

**Interview with Jean Hare
Interviewed by Susan Hawes
Interview on May 24, 1979
at 4134 Falls Road, Baltimore, MD**

**Baltimore Heritage Project
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Oral History- Edited Transcript

[Laughter] The following interview is being conducted for the Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project in the Hampden community. The interviewee is Jean Hare. The interviewer is Susan Hawes. Today is the 24 of May, 1979. We're at 4134 Falls Road.

SH: Can you tell me what you remember and what you've been told about your mother's mother, your grandmother?

JH: Well, my mother's mother lived in Hampden too, as far as I know she lived here from her childhood. She didn't have as clear a beginning as some of the other members of the family, in that her mother, a woman whose name was [unclear] who lived down on Chestnut Avenue, had several husbands. So there were lots of his sisters and you know it was a large family, but there were several of the men who are in family pictures but really don't have any relation to [laughs] our family, because they were other husbands of my great-grandmother. Her name though was Alice Anderson and we really know least about her; I know least about her, next to any of the other members of the family, except that her father didn't live very long. He died when she was still a very little girl, and she was only sixteen years old when she married my grandfather, and my mother was born when my grandmother was just seventeen. So you know I had a very young grandmother, they [her and my mother] were almost like sisters. She eventually moved out of Hampden when I was probably a little girl, and she lived in Canton. We used to go down and visit her and she had some rather distant relatives that lived in that part of the city; so that's how she happened to migrate there.

SH: You see, maybe I should have asked about your great-grandmother.

JH: Ah yes, it was her husband, my grandfather, Charlie Green, he had a very young wife [who] was really interrelated to Hampden because his mother, whose maiden name was Sally Cullum, was...

SH: Sally?

JH: Sally Cullum, C-u-l-l-u-m, [she] was actually the daughter of a man who had a grist mill on the [unclear] and she was little too when her father died, but still she was close to my mother and my mother knew a lot about her background. She lived in Medfield, which was the name of the mill where her father was, and so Sally Cullum was born

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[sound of passing cars] in 1852 and her mother's name was Nelson, and it was her mother's mother who had come to this country in 1818, so we have a pretty good record of that one branch of the family. [This was] only because my mother's father's people [hired] people that did genealogy studies from Texas and from Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, [then we learned] that [there] were other branches of this family. And so when they were doing their genealogy, that's when I learned a lot of facts myself about Sally Cullum's background. She was born in 1852 and she died in 1920.

She lived at Medfield and she used to tell my mother about, you know, killing snakes in the fields up there when she was a little girl, and she evidently went to the Medfield School. There was a school and there's some record of it that I've sprung across down at the Maryland Historical Society, a place called Medfield Academy. And I don't know whether that was just a boys' school or whether that was the name of the school there. I don't know what kind or how much schooling she had, but she was certainly a literate person and she had a beautiful handwriting, because her writing is in that little Bible over there, where she listed all her children's names. So when she was a young girl she went to work in the mill and somewhere probably after [that], she won that little Bible from St. Mary's church. In 1859 she must have gone to Lynnsville, Ohio, and I would imagine she went with a group of girls. People would migrate to different mill areas, and so she lived in Lynnsville, Ohio, and she married a man whose name was John Leander Green. He was, I think, two yrs older than her; his birthday is in that Bible too. There was a small difference in their age. He was very young at the time of the Civil War, but she did eventually in her life collect a veteran's pension, so he must have signed up for something or other in the Civil War. She lived there [in Ohio] and then came back to Hampden in 1880 because this man, her husband, was a machinist and he was coming here to work at [Poole](#) and Hunt which, just by coincidence, happened to be where her hometown [laughs] was.

[Poole](#) and Hunt was in this grand and glorious stage back then. They came here in 1880 and John Leander Green died on New Year's Day of 1881. So she had four little children. She had had five children; [but] she had lost one small child. These were the days when people had to take care of themselves, so their little family was split up and two of the children went to live with neighbors, and my grandfather happened to be one who went to live with the family in Woodberry and his brother George. The other two children were sent to an orphanage, but they did get back together again and I think it was probably just a short period of time [before] they were able to get the family back together. She worked in the mills as a weaver; she was an expert weaver at Clipper Mill. Because I've asked my mother a lot of questions about her since I've gotten interested in Hampden history and feel that I can track it through a personal relationship, every once in a while I think of something new that I might ask my mother. I've asked my mother like did she have pierced ears, did she wear earrings, and personal things about her. I have a lot of pictures of her and pictures of her mother that must have been taken around the 1850s or '60s.

She [Sally Cullum] was a patient at Johns Hopkins hospital twice in her life. Once for a hernia; I wondered if that was work-related [laughs] because you know those women did work I think that men do now or men did later and had things happen. She had a knee operation one time and she was in the hospital for that. So I don't know how many years she worked in the mills, but my grandfather Charlie Green was only nine

years old at the time of his father's death, so he went to work at the mill too. He was one of the many children working there. I've written this up before for the Hampden book because I wanted it known by people who look upon Hampden and Woodberry as the company town, and think that people were put upon so terribly and that life was hard. I knew my grandfather because he lived until I was twelve and I knew that he was a person with many interests and a very bright man even though he was blind; he had lost his sight when he was a young man. He was coached by a man named White, who had White School on Chapel Road, and so he learned to write and he had some artistic talent of some kind because his artistic bent led him into being a gravestone cutter. [Laughs] We have a little block with my mother's name that we use for a doorstep here, for he did anything with my mother's name in it. Then he was a letter carrier for a while and it was while he was a letter carrier that he discovered that he was losing his sight.

But Sally Green, I'd like to try to follow through on her. She stopped her work in the middle somewhere along the line and she worked as the mistress of the Lohman Room at Gilman School, and then she did the same thing at the Baltimore Country Club, and at one phase of her life she worked at the old St. James Hotel down on Charles and Center Street, right across the street from [Walters](#) art gallery where Westminster house [\[524 North Charles St.\]](#) is now. She lived with my mother when my mother was first married, because this woman never owned a house; and yet, I'm sure that they didn't look upon themselves as terribly poor people. I think that there is, in life, the benefit of a community like Hampden for that period of history, when people didn't have to adhere to [an] image in order to evaluate themselves. There are many people that they knew that [it] was the great benefit that they got out of life. I always felt that they knew people of a broad spectrum: the doctors that were living in here and the doctors' children that they all knew and saw grow up, and the mill managers.

