

**Interview with Myrtle Talbott
Interviewed by Susan Hawes
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At 1322 Moreland Avenue, Baltimore, MD**

Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project

**Transcribed and Edited by Lauren Abrams and Rachel Fischer, Anthropology
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SH: Mrs. Talbott, you were telling me before about your grandparents. I wonder if you could tell me again the story of your grandparents?

MT: Yes, my grandmother on my mothers side lived with us. My grandfather on my fathers side lived on Brook Hill. We liked to be with them.

SH: Do you know where they came from? Your grandfather on your father's side?

MT: My grandfather on my father's side came from the north of Ireland. And my grandmother on my father's side came from the north of Ireland too, but she was a baby. My grandfather came over in a sailing boat when he was about 19.

SH: How did your grandmother and your mother come to Maryland?

MT: My grandmother on my mothers side was born in was is now Chestnut Ridge, and were raised out there. And then they eventually lived out in Pikesville and eventually came to Hampden to work in a mill.

SH: Why did they come to Hampden in the first place? I heard a story about that, I think that your grandfather died...

MT: Ah yes, my grandfather on my mothers side had died when she was about 10 and then they eventually moved here I think when she was about 12...

SH: How did they manage here in Hampden when they first got here, how did they get along?

MT: My grandmother then took in boarders as I understand it, before my mother went to work in the mill. Then a lot of people kept boarders.

SH: And do you know, did they move into this house here...?

MT: No! My aunt said they lived on a moving wagon for a long time, they had lived so many places renting. And then they finally moved here maybe about, mm, 77 years ago

or so and rented it first and then eventually bought the house. About 1904, I think, 1906, sometime around there or about. I think 6 or 700 dollars.

SH: Do you remember the story of your mother's work in the mill, anything she might have told you? How old she was when she went to work?

MT: Momma went to work in the mill when she was twelve, but if she talked about the work, I don't really remember. She talked about the people but not too much about the mill, as I remember.

SH: What did she tell you about the people?

MT: A lot of people she worked with eventually gave it up. We had one lady that would come here and work every Sunday and stay for supper, because she felt free to come here, she was welcome. I could never understand it with so many children around, why she would want to come.

SH: Were there any other people who worked in the mill who you knew, or lived in this neighborhood?

MT: Yes, another lady who was a friend of Mamma's. She lived in Hampden. She worked in the mill when she was little, and then when she got older, she worked at the bank. Her husband had died, and she kept boarders and then worked at the bank, cleaning up. Eventually she went into the Methodist town, and I used to visit her all the time. She lived to be about ninety.

SH: Could you tell me about your father's work?

MT: Yes, my father went to work to learn his trade when he was seventeen. I've heard the tale that somebody wanted him to learn to be a florist, but he would have had to go and live with those people and be an apprentice. He didn't want to leave home, so he went to Poole and learned to be an iron maker. He worked at different places, at Poole's, and depending upon the work, at Bartlet's. During the war he worked at Martin's. After the war he was back at Poole's.

SH: Would he train at Poole's?

MT: Yes. He was born in 1880, and he went there when he was seventeen, so that was in 1897.

SH: You mentioned a couple of different stories about your father's work that were interesting. One of them was how he got re-hired.

MT: Yes, when I was in Washington, my father wasn't working. The man, who was the head of the Belmar, came in our office. We told him about my father's work and how he

had worked there. Later, one of the bosses from the Belmar Company came to my father. He went back to work.

SH: You said that he was a very good ironworker.

MT: Yes, very good. He was excellent. He liked his work.

SH: Do you know of anything he worked on, specifically?

MT: They used to talk about making bells, probably church bells.

SH: Did he ever mention to you what it was like working at Poole's, if he liked the work?

MT: Yes, he liked his work. He was very happy with his work.

SH: Was he happy with the bosses?

MT: I think so, yes. He was very fond of one of the bosses.

SH: Do you remember that man's name?

MT: Yes, Mr. Gartstein. He was the head boss. He used to push dear old dad around.

SH: It seems like he was very proud of his work.

MT: Yes, I think he liked it very much.

SH: Could you tell me about the neighborhood here when you were growing up? What do you remember most about it? What it was like?

MT: When we were little, our street wasn't paved. It was all dirt, and our bathroom was in the backyard. We listened to the radio a lot when we were growing up. That was a big thing, to listen to the stories on the radio. We played on the street, and had a lot of happy times, because there's always been a lot of children around here.

SH: What do you remember about the neighbors?

