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**Hope, Marian Darlington, Oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, October 29, 2017;  
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



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## Oral History Interview with Marian Darlington Hope

### Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project

Interview conducted by Katie Burke on October 29, 2017

at Marian's house in the Port neighborhood of Cambridge, MA

*Marian Darlington Hope was born in the Port neighborhood in Cambridge, and has lived there most of her life. Her parents were both from Barbados. She had a professional career as a Professor at UMass Boston and Lesley College, and continues to be involved in community activism in Cambridge.*

Katie Burke: 00:00:04 OK this one's going and this one's going too.

Marian Darlington Hope: Great.

KB: Okay. I am here with Marian Darlington Hope, who is the narrator for today. My name is Katie Burke. We're in Marian's house in the Port in Cambridge and it's October 29th 2017. So, Marian if you could just start by telling me a little bit about where you're from.

MDH: 00:00:29 Sure. My family, my parents, came from Barbados in 1945 and, my father is 1944. My father was actually born here, on Columbia Street, and then around the time of depression his mother sent him back to Barbados because she couldn't care for him. She was live in and, you know, it was really hard raising a small child and being a live in, so. And then my mother came in 1945 from Barbados.

KB: How old were they when they came here?

MDH: My mother was 22, and my father was 24.

KB: Okay. And then where did your mother move to?

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- MDH: So she stayed with a relative, her aunt actually, on Erie Street, which is on the other side, which is in the Cambridgeport area. So, she stayed there until -- and then she lived here for a short time before she got married, because this house was also owned by a relative. So, she stayed here. And then my parents got married, and they lived on Harvard Street, right next to the Fletcher Maynard. So, we've always been in this neighborhood I guess.
- KB: Right [laughter]
- MDH: For the most part, yeah.
- KB: Do you know why your parents decided to come here?
- MDH: 00:01:47 Sure! I know for my mother, it was a place for opportunity, right? Like probably almost every other immigrant. She -- her own mother died when she was four, and so she went to -- those days you had to pay for high school, so she went to learn a trade, and she was -- went to learn dressmaking, became her village dressmaker, but she always had ambitions of owning her own shop, and she had relatives who were here. In those days, relatives always wanted to bring in other relatives, and so my mother was sort of, I guess, high on the list of someone to bring because her own mother had passed away when she was a child. So, her aunts, both of her aunts, were living here. There was three of them, two in Boston, the Boston area, and one in New York. So, it was a natural sort of progression, for her - - for them to send for her, and then she came.
- KB: And what about your dad?
- MDH: 00:02:44 My dad came because the war was on, and he was essentially drafted. Even though he was living in Barbados and had been there since he was nine, when they were drafting he got his notice, even though he was living in Barbados
- KB: Oh, wow

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- MDH: Because he was an American citizen and he was American born, and, so that's how he found out. And he, you know, I'm not sure the exact details, if the embassy or some other, but - - he got his notice in Barbados.
- KB: Wow.
- MDH: Yeah
- KB: So, did he go into the army then?
- MDH 00:03:19 So, yes, he came here, and then he went from here into the army.
- KB: And how did your parents meet?
- MDH: 00:03:27 Well, you know, they have relatives in common. My mother's aunt is married to my father's uncle, so that meant their children were cousins to both my parents. Small island, you know, [unclear], small island so it's not unusual. And so, they knew each other a little bit in Barbados but they weren't necessarily friendly, you know, they had their own sort of class tensions in those days. You know, my mother's grandparents who she -- helped to raise her were landowners and they had people who worked the land for them, and so there was a sense that my father wasn't quite of her station in life. So they, you know, by this time they had passed away. But the aunt, the aunt that she came to live with did not like my father, because my father was, just before he went to Barbados -- remember it was technically his aunt as well. He was actually the nephew of her husband.
- KB: Okay.
- MDH: But when he was nine, her -- three of her children and my father were down by MIT where they had the boats, and the police came, chased them away but one of them drowned. And so she always blamed my father for her son drowning. So, when he went to Barbados, and then when he came back she still didn't like him, so [laughter] I'm sure she

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blamed her own children too but you know how it is. I mean, the other two were her children, and you know, and my father was their first cousin when they were down by the water, so she still didn't like him.

And so, it's not like this wonderful romantic story. Because essentially my father took my mother out once, and my, her aunt basically threatened to send her back to Barbados. And so basically kicked her out, and then my father was staying at her daughter's house so, the two of the were now living in the same house which, you know, being very proper Christian people you don't do. Even though they weren't dating, he had only taken her out once, but my mother was very upset, and he said, "Well, I like you," you know, "and I'm already a citizen," and offered to marry her.

KB: She liked him enough? [Laughter]

MDH: 00:05:55 Yeah, I think she liked him enough. I think she felt very much alone in the world. You know, the fact is that her aunt could send her back and, you know, I think she felt alone and vulnerable, and, you know, my father already didn't have the best reputation. He liked to party too much, and drank too much. And so, but her aunt, her cousin, her first cousin who she came to stay with, her aunt's daughter, said "Oh you can make a man of him," and, you know, "He's a hard worker." So, you know, people married, I guess, for less. But "He's a hard worker," and they got married. And you know, I remember as a teenager finding this out, I thought it was awful that there was no romance. You know, and she wore -- and her wedding gown was the wedding gown of her cousin. Her maid of honor was her cousin's best friend. So, she didn't even have anything that was really hers. And so, I also feel very bad about that because she did have a couple of friends. But, you know, they [family] made all the arrangements.

KB: How long had she been in Cambridge before they got married?

MDH: 00:07:04 45... she married in January of 47.

KB: Okay.

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- MDH: So a little over a year and a half. And one of actually -- her cousin's brother, so it's -- was out in California and begged her to come to California. Begged her. "No, don't marry. The blood is too connected. Come out, see the world, see new people." And, you know, she had just traveled from Barbados all the way here, where she knew everyone, and she didn't know -- I mean they were merchant seamen, so they were always out to sea. And even though they were encouraging her "Come to California," I think, one that was married and had children. So, she was sort of, you know, he was encouraging her and she wouldn't go.
- KB: Yeah. That must have sounded pretty daunting to travel that far again.
- MDH: Yeah, I think it did, I think it did.
- KB: Yeah. Were the same kind of class differences in the Barbadian community here as there were in Barbados?
- MDH: 00:08:07 Not as much so, because any, you know, we're all -- I mean, people who might have been teachers in Barbados would be cleaning floors here. You know, there wasn't any sense, there was, you know -- the education system was different, and so, you might, once you were finished, they were called -- the high schools were called colleges, but they were exam schools. It's not that different from the Boston Public Schools, where you have the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, you take all these tests, and then if you do very well you can go to the exam schools, like Roxbury Latin, or the -- our own version of private schools. So, we have these exam schools, and you would stay a little longer to become a teacher. right? And that was part of the transition from -- most of your teachers came from England, and then over time there was less people coming here from England and more of, sort of, people who were raised up naturally and either went to England for a couple years, or they extended the high school program to become a teacher program at the end of your traditional four, five years.
- KB: Okay.

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MDH: So, why was I telling you that?

KB: Oh, the class issues here, yeah

MDH: 00:09:25 So, what made you, often, of a different class was owning property and history. You know, there was a sort line of people that you were connected to who were either educators, teachers. You know, and they would marry their own in Barbados. Here, everybody was - - everybody's the same. So, the fact that you might have been a teacher in Barbados didn't make you a teacher here. Everybody was the same.

KB: Yeah.

MDH: 00:09:53 So you might be standing next to somebody who was in a different class at home and now they were doing the same work you did.

KB: What do your parents do for work here?

