his own. Mrs. Roosevelt could stand on her own. Look at how that with Marian Anderson, he wanted to stop her from singing. And she resigned, resigned from (unintelligible). And they found out then, after Mrs. Roosevelt took that stand, what did they do? They asked her back then and she accepted to sing then, and they were glad to have her sing. Well, that was a woman that was strong morally, spiritually, and financially. Well, when you've got power like that, you can do something.

Stuckey But whenever you don't have that type of power, not to exhibit it and put it over, then you're going to be defeated. And tell you the truth about it, right now I can't think–(unintelligible) guess Governor McKeldin in my judgement is about as strong as they've had. Now the others have come out and done some little things, and all. The way I feel about it, what little I know about it–but, of course, now I'm out there in the country. These people who work here in the city, stay here in the night and day and deal in the city, hold their jobs here in the city, pay taxes in the city–they know more about it than I do. I'm a little bit limited. I can tell you a whole lot about Charles County and that's about as far as I can go.

Richardson How has the civil rights movement changed in Charles County and southern Maryland in the last thirty or forty years?

Stuckey My, my, my! It doesn't seem like the same county. White and colored all riding together, going to school together, going to church together, working on the job together. There's one white lady, got a job down there with the (unintelligible), and she loves them and they love her. Another colored lady got a job in a white organization working, and they work just like–it would seem like to me (unintelligible). They just love them and work together and they work good. And well, you see the socializing. Now I'm not saying I'm going along with this, but I just have to tell the truth about it. In some cases, they are getting married, and living together. Well, thirty years ago, twenty years ago and say about fifty years ago, I never expected to live long enough to see anything like that. But they're doing it now, and nobody is paying no attention to it. It's going on.

Stuckey And I notice that they've got these Black principals in these schools, course now they (unintelligible) as many. And I admire these Black principals. They seem to be morally strong, and don't get out of their place, but I find a lot of these school children, the school boys and the school girls, they all co-mingle, they socialize, and some of them seem to want to get married and some of them do get married and all that kind of a thing. And that is on reason why that the good (unintelligible) casual people would like to have a place kind of to themselves, like St. Charles City wherein that if they do integrate, maybe it would be about a dozen to five hundred or three or four hundred, so the integration won't be so bad. Those that don't like this intermarriage. I've heard some of them speak about Dean Rusk. You know Dean Rusk, his daughter married, and did it all in private schools, and I guess that could have been the only Black boy in there, but never mind, his daughter fell for him. So, some of them like it, and some don't like it. But the thing I hate about that, in some cases, it is resented, in some cases not resented. Now, I can take my Black wife and boy, as long as I'm a Black man, no resentment about that at all. I notice here about a year ago, I guess you saw it in the paper where one Black man came through with a white wife, and where

they had a big fight in the station, and where they caused a few (unintelligible)– Black with white. And I was told there was a killing took place here about a year ago, going through Georgia somewhere a Black man and a white wife, and so on like that. But in other words, this country has got to be educated up to it. It's got to be educated to it, it's got to see it. And in some places, it is resented so bad, and the public has got to be educated because the public has not come up to it yet, but it's on its way. I saw in the paper about the number of intermarriages. I saw it and cut it out, but I just can't call it.

Richardson What do you think was Dr. Jackson's major contribution to the civil rights movement in Maryland?

Stuckey Well, her major contribution was her energy, her time, her thoughts, her patience, her endurance, and the principles. She really contributed everything she had to it. She gave it everything she had. She went all out for it. She prayed over at night and day, seemingly, she had to talk about it good night and day. That's all she knew to talk about. she wouldn't talk about nothing else. It just was in her from head to feet. It was just part of her, to the extent that you couldn't get nothing else out of her. And seemed like to me she was so forceful with it, until you had it to do, she'd try to make you do it, she'd insist you do it, and she'd come about it, go about it in such a way that if you didn't want to do it, you'd do it anyhow. Sometimes I did things that she wanted me to do, just to get rid of her, and when I did that – then I had more to do. And sometimes I did it just to please her, and it was all right, but when I did that I had something else to do, so you just kept on until (unintelligible) I had people say I was "crazy," too. I was civil rights' "crazy," too, so I just went right ahead. And so I still love it till today, I still love it. But she could–she gave all she had to it. She really loved that civil rights' movement, she loved it.

Richardson What was the source of this forceful concern, this character of hers?

Stuckey Well, it seems like to me it was in the way she outlines things, the way she told it. And if you followed her in directions, and followed her directions, you didn't make very many mistakes. You might have a hard time doing it, but it went over, and it finally worked out right. I noticed when I had that case down there when we wanted this boy to ride the bus, and those good white people wouldn't let him ride the bus, she told me who to see and who to talk to. And then, she took the same man, Tucker Dearing, have him to come down and he came down, and did exactly what she said to do, and it went over. And after we made such a success, and made such marks down in Charles County, they wanted to take Mr. Tucker Dearing away from us, and carry him over on the eastern shore. And I had to put up a big fight in an NAACP meeting to keep him down here in Charles County. even some of the white people wanted him down in Charles county on some cases. He was fine in the courtroom, he was fine. Some of them had never heard a Black man argue cases as fluently and as sensibly, and as forcefully as he argued that case. And Judge Diggs thought a whole lot of him, thought he was the best colored lawyer that ever came before the bar in Charles County. He was loved and he was liked. And I met them several times, wanted to know when was I going to call Tucker Dearing back in the county, when was he coming. But later on, everybody had him in Charles County. He set up an office down there once, but he had so much work he couldn't keep his office down there. He kept on til he came back to the county, and go down when he could, but he had an office set up down there one time. And I mean his office was full of people, colored and white. He was good.

