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University of Baltimore
1420 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Esther Reaves

The University of Baltimore is launching a two-year investigation called "'68 Riots and Rebirth," a project centered around the events that followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., their effects on the development of our city. UB administration and faculty members in the law school and in the undergraduate departments of history and community studies are planning a series of projects and events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of this pivotal event. We are currently working with the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History, The Jewish Museum of Maryland, Maryland Public Television and the Enoch Pratt Free Libraries to pursue funding for projects that may include conferences, a television documentary and a library traveling exhibit.

Your potential participation in an oral history project would contribute to the very foundation of this project – the memories of Baltimoreans who lived through the riots and saw the changes that came about in response to them. Your life story can fill in the limited knowledge we learn from newspaper accounts and the television footage.

If you choose to participate in the project you would be interviewed by students from the University of Baltimore who are currently taking "The New South and Civil Rights." Their work in this course will inform their questions, but your memories will determine the direction of the interviews.

If you agree to serve as an oral history informant in this project, you will meet with a team of undergraduate students on three different occasions. On the first meeting, the students will take a still photograph of you. In addition, if you have a photo of yourself in or around 1968, we would greatly appreciate it if we could borrow it, scan it, and return it. We would reserve the rights to reproduce those photos and use them in the documentary, conferences, exhibit or publications.

The students may conduct the interviews at a location of your choice, or you may meet them at the University of Baltimore Langsdale Library for your interviews. During the interviews, your recollections will be recorded in two forms: audio and video. The students will be responsible for operating the equipment. You can expect the interviews to last for a minimum of 30 minutes each.

The general topics for the three interviews will be:

- 1) Your life before 1968
- 2) Your experiences of the events of April 1968
- 3) What you see as changes that came about as a result of the riots

You will be interviewed three times to give you a chance to process the questions and make sure you are giving the fullest narrative possible. Sometimes talking about events that occurred decades ago will unearth forgotten memories. Undoubtedly, some of those remembrances will be negative. We greatly appreciate your willingness to take the risk of exploring a potentially painful past so that your life experiences will be recorded.

After the interviews the students will transcribe your oral history. They will provide you with a copy of the transcription for your review before the transcription is published. The transcription, video and audio records will be archived in the Langsdale Library Special Collections and will be accessible to the public. Your name will be attached to these documents. The University of Baltimore may use your image and/or your words in any future documentaries, exhibits, conferences or publications. Participants in the oral history project agree to waive their confidentiality.


If at any time you are uncomfortable with participation in the study, you are free to drop out. Participation is strictly voluntary. While your participation is requested and highly valued, you are free to decide whether or not to continue participation at all times. You may decline to have your name published with your reminiscences

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact me at 410-837-5296. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Nix, Ph.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
History and Community Studies
The University of Baltimore

I have read and understand the information provided above, and consent to participate in the study. I have also been given a copy of the informed consent for my records.



Alisha De La Cruz
11/27/2006

Mrs. Esther Reaves in 1968

- Resided in the 2600 block of Guilford Avenue
- Approximately 37yrs of age
- Married with 4 children
- Middle class, owned a vehicle, row home
- Daughter age 12, Sons were 10, 8, and 6 yrs old
- A year later, in 1969, the family adopted a Chinese son