MDH: 00:10:05 So my mother's first job was on Hamilton Street in Cambridge, she made dentures. And then she worked in Chinatown in the garment factory. And then after, I guess, all of us were born, there's three of us, and she would -- and my youngest brother started elementary school. The Goddess Bra factory was on Main Street, near the corner of Main, and, was on Windsor Street near the corner of Main and Windsor. And she worked there until she started working for the state in the 60's, mid 60's.

KB: What did she do for the state?

MDH: 00:10:47 She was, I guess, an administrator. She worked in the inheritance tax department, so paper processing. You know, like most people work in the state. But her dream was always to open up her own dressmaking shop. And so, she sewed for people who were in the community. In fact, she was doing it into her mid 80's until I made her stop. Well you know, I think the last one she was mid 80's, and the woman down the street actually, she was getting married and everybody decided they were

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going to lose weight for the wedding. And when they got their dresses most of them hadn't lost any weight, or lost very little, and so she basically remade six bridesmaid dresses.

KB: Wow, that's amazing.

MDH: Six of them. And the woman, you know, who my mother knew from Barbados. I was very angry about the whole thing. You know, she said, "Your mother told me that you weren't too pleased," and I said "Yes," and she said, "Well I want you to know that I was with her till two o'clock in the morning," so wrong answer! That's not the right answer! My mother has no business doing this. And, you know, not that they didn't appreciate it, they did. But, you know, she had really great skills, you could wear any of her clothes inside out. I remember feeling like, I used to feel deprived, really. I shouldn't say that, but, you know, I was an ungrateful kid. So, wanting store made dresses, my mother would make these beautiful things and I want something store made. So she finally took me into the store, cause I didn't even know that there was something above Filene's Basement till I was like 13. And so, she said, "See, they cannot make anything as good as me." And she was right. You know, everything she made fit beautifully. She could do wonderful things with pattern and design, and when she sewed for herself, as well as for me when we got older, it was always vogue, you know, those really hard patterns. My mother was really, really very good.

KB: Wow.

MDH 00:13:00 And when anybody died at the church, you know, people would often pick something they knew they would want to wear when they were buried, and, people did that in those days, they would, you know, say, "Well bury me in this dress, bury me in this." She'd go and tailor it to them at the mortuary.

KB: Wow.

MDH: Yeah [laughter]. And I was like "You touch dead people?!" and says, "Marian," you know, "Everybody wants to look their best. And so, make

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sure when I go that you don't let me look anyhow. Just, make sure I look good." So, I didn't sew anything, we bought her a lovely dress and jacket, and one of those little fashionista hats. She passed away last year. So, um yeah. So yeah. But, the class stuff was very strong in Barbados, and it was a little bit here, and it often got -- the way it often played out had to do with church. So, the folks who went to church were better than those who didn't.

KB: Did most people go to church?

MDH: 00:14:12 They went to some church. So, more people went to Saint Bartholomew's in Cambridge because that was Episcopal Church of England. I call it Catholic lite. But, you know, it was very traditional in the way that the church in England, which was the church in Barbados was the church of English, of England. And then, so a lot of people -- in fact Saint Cyprians in Roxbury was built by people from Barbados. It was built by them. This one had always been here, and so most people went there. And there's very few of those folks left actually. A woman passed away in March who was my mother's friend and she lived around the corner. And for a number of years my mother would do her food shopping because she was, wasn't able to get out, and then I did the food shopping for her. And then, when she passed away this past March and I went to her funeral service there were very few people there because she was 95, and it was no longer a Caribbean church in the same way. It had a lot of people from Barbados. St. Paul's was where the middle class black families, including Caribbean families, went. But Saint Cyprian's Church was like the gathering place of, for church, of most folks from Barbados. Even if some lived in Cambridge, they still went to Saint Cyprians.

KB: So people would travel from outside the city to come here too?

MDH: 00:15:49 MmHmm. Yeah, and, you know, your church became the place where you gathered even if you moved. So for a long time you'd see people who lived in Medford and further out would still come to Pentecostal Tabernacle, or Saint Paul's, or Saint Bartholomew's on Sundays. And they would support different events, and so.

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KB: So what year were you born?

MDH: 52, 1952

KB: OK. And what was it like growing up in the neighborhood here?

MDH: 00:16:24 Well, you know, I think I might have said last time that it was not, well my church as 99 percent Barbadian. The neighborhood wasn't necessarily Barbadian. In fact, the Gallagher's lived across the street. A lot of Irish in the neighborhood, some were, I would say, I was a first generation born here. There were some that were second generation. So, they weren't that far from an immigrant status. The next door neighbors here were Greek, right? They were Greek, and they came from Greece. And Mr. John, as we called him, had grapes right on the other, right back there. So there really was a sense, you know, it was very much an immigrant neighborhood I would say. And it was much more diverse, well, it's actually -- I shouldn't even compare because it's also still very diverse. But what it was was -- I think African-Americans or Caribbean people were in the minority in terms of the neighborhood. And then of course over time, you know, it became majority minority, over time. But that's, I mean, that's the problem I think of looking at the book<sup>1</sup>, as lovely as it is, you don't get -- you have a sense it was largely a neighborhood of people of color, where when I came it wasn't. There were three black families on this stretch of the street.

KB: Yeah.

MDH: 00:17:54 And by the time I was ten or twelve it was many more. The projects also, the housing development, Newtowne Court and Washington Elms, in fact, at one point, probably early in its, soon after it was built, had restrictions to keep African Americans, or almost any people of color, from moving in there. So even that was largely Irish and Portuguese, I think. I'm thinking about the last names of my eighth grade graduation [laughter] and where they lived. So, there was a lot of Italians, Greek

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Boyer. We Are the Port

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and Portuguese. Less Greek, but some Greek, but Irish, Italian and Portuguese moving into housing developments, and over time more African Americans moved in.

KB: Okay.

MDH: 00:18:48 So the neighborhood changed, I think, pretty dramatically from the time I was a child, and then there were many more families we could see that we're living in one of the, that were living -- so the one across the street was all families of color, some from the Caribbean. And when I think about the Latino community it was largely Puerto Rican, and then later it was some -- where we had a relationship, like El Salvador and, you know, Central America, Central Americans. Well, Dennis is Dominican and Guatemalan? Dennis Benzan.

KB: Dominican and Puerto Rican I think.

MDH: Dominican and Puerto Rican. So yes, and a growing Puerto Rican population as well. So, it really changed dramatically and now it's changing back, or I'm not sure what that looks like.

KB: Yeah

MDH: But, it certainly is -- it's much more mixed now and it didn't become largely majority minority, which is what it did. Across the street were only people of color and everybody had families. There's almost no children on the street anymore.

KB: Wow.

MDH: There isn't any. Graduate students.

KB: Yeah there are a lot of young student types around here.

MDH: And individuals. I mean when I say individuals, you know, I think when you get out of graduate school, you know, you often will get a job where you've been a graduate student. So, your first job or two might be

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where, close to where you went to school. And then following that, I think people leave when they are ready to settle down more. When they have a regular job, Cambridge is just too expensive to live in. When you don't want to live with three roommates, you're not gonna choose Cambridge.

KB: So have you always lived in Cambridge?

MDH: 00:20:40 All for -- except for six years. When my children were -- cause I bought a house on Columbia Street in which I lived, and when my children were in the, Sean was in the sixth grade. There was just a lot of terrible, we had a lot -- a big problem with drugs and violence, and I remember making the decision to move when there was a guy who was shot, it wasn't a park yet, across the street from the church and died, and when I walked -- when I was coming home, my Sean, my son met me and said "Mom, did you hear what happened?" and I told him about this, he didn't know he had died, but this guy got shot, and he heard the gunshots, and I said, "When you hear that you need to go right to grandma's house." He goes, "What? And then you'll miss out on all the good stuff!" And I thought, *Okay, I'm done, I'm out of here.*

KB: When was that?