MT: The girls were talking in church today about how one neighbor helped another, and that's the way it was here. As we used to say, it was like a family. People really worked together.

SH: Can you think of any times when that was particularly true?

MT: All the time. One time my grandmother had an infected eye, and Momma had all these children to look after. One of the neighbors would come in and look after Grandmamma.

SH: What about the jobs of the people who lived around here, do you remember what jobs most people had or where they worked?

MT: Of course a lot of people worked in the mill, and then a lot of people worked in the church, actually. The ladies did.

SH: Do you know which mill they worked in mostly?

MT: In later years it would have been at Mount Vernon, which was way down Falls Road, or Hooper's Mill, because the other mills were taken over by other businesses.

SH: Where's Hofackers (Hoofacres)?

MT: It's on Hickory Avenue. Years ago there was one on Elm Avenue, where there's a market now. A lot of the ladies worked up there. I think they're all closed now.

SH: Did anybody work on the railroads that you remember?

MT: Yes, there were a lot of people at Hampden that worked on the railroads. My uncle worked on the railroad at the Pennsylvania, but not any other people that I would have known too well. There were a lot, though. You could tell when they were off and had meetings. I don't know whether they were strikes or not, but up at Red Man's hall you would see crowds of them. It was probably where they came for meetings. So there were a lot of people who worked on the railroad from around here.

SH: There were strikes that you remember, where people were laid off for a while?

MT: I don't remember that. I just remember the crowds being up there. I was on strike one day. It wasn't a big time thing. It was a picnic. Just one day in all the years that I worked there. I was off one day.

SH: You worked at B&O how many years?

MT: I went to work for B&O in 1948 and took my pension in 1973. It was about 25, almost 26 years.

SH: Were there people here who worked at Poole, besides your father?

MT: Yes, my older sister worked at Poole's for a while; she was a secretary. That was back during the First World War, because the army or the navy had taken over Poole's, the way they did during war times. They all got their dinners every day, a hot dinner. She worked there till she was married, which wasn't too long, cause she was young.

SH: Do you remember if your friends worked at Poole's too?

MT: Yes, they would always have different men in the neighborhood who worked at Poole. Different neighbors worked along with him in the shop.

SH: Do you remember what shopping was like when you were a little girl, when you'd be helping your mother?

MT: Most of the shopping then was done in the neighborhood. When we were little, the order boy came from Hall's. Mr. Hall had a business on Falls Road. The order boy would come and get your order and send your things to you. Then in later years, after Mr. Hall didn't do that, we had a store right on the street, Cole's, where everybody dealt. You would buy your things and pay for them each week. That's something you couldn't do now in a supermarket. They wouldn't trust you that much.

SH: Did things come in the same kind of packages as they do now?

MT: No, things were weighed then. The sugar and tea were put in bags, because when Momma bought tea, she bought half green and half black. They'd shake it up in the bag. The cheese was cut. It didn't come packaged at all. Of course we didn't have a lot of soft drinks or fast foods then. We wouldn't have had the money for that anyway. We had root beer and ice cream on the fourth of July.

SH: That brings me to my other question. Do you remember any big holidays that were important to you?

MT: On the fourth of July, our church always had a Sunday school picnic in Duehill (Druid Hill?) Park, and we would march out and dress the children up. I had a class at the time, and we would dress them up in red, white and blue. Prizes were given for the best decorated, and we tried to out do one another.

SH: Red, white and blue?

MT: Yes, in crepe paper. We'd get their petticoats and sew the paper on the petticoats. We had a lot of happy times. We'd take our lunch to the park and spend the day.

SH: Was your church the only church that did that?

MT: No, all the churches in Hampden would do trips to the park. Most of them went to the park.

SH: Do you remember any kind of activities that you had there?

MT: Yes, they would play ball and have races and different things for the children. They still do that when they're having a picnic Sunday, but they go to a private property, now.

SH: Were there any other events in Hampden that you remember?

MT: We had a onetime event in 1932. They had a big celebration in Hampden and had a big parade. I don't know what anniversary that was. I remember Mr. Violets had an elephant, a big elephant, because he was a republican. They had that in the parade, and that was a big year. I bet Margaret would have the book from that. Margaret said she had some of the books. I know it was 1932 because that was the year Richard was born.

SH: Was it a big parade?

MT: Yes, big time in Hampden. It must have been an anniversary, but I don't know what anniversary it would have been.

SH: Did it last a long time?