One of Sally Cullum's sons, my grandfather's brother George Green, eventually was head of the office at Clipper Mills. He died in 1934, and so he sort of went up in the administrative side of the millwork. I think that Sally Cullum's life; I used to think when I first got interested in it that she must have been an intensely lonely person as she grew older; she was 68 years old when she died. But then I re-thought that and I thought that she was a woman who lived in a phase of history where she was just a little country girl and then she was part of a small town and then eventually that small town was part of a larger city, and that I imagine her spectrum of life broadened with each step that was made. Or let's see the spreading of the real [unclear] civilization when country towns become part of the city, because my mother spent a lot of time with her when she, my mother, was little and she went off to the Eastern Shore. They would take the ferry from Baltimore and go over to [unclear] point and then take the train and go to Denton. She visited people in [Cockeysville \[MD\]](#) and she knew people all along the line [laughs] and I think that there were probably fellow mill workers that got off [the line]. The women who married and men who were farmers did many different things in their lifetime and I just had a feeling that those people had a great feeling of security that we never know or are able to understand, only because opportunity was wide open; she was limited financially, but opportunity for travel and for doing your own thing was just [unclear], so I think she was probably a very happy person in spite of what appears to be the rather sad things that happened to her. She never remarried and she lost her one daughter when she was only 18 yrs old, she [the child] died in childbirth.

Because of the way things were in those days, talking about the ingenuity that people had, I don't think it was ingenuity. I think they were just really able to do what came naturally and they didn't even look upon themselves as striking out to conquer anything. I think they were able to follow their inclinations and their ambitions, because when my grandfather learned that he was losing his sight and he was treated by a doctor down at St. James Hotel... that may be why she got a job down there. Then, when he found out that the doctors here couldn't do anything for him, I learned this from my girlfriend's father, who was a man who was devoted to my grandfather. He was a man who is now in his 70s, Burt Edmundson, and he appreciated my grandfather and his own father-in-law, and the two men, my grandfather and his father-in-law, had been lifelong friends in Hampden. Charlie Peacock, whose father was written up in our book because he was a Civil War veteran, and my grandfather was Charlie Green, and they called each other Jim. There are all these funny little stories about him, but Burt Edmundson told me this story. Families I still say do not talk about themselves and I read this wonderful piece in the Village Voice talking about mill families. I think I told you a little bit about this before: mill families in Lawrence, Massachusetts and this writer, I don't know if he coined the phrase but at least he wrote this phrase that said "the noble hypocrisy of not talking about yourself", and I think that it again was another instinctive thing of people. It was their own prestige and their self-esteem that kept them, well I guess, motivated towards the future for one thing and they didn't think so much about their past. I learned all this anyway from Burt Edmundson: that my grandfather had helped some two men, a man who was a young Baptist minister who was a doctor, Kingman Handy, and he was an important man in Hampden history, Kingman Handy. There have been a lot of important men in Hampden history, men who like Horatio [\[Gambrell\]](#) who lived here for fifty years, who was a leader in industry, and Kingman Handy, who really lived on University Parkway, but for a long time he was the minister of Union Baptist Church. My grandfather was not a Baptist I guess, because you know, through the close inner circle of all our friendships and everything in Hampden, they at least knew each other. So, Kingman Handy and somebody from a national foundation for blind people, who had some other name, I don't know what, got my grandfather aboard a boat without even the captain knowing he had a blind man aboard.

So, they stashed him aboard the back [laughs] and they were at sea, past the limitation of whatever, when at the point of no return somebody said "this man hasn't come out of his cabin even since we've started our voyage" and so they searched him out and brought him out and they found out of course he couldn't see well enough to get around. Burt Edmundson said Willie Hoppy, [laughs], who was the world champion billiards player, was on that ship and he befriended my grandfather and took care of him and that they were friends throughout their lifetime.

So, [later on in life], my grandfather went to Germany and he was in a hospital there being studied for ... I'm not sure if he was there for a year, but he might have been. Once again, he formed such close friendships with people who came to that hospital, either nurses or whatever that, this is another family story that I love: before World War I, this German family came to Baltimore to see my grandfather, came to this country to visit him, and they came evidently in the winter time because it was snowy and the whole family walked to Pennsylvania Station [\[roughly three miles, one way\]](#) to see German people. I mean that's how people were, and to me, that is really worth thinking about.

So he went to Germany and was there a [unclear] blind man and he was a flamboyant man, my grandfather was, he liked to gamble, he played cards, and of course all of his friends could have been men that had been boy mill workers with him. He was what we would call now a “man’s man” and I guess it was a great age for that kind of thing. It was actually my grandfather’s friends who set him up in business because they were a poor family. The other branch of the family, his brother George, who was still working the mill, and his wife...

SH: Another son of Sally?

JH: Yeah, George was the other son, and by that time the only other living son of Sally Cullum. They bought a house up in Evergreen [a half-mile north of Hampden], which is now Schenley Road, but it was called Evergreen Road or Evergreen. My mother lived up there for a time in her life, and my grandfather, when he came home from Germany, moved in with them. He was trying to learn to play some musical instruments and they read to him every night, so because of that the whole family got to know a lot of literature. My grandmother was the woman who knew the Civil War, and I think it was a very emotional time in American history. I think that all this family are [an]overly emotional kind of people, hanging onto family relationships and friendships and all that, but I think I always feel it stems back to Sally Cullum’s extreme influence on this family, and probably other people in the community who had lived through the same time too. Gosh, my mother is a product in encouragement, because when I was little I used to think of my mother as the kind of person who related to books and that kind of did something for my ego as a child. She liked to go to bed early and read. My mother was getting books out of the library. I always felt that all these strains came though from these different mishaps in one way or another to the family, and sort of built a background for them that were rather an inward look at themselves.