MDH: So he might have been -- So we moved when he was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, that was, we moved in 1988, so it might have been 85, 86?

KB: Okay.

MDH: When this incident happened, and I just said, you know -- and it was rough because I loved my community, I loved being here. But I was really thinking about what I saw happening with the children. And Stephanie was beginning to get some harassment, you know, and they were young as well, not from like old men, but, you know, boys a little bit older or around her age wanting to date and I was beginning to see girls, 14, having babies and, it just felt like, you know, I need to protect them. And it's really hard to protect teenagers unless -- you can't lock them in the house, you can go to prison for that, I think it's called child

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abuse [laughter]. But I couldn't do something, you know, I would always have her in some program. My mother had now retired and so there was always a sense of, you know, check in at grandma, you know, those kinds of things. But you could just see that what I was seeing with, I saw in some of my own peers, but what I could see was happening was just -- I just felt like, you know, that this was not a good place for them to be. And so we moved to Lexington and I hated every minute of it. But.

KB: Why?

MDH: 00:22:56 Well, you know, first of all you always felt like an outsider and they had a METCO program, so there was an assumption, because mine, there were only five so called native Lexingtonians who were people of color. And two of them of those five were my children, so everybody else came in through METCO. And that was, you know, a bus program that children from Roxbury and Dorchester actually would get on a bus and come to school in Lexington, and they had a pretty good program, but everybody assumed that they didn't live there. So, there was always -- I was, you know, I'd to go to a PTA -- "How long did it take you to get here?" "Oh, I just live up the street!" But, you know, there was always this sense that you were really an outsider.

KB: Right

MDH: So, I really didn't like it very much. And in the middle of while were there we had a bus that came right by the house and my children loved that kind of independence. They stopped running the bus up by our house, the little town bus. And so, it just made it more of a challenge, I think. And, my daughter didn't like being at the high school very much. She thought it was very cliquish, and so she didn't have any friends, except for one, who was not in the METCO program. And very -- in many ways it was very elitist, Lexington as a school system. You know, they didn't -- I don't know if you ever played in the school band but most school bands, as long as you show up to practice, you get to play, where everything was a specialty in the Lexington High School. Like if you did the debate team you couldn't play sports. They were number one in the country for a reason. Those kids were dedicated to research and

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debate! If -- the kids who were in the drama club already had dossiers because they had done a lot of acting already in Wheelock Theater. I mean, so it was a, sort of, you just couldn't enjoy and try out different things, you had to be committed to a sport, or music, or a dance or something and you just need to kind of--

KB: Yeah. Yeah my high school was a lot like that too. I went to high school in Hamilton

MDH: Oh yes!

KB: And so it was, you know, very competitive, all the sports and the theater, they were, like, going for awards.

MDH: Yes, exactly!

KB: Yeah, I get what you're saying about that.

MDH: 00:25:19 Yeah. Yeah. Art, the same [*Boston*] *Globe* would always have these art and there were like ten or fifteen were in Lexington so it was very much, yeah. So I really I didn't, I didn't enjoy it. My son liked it, it was great and I was happy because he had a number of friends who over time a couple of them got shot. Number one got shot right in Porter Square

KB: Friends from this neighborhood?

MDH: Yeah, who were in his little league, some of them. And so there was a period of violence and a lot of drugs. Which, you know, they've -- I can't say they've gotten a handle on it because, you know, from time to time things still happen. But the neighborhood has changed a lot and I felt -- so we came back at the point in which my son was getting ready to go to college, and I just couldn't wait to come back. So, and they always considered themselves from Cambridge, both of them. My daughter didn't like Lexington very much, you know, girls can be really not very nice to each other more than boys -- as long as you can, you know, handle a ball or handle yourself or can -- I think boys are much more accepting, but girls are not, you know, not very accepting at all. So

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when, so when she went to, in fact, it forced her to go to, in her head, she went to a historic black college in New Orleans. And Sean also went to New Orleans because he missed her, but he went to Loyola. And she went to Xavier, which was a historic black college. And I think it has to do with their experience, he didn't want to be in an all black college. He liked his experience in Lexington.

KB: 00:27:04 Interesting. I just want to go back for a second because I think I skipped, I think I skipped a little bit. So can you tell me about your background. Did you go to school in Cambridge, and college?

MDH: Yes, so I went to the Robert School. You know, Fletcher Maynard Academy is what it's called. Then I went to the high school for two years, and then there was this program. It was part of, I guess, the Better Chance program, but they came and did tutoring in Cambridge and I went to tutoring and they -- I got an opportunity to apply to the Cambridge School of Weston. You ever heard of the Cambridge School of Weston?

KB: No

MDH: It's a private school about 25 minutes outside Boston. They pick up in Harvard Square. And I got a chance to go, to go there for, and I went for two years. Very different, I mean just very different. And I did well for a while and, you know, you know I was, I just was not a very happy teenager. In the end, they asked me to leave. And then I went back to Cambridge Rindge Latin School for about a half year, and then dropped out. So, I'm technically a high school dropout.

KB: Why did you decide to drop out?

MDH: 00:28:23 I felt I wasn't learning anything in school. And, particularly after being in the Cambridge School of Weston where, you know, we were really doing, you know, we were having significant discussions that you wouldn't have at a the [Cambridge Rindge and Latin] high school. In English class, we were reading *Ivanhoe*, you know, Sir Walter Scott, and we were really, you know, in Cambridge [School of Weston], we were

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reading much more contemporary, or we'd mix something contemporary with something from, you know, the 1800s or the 1700s, [unclear] to kind of be able incite insights in conversations and dialogue about the world. So, you know, Charles Dickens would be paired with something much more modern, you know, I don't know, like a Ta-Nehisi Coates or something. He wasn't writing then, but you know, it was something like that. So that you weren't just looking at really about the past or whatever the context, they were doing a lot of comparisons. And having you sort of see what was going on at that time wasn't very different from what was going on now. The language was different and we'd do a lot of -- anyway, it was a very exciting education, but I often felt also very lost. So, I don't know all of the reasons but it's just, my second year there I just did so poorly they asked me to leave. So I came to Rindge Latin and a half a year, it was very -- I didn't enjoy it and I dropped out, and got a GED.

KB: What did you do after that?

MDH: 00:29:58 Went to UMass Boston at the College of Public and Community Service. Cause I was also becoming more of an activist at the time as well, so I was very active in community. I got involved in -- at the beginnings of after school care, which was also political, I mean nothing is -- It wasn't just taking care of children the way you see it now. It was also about the rights of women to have child care, and the rights of children to have good quality care, and so it was all, it was very much tied in. So, the work I did, yes, I was learning a lot about children and their development, but I was also learning a lot about the political context in that. And maybe some of that is also my own orientation in terms of want, need, desiring that. And to make change, and make change in the world. In fact, I came across a book that somebody gave me when they left Cambridge and she -- and the insignia, what she wrote in it was "To Marian, who wants to know everything about everything probably will." You know, that I was always hungry for figuring out this stuff.

So, I went to UMass and I really found a home there at the College of Public and Community Service, cause it was company based program. It was really designed for people who wanted to work, not just public

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service but in nonprofit, in the nonprofit arena. And it was also about making change, so you know, I was often up at the State House. Great education. And from there I then went to MIT in City Planning. I had a professor who had graduated from MIT and thought I would be a good candidate, and I applied and got in. Scared to death at first beginning. And then went to Brandeis, because I decided what I really wanted to do was to be able to cut pumpkins at eleven o'clock on a Wednesday morning if I wanted, and if I was in an academic setting that I could do that. I mean really, it's very, very practical [laughter]!