MT: Maybe several days, but that I don't remember either.

SH: What about Decoration Day?

MT: Yes, Decoration Day was a big time in Hampden. They had a parade, and then they would go to the graveyard in Saint Mary's. Soldiers would be there and shoot the guns. Everybody would be there. They'd decorate the graves of course, and you'd see lots and lots of friends and people that you knew.

SH: Did the different groups and fellowships and fraternal organizations participate in the parade?

MT: They would probably be in that, but I don't remember which ones.

SH: What about amusements that you and your friends had? What kinds of things would you do?

MT: When we were little we used to go to Crawlands. Crawlands was new then, and we would walk over there, down through Woodberry and Walnut. We went there a lot. We went there one night when Helen's son Kenneth was born. My husband and I took, well we weren't married then, but we took Helen's other two children to Crawland's to spend the evening. Later they said, 'every time mommy goes to the hospital, she brings home another baby.' [Laughs] Kenneth is forty-three, so that was forty-three years ago. We had a lot of good times out there. That was the nice park to go to. They'd have a lot of picnics at Gwynne Oaks. We'd go there and spend the day. You could take the streetcar there.

SH: What kind of things would you do here in Hampden?

MT: They would have carnivals here. A lot of the churches had carnivals, or maybe some of the lodges would have them. Hampden church used to have one on Hickory, below thirty-six. We would always be at those, and then we would go to the church tent meetings. We had a lot of good times there, meeting boys. We'd be on the outside of the tents, but we had a lot of fun there. That was probably when we were in our early teens.

SH: Did you go to the movies?

MT: Oh yes, I loved the movies. When I was thirteen or fourteen I would work to get every cent I could to go to the movies. I always loved the movies.

SH: How did you work?

MT: I used to go to the bank for people, and people had Christmas clubs. I'd gather up the Christmas clubs and pay them. There were different things that you would do to earn a little money. Of course we didn't have much money then. When I hear of children now getting five or ten dollars spending money, it's amazing to me. I don't think it's good; children expect too much of life.

SH: Were there any sort of social events that you may have had in this neighborhood, any parties?

MT: We used to have a street carnival. Helen did a lot of work with that. They'd play bingo and sell things. There were things to eat. We had a nice time with that. Just neighbors mostly.

SH: When was that?

MT: That was probably in the early 1940s.

SH: Did you have parties when you were younger?

MT: Yes, when we were really little, they used to have what they called pam parties, and everybody would take something.

SH: What was that for?

MT: It was a get together, but it wouldn't cost the person having it much. We used to go to Simmon's. They used to have parties. They were neighbors who lived a couple doors from us when we were little. We used to have pam parties. Now everybody takes something but I don't think they call them pam parties.

SH: How did music get into your life when you were little?

MT: We always had a piano when we were little. My mother always enjoyed music. She said she had taken lessons from a blind man when she was little. When her father died,

she had to give it up, and my mother would have been talented. I think that the man she took them from was distressed that she couldn't afford it. We took music lessons when we were little, didn't pay enough attention to them, but we took them. I can remember that so well. I was probably ten, because the lady that I went to first had music on her piano from the first world war. That's how you keep the home fires burning. They were things that were out during the first world war. I've always regretted that I didn't keep that up.

SH: Did you ever sing?

MT: Yes. You'd gather around the piano and sing. When my mother was growing up, she said that would be the main thing. If somebody could play really well, that's the way that they would entertain themselves.

SH: Did you ever hear people talking about the mills when you were growing up or did you see people coming out of the mills?

MT: Yes, you would see the people. I remember especially a colored lady who worked in the mills, who would come up the street. We were little then. That was in Druid Mills, which was right at the bottom. I think there's a furniture company or something like that there now. The lady would go along humming, and the children would be attracted to that, but a lot of them lived in what is now Cross Keys. That was a settlement, and that's where most of them came from.

SH: What about the people in the neighborhood, did you ever hear much talk about the mills, did people discuss it a lot?

MT: Not that I remember too much.

SH: You went to school?

MT: Yes, I went to White's school. That would have been 1914, when I was 6. It was on what was then Church Street and is now Evan's Chapel, where the Green Spring is. It was like a barn. We had stoves in the middle of the floor, and we had outside toilets. We had marvelous teachers, people that you still remember who were outstanding people. Then from 1957, I went to fifty-five for the seventh and eighth grade.

SH: What do you remember about the teachers at 67?