So my mother went to work when she was 12 years old, because when my grandfather lost his sight there was no income for a year. They tried to keep things hanging together as a family, but there was no income and there are a lot of funny stories that come out of that because my grandfather, Charlie Green, and his wife, Alice, bought a house on Roland Avenue, across from St. Mary’s Church. One of the short row of houses there, about three or four steps up, my mother had these funny pictures of herself taken out front, with all her different dogs and her big flower hat.

They took in boarders and one of them, this isn’t Hampden history, but one of the boarders they had was a German man. I might imagine he was a manufacturer’s representative to this country for some German company because after all, the Germans in those days were known for building [unclear], and the many things that we still look to Europe to get here. So this German man had his girlfriend living with him there at the house, Frea [her name] and she couldn’t even speak English, but because my mother was a little girl, they were friends; they were able to communicate in some manner. My mother said she used [to see] poor Frea just sit at that front window, this was in 1910, ’12, ’15 or something like that, and just look out all day long until whatever this man’s name was, till he came home. Then they left this country when the war started. So, all [of] that made World War I interesting to me.

My father and mother even though they grew up in Hampden, never knew each

other as children and didn't meet till my father was in the army. My father was a good-looking man and a very aggressive person, and he went to St Thomas's School. 55 and St. Thomas's were the schools that the children went to in the neighborhood in those days, and, you know, another thing about people just being able to do their own thing: you know education is grand and there's no way without it, but these were people who became self-educated and they had the freedom to do it, which isn't possible now. My father started work, but he always said [that his life was] the internal combustion machine. He worked when he was a young boy I think. Whatever company he was working for sent him off down to the harbor to do some work on an engine or a ship or a boat; I don't know whether it was a large ship or if it was someone's pleasure cruiser or what, [but] from then [on] my father had this lifelong love affair with boats and engines. It took hold so much then [that] he went to Maryland Institute [\[now Maryland Institute, College of Art\]](#), which of course was the [place for] mechanical drawing classes that they had then. A couple of weeks ago I picked up an old atlas that we had, to see where Lisa's new house was going to be up in Connecticut, and it was a 1931 atlas, just like a paperback thing. And in it was this piece of little paper that my father [had drawn on], he used to just sit around the house, always just drawing machinery, fly wheels and assembly lines. He doodled with machinery writing in dimensions.

He enlisted in the service, when the war came, and he went to Princeton to the Air Corps officers' training, which influenced his eating habits for the rest of his life [laughs]. They ate in the schools mess halls or whatever, which were for students then, and were fed all this wonderful food. He loved rolled jelly omelets and eggs poached in tomato sauce and things that I think he first encountered [there], although he came from a family that basically had a foreign background and food was the biggest thing with them, as it was with any ethnic group. So my father was up there learning the mechanics of airplanes for a while, and, well I guess this is still Hampden history; so it didn't take him long to get the idea that they weren't going to do much with airplanes. I think the animated cartoons of the Red Baron tell it all [laughs], they had a few wild sorties and that was the end of it, but [they were] finding out what they could do with land vehicles I guess, because Colonel Frank Andrews, who later became General Frank Andrews and Andrews Field was named for him, called and said "Larry, we want you to go down to Fort Meade and set up a machine shop." So my father was pretty well involved in mechanical stuff for him to have been singled out to do it and he did. He went to Fort Meade [\[MD\]](#) and started a machine shop there to convert aerial motors into tank motors because they were still [unclear] up until World War II which is when I stop thinking about this stuff. They still used these, I don't mean aerial, I mean radial engines in tanks, and so they took all their airplane equipment and converted it into tank equipment. My father left the army as a second lieutenant, and it gave him a great boost in life. You know, people like to say "oh people in Hampden, yeah you think of people in the service", but I think that you've got to recognize that it was probably an important element in its time because it got people away from home and got them thinking on a broader basis; like my father, a man who went back to his home town with these talents and he went to [unclear] and he made some [unclear] for some beautiful [unclear] that I have one on the shelf over there. He was a fiercely independent person, he never learned how to subdue his own ambition unlike MacArthur [laughs] and a few other people; you know that kind of wild ambition [that] lasts for a while... well it lasted...

So he worked just long enough and then he worked for Continental Can Company and they later bought out [inaudible]. He spent his lifetime being a [inaudible] man [who at] an early age was chairman of the standards committee for Continental Can. When I was a child my father was always on a train going up to Syracuse where they had certain factory. [In the] tin can trade and things like that where things were rolling off the assembly line by the millions, standards to size and so forth were very important. I heard all this at table talk when I was growing up. It was rather funny because my mother had worked for this food broker and so they used to sort of play games with each other about "oh do you remember so and so", talking about the different packers uh food packer [inaudible]. My mother can still tell you the names of these many people. I guess when I ramble on about all this, being so defensive about people and Hampden being turned inward, [it's] because a certain group of people were. But I think that there were maybe people and Hampden was the inward thing for them, but they may have come here from-- - say a rural Appalachia--- and so being turned inward was still an expansion for them. My father's friends [inaudible] [who] enlisted in World War I with him, as I said, and were all men who went up with their own companies; they went up in the world and became social minded. My father never did. That was never a thing with him. In fact, my father was so dedicated [laughs] that he quit Continental Can Company when he left that New Jersey factory. He walked out because my mother had health problems (she had asthma because she was worried about her blind father down here) and so my father [walked out of the factory] and, as an older person, I admired him for doing it. You could afford to be more rambunctious in those days. He walked out of Continental Can [when] he was plant manager and he was in his 30's and came down here. About six months later, he went back to Continental Can again for reestablishment. It wasn't a long period of time.