Remembers

- Her husband, Earl, worked at WBAL. She recently found his press pass; he passed away 16yrs ago.
- Scared about everything that was going on and he was out on the streets and not at home.
- She was “a wife of the 50’s”, stay at home mother.
- Moved to 219 29th St. because her mother-in-law died and her father-in-law was alone. This home is currently the only single family house left on the block; all of the other ones are converted into apartments.
- Born in Frederick County, she has been in Baltimore City since she was 12 yrs. Old.
- Earl traveled around with the TV personalities (the on camera people) during the riots.
- Everyone was concerned about his safety
- There were fires.
- She also recalls “jeeps going up and down the alley with guns mounted on top”. Ginger, her daughter, would play in the alley and would go running when she saw the National Guard’s jeeps.
- Usually took pictures of everything but did not take any during the riots, she does not know why she didn’t take any.
- They lived in a racially mixed or integrated neighborhood
- Neighbors were African American and white. These neighbors included a librarian and a school principle.
- The effect on her had more to do with a lack of effect because her best friend was “African American” and their kids were the same age, and their neighborhood was secure.
- Jesse Montgomery (her neighbor and best friend) - tied black cloth outside [she thought it was likely to show that they too were mourning King’s murder].
- She also recalled some people having red porch lights, but was not aware of the significance.
- Her children went to school, there was a curfew though.
- Her brother brought home steaks. He was a butcher and was living with them at the time.

- She was not then and she is not now, sure of the impact on she and her family. There was damage to the shop that her brother worked at in Hampden. Her sister lived in Pikesville (there was no further mention of her).
- She was able to see the fires and watch the looters from her front porch.
- Jesse ran from North Avenue and Harford Road, where the Sears was located, to her home when the rioting began. She was afraid.
- She feels as though her lack of worry was from her being naïve.
- She does not recall any shocking stories from her husband
- She mentions the phrase “bib-whacked”
- When reflecting on things she tells us that Jesse “pops” into her mind the most.
- Her neighborhood was a fun place to live, it was a time when the neighbors would tell you when your kids did something wrong.
- They moved in 1970
- Kids attended a school on 26th Street and St. Paul, she recalls school being open, the riots occurred over the weekend.
- They had a good life prior to the riots
- None of their neighbors were directly effected, as far as she knew
- Her husband alerted her to the rioting
- She remembers the rioting occurred soon after MLK, Jr.’s assassination (4/4/1968).
- She mentions Taylor Branch; he was a speaker at a program held at her church.
 - What was the progression of the riots? Do you remember where you heard about them starting first?
- She seems to remember them being in D.C. then Baltimore, not really sure of the progression.
- She does not recall being scared of the progression; she attributes this to knowing what was going on because of Earl.
- She remembers seeing, from traveling around, the destruction.
- This included broken windows, places burned down.
- One change that she noticed after the riots was a change in the way storefronts looked. They used to have larger, sprawling windows but afterwards the stores were more bricked up with smaller windows.
- The Sears was destroyed, she and her family frequented there.
 - ❖ Saturdays usually involved shopping with “Dad” (her father-in-law)
 - ❖ The market at North Avenue and Maryland Avenue closed down, she was not sure if that had anything to do with the riots but it was close to one of the rioting area.
- There did not seem to be any economic change.
 - When did outdoor malls start? Or when did you start to see them become more popular?
- She thinks that the development of outdoor malls may have occurred as a result of the riots

- In her view: the riots were anger and frustration (she does not completely think it was racially motivated).
- She recalls MLK, Jr. being in Baltimore. It was either at Morgan State University or Coppin State University, she does not remember but, Earl was there.
 - ❖ She attributes her awareness of his visit more to her husband than to her African American friends or neighbors (she said because they were military).
- She feels as though she has a different slant on things because she lived in an integrated neighborhood.
- She recalls a book about Baltimore called “Baltimore: Then and Now”
- She did not recall particular discussions concerning the fear of the riots spreading or MLK, Jr.’s murder.
- The kids were not afraid except about the National Guard’s jeeps and thinking that the jeeps should not be there.
- In her opinion: People who were having problems [struggling] before [the riots] are probably still having problems.
- There was no mention by the kids about tensions at school during the riots.
- She did not recall outstanding conversations about race or incidents in the South with her neighbors.
- She has never has any ill feelings towards anyone because of race. She raised her children the same way.
- She was more frightened during the Cuban Missile Crisis than during the riots.
- Things were reasonably normal during the riots...she cooked dinner every night.
- They did not go to church though, reason being that Earl was working and he had the car. Their church, St. John’s, did not close because of the riots.
- The evenings were worse for the riots. The kids played in the backyard and the alley.
- She believes the curfew was at dark but that it was initially at 11pm, then 6pm, and finally 4pm.
- After the riots there was a lot of distrust and anger and it took a long time for that to go away.
- Some people never changed from the riots, i.e. if they were racist prior to the riots, they were likely still racist after the riots.