I'm sure it ties into also my desire to really study some things in depth, and so at MIT, you know, it was broadly social policy and women's rights, and I did my, I did a master's thesis on, the fancy name is the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act in 1981 impact on welfare and their families. So, basically a lot of families around 1981, they changed the rules, and women -- you wouldn't lose all of your welfare benefits once you started working. Women make much less than men, so that you would be allowed to keep a portion of your earnings, and while you are working. The problems is that it didn't allow for childcare, and Massachusetts had created a program to also subsidize those women with childcare and after school care. Unfortunately, after a year and a half, only 40 percent of the people who they intended it for were using it. And so, I wasn't interested in doing an evaluation of that, but that gave me an opportunity to look at what happened and why they weren't using it. And so that was the kind of [thing] that fueled my interest. And what we learned was that some of the programs were far away from where children went to school and didn't offer transportation. So I might live here but the program that was subsidized was two miles away. And so, you know, we'd hear these incredible stories of, "Well, my children were home alone in the afternoon. They are six and eight. But I would call every day at 3:00 to make sure they were in the house." I mean, these were these women who were working. They didn't want to leave their job, were getting some subsidy, you know, so they could keep -- so they could do a little better. But the trade off they were making was their children in many ways. I mean they, you know, and one woman told me how she would always make sure that her boss wasn't around when she would call home at 3:00.

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Because, you know, calling, I mean, I know we can't even imagine it now. But, you know, that's work and that's home. And so you can only call your break, and you didn't always have a break right at 3:00, and if you wanted to make sure your children were home. It was, you know, you'd hear these elaborate stories. In some cases the subsidy was only the fact that welfare was getting their husband or ex-husband's child support. So, essentially it was still an AFDC subsidy even though it was child support because it was coming in through the state. And then probably the worst story I heard was from a woman who was a nurse in Springfield and she wasn't able to use the system very well, the sort of child care system. She got something for four months and then it didn't work out. And her real story was the fact that she has, was that they didn't subsidize her health care and so you have to pay -- She worked in a hospital -- But you had, it had to do with class, I think, this story. You had to pay 20 percent of whatever the procedure was. And so, she was saving for the 21<sup>st</sup>, she was saving her 20 percent, and her child had 3 ear infections. And then he basically had a severe cold or something and he blew out his inner ear, and so he's now deaf in one ear.

KB: Oh, that's awful.

MDH: Which she told me. I mean now he may have an implant or something, but the story was really awful. And I think, what I saw was these people were really trying to do the right thing, you know, they were working. All things welfare wanted you to do, and it still wasn't working for them. And so, she was quite distressed in my hearing, quite distressed about her son being now deaf in one ear, and to me that was also an issue of class because if she was middle class she would have the procedure, and then fight around the 20 percent. Pay him a dollar, do whatever but she wouldn't have necessarily, when they -- I think in a different class would decide we're just gonna go and have it done and then we'll finance the other 20 percent, or we'll pay them off later, or whatever, and not feel like *I couldn't do this until I had the whole 20 percent*. And there I am. So those could just reinforce that experience at MIT, of really -- and doing that thesis of wanting to continue do this and being an academic allowed me also to be a community activist at the same time. And I did,

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my area was, I did it on community university partnerships was my, I did my dissertation on that. Community university partnerships.

KB: And then what did you do after that?

MDH: So I then taught at UMass.

KB: Oh, cool.

MDH: So I taught at UMass, so I was there for 14 years. And then I went to Lesley. I spent 14 years there. So.

KB: Do you still work Lesley?

MDH: 00:37:25 No, I didn't retire directly. I thought I was leaving. I left, in part what was going on, they had gone co-ed in the undergraduate and they did a very poor job of implementing it, and they basically closed the program that I was in, and I was in an adult program, which I love. I love teaching adult learners who would come back to, you know, it was called the adult baccalaureate program. And so I taught in that for a number of years when I went to Lesley. First I taught in an adult management program that was in the evening, and then I taught in the adult baccalaureate program, and over time they just sort of kept eroding the program. It kept falling apart and, you know, they wouldn't give it the resources it needed and, so it was sort of clear and I was not good at teaching 18 year olds. So I, so that last year I could sort of see the handwriting on the wall, and I wasn't happy there. And they weren't happy with me by this point. And so, I had, with my last contract, then I left. And they basically pay me half time and do nothing so I could look for another job, and I thought it would be easier and it wasn't. So, and about that time my mother became ill, so it kind of worked that I could be there around my mother.

KB: What kind of activism work do you do?

MDH: 00:38:56 Now it's mostly community activism. I was involved in, the, there is the -- what's it called? The Port Café. I don't know if you've heard of it.

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KB:

No

MDH:

It began with a group of us, actually Abe is really the – Lateiner, is basically the person behind it. But I was really interested in bringing people together to get to know each other in the neighborhood. The neighborhood is very different and it's just -- Cambridge is gonna be very different, but it was a way of bringing people in the neighborhood together to share a meal once a month. And that was the whole point, that when people get to know each other around things that are important, the look out for each other. You know, it was the neighborhood that I remember. Not that it was all, you know, rosy, but it was the neighborhood that I remember where people did look out for each other. And sometimes the adults weren't always very nice, "You go home to your mother!" [laughter] but, you know, there was a sense of protection. You knew who people were, you knew, and that no longer exists.

So my goal was really, with Abe and a few others, that we can do a lot when people know each other, and we can then come together to make demands around our neighborhood and things like that by getting to know -- So I was very active in that up until about a year and a half ago and I've just about quit everything. I didn't quit that, but I quit about all the others. I was on the Human Services Commission. I was on what was called the Area 4 Coalition, where we came together once a month and I think we did some good work there around, for example, the rat problem with all the construction and getting the city to pay attention to things. And now, I'm only doing the Cambridge Health Alliance. I'm only on that. And I just sort of felt that I'm at an age where I've learned some things and I could bring that to bear with a group the people who are looking at how do we keep affordable health care in the city. And also make it one that is -- and while there are a lot of people who use it, who use the Cambridge Health Alliance, Cambridge Hospital as their primary care, it's often seen as the hospital of last resort. Even though it's a credible, wonderful hospital. So I'm working, that's what I'm doing now. And then I work a couple of days a week at my church, for my church, and I'm actually working with them on the renovations and

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reorganization. I mean they're growing, they're probably about almost 600 people who attend every week, every Sunday. And we're in two facilities and so I've been working and now they have more people, working and helping us grow from being, you know, a 300 person church to a thousand person church. And that means reorganization in some ways, creating a viable board. Things like that. So I'm still active.

KB: Yeah. So it sounds like church has been really important the Barbadian community. What were some other places you spent time at in Cambridge as a young person and up through the rest of your life?

MDH: 00:42:20 Sure. Margaret Fuller House was a real place where I spent a lot of time. We could always go down to the Marga, or The House as it became known later. They were, they were a site for day camp, and so kids -- I forgot the name of the camp that we would go to, we'd go by bus, but you'd meet at the Margaret Fuller House. They had lots of their own programming at the house, they had Girl Scouts at the Margaret Fuller House. So, it was a place I went to probably four days a week after school. That I could just go, and they made me crafts and they had, they used to have a lot of students, and they had Girl Scouts. So, the Margaret Fuller House was a real place that I hung out at. And as a teenager my mother didn't, my mother was a very, very, very religious person you would say, and so she didn't like the dances or any of those things over there, and so I would have to sneak out and get caught, and it would repeat itself three and four times, not a month, but let's say in a quarter, three or four times I would sort of get caught. You know, or "Be home by 9:30," and I wouldn't get home till 10. You know, what can I say, I was -- it was the 60s, that's who I was [laughter]. But the Margaret Fuller was a big one.