MT: I can remember every teacher from the first grade. In the first grade we had Mrs. Kate. Most teachers were interested in you then. That really was their life. In the second grade we had Mrs. Jenny, and we learned to tell time in the second grade. She had a big clock that one of the fathers had made for her. She would teach you to tell time. In the third grade we had Ms. Rae. They were all just outstanding people. In the fourth we had a younger teacher. I don't know what happened to the fourth that the younger one came, but she was a younger teacher. I don't remember her name. Then in the fifth, we had a

lovely lady, Ms. Martha. In the sixth, we had Ms. Adrienne, who was a perfect lady, lovely lady.

SH: Sounds like you enjoyed school.

MT: Yes, I did. I would have been like Harry. I would have liked to have gone to school the rest of my life.

SH: What did you like about it particularly?

MT: I just enjoyed school. I enjoyed learning. I always got along pretty well, so it wasn't too difficult that way. I liked it. I ask the children now if they had spelling bees. They'd stand you up on each side of the room and you'd compete. Then they gave you little kewpie dolls, which I wish I had now, but I don't have. That made it interesting for you, because, like I said, that was their life's work.

SH: What was 55 like?

MT: Then at 55 I had the best teacher they ever had, Mrs. Alice. She was so wonderful that she made it easy for you, and she was always ready to compliment you and encourage you. They were all good teachers, but she was exceptional.

SH: What kind of things did you learn from Alice?

MT: For one thing, you learned to put your blinds right. She said if you lived in a house, you wanted people to know you lived there, and you always had your blinds nice and even, not up weird. She would teach the boys to dress and wear a tie. They don't teach them that anymore because they don't wear a tie. Along with learning, she taught you other things. We try to teach you how to act, and how to act with other children. They would have some Chinese children. Their people had the laundry on Thirty-sixth Street, and she taught you that those children were the same as you and you should treat them the same. She was a very, very understanding person. You didn't make fun of them because they looked different. You treated them just the same as you treated your own people. She was an exceptional person.

SH: You say there were some black people who worked in the mill?

MT: Yes.

SH: Did any of those children go to school?

MT: Not then, no. I don't know where those children probably would have gone. I think they had a little school of theirs.

SH: Was it more than just that one lady, who was black?

MT: Oh no, there would have been others, probably, but I just remember her. She seemed old, but I guess I probably seem awful old to people, the way they look at me on the street. I don't feel that ancient, but they look at you like you're ancient. [Laughs] I don't feel that ancient.

SH: You said there were a few people who you remember in your neighborhood who had accidents at the mill.

MT: Yes, one of our neighbors, a young man, had learned his trade. His first day after he had learned his trade, he was killed. Momma said that was a terrible day because you could hear his people screaming and screaming. He was probably just twenty-one or very young. The equipment in the mills were big things that you had to be careful around. You just slip once and you were hurt. We had an uncle, Uncle Pete, who died over at the mill. I think he just died a natural death, but it happened in the mill. He was my mother's uncle. A lady next door to us had her finger off. Back then if you had your finger off, you didn't get compensation-it was just off. She went around all her life with just part of a finger. Now compensation is a big help.

SH: Do you remember if there was anything that people talked about in the neighborhood that the mill did for them? Dances or holidays?

MT: If they did, I don't know. The only thing I ever remember was one time Pooles had an outing to Chesapeake Beach. And we took a boat trip to Chesapeake Beach and mom and I were sick all the way. Hangin' out the window, we weren't used to goin' out. [laughs] But that was a long boat ride! And we would take our lunch and then of course you had to take a streetcar to get home. Streetcars always made me ill, I couldn't stand that odor! You know how that odor would be on—well you don't know 'cause your not that old-- but the odor would sorta upset you. I guess if you weren't used to riding, another thing that used to upset me was riding an elevator. Oh my dear! I'd really be sick. There are some people these days who still can't ride them. One of the girls at church, she won't go up the apartment half because she wont get on those elevators that you operate yourself...she wont do it. Hel and I went down to that building at two-twenty-two St. Paul Street to the foot doctor. When I got on that elevator I thought 'Oh, to the thirty-fourth floor?' And the elevator was so dark! You just hold your breath till you get to the thirty-fourth floor.

SH: What was Christmas like for your family?

MT: Well our Christmas was very meager. We had a baby doll who would have been dressed up every year. And we always had a tree, which we probably left up till Easter. Then we didn't have heat- central heating. We had a stove in the middle of that room, and our tree would be back in this corner. And we had folding doors then, and they would be closed. And we would have heat for Christmas. I guess the tree stayed up so long because it was cold in there, it would keep. We didn't get lots of toys we couldn't afford them, but we always had a baby doll.