Joe Slider
Brian Litz
Alisha De La Cruz

Interview of Mrs. Esther Reaves
November 27th 2006

Mrs. Esther Reaves in 1968

- Resided in the 2600 block of Guilford Avenue
- Approximately 37yrs of age
- Married with 4 children
- Middle class, owned a vehicle, row home
- Daughter age 12, Sons were 10, 8, and 6 yrs old
- A year later, in 1969, the family adopted a Chinese son

Joe: We're going to go back and start before. . .where we were talking about your husband and all that... where you lived on Guilford.

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah

Joe: 2600 block, all the kids and everything. Your husband was at WBAL?

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah, he was at WBAL

Joe: And he was, like, traveling around within the riots

Mrs. Reaves: Pardon?

Joe: He was traveling out within the riots?

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah, he was traveling around with what you call the personalities. You know the.. .uh. . .the people, the on camera people. He was not on camera, he was never on camera, he was off camera. He just worked with the people, he was out different places.

Joe: How did that affect you at home?

Mrs. Reaves: Well I guess everyone was worried that he was not; you know.. .that he was vulnerable. There were lots of things happening, there were a lot of things going on in the city. There were a lot of fires going on. And, and, and I think at the time.. .umm.. .the, the, the most vivid recollection, if you want that, of the riots, is of seeing jeeps going up and down this, you know up and down the alley with.. .umm. . .guns mounted on them.

With National Guards in the jeeps, that was scary in itself. I remember Earl coming home and saying that the National Guard was bibwacked. . .I just happened to think of that.. .they were bib-wacked over at the, over at Druid Hill Park. And I think since then the, umm, the thing that has struck me is the fact that I didn't take, I'm great for taking pictures, I take thousands of pictures all the time. I didn't take one picture, must not have had any film (giggle) because I didn't take any picture of the time, of the people in the streets, of the jeeps or anything like that. It's really strange that I didn't so...

Joe: What was your neighborhood like?

Mrs. Reaves: Ahh.. we were, we were, in ahh, a mixed neighborhood. Our, umm, it was, ahh, the kids have since thanked me for growing up there. I don't know if Jimmy said anything to you or not? Because they grew up with. .this was when all the umm, the umm, what is it? Civil Rights thing?

Joe: Uh huh.

Mrs. Reaves: All the civil rights things was going on. And we lived. . .there was a man and his wife that lived next door to us and they were African American and next door to them was another African American family. And then there was a white family and then there was another African American family. So we were really mixed and next to us was a school principle and then a school librarian. So it was, it was a really mixed neighborhood.

Joe: Now, do you think that had any effect on the riots?

Mrs. Reaves: Well it didn't have any effect on the riots but, it certainly had an effect on what we did and how we are because my best friend, who lived like two doors down was African American, umm, we were always.. .her kids and my kids were the same age. We were secure because they were secure; we weren't worried about anything happening to us at the time, so...

Brian: I think Jim mentioned something about a piece of black material.

Mrs. Reaves: My friend, her name was Jessie, Jessie Montgomery. And we had, you tied a piece of black cloth on your porch or on something outside, he was, he was talking about the red light on outside but I don't remember anything significant about that.

Joe: And what was the significance of the black material?

Mrs. Reaves: It was significant of being in morning of Martin Luther King, I would assume. In thinking back, that why we did it so.. .There was a sort of saying that you know what happened and so forth, I mean that was my interpretation of it at that time.