Saint Paul's was another place that I think, you know, it was a little, there was some tension about Saint Paul's because the Barbadian community either belonged, most people, to Saint Bartholomew's, and, or one of the five Pentecostal Caribbean churches that was around and so we were, of course, much holier than any other group. And of course we were going to be going to heaven, and the others might squeak in. So, if they had something there was always some question about the

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quality of, meaning, the moral quality of what they were offering, and it really wasn't any different than anybody else, but there was some tension around there. But I would go. And then, for a number of years we had something called CYA, Cambridge Youth Association, every Friday night and it was fantastic. And that was at First Holiness Church, and I went there for years. It was just, you know, you'd come, you'd sing songs, you'd get a little message, but you got to hang out with friends. And afterwards we would sometimes go and, you know, get lasagna or some other Italian, [there was a] little Italian restaurant, where the Mideast Café is, it used to be across the street. None of those restaurants are there now but we used to go there and it was very inexpensive. So yes, so the things that [were] sponsored by the church I would always go to. And there was enough of us to be able to go and hang out and have a good time.

KB: Did you hang out mainly with other Barbadian--?

MDH: 00:45:23 Yes. Those are the ones that my mother would approve of. You know, and she would always say, "I don't know who those people are and I don't know where they're from." And she had her own sort of biases about African Americans. I mean, Denise Simmons is our Mayor, and I couldn't play with her as a child because she was, they were Americans from the South and they were Catholic. So, which means they worshipped idols [laughter]. You know, so we didn't jump rope and everything together. But my mother actually admitted later, you know, when Denise became mayor, she says, "You know, I just didn't want you to spend time with her. I just felt like they were Southerners," and, you know, and all of her -- I don't know what vision she had of Southerners. She said that they all had knives and, you know, so she had this, you know, I mean it sounds so -- it's the same kind of bias you would think the white supremacists have, I mean it's the same, at the root it's the same. There's these views of who -- so I didn't have that many African American friends. So if they weren't from some part of "the Rock," as my mother would call it, she wasn't even all that interested in getting to know them. However, her compensation is we had a fancy stereo player and we could bring friends here so we could dance. So she did a lot of things to keep us here, and would spend money to do things like buy a

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stereo and would have snacks that we could eat on Friday nights to have friends over. So my mother did a – my mother was really -- that was her way of protecting us.

KB: Yeah. Did you usually eat here? Like, did she cook for you at home or would you go out to get food?

MDH: 00:47:07 No, mostly here. Right. In fact, the tradition of Sunday dinner was something that she did. You know, she would always cook and have us here on Sunday. Even after we got married, you know, we would still come and have Sunday dinner. And we did this up until – so, I mean, I moved out of next door a little over a year ago. And we just couldn't keep, I just couldn't keep it up, and then as we got older, I mean, in the past say 10 years it became what we did every Sunday. My brother lives in Winchester, another one, my son lives on Eerie. We all come together for family dinner. It was becoming a challenge because there's lots of -- I have one niece who has four children. You know, it just became more and more of a challenge. But we had -- Sunday dinner was important and we always ate together. And my mother cooked in the week, and I learned how to cook, so I still tend to do that. My brother, my brother. My son and his wife and two children that live on Erie Street. I have her nieces staying with me and so we usually have Sunday dinner together. We just go out and have Sunday dinner.

KB: Do you cook Barbadian food?

MDH: 00:48:28 Yes, I do. I can cook Barbadian food, and the one tradition that we used to have, which was to make fruitcake, or black cake as they, as they would call it, so it is not the fruitcake you buy in the stores. It has lots of rum, and it's almost black from the sugar and the raisins that you would, you would let it sit for over three to four months.

KB: Wow.

MDHL Yeah, in a big old jar. And then you would, you know, and then you would put the eggs and all that, and then you'd make it into a cake. And my mother for years would make the cakes, would give people some at

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Christmas, send some to her friends or her friends' children, like one who lives in Philadelphia, she would send him her black cake. So, yeah. That was a tradition that she always did. And so we're gonna do it again this year. So I'm going to have my nieces come over and we're, you know, I think some of us know how to, I do definitely. I made that, the cake, for both Daniel's wedding and Yolanda's wedding. They both got married last year. And, last year? Yes, last year. And so, you know, that's what I'm doing now.

KB: Yeah

MDH: Is I'm learning how to make a make cake! [laughter] Yeah, I'm making cake, and I'm teaching them how to do that too. So, and then, you know, our food, unlike Jamaicans or some of the others, tends to be a little less spicy, but there are things that are clearly from Barbados. Like we make something called coo-coo and the closest thing that we figured out is that it probably comes from Nigeria, which is fufu, it's made with cornmeal. Or we make -- it's something else I've forgotten. What's the name of it? Basically, it's made with different kinds of pumpkin, some cornmeal, and coconut, and wrapped in banana leaves.

KB: Wow, that sounds good.

MDH: Delicious. Conkies is what they're called. So we do that. You know, stew dumplings, so yeah, I do cook, still, a lot of Barbadian food.

KB: Sounds great

MDH: And there's people who do it and continue to teach and help.

KB: Yeah. So how did you meet your husband?

MDH: 00:50:58 At church [laughter].

KB: Is he from Cambridge too?

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- MDH: He was, actually, he's originally from New York and they moved a lot and I met him at one of the church, some church, youth church event. And I was, I think I was 19. So, we met at a church thing. He was here, they had just recently just come from Puerto Rico. His parents were doing sort of missionary work and they moved every few years and that's how I met him. And we got married for legitimate sex, I should just say. I mean to me it's, you know, if living together would have been okay, but you know we were clearly trying to be the right people, do the right things, stay true to our faith. And so we met in July and married in June.
- KB: Wow.
- MDH: So, unlike what people do now. But, except my son didn't spend a lot of time, but he also got married at 34 and he was ready. You know, it was like "Yup, I met her," and, you know, that for him it was like you know, this is who the person is. I know, I know.
- KB: Yes, sometimes you know.
- MDH: And yeah. So, and then we were, you know, I was -- it wasn't a great marriage. His parents are from Barbados, their roots are in Barbados and Antigua. So my mother's views, you know, Barbados has a high literacy rate, like the highest in the Caribbean and the second highest in the world at one point, below China or something. Everybody reads, everybody goes to school. And they -- my mother asked, "Well you know, Antigua's a low island," which means you're not very well educated and wasn't sure, and wanted to know if she [my mother in law] could read. Well this is, this is my mother, this is her own classism, if she could read. And I said, "What are you talking about? She grew up her, she was born in the United States." But, her view of the other island. So, we met and so we had those things in common. I think my ex-husband struggled with them more, those roots, than I did with mine. And I think that's because his mother struggled with her background, with her roots. And where I was really quite proud of where we were and where we're from and, cause even as I grew up I

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met people who would say “Oh yeah, my grandparents came from Barbados, or something like that,” and you think *Wow, you don’t really know?* Where, for me, it was, that was so important.

KB:

What about for your – so when were your children born?

MDH:

00:53:45

76 and 77, and my mother is, I credit her with keeping our Caribbean roots alive. I really do. She always made sure we had, we knew where we were from and gave us a love for Barbados. And we also have relatives that we visited. So on my first trip I think I was eight. I think my mother was planning on leaving me, but didn't, to stay with my grandmother, my father's mother. And I think because of, she lost her own mother when she was four, there was, you know, there was some tension around my father not caring for his mother and Barbados, people from Barbados, and maybe some of the other islands, but they engage in what one would call “child lending,” meaning that if I had a sister and I had four children, she didn't have any for whatever reason, that I would lend her one of mine to raise, which sometimes is not a good thing cause it causes tension. Like, why was I sent to live with a relative? And that often meant relatives who were in the United States. And so, if I then go five years from now I get up and get the opportunity to get a green card and go, and I want my daughter back there'd be all kinds of tension around that and “Who’s your mother” and what not. So, the first time I was eight, I was there for three months, went the school and everything. And then I think my grandmother thought I was already ruined because I was too much of an American, and I had to wear shoes and things like that, because not everybody wears shoes to school. Alright? So and I was just, I was not your quiet, “Yes Ma’am” child. I was, yes, the same person I am now [laughter]. And, the second time I was twelve, so I went a few times.