My mother, her business friendships in the office--- there were a lot of German people from East Baltimore--- would kid her unmercifully about Hampden. Hampden was already the butt of many jokes. My mother became acquainted with the opera and these people had more of a foreign element in their background and so they had different interests. It was a pretty broadening experience for my mother. She owns two percent of the business when she retired because she was pregnant [laughs] in World War I. She didn't want them to know she [pregnant] and she worked for a while and then had to give up her job...

SH: She had to give up her job...

JH: Yeah well because she was pregnant you know and she felt that it was the proper thing.

SH: She couldn't [work] again?

JH: She never did. I don't think that she wanted to. In the meantime, I don't know whether my father was out of the army before my brother was born. I'm not quite sure of that but when he came home the general attitude of women in those days... They weren't

reading the Ladies Home Journal for nothing [laughs]. All these ads about staying home and making your waffled aprons and I guess I overworked this point because when I worked at W. Burton Guy [someone that] I worked with came over here after World War II. She was a German youth leader and she hated this country. She couldn't stand the commercial aspect of this country and she divorced her husband because of it and went back. She was so turned off by certain things. I'm not world wide or anything, but as I got older, I could see the good and bad of all this and I think that we were being forced [to be a] lady libber because I had to defend myself [laughs] which I didn't believe in. But some of it was badly needed and I feel when I go to the antique shows and flea markets and buy old Lady's Home Journals from 1902 and see how women were really just being channeled into thinking... When you think of it the, great progress that this country made was mainly in home appliances and household items and making living easier so I think you know ultimately everything got shunted off in the direction of putting the lady on a pedestal in the house [laughs]

SH: Let's get back to the very beginning of your generation when you were a little girl growing up in this house. What do you remember about it?

JH: Well, the first thing that I remember was [that] my father bought that great big grand back porch and it was the only one on this block. It became the gathering place for the whole neighborhood. The greatest differences between now and then is that we had a car and Mr. Waxter, about six doors up the street, had a car, [as well as] two or three other people in this neighborhood. There were so few automobiles that when I would get out of bed, and I was always an early riser even when I was a little kid, I could hardly wait to get downstairs and sit in a chair in this corner and look out the front window at the cars lined up driving down, all the sort of people going to work. We would round up a bunch of kids on Sunday afternoon--- and I think the Waxters would do the same thing--- and we'd go for a ride. That is really the greatest difference that automobile traffic has made in a community like this. This house [was] built in 1914 and so it was still a new fresh community after World War I. The housewives were first generation in this neighborhood and [automobiles were] the first step away from Hampden for a lot of people. It was a new thing and [inaudible] the streetcar line certainly wasn't new. It wasn't that they accepted streetcar travel, it was just a wonderful convenience and they made the most of it. My blind grandfather lived with us and that made a huge impression in my life--- having a blind man in the house. I thought I didn't relate to him as I did other people. He was always a curiosity to me he had a big port wine birthmark on his face and he was blind.

SH: Did he ever mention the reasons for his blindness?

JH: Well [inaudible] he tried to have the birthmark on his face removed and the x-ray treatments destroyed the cornea. Later on, they could do a cornea transplant but they hadn't perfected that, so he spent the rest of his life as a blind man. The streetcar travel and the relationship of neighborhood people [going] out to the downtown area were very pleasant put[ing] your hat and gloves on[and] go to town for the afternoon. That's what my mother would do [laughs]. My blind grandfather left from this house every morning.

He got himself up and out and waited in the front steps and the streetcar conductor would stop in front of the house. [The driver] would put my grandfather aboard the streetcar and let him off in front of his shop. He would get the 20 at the five streetcar. Because my grandfather was blind and had that shop--- that was a big influence in my life. But, I didn't realize until much later. He had all of his old friends around him all the time and it was a focal point for me [inaudible] 36 street. I would never go to the movies or walk out 36th street of course that I wouldn't stop in and say hello to my grandfather. He sold [inaudible] pipes. You might read this on the front of the paper sometime because I wrote a piece about the [inaudible] decorating company or pendeco. They put out such beautiful [inaudible tobacco?] tins. That was an important thing in male culture--- the smoking thing, I think now. It was Depression days. When I would go to 36th street with my mother [to] what has been Sander's corner for the last twenty or thirty years, was still the big beautiful wonderful bank. I can just remember the huge long steps that went up to the door which was the second floor. The interior of that bank was beautiful and there was so much brass work around and a shiny brass railing on the long steps came down.

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I can remember--old times, whether Hampden had so many old timers then that that didn't have to work and were retired or whether people were out of work because of the Depression, but it was a community where people always could live outside their own home and have have friendships and relationships outside their own home. That's what I wish it could be again--- all these men sitting on the bank steps and the ball game being blared out all over the 36th street. They were all sitting there listening to the ball game and the beautiful post office that used to be above 36th street on Elm Avenue. I've often wondered what happened to the brass work. [The] brass that was probably 24 inches wide and I could almost remember it going way up high over my head. I bet it was junked when the post office was torn down. All these beautiful things that people built that they cherish now--- they were all over Hampden. My fathers people living down on Elm Avenue in this great big three story house that had been built right after the Civil War by my father's grandfather, a man named Phillip Hare, that had a big back yard and grape arbor. There were always all these crocks of fermenting grapes, [they were] making their own grape wine. My father's father, John Hare, in those days was just a chauffeur for the police commissioner. He did that because he had been a horseman with the Baltimore City Police Department. He knew horses, he was kicked by a horse and he was a crippled man.

SH: Okay, what things would you do for fun, for entertainment that you [inaudible]?