SH: Was there any holiday that was more important to you or more fun than Christmas...In your family?

MT: No, we still had birthdays. When I was little my mom always fixed me a lemon cake, that was my favorite so I would have a lemon cake for my birthday.

SH: Was Thanksgiving an important holiday?

MT: Well of course we would all be here but I don't think that would have stood out as much as Christmas though.

SH: What were the rules that your parents enforced in your life that were important, the things they tried to teach you?

MT: Usually we had to listen, if we didn't we'd – I got a couple whippings ----But not usually. You just did what you were supposed to do. Like being in when you should and being in on mealtime. And when you went out your parents knew where you were going.

SH: Can you tell me a little bit, you said that you met boys--

MT: Yes, we used to go up to the Ten at thirty-seven and... I guess that would be Chestnut. That's when we were teenagers. And my cousin was here from Philadelphia. She came for one week and stayed for three because she met a boy up there and we really had a lot of fun.

SH: What kinds of things would you do with a boy, on a date or where would you go...?

MT: We'd go to the movies, or we went to Timonium Fair. We had nice boys, too. I don't know, when you look back, it doesn't seem real sometimes. It seems so long ago, time goes by quickly. But we knew nice boys. And of course we always had a lot people at the house, the boys would come here because there were a lot of girls here. But my mother and father were always here, somebody was here we weren't left alone. We were always chaperoned...

SH: What about the church? It seems like church was pretty important to your family.

MT: Yes, my mother always saw that we went to church. From the time that we were five or six, she didn't take us when we were babies. Well, she couldn't have. But from the time that we were probably five or six we never missed Sunday school unless we had to. And we never missed school either. Never. We never knew such a word as 'hookie'. I mean we just didn't do it, stay home. We always went to Sunday school, too, always. And to the same one that my mother had started in when she moved down here.

SH: How did you feel about going to Sunday school?

MT: Well I don't think you feel, I think that's what you were told to do and it was just a part of your life so that you did it. I mean you would have missed it if you hadn't gone because it was something you were doing.

SH: And as you got older? How did you feel about going to Sunday school?

MT: Well I've always gone except for some years that I couldn't go.

SH: What do you think that it did for you and for your family?

MT: Well I think it gives you faith. For one thing, you've got something to go on if you have difficulties. [pause] We were talking to a lady that lives up near church today, she used to go to our church. But she's up in years now, I don't think she goes anyplace. She's very religious and she's there by herself but she says the good Lord is always with her. She doesn't have any worries. She's taken care of. She's by herself. But I think it gives you faith and I think that's something you need to go on.

SH: Have you ever seen an instance where your church has done something for the community, for Hampden?

MT: Well our ministry that we have now is a great believer in H.W.R. Some of the people at church aren't...

SH: H.W.R. community council?

MT: Community center. It was room 37. The main thing that I see with that is feeding people who are hungry. Every now and then, or a lot of times, people give canned goods or food to church and our minister takes it down to the center.

SH: People in Hampden, do you think?

MT: Yes. And I believe in that. I can't picture anybody being hungry in a world of plenty. I just can't picture that. And then we've been up there at tax meetings up to the center. They've had different people there. That's about the only thing that we've really, personally helped with. But all the ministers in Hampden are interested in it. I think they do a lot of good work.

SH: While you were younger and going to church, did you ever notice sort of the elders of the church and who they were and where they worked, when you were younger? Were you familiar with them?

MT: No...

SH: I wonder if they had anything to do with the mill.

MT: I had letter from a lady yesterday who was raised here. She's up in Quincy Pennsylvania now. But I had sent her that write up that was in the Sunday paper about that meeting they had at Woodbury church about the mill. And she said 'Oh, if I could only be there to talk with them,' she said, 'my father went to work in the mill in 1897. And she used to help him, she said like after school and on Saturdays. I don't know what she had done, book work, probably. Until she went to work for the [unclear] and she said 'My, I wish I could be there and talk about the mill'. And of course she's up in Pennsylvania now...

SH: I wonder if you ever noticed in the church that there were people who thought they were a little fancier then other people [laughs].

MT: Oh, I'm sure. Yes. The Bontons. But they aren't any fancier, they just think they are.

SH: Were there truly any people who were maybe a little higher up in income...