And in 2007, we bought a family home there, which we rent out, you know, occasionally. In fact, we just decided we weren't gonna rent it out to strangers anymore. We would make it available for friends for a nominal amount of money. You know, cover the gas and air conditioning while you're there. So that's what we would do. The rest of the time, you know, it's empty, you know, we have someone who takes

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care of it. But yes, so that's where. So, we did that because we always wanted to have a place in Barbados. And so, we bought this because it was right on the main, off the main road, it's like in a little cul de sac, and you can walk to the beach, and you can take -- there's a bus, the bus that comes every few minutes, it'll take you to the fish fry, which is something they do on Friday nights in Barbados. I think half the island is there, you know, cause it's dancing and music and great food. And it'll take you to downtown Bridgetown, in Barbados. So, and we've all visited, we've all gone to the house and we did this in 2007.

So, growing up because I lived so close to my mother, my children also had a wonderful view of what it meant to be a Bajan, and being from Barbados. Better than I did! Because they were, you know, I got some teasing around it because not everybody in my class were from Barbados and, you know, "You're monkey chasers," or, you know, "Geechee girls," you know, so I didn't always appreciate it as who I was, but I didn't always appreciate it or embrace it, because I didn't want to be different. I really wanted to be an American, right? In that sense, and I remember I used to want spaghetti o's when they first would be advertised, you know [sings] "Uh oh, spaghetti o's" [laughter]. And it was like, you know, a neat new spaghetti you can eat with a spoon. And I really wanted spaghetti o's, and my mother said, "No, we don't buy food out of a can! We're not Americans!" you know, so I had this vision that Americans eat out of boxes and cans and, you know, and at the same time thinking that we were poor at one point, because we would get a package and it was a day of, the period of care packages, send a care package. They're not advertised anymore, but you would send a care package to India, you know, so you could do that. So, I thought "We're getting care packages from Barbados! So we must be poor. How come we're not--" you know. And I asked my mother, she just said, "Oh, you silly." It was really that she was getting things like palm oil butter, and things that she couldn't get here in terms of little delicacies. And so we would get it from Barbados. I mean, someone would send us a package every year with goodies. And that was all it was.

KB: Where there the kind of Caribbean grocery stores that there are around here now?

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- MDH: 00:58:45 No, only in Roxbury where there was just one.
- KB: Oh, okay.
- MDH: Only one. And my mother didn't like being in Boston, so if my father took us she would go, and usually to make fruitcake. "I'll get the things for fruitcake."
- KB: Were your kids also friends with Barbadian students and other people from the community?
- MDH: 00:59:07 Yes, they were. But not necessarily only from Barbados, because you remember there were others. There were Haitians, Jamaicans, and Trinidadians, and more and more over time. And so they did have all kinds of friends. I mean, they had friends who were from the islands, African American friends, so -- but they have really embraced Barbados as their ancestral home. They have a clear consciousness of it. And even my, the two oldest grandchildren really have a sense. And I think for my daughter and her family, her father is, her husband is from Liberia. He came as a kid but, you know, there's a sense that he's African and they're Bajans. So my 12 year old grandson thinks of Barbados as home, and where my other two grandchildren, they are very young. So Noah's 4, so he doesn't really know, but I did hear him mock a Bajan accent the other day.
- KB: [Laughter] That's so cute.
- MDH: I said "Oh!" you know, he heard someone and he goes, "Oh, she talked the way grandma did," because my mother had an accent. So, he was really, so it was interesting to hear him make those distinctions. And my son has really embraced it, you know, he's really -- he sees it as really part of what has made him who he is, which is my mother, you know, it's because of, you know, all of her dreams. She really had very high expectations of us as, you know, all of us have advanced degrees. I have one brother who has a doctorate and three master's? Three, yeah, three master's. Used to teach Biblical Greek and Hebrew in Spanish for

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a small group of Spanish speaking pastors who wanted to learn Greek and Hebrew. But if they were clearly, Spanish was clearly their first language and then, and it's taught in English, so basically he saw his role as cutting out the middleman, as cutting out the English. So, he's very, very, very smart. And then my other brother was at the military and he has, I don't know, a divinity -- because both my brothers are ministers. It's divinity and counseling and he's got three master's as well. So, very highly educated with -- my father didn't go to school after second grade and my mother went to dressmaking at the age of 12. So, and for her, and it all really meant that education was, is the great equalizer and also owning property. So, she would tell us all, which I think he's talking about males, "Buy your own house so nobody, so you can stand up and pee and nobody can make you move." So the "stand up and pee" part I think she was talking about men [laughter].

KB: Probably.

MDH: 01:02:08 [Unclear] But I do think there's this notion, you know, that ownership is important and having your own -- and I think it's shared with lots of people from the Caribbean, I think it's shared with lots of immigrants. Somehow owning your own means that you've arrived, or you've accomplished much, and sending your kids to school and making sure that they have opportunities that you didn't have. I do think is a, very much an immigrant experience. Not just Caribbean but --

KB: Does that have anything to do with why your family kept this house, even when other people were leaving?

MDH: Oh yes! I mean, when -- her church was right here, she could get on the train. She didn't like to drive. Her point of view was, *you go out to those places and you have to have a car*, and she felt that you make yourself much more vulnerable if you move more into the suburbs where you needed to have a car and, you know, already that wasn't -- you know, you'd have to take two buses or something, you know. So her sense of *let's just stay here, right? And make this beautiful, make this wonderful, care for this*. So I, you know, my son essentially owns the house and has it in trust, so and he has no intention of selling because it's the family

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home. So even though he could probably get a lot money but, you know, it's -- I'm here because it. If he were to sell it, I wouldn't be here.

KB: Yeah. So how has the neighborhood changed over your lifetime?

MDH: You know, there are very few children who live on the street, and in most neighborhoods. We gonna have one new baby, two new babies. One was born a couple of years ago and I met them and the folks that were renovating that house. They have one child. But we don't -- it used to be a street full of children. I mean, every apartment here had children. Across the street had children. There were lots of children. That's, that's one way that has changed. There's less families. You see a lot more partners and roommates and not children. You know, they're graduate students or they're doing that first couple jobs before they go on to do that, so that way. It's much more affluent than it was. Definitely much more affluent. And I think it's changed in the way that the society or the countries changed. I mean, people live here -- there's less cars. You know, as I think I said before, that we rented next door -- five guys and they didn't want -- we thought it would be an issue, because we like to have extra parking for when family comes. They didn't need a car, don't want a car. They all work at MIT, and one works at Harvard. Don't need a car. So that has changed, you know. I think there's more interest in politics and conversations about it but not in working together around it. You know what I mean? It's a --we're not together meeting to talk to City Hall about anything. We all are sort of progressive and want to see good things happen, but we're not working collectively to make that happen.

KB: Right.

MDH: Yeah. So I think in that way it's changed. Yeah, not looking out for each other. We don't even know each other.

KB: Yeah. So that's part of what you're doing with--

MDH: 01:05:48 With the Port Café. Right? I mean, cause as a child I remember there was and, you know, because I was a child I wasn't allowed to be part of

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it, but there was something going on. It looked like there was a man who lived on the street who had an eye, who had eyes for young girls. And I overheard some conversation, he says, "Well, you know, we're gonna to take care of it," my father said, you know, "We're gonna take care of it." And so I didn't hear enough to know that whatever the problem was, they moved.

KB: Wow.

MDH: And he, my father and some other men, I think either beat him up, or I don't know exactly, but, you know, you heard enough whispering, whispering, whispering. But I knew the family moved, that was there. And the word that we used was "interfered with," so he must have interfered with some girl, and it got out there so, you know, there was no arrest, no anything.