Joe: Now how did the kids grow up in that? Did they go to school at that time?

Mrs. Reaves: They were in school, I remember them playing and there was curfew. I was talking to them, not yesterday but last week or something. I was talking to my oldest one Ginger, and she said she remembers playing and the jeeps coming down the street and them being.. .and them running for home because of them thinking they weren't supposed to be outside or something. They're life went on pretty much as usual. Another thing in talking to the kids. . .they remember that we ate steak. I don't know why they remembered that, I didn't remember that. I remember that, my brother was working as a butcher. He brought steak home. We had barbeque; we would cook the steaks on the barbeque.

Joe: So, your brother lived with you at that time?

Mrs. Reaves: Mmm hmm, with my family there was always someone living with us.

Joe: Well a big family makes for a happy family.

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah.

Joe: Now, how was he affected by the riots at that time?

Mrs. Reaves: I don't know anymore than, I don't think it had any big effect on any of us except that we were concerned, I guess, with what was happening.

Brian: Was his butcher shop damaged at all?

Mrs. Reaves: No, and he was over in, he worked somewhere over in Hampden, I can't remember exactly where it was now.

Joe: So as the fire was burning do you have any memories of that?

Mrs. Reaves: I remember watching the fires bum. I remember being on my front porch and watching people with loot or what ever they had taken. But I remember Jesse, when it first started she was at sears at north and Harford and she ran all the way from there all the way to Guilford Avenue. . .they lived on 2628 an we lived on 2632, 2628 she lived on. She was an African American and she was afraid of the things that were going on. In talking like this.. .she had more concern; maybe I was too dumb to be worried. I was, I was too naïve to be worried about what was happening, so. And she long since, she died, in '70, so I can't go ask her what it was. Her husband is still living there, on 2628 Guilford Ave. so

Brian: In a little over a week, I'll be living at 2432 Guilford...

Mrs. Reaves: 2432?

Brian: Yeah, yeah.

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah. That's below, that's below 25th Street? Our agency at Manor House is at 25th St. that's where I work; I'm executive director of Manor House 435 East 25 St.

Brian: Oh, well there you go. We'll be right near you.

Joe: Did your husband talk about it when he came home?

Mrs. Reaves: I'm sure he did I can't remember him saying, I mean I remember him saying different things. But I don't remember him saying anything that was, umm, scary or anything like that.

Joe: Any memories come to mind when we mention the '68 riots?

Mrs. Reaves: Naw, uh ah, not really. I think Jesse pops into my head because we were such good friends and we spent so much time together.

Joe: She was your next-door neighbor?

Mrs. Reaves: She lived like two doors down. So, umm, at that time the community it was really, it was really friends and the kids were all..it was in the days when your kids did something wrong you neighbor would tell you. I don't think that happens anymore, so. Jesse and I were really good friends and the women next door, CL and Ida, so umm, it was umm. I don't remember anything spectacular other than the friends and the cohesiveness of the neighborhood at that time, which was pretty nice.

Brian: Was it still like that? Did that stay?

Mrs. Reaves: Well I wouldn't know, we moved over here in '70. Jesse died in '70, then we moved over here. We moved right before she died. We changed neighborhoods more so than us knowing that it changed. It changed for us because we moved.

Joe: How was life before the riots?

Mrs. Reaves: It was ahh. . .I don't know it was just kids going to school, **26th** and St. Paul. Was it **26th** and St. Paul? Yeah, it was 2& and St. Paul. So it was walking the kids to school when they were little and pretty nice life, I thought.

Joe: Were any of you neighbors directly affected by the riots? Such as like a shopkeeper?

Mrs. Reaves: No, uh ah. On the one side of us they taught school. And the African American person and Jessie Montgomery on the other side were.. .I don't know if they were in the army or if they were out of the army. I can't remember if they were still in the military or if they were retired. I don't remember anymore than that.