MT: Well they may have made more money, but as Mr. Christian says, nobody is any better than you are, they might be as good but they are no better. And that's the way I feel.

SH: Now you said the Bontons?

MT: Well no, that just means people who think – the Bontons, people who think they're different. But they're not.

SH: I wonder if you remember, were there any different places in Hampden where people lived who had different kinds of thoughts about themselves or maybe who were very wealthy, the wealthiest people in Hampden. Do you know where they lived?

MT: Well of course [unclear] Avenue was always considered nice.

SH: Where would people on [unclear] avenue work, do you think?

MT: I don't know. One man had a moving business and then this other man had a plumbing business.

SH: Were there any places where people who were probably not so well off, maybe poorer then you considered yourself then, would live? If people said, you know so and so lives over in...

MT: I don't know. I never think about people like that. Yeah, I don't know. Cause we didn't have much. I went to St. Paul's, I had two dresses I wore one one week and one—of course you took your dresses off as soon as you came home, you didn't play in them. One time one of the girls over at school said to me, 'don't you have any more?' and I said 'that's it.'. But we had one girl who was in our class, very brilliant girl. She only had

one dress, like a mini sailor dress. And the day she was 18 she went to the convent, so she wore the same dress the rest of her life. I guess I was pretty lucky to have two! [laughs].

SH: What do you remember about the Depression?

MT: You saw my kitchen stove, we still have our kitchen stove. My father never wanted it out, and mom never had it out so I just haven't bothered. One of my old neighbors called me just lately and said 'You still have your kitchen stove?' and I said 'yes'. But during the Depression I think I made \$15 a week, my father was out of work and we had to use our kitchen stove because we didn't have the money to heat the whole house. And my mother knew how to economize; my mother knew how to save. We had it rough. Didn't we, Helen did too, raising a family.

SH: What about other people in the neighborhood?

MT: Yes, our store keeper across had welfare orders and it was sad to see the people lined up there to get welfare orders who had lived nice. But they didn't have anything then. And then people worked for the W.P.A. when they didn't have work, after Roosevelt got in. They had to do work like that. We had one man at the office who was absolutely a marvelous boss, at the B&O, and when he came out of college you couldn't get out of work, and he worked for CCC camps, the one that fixed Skyline Drive. Until he finally got with the B&O. But people didn't have anything. The people these days I don't think can realize what that was. And so many people had bought homes up this way, like 41st, 42nd, and so many people lost their homes, so many of them. But people just don't realize how difficult that was. I was just lucky to hang on to my job during then but I made \$15 a week.

SH: Did you notice when the depression started to sort of let up a little bit?

MT: Yes, I guess it would have been the real late '30s, wouldn't it? Real late. And then I wasn't making very much and that's when I took civil service and went to Washington. To make more money. I had to do something, you know, you just can't sit still.

SH: We talked a little bit about what you thought the boundaries of Hampden and Woodbury are...

MT: Yes, well Helen's son was over last night and he said something about Roland Park and he lives on Beech Avenue. I says anybody in eleven lives in Woodbury. We just kid about that. Cause Beech Avenue is very nice, he has a lovely home over there. 'Course on the other side of the tracks would be Woodbury, I would think. But I'd say when we were little like at the bottom of the hill, we called that Druid Hill and over here I guess would be Hampden. Up that way were the ---, they call that Medfield. But they're all within the Hampden radius I think. Cause they're all eleven [the 21211 zip code]. [laughs]

SH: What would you say then? Is Woodbury part of Hampden, do you think, or?

MT: I don't think it would be part, but it's closely associated with Hampden. I know some nice people in Woodbury too, very nice. People that have lived there —

SH: Did you have friends there when you were little?

MT: Yes, that's where we would go every Sunday over on Brick Hill to my father's sister's. And we were little then and we'd go in the park. We went over to Woodbury church a couple of weeks ago to the Ecumenical service and I hadn't been in Woodbury church for years. And it really was nice to go.

SH: Wonder if you could describe, just briefly, your work for the B&O?

MT: My work for the B&O was very interesting. I worked in the claim department where we took care of the people who were hurt. And whenever you deal with people, it's interesting. And the old B&O was the best place in the world to work. And yes, the office was small and I think we had the nicest office in the whole company.

SH: Where was the office?

MT: The Charlton Baltimore, the central building they called it. And it was really nice. Then we finally went in with the C&O in 1965. Then you went into the union and you made more money. C&O paid a whole lot more money, but there wasn't that home atmosphere that there was in the old B&O. The old B&O was like a family.