JH: Well, it was really wonderful and I realized this long before the Eastern City sort of went caput. When my close friends moved to Seattle in 1954, she'd go on all about our wonderful childhood and she would come back here and tell us that I wasn't old enough then for nostalgia so I would reflect on it a little bit. But, I did become aware of what a wonderful thing it was. I knew people from here to 33rd street probably on every street and every block and I bet my own close friends were the girls that lived in Weldon Circle and close to me where we had known each other since before starting school just playing in the neighborhood. We went to school together. We all would [go] to 36th street on Friday night without question. It was the thing we knew we were going to do. There were

two movies down there and cavacos, your boyfriend was sitting there sipping a coke. They were so benign, such innocents but we'd congregate and then we'd go to movies if it wasn't too late, we'd all have a curfew and we'd have to be home by 10:30 or 11. My parents are rather hard to describe. My father was a man with a terrible temper. He'd fly off and [was] very strict in some ways but I really think I had a lot of freedom. But, my girlfriend Elle did not. Her father was an entirely different kind of man. He'd grown up in an orphanage and he was really, I think more concerned about his children, it was just honest interest, but he would lay down all these thick strict rules. It was funny because I look back now and our whole crowd was conforming to what her father was laying down for her because we'd all have to travel together so we'd go off at 7 and come back before whenever time she had to be home. We'd do that on Friday nights and Saturday nights. Saturday night we could go ice-skating and we'd walk. We roller skated on the streets. I can remember [Weldon Circle](#) [[now Weldon Place](#)] out here when there were probably 150 kids roller skating and, I'm not kidding, the police department would block the street off because it was a built in roller rink [laughs], being a sort of a pleasant place for kids to congregate. We had pranks and we used to even play tennis out on the street. Lord, it sounds so healthy and wholesome that I can hardly say right now. [laughs] But that's what we did and the bunch of girls that were my friends living here--- we'd ride bikes oh I guess for 3 years we rode bikes after school every day. My girlfriend, Elle, was a Peabody student so she'd have to do her practicing. We'd be riding up and down the back alley waiting for the time when she could come out and join us. City living really was quite different.

Children here now can't do any of these things. We had this marvelous woods where all of Medfield is and kids had their own gangs here and every gang would have its camp over in the woods [and] go over there to walk a dog. I have walked through the camps where the smokehounds hung out and not, realizing until I was in the middle of things, that there were a few smokies over here and a few smokies over there and they had their pot of alcohol in the center inhaling the fumes. It's funny about that kind of thing too. Now because I had this older brother who was a male chauvinist I worshiped my older brother. He was enough older than me that he could be quite adventuresome. My Lord the tales that he could spin about what kids did. His gang would steal trains and, I'm not kidding [laughs], on the sliding down here and a hand car and pump it up as far as the vinegar works and come down and roll it up here [laughs] somewhere close to the Pennsylvania yards. I mean, they really were destructive and if it were being done now, everybody would turn over. But, it was their kind of fun. My brother, as he got older and thought about these really preposterous things that [he]did Because I had my brother who was hung up on army navy stores selling all World War I, leftovers--- books of poetry, navy peacoats--- we always had a lot of stuff around this house--- my brothers bugle and the guns under his bed. My brother would always sort of laugh about this Pete. Hampden always had its characters. We have Nelly Summerville who was practically the janitors, extra-ordinaire [laughs]. She could clean up for grins and everybody always knew Nelly Summerville. Where she lived I'll never know. I'll always remember her as a gray haired woman with her hair up in curlers and [laughs] carrying on down around 36th street someplace. Pete was probably the smokehounds extra-ordinaire because I'll always remember his name. But you see, he came from what you would consider to be a very socially accepted family. He was just a man who didn't make it and so the kids were

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scared of these smokehounds. When they would see them on the front street, they'd run from them because you could spot one--- he looked disheveled. I happened to know because his two sisters were women who taught in the Baltimore City Schools and they lived in a very nice house on [Roland Avenue](#).

SH: When you say smokehound, what do you mean by that?

JH: It was a cheap way, I guess, of getting drunk or getting high. It was preceding to pot. They would buy wood alcohol in the hardware stores and, I guess, this is what they would do--- put this together--- they would take it over in the woods or someplace [where] they could all just lounge around and build a fire. [They would] put it in a pot and then inhale the fumes so they were getting alcohol into their systems. I had forgotten that [laughs] The city was not intense, it was relaxed and the things that go on in a relaxed atmosphere, no matter what they are, never seem to create dire circumstances. Now the city is intense and you look upon this as just folklore and didn't have to be a big problem or whatever it has to become legislation [laughs] it has to become everything [now]...

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SH: What about holidays? Either Hampden Holidays or holidays in your family? Do you remember?

JH: Mmmhmm. Well, keeping the holiday where probably the only one we were tuned into was Halloween and we would always go down to my grandfather's place and have a spot on the avenue to watch the Halloween parade which was always a big thing. Then there was all the fraternal orders that were an important part of Hampden history and these great pictures of these men all dressed up in their tuxedos who got their pictures taken down at headquarters you know down on Charles Street and you know they were probably uh they were a distinguished looking group and kind of funny to look at now. I guess it was because of all the fraternal orders that you know that led into the parade thing and my father loving the war so much we spent an awful lot of time when I was a child driving around and looking at shore [property](#) for years before he ever bought a place.

That whole generation they were really overprotective of kids and my father was always scared to death something would happen. My father he had a fierce temper and blow up and when he blew up the whole family fell apart [laughs] and we went off to a Sunday school picnic once in my lifetime probably did this before--have cute pictures of my father and my brother together over at [Druid Hill](#) park-- and it must have been taken at you know such a gathering but that was before I arrived in 1925 we went over there one time and I just remember sitting in the car and my father was exploding about something and we turned around and came home that was the extent of our picnic...

SH: 4th of July picnics?

JH: Yes, indeed. They all had been a big part of my mother and father; it was old habit for them--- 4th of July picnic stuff and I think they were out for new stuff. So, we would go vacationing. We did it I think two years, which seemed a lot, at Rock Hall down on

the Eastern Shore with this grand, grand Buffington family who lived all their life down 36th street. I just loved those people so much and they were a foursome--- my mother and father and Mr. And Mrs. Buffington. They were close and vacationed together. They had a big family and there was a lot of them. We would just go out in the car and take rides in the country mostly with the Buffington family [but] never by ourselves. Christmas was related to church activity although I don't think we thought of ourselves as really staunch Christians. It was the way that people did things since my girlfriend had to go to Christian endeavor on Sunday nights, this whole group, a couple Catholics included, formed the Christian endeavor in the Presbyterian church. We were the main [laughs] carolers. We put on the Christmas pageant. This was just preceding World War II--- it was probably 1938 to 1952, I would probably say when our friends were old enough to start being called up or be involved in the war and so we had a lot of involvement in the church. These days people relate to the schools they go to, particularly the college they went to. In Hampden if you knew somebody the question that would always follow was "Where did he go?" And then it was what church did he go to? Funny, I don't think many people were uptight Christians.