Alisha: When the riots started, do you remember if.... How did you know? Did you see something? Did your husband tell you?

Mrs. Reaves: He was probably at work.

Alisha: So he alerted you before you saw anything.

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah, oh yeah.

Joe: Now, did you see any of the rioting first hand?

Mrs. Reaves: It was all; it was all.. .I think the closest thing was Sears. You could see the smoke and you could see the flames. I mean you could see the smoke but you couldn't see the flames. There was nothing close.

Alisha: Do you happen to know how long after Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot that the rioting started? Was it like... I mean I don't know.. .was it like months? Was it like days?

Mrs. Reaves: I think it was like immediately.. .I can't remember the time line but, it was very, very quickly. I don't remember exactly what day it was.

Brian: It was like April 4th

Mrs. Reaves: I remember it was like April.

Brian: I guess the rioting didn't get full into effect until Saturday the 6th or Sunday the 7th.

Mrs. Reaves: Because it like started in other cities and then it just gradually started here. [pause] Have you talked to Taylor Branch? Because I have his books here.

Brian: Uh, yeah, we've been reading his book though.

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah, 'cause I have his books here.

Brian: Yeah, we've been reading Parting the Waters

Joe: Isn't he coming to the school?

Alisha: Yeah, the 7th think.

Mrs. Reaves: Why he comes to mind recently, I keep losing time in my head. My kids are all grown up but in my mind their still kids. They had a program at the church that I go to. Martin Luther King Day and Taylor Branch was at this thing and he spoke, gave this presentation. I think that is the biggest name that has been on the same. . . See I told you they were going to get worse (referring to the band playing next door, everyone laughs).

Joe: Now, when you said that you could see the riots progressing towards Baltimore, do you remember where the tracks came?

Mrs. Reaves: When they came to Baltimore, it started in Baltimore I'm not sure of the progression.

Joe: When you could like see it on the news reel did that spark any fear into you or any of your neighbors?

Mrs. Reaves: No, like I said because we lived in a mixed neighborhood. I think if we lived in a white neighborhood you would be more scared because you wouldn't know because A) Earl, my husband would let us know, he would let us know what was happening.

Joe: You guys were pretty well informed then. You knew what was going on. Did you see any...? Did you go by and see any...?

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah, yeah, I can see the pictures going on in my head. The destruction after the riots. It's amazing how you forget these things until you really stop and think about them but I remember in traveling around that you saw the different stores.

Joe: What were the conditions of the buildings that you saw?

Mrs. Reaves: Some places had been burned and the broken windows. It was in that period of time they had expansive glass windows, then there would be a little small window and then the rest of it would be bricked up or something like that. A cause and effect of the riot.

Joe: Did you notice any change in the people?

Mrs. Reaves: Not in our, not in our immediate neighborhood, no.

Joe: Did you notice any of the people who weren't in your neighborhood?

Mrs. Reaves: Mostly, when the riots were going on you would see people with stuff but, none of these people were in that block there.

Alisha: You mentioned that when you traveled through the city and you saw the destruction, did you know of stores that you went to that had any destruction?

Mrs. Reaves: I think that was our biggest bemoaning fact that we lost Sears Roebuck because that is where we buy everything. Of course they closed it down after that, so that is one of things that you felt as a result of the riots.

Joe: Did you notice any economic change? Just the lost of Sears?

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah, just the lost of Sears. You know it was a lot easier to go the eight/ten blocks to Sears than it was to go.. . I'm not sure, this is something you can find out. When did they start building the outside malls? Was it before the riots? After the riots? I don't know.

Brian: I think it was after the riots. I'm actually taking American Cities and we have to talk about...

Mrs. Reaves: Was that a cause and effect thing?

Brian: It may have been, it seems to go more along with a transportation thing and the rise.. .or something like that. It had to have happened around the same time. It could very well be just a safety factor. People who were living in the city, some of them moved out because they thought it would be too dangerous, so.. .but yeah, I guess, yeah. Because I guess you can look back in Baltimore's history, the peak of when people started leaving and when businesses started closing up.

