

**T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection**

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** Reverend Mary E. Moody

**COLLECTION:** 4700.1514

**IDENTIFICATION:** Participant in Baton Rouge Bus Boycott, 1953

**INTERVIEWER:** Amy Horn

**SERIES:** McKinley High School Oral History Project - Baton Rouge Bus Boycott

**INTERVIEW DATE:** April 17, 2002

**FOCUS DATES:** 1950s

**ABSTRACT:**

**Tape 3079, Side A**

Moody born July 29, 1926; volunteered to drive her DeSoto during Baton Rouge Bus Boycott at the behest of Reverend T.J. Jemison; recollection of a woman she drove to work; Baton Rouge inspired Montgomery Bus Boycott; Martin Luther King, Jr., visited Baton Rouge to learn about boycott; Moody was first car owner in her family; African-Americans riding the bus in Baton Rouge often stood over empty seats reserved for whites; sit-ins in Baton Rouge started after the bus boycott; women played key role in boycott; meetings about boycott; fear of retaliation from whites; inspiration of "Steal Away," a Negro spiritual; connection between Dr. King and Reverend Jemison; King's book *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*; Moody and Rosa Parks were both members of African Methodist Episcopal Church; contribution of Rosa Parks; news of bus boycott spread by word of mouth; urge to help people get to work on time so they wouldn't lose jobs; even small contributions are important; success of movement; standing over vacant seats on bus on her way to McKinley High School; white drivers probably felt privileged; both Moody's parents were teachers; man warned father to leave Hammond because whites thought he was too intelligent; considered man to have a caring heart and heeded his advice, moved; father eventually became supervisor of schools in West Baton Rouge Parish; walking was common form of transportation; economic impact of boycott; credit for boycott should go to God and Jemison; unsung heroes and heroines; feels connection with Rosa Parks; Moody called to ministry in 1972; pastored church in Saint Helena Parish for nine years; family connection to that church; details of career in church, pastored a total of twenty years; represented the African Methodist Episcopal Church at national and international meetings; serving churches in Fiji and Australia; now back at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church as associate pastor; believes she was called to serve God because He spared her during severe childhood illnesses; importance of having her mother at home as child; "When families can be strong, then cities can be strong. Nations can be strong".

**TAPES:** 1 (T3079)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 34 minutes

**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 18 pages

**OTHER MATERIALS:** Correspondence

**RESTRICTIONS:** None