KB: Wow, they just took care of it.

MDH: [Laughter] They just took care of it. You know, so as an adult when I think about it I said, "Well..." You know, it's not the right way to do things, but it dealt with the problem. But, it meant it became somebody else's problem. So it's that way. It's -- those things don't happen, you know. No one's looking out for each other in any way. And if I didn't belong to my church I would have similar things than if I wasn't involved. You know, when I had surgery in the beginning of September, I had a week of food. People came and brought me, I had too many meals actually. You know, people brought food for me to eat, you know, and so.

KB: That's so nice

MDH: It was very nice! It was very nice.

KB: So you talked about how this neighborhood had kind of become more violent and there were drugs in the 80's.

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- MDH: 01:07:43 Yes. Even before there were drugs. Yeah, yeah in the 80's, right, because my son was born 77. And we had, in a two year period, nine shootings, nine homicides. And, one was a couple on Suffolk Street he shot her and killed himself. And they had been having some domestic violence stuff. We had a few people who had overdoses. And just a lot of drugs out there. And there was some reports that you saw and that I've seen from the city about the drug problem. I'm not saying that drugs aren't around, but I do think it's different. One is that the police are much more active around, being proactive around it. But we've had a number of people who have gotten into trouble and some of it is still based from when they lived here. So, we have a young man who was, he was in Kendall Square, they had moved to Boston, but he had roots here. He was shot and arrested. Another one, not a couple -- a year ago, and then there was one right in front of the projects two years ago, three years ago in daylight. He was shot and killed. Evening, almost evening. It was the July 3<sup>rd</sup>, which, he was celebrating Independence Day, because of the way Independence Day fell, like it fell on a Sunday, or whatever, one of those things. And so, we still have some of that, but not in the rampant way that we were having problems with drugs and break ins. And one of the ways you know that, we would have had lots of break ins. Radios, televisions, stereos, and we're not having any of that. And it seems -- and it's interesting because the young men, it's usually young men, are like in their 30s, who are still connected somehow to their growing up years, which was here. So, if my son is 39 and they're in their early 30's -- so, you can see that he would have been in the middle of a lot of this if -- partly I left because I wanted to get him away from that influence.
- KB: So by the time you came back here it was --
- MDH And he was going to college!
- KB: [Laughter] Yeah, so it was a good time to come
- MDH: 01:10:26 It was a good time to come back. And I was clear about my agenda, I didn't like being there, but once he was off, I wasn't worried about him

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getting into drugs once he got off to college. He could, people do, but not in the same way. And that there were people breaking in and going to prison. There was just a number of young men who are my son's age who've gone to – been in prison. In and out. One is in there now, I didn't know him very well, but he was in Sean's Little League, who's in for murder. And, you know, he has a life sentence, so you know, there's been enough.

KB: When did it start to become more affluent here?

MDH 01:11:03 End of rent control was the beginning of the end of -- even the kind of diversity. So, I think we lost a lot in the Latino community, because it feels like there are less Latinos that live in the neighborhood. There are less Latinos, I mean, it doesn't seem like it, there are. And this neighborhood had the cheapest housing stock at that time. So, there was lots of influence in terms of families looking who wanted to buy, came and bought. The folks down the street came about 99, 2000. Now it's very different. But I think that was the real beginning of it becoming more affluent, and then people -- and some that meant that the people who lived here were no longer living here anymore. Who might have gotten in trouble or drugs, I mean, all the folks across the street, cause you know, every once in a while we'd have the police over there. Somebody doing something, some kid doing something. And I think about 9 -- the end of rent control. And then by the time -- you know we had a referendum to try to get it back in, or try to see if we -- We were beginning to see if we could push to have rent control reinstated. It lost by 70 percent. So enough people had changed, in that short window, about six years, that it lost, the referendum. Absolutely lost. You know, we go back and go, "Well, it wasn't worded right," but I think people didn't -- felt like it wasn't necessarily a good thing. We didn't have the -- we saw very little of new building going on. And so, there's been a lot of building that's happened since then and it's become too expensive for a lot of people to live. But, I think for the Caribbean community people were selling in the 60's and 70's and 80's, and if somebody offers you eight hundred [thousand] dollars for your house that you paid 25 thousand for, it's kind of hard to say, "Oh no," you know. Or, when people die, families die, people my mother's age. And a number of

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those cases, there are four siblings, and so there was no thinking or planning about, how do we keep this in the family, or whether or not we should keep this in the family. So those got sold, where I think with us, my mother -- we had had a conversation a long time ago about what we wanted to do with this house, and to keep it, and, you know, that it could be used to kind of help other family members even though nobody's coming from Barbados to stay, which is what a lot of people from the Caribbean did when they first came. You know, that my mother brought a cousin from Barbados to stay with us, and she was, you know, a young woman like her, a seamstress. My, another niece cousin came when I was 12 and stayed with us until she got married. So, there was a sense of bringing people from the old country to give them a start. We're not seeing that and we're not likely to ever see that again given this current president.

KB: Yeah.

MDH: I mean, that had already -- I don't want to say, I don't want to blame it on Trump. It's been coming for a long time, it isn't that. You know, you don't see it in the same way.

KB: Do you feel like there is still a Bar – or a Caribbean community in Cambridge?

MDH: Mmm, just the remnants of one. You know, there is an event or something and we'll try to go, but most of those events that might have happened in Cambridge, now really happen in Boston. So I'll hear about something and I'll go to Barbados<sup>2</sup>, cause I think, Barbados is a much bigger city in terms of numbers, it's a much smaller -- and there's not even a sense of us as Caribbean people anymore.

KB: Right.

MDH: I don't think we see that. And there wasn't a lot of cross cultural engagement either. You know, Barbadians are Barbadians, Trinidadians

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<sup>2</sup> Means Boston

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are Trinidadians, you know, so that there wasn't a lot of "We as Caribbean people." Although, we now have the Carnival, just only started a few years ago, but there wasn't growing up a sense of, where all of us are from the Caribbean. Is was no – we're Bajans or you're not a Beijan. Simple, simple as that. I mean, when I married my husband, she said, "Well, he's half Beijan and I guess, you know, you know, mixed marriage can work." [Laughter] So, I mean my mother was really like, "That's a mixed marriage," right? "But you're not, you're not marrying a Beijan," so.

KB: So I think we're just about done. The last thing I wanted to ask was what kinds of resources you would recommend to people who would like to learn more about Caribbean heritage, like if you have music, or books, or anything else.

MDH: 01:16:19 Mmm there are. There's some, there's a piece of historical fiction which I've used in a course that I taught. It was called *To Hell or Barbados*, and while it's fiction, you really get a sense of Barbados history within the context of England and Ireland and that period and how it developed. I thought it was useful to understanding – cause Barbados has a very small white population, and there's also a small, white, very poor population which I was surprised, it's almost like the Appalachians. And, so -- but let me, I have to think about that cause there are some great resources that are around, but let me think and I can probably put together a bit of a list.

KB: Yeah, that would be great. I think they're hoping to put some kind of like web resource list on the Cambridge Historical Society website when we -- yeah, so that would be great.

MDH: Oh, good. Good, yeah, most of the resources are in Boston but there's some good resources. Has anybody mentioned to you a Nicole Adams?

KB: No

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MDH: I don't know her address, but Denise Simmons knows her. Except you wouldn't be able to get anything before the election, which is November 7<sup>th</sup>

KB: Yeah, it seems like everyone's pretty busy

MDH: 01:17:46 Yeah, but she actually started the carnival here and, the Caribbean carnival here, and I think she would -- I'm gonna see if I can find her. But she's been here for a long time. She lived in Boston. She then was living in Cambridge, she may still live in Boston. But anyway, so yeah, let me think about that.