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SH: You said you went to Alder's Gate when you were--younger, though.

JH: Oh, well I went there you know, and I taught a Sunday school class when I was only about fourteen years old, and I was in Christmas pageants there and all kinds of children's day church things. We always had to say a piece that was standard, having to learn something for children's day. I declared I'd try to be part of a church group to provide...I would love to do it, anyway, but whether I will or not---

SH: To provide---

JH: ---something for children again, although, you know, there's not the innocence that there was for us and so whether children would even be interested in trying...But we went on hikes; the church groups would hike up the railroad tracks, the [Bare Hills](#) [[Near Lake Roland and Robert E. Lee Park](#)], you know, even on Washington's birthday or any school holiday. We'd strike out and go up the [Bare Hills](#), the boys would take their rifles and shoot at tin cans and we'd have a little catastrophe or a big catastrophe...a couple of times we came home with kids with broken arms [laughs.] You know, we'd find a monkey vine and swing, and old Herb who lived down on 37th Street--is part of the mainstay of Hampden. I remember we all came home early that time with Herbert with his broken arm and these kids lived on [inaudible] Lane, and ...some of my earliest thoughts of getting out of the house when I was a child was to go to Christian endeavor with my brother on Sunday night, and a very nice little Halloween party would always be held sometime, probably not on Halloween night, but around that time up at Alder's Gate, and Raymond Cline and his wife who still live up on 42nd Street were sort of young in those days and they were the youth leaders for the little kids, playing games you know, bobbin' for apples. We'd make the crepe paper costumes for ourselves or you know, Halloween and that would be part of... well, sort of ordinary everyday play in those days a lot of it had to do with playing movie stars [laughs] and that didn't have much to do with the holidays but it was fun. The neighborhood grocery store would sell crepe paper

and we would make ourselves these great old costumes and do tap dancing and [do] acrobatics as we'd call it, but you see we had all learned some tap dancing anyway, the time step and a few things that were right, aside from the movies that were laying it on thick for all of us down at Roosevelt Rec [\[on W. 36th street, near Robert Poole Middle school\]](#).

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The following interview is being conducted for the Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project in the Hampden community. The interviewee is Jean Hare. The interviewer is Susan Hawes. Today is the 24th of May, 1979. We're at 4134 Falls Road.

SH: Jean, would you continue where you left off? You were talking about... Ella Banks tap-dancing---

JH: Oh, yes. Well, Ella Banks taught tap-dancing at the Roosevelt Rec. one night a week, at Roosevelt Recreation Center... I was rather young in comparison to some of the older girls who were more accomplished dancers, and we all had our little black velvet tap-dancing tights and our white satin pull-sleeve blouses that we wore, and I could remember particularly a girl named Rappaport, whose brother later became my dentist [laughs.] I was really just so terribly hung up on tap-dancing. I used to tap dance my way down the steps in the morning and on all the floors [laughs] But---

SH: Did you tap dance your way into school?

JH: [Laughs] Well, maybe once or twice I participated in some school activity... There'd be great entertainment down on 36th. ... I think it was a sign of the times---movies and all these things that had an influence on what we were all thinking and trying to do, but when they would have entertainment at school, it would be terrific, and they brought out Aldous Mann and Al Barton, who used to collect tickets at the Hampden movies. Al and his family really related back to the mill history. Everybody knew Barton's store. I think they bought the mill store from the people that had it really early. There was a big Barton family, and Al would rattle spoons on his knee to banjo music and at minstrel shows. It was just an amusement to ... portray... I guess betray is a Freudian slip because it eventually became a betrayal of the way of white people and their thinking and their portrayal of black people and of Mr. [inaudible] or whatever they called the men in the minstrel show. There were people and school kids who could sing really well. Some of them went on to have singing careers, like those who lived on little streets like Pleasant Street down behind Elm Avenue. There was a girl down there named Jean Gorman who had a perfectly beautiful voice, and a girl named Faye who used to live up the street and they had soprano voices. There were groups singing songs... people made their own music of course. We were just past that stage when they were saying there should be a piano in every parlor, but the idea was still there to some degree.

SH: You mentioned the Grimm brothers.

JH: I remember reading something that the daughter of the founder of Grimm's restaurant wrote. What an incongruous combination, James Grimm, who was the

proprietor of the inn, and the son of the man that started that restaurant, and his sister, who did some writing one time. She wrote about her childhood, and remembering the wonderful banjo/mandolin group that her father belonged to. After they would close the restaurant, they would all gather down there and do their thing--- play their mandolins. There were traditional piano teachers who went to people's houses and taught piano lessons. [Spiro?] Agnew's wife, Judy... I know that it was her father or uncle who was one of the men who was sort of a circuit riding piano teacher, who taught a lot of people in my mother's generation how to play the piano.

SH: Besides learning activities that [inaudible] the schools, what was school like? What were things like at school?

JH: Great [laughs.] It was a great school. The Depression was going on, and I was never aware of it because my father wasn't out of work, but the people that were out of work, you just didn't think anything of it. It just was an accepted thing. I found out later, when we'd all grown up, and I talked to some of the girls I'd known, that they were eating pancakes three times a day because pancake mix was a cheap way to put food on the table in Depression days. But because it was that time, the poor people weren't any different than anybody else. There was one difference, and it made a life-long impression on me when I was a little child, and I knew that people were poor. It made an impression on my friend Elle too, because she was from the same kind of family that I came from. Her father worked for Sherwood, which became Sinclair Ridgefield, which in turn became CP Oil. It was a little privately owned oil company in Baltimore. Mr. Sherwood, John Sherwood, and her father built a lot of stations for Sherwood, always to the [inaudible] designs. They were the cutest little things, and it's too bad they're not still around. There used to be one right down the middle of Chestnut Avenue, somewhere between 34th and 36th Streets. That was the only Sherwood station that I can remember. We came from families that weren't really suffering financially. I never knew this until about two years ago, because we didn't talk about what we did, but Elle said that for years she packed her own lunch when she was a child, and she would pack an extra sandwich for a girl that was in her class. For years she took a sandwich to school for this child. There weren't poor kids, there were just dirty kids. There were always kids that were dirty, and you really didn't have much to do with them [laughs.] It wasn't polite, and something instinctive tells you I was never preached at about anything in this house.