SH: And there was no union [then]?

MT: There was a union, but our office wasn't unionized. Different offices- the law department of our office- I don't know how many. But we didn't belong to the union. Under the C&O it was compulsory. But we had all the advantages that the union people had which really isn't right either because they would get the raises then they'd vote us a raise and we weren't paying union dues. So maybe there was some inequity.

SH: Do you have some opinions about unions?

MT: No, I think the unions do good and I think they do bad. Because I don't think anybody who's interested in their work has to be told to work or what not to do. I do think that they look out for people when they need to be looked out for. And that's what I liked about the unions.

SH: What are your objections? What do you think is not good about the unions?

MT: Well I don't think you can have much initiative. You have to do according to them and I don't think you can use your own head at all. Maybe I'm not right, I don't know. But I have no complaints myself, the union was alright with me but then again I didn't

need the help of the unions. I did my work. Paid my dues, was only off one day so I mean I don't have key qual about the unions at all.

SH: How did you manage to get work when you were 16?

MT: Well I had quite a time. You know I had finished school, I think our graduation day was June the sixteenth. And we went out-- no, at St. Pauls, yes, in east Baltimore, and the sister would send us out early because of the high schools coming out, she would get the children out earlier. And back then girls didn't fix up, you didn't wear lipstick or fix up like girls do today. We looked like children. I had a terrible time until I finally got a job. With a lawyer.

SH: How did you find that job?

MT: I think through the Royal Typewriter Company. That lady knew the sister at school and she would send you out on jobs that didn't cost you anything.

<< It is agreed that the Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project will not authorize publication of the following tape section and transcript section relating thereto for all time. One tape number one, side two, starting with "and I know the only reason," to "I just worked for this young fella,". >>>>

MT: ...I went loads of places. One place I went the man said, "we couldn't hire you! Why, the labor laws would be out after us." I was 16, but probably didn't look 16. But I got this job and I stayed for 17 years. Then I took the civil service and went to Washington. But I still keep in touch with this young fella who had hired me. Still write to him at Christmas... about 10 years older than me. And he's still around. [laughs]

SH: Tell me about what you've seen of politics in Hampden.

MT: Well I've never really been into politics, mostly everyone here is a democrat. And I've never really had to use politics. And if I had any complaints, I would call Mr. Nevin, who works in the mayor's office. Mr. Nevin lives in Hampden, he doesn't know me personally but I have called him, if I had any complaints, which I very rarely do.

SH: Has there ever been something that you or a group of people in Hampden thought was really important to bring to the attention of city hall, or someone, to get it done? And how did you take care of that?

MT: We used to have a neighborhood association but I wasn't active in that so I don't really know of anything that would have been done.

SH: What do you think are the changes in this neighborhood? Or are there any changes in this neighborhood?

MT: Oh I'm sure there are. Because it used to be that most people owned their home. And then when people would die, the house would be sold—and a lot of times you get people who rent [now]. And I think that makes a difference. 'Cause I don't think people are too interested then. I think when people own their home they...

SH: What happened to the children of the people who used to live here?

MT: Well a lot of them still live here, they've lived here for generations. The girl next door- why they've been on this street for four generations. 'Course ours was three generations. A lot of them have lived here for a long time.

SH: What about the children of the people who used to live here who sold some of the homes, or rented them?

MT: Yes, people if they were dying maybe the property would have to be divided, sold and divided. Then the children had left.

SH: Do you know where they went?

MT: Well a lot of times when children get married and get their own place they would go other places. Helen's, all hers lived in Ham—no, Robert lived in, her one son lives in Riderwood and Barbara lives in Parkville. But Carol and Harry and Kenneth, they all still live here.

SH: But the ones who now rent...?

MT: Well most of them I don't know. Most of the people you know you've known for a long time.

SH: What about changes in Hampden itself? Have you noticed any changes in the Hampden area?

MT: Well I think 36th street is different from what it used to be. Look at all the empty stores. And I don't know why that is, what happened. The one lady that had the store on the Avenue said she had to give it up because of her husband's health.

SH: What store was that?

MT: O'Brian's. And they had a nice store there.

SH: Is there anything else that you can—

MT: And then Grimm's, of course they were there for years and years. And they just sold out their place. I hope someone buys it though, so it can be opened.

SH: Is there anything else besides the stores, that you think is different—?

