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Laura Goodly

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Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Laura Goodly

Interviewer:

Unknown

Interview Date:

August 2, 2017

Interview Location:

Rialto, CA

Length:

00:08:14

Interview Summary completed by:

M. Camacho Nuno, 2024

Description:

In this interview, Laura Goodly is the guest. She discusses her parents' jobs as sharecroppers and how her large family originally lived in Oberlin, Louisiana. Growing up, she had been raised in poverty alongside others in her community. Goodly also describes how there was a lack of full education for the Black population, going so far as to describe how high school was not an option for them. She eventually went to high school, after being given the right to vote in 1952, and adult school to get more of an education. She and her husband were able to go to college in San Bernardino since they moved to the state in 1962. With some questions given by the interviewer, Goodly talks about being a Creole woman and her continuation in the National Council of Negro Women. The interview ends with Goodly advising the youth, that is, to learn to work hard.

Subject Topic:

- Sharecropping
- Poverty
- Segregation
- Lack of a Full Education
- Voting
- GI Bill
- Bilingual
- Creole Culture
- National Council of Negro Women
- Working Hard
- College Education
- Advice

Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
Oberlin	City in Louisiana
San Bernardino	City in California

Temporal Coverage:

1952 - 2017

Key Events:

- Laura Goodly's parents were sharecroppers.
- Goodly originally had limited access to education due to segregation.
- After 1952 and the Black population was given the right to vote, Goodly and her husband continued their education.
- After moving to California in 1962, Goodly joined the National Council for Negro Women and was still involved in it at the time of the recording.
- Goodly explains that education is the ticket out of poverty.
- She tells the youth to learn how to work hard, including to study hard.

Key Organizations:

- National Council of Negro Women

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:00:18 - 00:01:28	Goodly talks about her family's origin and childhood experiences.
Digital Video	00:01:29 - 00:04:14	The lack of education during her youth and how Goodly was able to continue it as an adult.
Digital Video	00:04:18 - 00:06:08	Goodly joining the National Council of Negro Women in San Bernardino.

Related Materials

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Bridges That Carried Us Over Project at CSUSB, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Q: Okay, we're ready. Today we're interviewing Miss Laura B. Goodly. Today is August the 2nd, 2017. Miss Goodley, I would like for you to tell me, where were you born?

LAURA GOODLY: I was born in Oberlin, O-B-E-R-L-I-N, Louisiana. And my parents were sharecroppers, so we lived like in the county -- in the county, but the country of the city. We lived seven miles from the city.

Q: Keep talking.

LAURA GOODLY: Oh, okay. And what --

Q: So tell us something then about your childhood.

LAURA GOODLY: Well, we -- all I can remember, everybody were [00:01:00]

poor. So we didn't have -- we didn't have no competition. Like for example, some of us had shoes, some didn't. And we -- you know, we then, it wasn't something like we compete with everybody. We were all, about in the same condition.

Nobody had cars. We had a wagon, and we had to walk everywhere. And then, I was the oldest of seven children, so I had to make sure that all the chores were done before I went to school. And the other thing that's probably, I was in a segregated state. So the Black people didn't go to school -- to the high school.

[00:02:00] We had one-room country school with one teacher who taught seven grades, from first grade to seventh. And when you completed the seventh, then you couldn't go any higher. But in my case, my mom would always say, education is the way out of poverty. So she always em-- put emphasis on higher education. So, after I got married, I went to adult school. Well first of all, when the bus, we -- in 1952, the Black people in that community was given the right to vote. And we --

they got [00:03:00] a school bus. And then I was eighteen years old, and I went to school, to high school. And then I got married, I was 20. And so after I got married, I went to adult school, and did the GED. And my husband was what you call, was very -- you know, he wanted an education, so he went to a school with the -- under GI Bill. So we took the GED at the same time. So that's how I did finish -- I did complete college here in San Bernardino. We came to California in 1962. And -- when my second language I guess was English, because I was taught French [00:04:00] first. Go ahead and ask me (inaudible).

Q: Okay, so you said that English was your second language?

LAURA GOODLY: Yeah, I did --

Q: Okay, when did you learn to speak English?

LAURA GOODLY: In school.

Q: In school?

LAURA GOODLY: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hmm, and as a Creole woman, was your life any different in any way from other Black women?

LAURA GOODLY: I don't know, I think I was very sheltered. A lot of things we didn't -- I didn't -- I don't -- I can't think of anything different. It's just that, you know, we were taught to help each other. And, like when we would finish cleaning our [crop corn?], we had to go to other people who -- like someone had small children, and they couldn't [00:05:00] hire someone to clean the crop. We would go and help them (inaudible), so this is why I still today, I always try to help people, if there's something to do, right, I give a helping hand.

Q: Right, and the last question that I have for you is, when did you join the National Council of Negro Women, and where -- were you here --

LAURA GOODLY: And where.

Q: -- or were you in Louisiana?

LAURA GOODLY: Oh no, I didn't even know anything about National Council of Negro Women, didn't even know (inaudible) or anything. But, I joined the National Council of Negro Women in San Bernardino when I came here. And I was a charter member. [Lois?] was in charge then, so I -- and our group is only [Lois?] and I who are still charter [00:06:00] member, and I joined in 1967. And so I'm still with the organization.

Q: And the last question, what advice would you give to either our young people today?

LAURA GOODLY: Oh, okay. (laughs) I feel that the young people, we don't teach them how to work. I think they need to know that they have to work hard, if they study, study hard, and go to school, because that's the way out of many situation, if by education. I didn't get a college degree before I was 35, and my high school, I never -- I went to high [00:07:00] school two years, and I was 18, and I got married, I was 20. But I kept on going. I went through the GED, and got -- my -- I graduated here in San Bernardino. So, I say -- try to -- I mean, you need to be a good person, know yourself first, and love yourself. Don't -- and you don't have to do what everybody else do. You are an individual, so do what you feel that is the right thing to do. And that's about it. Anything else?

Q: Okay, that -- okay, we want to thank you for taking the time to do the interview [00:08:00] with us, and we are glad to have you here, and we hope that you would come back again, so you have a blessed day.

LAURA GOODLY: Thank you. (inaudible) know me, so she can put a --

End of Interview:

[00:08:14]