KB: Yeah. Do you know someone with the name, her name is Lena James?

MDH: Oh, Lena James, yes. She's Trinidad or Jamaica?

KB: I think Trinidad.

MDH: Trinidad, yes.

KB: I've been trying to figure out how to get a hold of her too.

MDH: 01:18:28 Yeah, she still lives in Cambridge. She used to be in the schools, I think she's retired. But I see her every once in a while. I'm trying to think of who she might be friends with.

KB: Okay, yeah, that's a good way to go.

MDH: I mean, we're not like buddies or anything. We see each other in the grocery store every once in a while.

KB: Yeah

MDH: But Lena James has been here a long time. She came as an adult. What would be wonderful to some point figure out, because I do think there are different stories. There's what I call my story, and there's a group of

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us who are my story whose parents came from the island in the 40's when a lot of people were coming and were raised here and have a particular connection with whatever their home is. I think when I've read stories by immigrants, like what's the Indian woman's name, whose been writing about that? Uh, she went to B.U. I'm trying to remember. She's written three or four books

KB: Yeah, I don't know. Yeah, if you think of it later let me know.

MDH: 01:19:39 Yeah, I will. But everybody says, "Yes, yes, yes, I remember reading that!" Some people like it, some people don't like her work because she, you know, writes about -- one of her books writes about being born in the United States in Cambridge, and it's a novel but she's writing about this young man who struggles with identity until he finally embraces the identity of who he was as an Indian-American. So that's kind of one story, and then there's a story of, when I think about people whose parents came a whole generation before my parents, so that their parents were first generation and they're my age but they have less of a connection, it's a different story. They may be some foods, but that's it. There's not a -- you know, people aren't visiting back and forth, or, you know, there was less of that sort of actual connection. And so it's interesting, I've often thought about how do we think about those distinctions and how do we keep them alive because, you know, I'm sure Noah, one of my youngest grandchildren, isn't gonna have the same kind of connection because it was his grandmother, his great grandmother, who was born in Barbados. And so while I have a connection, he's not gonna have the same connection that I did.

KB: Right.

MDH: Right? And that will be one of the many places they go for vacation, as opposed to, we're going to Barbados because we have to make that pilgrimage.

KB: Yeah. One thing that I read about just in doing research that you might be able to speak to too, is just -- what I was reading was saying that people who are immigrants, like someone like your mom, would identify

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very much with the country that they came from, but then their children would identify sometimes more with like, the African-American community.

MDH: Yes. Yes.

KB: Do you think that that happens?

MDH: 01:21:42 That does happen. I think that it happens more with -- well in my generation it didn't happen very much. Those of us whose parents came, I think they felt very good about their country and so they wanted us to love it. My mother wanted us to be Americans, so we couldn't have an accent. See I don't have an accent? [Laughter] I wasn't allowed to have an accent. Although, I can have an accent, but I wasn't allowed to. But it was because we had people coming all the time. I belong to a church that was 99 percent Barbadian, not even just Caribbean. It kept it very much alive. But it does make sense, because those who were second generations, it's -- they're less connected to it. But, I would say that I've seen in -- with some other Caribbean, and maybe it's ours is an unique story, where children have less of a connection in order for them to be very much, to be more American. So my mother wanted us to be more American, and particularly and some of my friends in the Haitian community, when I've talked to people that are younger, you know, their parents only came here for what -- because it was better in terms of economically, but they really didn't want to be here. You know, they only were here because better jobs, better opportunities, but -- and they didn't give -- and so their children kind of had to grab their own identity away. You know, they had to, you know, they couldn't do the things that some of their African American friends did. So, I do think there's just a number of different sort of cuts at this, how to think about it.

KB: Yeah. Actually if your son or daughter is willing, it might be interesting to do an interview with them too.

MDH: MmHm. I could ask Sean.

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- KB: Okay.
- MDH: My daughter's in North Carolina.
- KB: Oh, okay, so she's not around.
- MDH: Not around. But my son might be a good one. I'll ask him, I know he's very busy. He's an attorney but he's also -- he and his partner built the new house on -- it's across from the projects. It's called Port Landing. They built that, and that just opened up last year. So, and they're getting ready to bid on another one. And not in the Port, but someplace else in Cambridge. So, it's a lot of work because they get some subsidizing from -- first of all they have to go get it zoned. That's the first hurdle, is getting the zoning. And then, I know that he didn't -- he went to church but he wasn't gonna to have family dinner today [laughter] because he's getting ready to put in the zoning petition. And you want to finish it by next week.
- KB: Yeah, so I'm going to be doing a few more interviews, probably like in the next month or so. And then I think they're going to continue the project into next year. So it might not be me doing interviews, but they may get other interns to do them. So, yeah
- MDH: If they're going to continue that would be great.
- KB: Okay.
- MDH: Because I do know that he would like to talk.
- KB: Yeah, that would be great.
- MDH: And it would be good to hear his perspective.
- KB: Definitely .

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MDH: And what that means, because he has wonderful stories about grandma, just in terms of what it meant to be a Beijan and her view of that and--

KB: And he has kids too?

MDH: He has two children.

KB: Okay.

MDH: And they're four and a year, so they're babies

KB: Too young to talk to

MDH: [Laughter] To young to talk to.

KB: Okay. Yeah, so we'll just be in touch about that.

MDH: Yes.

KB: It doesn't have to happen right away.

MDH: Good. Oh yeah, absolutely.

KB: Well thank you so much. This was really great. I really appreciate it.

MDH: Sure.

KB: So I'll be in touch with you.

MDH: 01:25:42 Have you read any Paula Rothenberg? She doesn't write about the Caribbean but she writes about immigrants.

KB: No, what's her name again?

MDH: Paula Rothenberg.

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KB: Okay.

MDH: She has one book called immigrant, *Ethnic America*, and I'm sure she has at least one chapter or something about people from the Caribbean. You know, but she's written a lot of articles like, you know, how the Jews became white, you know, understanding in the context the, you know, their own history and the choices that got made in those communities took to fully participate in the American mainstream. Just understanding how ethnic identification, as well as separation, occurs. So, there's a piece of one of her books, or an article, that speaks to why the Irish became good domestics and the Italians didn't. You know, that's not quite the title but it's something like that. And what she writes about is how they immigrated into the United States. Where the Irish often immigrated as adults, young people, and individuals, and Italians came as families. And so, in places like Boston, you know, it would -- and they're much more, if you're here by yourself, you're much more likely to become a live in or be willing than if you're -- obviously you had a family. And so, attitudes would develop, which is, if you want a good housekeeper, a good nanny, get yourself an Irish girl. And that's because, at 5:00 I'm leaving, and I'm gonna go take care of my family and cook my husband dinner. But it's just the way they -- how immigration, how their own processes of coming to this country shaped both who they decided they were and how people saw them.

KB: Interesting.

MDH: Yeah.

KB: Yeah I definitely will look into that.

MDH: Yeah, Paula Rothenberg has written a lot about ethnic America, immigration, understanding processes.

KB: Is she from Boston by any chance?

MDH: I don't think so. And she's been writing for a long time.

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KB: Okay, I'll look into that.

MDH: Cause you're in history, right?

KB: Yeah, I'm at UMass Boston too, so

MDH: So, even she was -- if it was in Sociology, you know, if you were -- you would have read her

KB: Yeah.

MDH: Because, I mean, she does a lot of history but the slant on is clearly around ethnicity and immigration those pieces.

KB: Yeah, I'm surprised I haven't come across it yet, but I'll look.

MDH: And I have your email, so if I see anything I will send that to you.

KB: Yeah. And if you think of any other resources about the Caribbean or Barbados let me know.

MDH: Okay, I will, I will, definitely. Great.

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