My parents had very relaxed attitudes, and they felt that they knew everybody in Hampden practically, and so they weren't weighing values and too much. I remember kids that came to the school dirty, and now I know that some of these children who were just from poor families that had so many kids they couldn't possibly keep up with them. I remember skinny little kids, the boys in little cotton [inaudible] pants, and that they weren't well kept. They would come around in our class and look in our heads for bugs. I got bugs once [laughs.] We were in a school that housed the same kids for eight years. We were like brothers and sisters, and we knew each other so well. A lot of sympathy went out that you didn't realize. You'd feel sorry for the bad boys that didn't pass. You might even cry. It was a very emotional age. You'd cry on passing day if somebody didn't make it. Isn't that ridiculous? This fellow that I ran into while having my car fixed last winter, was one of the misbehaved kids, and probably from a family that was

very poor, because he didn't talk clearly enough for people to understand him. They always just looked upon kids like that as odd. He's retired from the A&P, and has spent his life time working for them. He was having his car fixed. I think it was a Cadillac that was up on the rack. I know it was either that, or a big Chrysler. He made some money in this world, and he lives up on Wood Heights Avenue now. So, you see, I don't think that those kids suffered too much. Their story may be a lot different. The same way Blacks are able to benefit from their bad situation now, I think it was a time when poor white kids could benefit from the community and get a push along, even if it didn't come from their own homes or backgrounds. Since it was a close community, I imagine it was just a natural thing. It would be as natural as coming from your own family, now. My friends were the nice girls [laughs.] The big, bad boys would write you notes in class and you'd be embarrassed because they were passing love notes [laughs.] We were in the second grade and the third grade. There was an aura about everybody in one way or another.

My closest friend was Miriam Coons. Her father was the minister at the UV church, and she stayed here until we were in the third year of Western High School. We both went to Western together, when everybody else practically went to Eastern. We were being treated differently because we had said we went to Western, which was a terrible mistake for me. I was very lonely and I was really just lost because I didn't adjust at all, not even to high school. I was a like a fish out of water. Miriam was always a number one student and she was in a course and later went to Georgia Tech for the first year of her college and then changed schools and went into the medical field and became a psychiatrist. My other friend, Ruth Wilson, who lived down Whirling Avenue was from a big old Hampden family. My mother and her mother, Gernie had gone to St. Mary's together. Miriam and I were almost like sisters too. Our birthdays were one day apart. She's teaching nursing over in Montgomery County or Prince George's County, now. It was natural I think, that they would pursue their own ambitions.

Who I was friends with in Weldon Circle depended somewhat on what our religion was. The girl who lived closest to me, right across the street, happened to be Catholic. We all went to the Catholic church when something was going on, but she always went to private school. She went to the Institute of Notre Dame, and then Notre Dame college and then she went to Boston School now she's back working in trustees because she's divorced with a long marriage and four children behind her. Another friend finally left and went out to Seattle, which was a great. She's the one who's changed the least, because out in Seattle everything is still fresh. They're emerging with their own ambitions, and they're not being put upon as much as we are in the East by social pressure. I feel that she's enjoying life more than anybody else I know, because she's living in a natural way that she knows. Interestingly enough, her main source of friendship and social activity out there has always been church. It's wonderful to go out and visit her and see the different people.

SH: Can I ask you since you've [inaudible] since World War II, and now in 1979, what kind of changes have you noticed in your neighborhood?

JH: Well, I didn't notice Hampden very much at all for about twenty years of my life because it was where I hung my hat. I drove through to go to work or to go out wherever I was going. For a long period of time, I was going with somebody that grew up in

Hampden. He was sent out of town to work, and he would just be back here on weekends coming from Cleveland or wherever he was. So I didn't watch Hampden fall apart, but it was inevitable. It's going to sound trite, but it was inevitable that it would fall apart, because it was certainly not a place that was built on an image, and so it had nothing going for it. Inevitably it became... I sort of bite my tongue when I say this because I know people from the community council that I have a very high regard for, and I think that some of these people are stronger people than I am in many ways, and they're bright and everything, but Hampden became a receptacle of a kind for people who weren't making it, at least like our generation had, and they filled up the empty spot, just like Blacks filled up downtown...

JH: ...For one thing, the war came and my generation all... after war was declared, [inaudible] Circle was empty of men of draft age. It was the thing to do to go sign up, and they did, and they retired. One of them over on the corner retired an air force colonel and then went into the ministry. It seems like what we did in our innocence just to occupy ourselves is coming back on us as adults. For instance, Harry [inaudible] has become an ordained minister. He lived around the corner, and when war came and they all went out to fight the war--- all of them served over seas. I can't think of anybody that didn't. My brother's friend was first to go and he was in the Africa corps. He's been a painter all his life. Even he lives out in the county, or out around Falls Road. Well you don't do the same thing all your life. It's not natural to. When you put yourself together as a child, and you just think of going ahead, naturally you marry, as all my friends did. You just look for higher ground. That happened to be out where there was more grass. It wasn't greener, but there was more of it. This friend at work who's just bought himself a house on Union Avenue off of Roland, he writes for *The Sunday Sun*, and sells [inaudible] during the day. He said to me, "Did you ever know Jim Philips?" And I said, "Well I sure do know his name," and he said, "Well he's a young lawyer, and he's made himself a lot of money but he never moved out of Hampden." Well frankly, I can't understand people that made a lot of money and didn't move out of Hampden, because it didn't have any aura to it. It was just a thing you put behind you, and went on to something new. I think now that people are looking for a feeling that might relate to something historical, Hampden might be interesting to some people who aren't forced by their economic situation into living here, or maybe some part of Waverly that would be equal to Hampden. There aren't too many neighborhoods like it, except maybe Dundalk. Dundalk has the same fantastic thing going for it. I don't see how people really could've gone up in the world and stayed in Hampden. You didn't want to live in a row house anymore. It was like living with fins on Cadillacs. I mean right now, who wants them? [laughs] so...