Richardson Did Mrs. Jackson have any weakness that you were aware of?

Stuckey The only weakness I knew of and I'm kind of about that. When she got wound up and talked, she'd talk too long. I found that was her biggest weakness, but other than that, it was just fine. And of course I have patience, and I could do it, but all of them thought she talked too long. They'd say "Dr. Jackson, will you please let us get a talk in, let us go home, let us do this or let us get something to eat?" And she'd just pour it out. I felt like that was the only weakness she had that I could (unintelligible).

Richardson What do you see now as the future of the civil rights' movement, and what still needs to be done?

Stuckey Well, folks say that's the "sixty-four dollar question." There's a whole lot needs to be done. And, as I see the future of it, I believe we've got a great future. And I feel like some of it hinges around this busing issue, that we've got before us throughout this country. And we're lacking a long ways from having all the civil rights, equal rights and justice–we've still got a long ways yet to go, but we definitely have gone a long way. And I feel like that it is great. Now I cut that piece of paper out no longer than yesterday or last night. Four years ago in Maryland they had only one hundred eighty-three Black people in public office. And if I'm not mistaken the piece of paper that I cut out of the paper last night, they claimed that they've got four hundred and some people– Black–in public office in Maryland–four hundred and some. I wish to goodness I'd known that this question would be asked, I would have brought it and read it. I cut it out; I did that in case I'm asked or come to another meeting, I'd have it and then in a NAACP meeting I would carry it. But, we have got four hundred and some Blacks right here in the state of Maryland performing (unintelligible). Here four years ago, five years ago, it was only a hundred eighty-three–four hundred and some against one hundred eighty-three. So that looks like that thing is very much on the upswing–very much.

Richardson But how about for the average Black in Maryland, or the United States? Is there still a long way to go economically?

Stuckey Absolutely. We've got so many ghettoes–my Lord! For the average Black it's bad, extremely bad. The thing that makes it so bad for the average Black is the economic conditions. Everything is so high and the dollars that he gets doesn't count and doesn't go as far. He can't buy but just so much with it, and he be limited on his job, financially, intellectually–I would say physically, morally, until really he is under a terrible strain. It's pitiful. I've got two houses I'm renting to welfare people– Black. One of them women has got ten children, the other one eight, and they're pitiful. They are Black. And it'll take twenty years for them to make any headway worthwhile on account of the food stamps that they get, the kind of jobs they are able to hold, and the clothes they are able to buy their children, and the way they have to send them to school. And in other words, they've got to change this schooling system, and fix it so that these people in this lower income bracket, in the ghettoes, whose economic and other conditions are below average can get somewhere.

Stuckey They can't cope with it. Their background won't even allow it. And that's bad. Well, I wish that I could place it in the proper perspective in the way of telling it, and the way of talking about it. But I can't do that. But they're coming, and it's helping them, and there ae some better off than they have been but nothing up to par. They're way down below par. And you take the better class of white or colored. Why, certainly, they are way ahead of that class. There are differences in their children. There are differences in their background. There's a difference in their attitude and the physical features, their makeup, their way of thinking, and ignorance is a dangerous thing. And poverty and ignorancy seems to be a curse. And I hate it (unintelligible), but here we are.

Richardson How has the Black leadership changed? Why does it seem difficult now to pick out Black leaders?

Stuckey There are several reasons for that. In the church, the Black leaders are integrated with the white. In the schools, the Black leaders are integrated with the white, and I'd like to be a little frank along that line. I really feel like that a Black leader with less intellectual training, with less book knowledge and with less training, and can lead him better than the white who has never been segregated, doesn't know what it is to be segregated, and never been denied. I fee like this Black leader understands the man of his texture and impediment. I feel like he understands him better. And I feel like that if we are allowed to keep our Black leadership to that extent, that he can better lift us out of the gutter where we can get on a higher plane, a higher level with better leadership, better economic conditions, and a better generality. That's the way I feel about it because I feel like he understands a little better.

Stuckey We've got a Black pastor in our church, and I love the white pastor that comes around and the white superintendent, but I feel deep down in my heart that this Black pastor that we have understands us much better than he does, because he doesn't know what it means to be segregated. He doesn't know what it means to be financially and economically embarrassed like we do. He has never gotten up out of his seat because of the color of his skin and texture and so on like that, and given another his seat. He's never gone on a job and been told, "We can't hire you because you're white or Black." He's never sat down in a seat and told, "We don't serve you here. You can't eat here." And now he has never gone and gotten a job and told, "We can't give you any more because you are Black, because nobody else here gets it. And if I give you that, they wouldn't like it." And in certain neighborhoods where we actually don't want you, we'll put the price of a house up maybe thirty or forty thousand dollars. Well, at the salary you're making, you can't buy a nice place, here. He's never had that feeling. I notice a good white lady fell out with some of her good white friends, living right there in the community. And she put a big sign on her door, "House for sale–to colored only." And she sold it to colored. And those white, most everyone of them around there to sell out, and did sell out and left.