MT: No...then we used to have the movies on the Avenue, we had the two movies but they are gone, I guess because of the movies. And when we were little they had the Omare movies, at 36th and Roland which we used to go to. I remember that so well, it was a treat for us to go to the movies. Just like they have drive-ins now, only they had benches in ...

SH: Do you think the changes are...

MT: Good? Well I don't know. According to the looks of the Avenue I don't think they look so good. I think the Avenue is horrible now, don't you? I hope it will be better when they get it fixed up. But of course we have the Rotunda, which is a great addition I think. When we were little that was lootin' country. Then the Casualty built there. When the Casualty had that years back, they used to have concerts every Sunday that a lot of people would go to up there.

SH: Who had the concerts?

MT: Well different groups. They would have good concerts up there, every Sunday afternoon. For free. I remember so well that one singer who was a lawyer in the Calvert building, Mr. Harris. And he's a retired judge now, I saw a clip in the paper lately where they were going to bring him back to something. But he was a great singer. And I remember he used to sing up there. I didn't know him, only knew who he was. But they had concerts up there all the time. And then they eventually tore that building down and built that new building.

SH: Did you know a lot of people who worked for Maryland Casualty?

MT: No, not too many. 'Course they had a lot of workers but they didn't pay anything. I remember one of the lawyers in their office said his son worked there. He was later killed in the service, but he said you can't start any lower. [laughs] The wages probably were rock bottom. But now another company has that, Casualty doesn't have it now.

SH: Why have you stayed in Hampden?

MT: I don't know. Why do you stay in a place? Because for one thing, I've always stayed home with my people and it just never occurred to do anything else. I wouldn't have it any other way.

SH: What do you like about it?

MT: I think the main thing is that it's home. I wouldn't want to live way out. I think its important to live where you can get to and from places, its on the car line. I guess its just home, that's the big thing.

SH: What don't you like about it?

MT: There isn't too much I don't like about it. If people were a little more careful in keeping the streets clean I think it'd be nice. No, I don't have any complaints.

SH: Some people have told me that they are upset about the security, the safety when walking around...

MT: Well we don't go out at night, not by ourselves. We're going to the concert tonight over Tudor Arms, the park concert. But uh, I really had never felt afraid. But I'd say I don't take any chances on going out at night by myself, wouldn't do that. But we've never had any difficulty.

SH: What would you hope for your nieces and nephews?

MT: Well I think of that. I think of the little ones and what do they have faith in, I don't know. Just have to pray that life will be good, they'll be able to face it.

SH: Is there anything special that you'd like for them?

MT: No, because they have their own lives to live, they have to figure that out. Not to interfere. Only I'd like to see people learn more trade. I think that's good. We stopped in the store on the avenue today to get liver, they have delicious liver at the store, and I said to this fella, you learned to be a meat cutter? He said 'yes, I've been here about [unclear]' I said I think its wonderful. And I like to see things like that. I think things like that are important. More so then all those graduates at Johns Hopkins. [laughs] I like people to learn trade because I think they're very important.

SH: What about the other kids who you went to school with? You think they all learned trades?

MT: Well the fella across the street, he's the same age as me, he learned to be a sheet metal worker. He's very ill now. And then another boy who was in my class, who was a brilliant boy, he—well of course I haven't seen him since I went to school- but I understand he learned to be a chemist. He lived down south, but he was just exceptional, I thought.

SH: Is there something that you'd like people, specifically to remember about Hampden, that I haven't asked you that you think should be on this tape?

MT: I don't really know. Just that it's a nice place to live I think.

SH: Do you think it's useful to do history like this?

MT: I think it's wonderful.

SH: Why is that?

MT: I was always interested in history anyways, so maybe that's why I think so. I like history. I like reading books about history too. Of course we keep the library going, we read all the books and keep the library going. [laughs].

SH: What's one thing you learned in your life that you'd like to share with other people that you think is really useful.

MT: I don't know; I never felt like I was very useful. You know, just sort of humdrum.

SH: Well think about something that may have helped you through rough times.

MT: Well I'd say having faith I think helps you through rough times.

SH: How do you have faith?

MT: I don't know that's something you can't see you just have it.

SH: If you had your whole life to live over again—

MT: Yes, you'd think it would be different, but then you don't know that, do you?

SH: Would you have—

MT: I don't know. And sometimes circumstances are so that- maybe it isn't the way you want it, but it's the way you have to do it. I don't think everybody's life is perfect or the way that they would have everything. Sometimes these things just happen and that's it... can't change them.

SH: Thank you. Thank you very much.