SH: So, what about the people who are here, who stayed here?

JH: Well, let's see, who do I know that stayed here, other than Raymond Gross? My family knew the Gross family and I knew them very vaguely just by sight, until Raymond and I both got involved in the community council in 1971. Raymond you see, was a minister, and his father had been a minister before him at one of the churches in Hampden. He and Ruth really lived the dug-in Hampden life, and they're two wonderful

people. They've done a lot of good. They've always been strong in the Hampden church, and you know for what they did, they did a grand thing. Somebody said something to me back in days when I was being very defensive about Hampden, and thought they were all just a bunch of dumb clucks that needed straightening out. The attitude that I had was that people like Raymond and Ruth were terrible squares. Well they've had rich lives. They were dedicated to their parents. Ruth's father was a wonderful man, Mr. [inaudible.] He ran the Building and Loans Association on 36th Street. They were top echelon because they were involved in businesses too. They got a lot of enjoyment out of it, and they didn't have to go up the ladder socially because of it. What I started to say before was, when I got into the Hampden thing and thought everybody needed straightening out, which actually turned around the other way, somebody said to me, "Oh, Jean, don't worry about those people in Hampden. A lot of people would just be grateful if they could live the kind of life that the Hampden people are living." But they were just as naive and innocent as I was. For such a long time Hampden was just an area where people lived because they were forced to do so for financial reasons. There were a few exceptions, like Ruth and Raymond Gross, and dear old Jim Bolak who died last week. His wife is a terrific person if you get to know her. She was Helen Baker before she was Helen Bolak. Because Jim worked for the mills and later became a history buff, I think they had a fulfillment in their own right, in that Jim related to the higher people in the mill and yet they had that wonderful little private place of their own all to themselves for all those wonderful years. Helen had grown up living in the superintendent's house. It was the grand house down there. She'd tell you nice stories about when [inaudible] had electricity and chickens in the yard and all that kind of stuff. She wrote a little piece about it for the Hampden newspaper a long time ago, and so now she's moving back there. Jim died and she's coming home. He was waiting for his retirement next year and then they were going to come back. There were exceptions, and those were the people that had a very satisfactory personal life, and really didn't have to move out with trends. Now a lot of people that moved out with the trends didn't feel that they had to, because they were just doing a natural thing. It wasn't that they weren't striving for anything.

SH: What were some of the products of the change?

JH: Well, now you pay ninety-nine cents for Keebler's cakes. When I was in my teens, I could rush around stores... Do you mean packaging and things that you buy in stores?

SH: I mean the results of the change in Hampden. I guess I mean that.

JH: Oh, I see. My old boyfriend was a neighborhood [inaudible] living in New York. He's up there, and he used to live in a house that's been torn down. It faced on an alley, off of 37th Street below Falls Road. There was opportunity in my mother and father's generation. There was opportunity that could always be gleaned from community life. My old boyfriend, who is a great guy, lost his father before he was born, and his mother didn't remarry until he was 13. He lived in the community, and there were people available to provide him with leadership, which is not entirely lacking these days. This is one of the great things I went around saying when I started to get myself involved in the

community again. I was thinking all the leadership was lost, and then I had to backtrack and when I found out that there were still people coaching ball down at Roosevelt Rec. that had been doing it for twenty years. They're all people who can benefit from community life, and there are kids that might not get it out of their own homes. I got real uptight about all the houses in Hampden that belonged to all those elderly people that were going to be bought up by real estate companies. I was very concerned that we'd be a neighborhood of nothing but rented houses. Luckily, this trend had started becoming of interest in the city thing. I just wish we could get a bowling alley, because kids in Hampden have nothing to do. I can't see what they do. Once again, I might not know the whole picture, because I'm not as intensely involved in the community as people like Jenny Kirkendall and all those other people in the Hampden council. Joni says that kids in Hampden just don't have anything to do. You can play ball, and you can play ball, and you can play ball [laughs.] However, you can't roller-skate, you can't ride bikes, and you can't have a camp over in the woods. I was against Coldspring [Lane] being built, because there are still woods within walking distance that little kids in this neighborhood who are around eight or ten years old can still go over to. I always thought that was an important part of my childhood---getting together with nature, and it's just filling in and filling in. It's too bad about Coldspring, because once that's built, what little greenery between us...well I hope that it will be a city park, but even a city park is not some place you really feel that this land belongs to God or it can almost be yours. So that's the tale of development. You have to develop to keep your city finances working, and it's bad, but I'm sure problems will be solved in other ways. Kids can only participate mainly in structured kind of recreation, and it didn't do me any good, but I know that I had the sense when I was little of needing things that were unstructured. I had a deep need to feel that I was doing something on my own so...

SH: What do you see as the future for this neighborhood?

JH: I don't know. I can tell you what I wish [laughs.]

SH: What do you wish?

JH: I wish for paradise [laughs.] I wish for a place where people will come in and even appreciate row houses, which I now appreciate. Seven years ago I didn't do that. I only appreciated mill housing and something that would stand apart, so I'm mellowing a little bit. I wish that it would be the same way with other people---that they would appreciate the housing. Editorial writers will come to me sometimes and say, "Do you have any worries about what is going to happen to poor people in Hampden, when they can't afford to live there anymore?" I thought the same thing about Annapolis ten years ago. I saw black people losing their houses. We used to roam around there so much, and I was concerned, but I do think now that you have to...