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah, I think that was the point when...

Brian: Yeah, things have only started to pick up in the last couple of years.

Mrs. Reaves: I'm not sure.. .was downtown? Was downtown burnt? I don't think so.

Brian: I think it was along President St.

Mrs. Reaves: It had to be more...

Brian: It was more along Gay St., Monument St.

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah along Monument St.

Brian: Some of the biggest hit.. .cause, umm I think like North and like Chester...

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah because I think it would be interesting to know, I will have to look into that were directly it came from...

Brian: I'm sure from a business aspect, you don't want to reinvest in a place where there was that damage. I was wondering, did you think that it was like a black/white thing, like a black versus white or was it something else?

Mrs. Reaves: My take on it was that it was anger and frustration, umm, I was never into the black/white thing. There were friends there, it's never been a problem with us from the family. It's really something that, it's something that I haven't really ye forgotten what you asked me.

Brain: Well actually, when was the first time you actually heard of Martin Luther King?

Mrs. Reaves: Oh, he was here in Baltimore. I definitely knew about him from Jessie and everybody. I also knew about him through Earl working in television. When he did the speech over at, umm. . .do you know where he spoke here in Baltimore?

Brain: Yeah it would have to be Morgan or Coppin.

Mrs. Reaves: I know it was in Baltimore because I know that Earl met him. I think it was at Morgan, I think he spoke at Morgan. Because he was there with the [inaudible] group. I guess we had a different slant on things because of what he did

Brain: Yeah because I guess living in an integrated neighborhood, even then. Because I know my grandmother lived in Hampden, that's still a big issue with her today...

Mrs. Reaves: Oh yeah.

Brain: Even when she has to go the hospital, then she wants to go to a particular hospital where that racial divide is.

Mrs. Reaves: It's still going on in Hampden.

Brian: They just came out with a big book about the history of Hampden.

Mrs. Reaves: About living in Hampden?

Brian: Yeah.

Mrs. Reaves: I have, I have m sure it's here somewhere. It was about earlier days. . . I was about twelve when I came here but it was about earlier years. I have a book on Baltimore: Then and Now

Brian: Oh, Yeah. I bought that for my father. It has all the pictures; you can see how the harbor transformed.

Alisha: When the riots were in other cities or immediately after, were neighbors or other people talking about whether or not they thought the riots were coming to Baltimore?

Mrs. Reaves: Oh, I'm sure we talked about it. I'm not sure. . .again that goes back to who our neighbors were and how we interacted with people. I think people who lived in Hampden or someplace like that were more afraid because they didn't have the vaguest idea of what an African American was, they would've had more concern than we did.

Brian: So you never really did. Did you ever fear for your safety?

Mrs. Reaves: In talking to the kids about it, they never said that the only time they were afraid was when the Jeep came down. They thought they weren't supposed to be in the alley. So, umm, we were never worried about our safety that much.

Brian: Do you think any of the racial tension or any of the effects from the riots still lingering around today?

Mrs. Reaves: I'm sure that people who were having problems before that are still having problems. How would it have changed? I don't know.

Alisha: Your children, the school that they went to, was it integrated? Did they have any difficulties during the riots?

Mrs. Reaves: I don't think so, I don't remember them having any problems. You know recently, when Jim first brought this up.. no one ever said anything.

Brian: Do you remember anything from like after the Brown v. Board of Education? What was the time of that?

Alisha: '54/'55

Mrs. Reaves: When was the Civil Rights Act?

J/B/A: 1965

Brian: I'm just trying to get the time straight.

Joe: Did you and your neighbors talk, before Martin Luther King, like about what as going on down south or anything?

Brian:

Mrs. Reaves: I don't remember. In the course of conversation we may have, I don't remember anything outstanding about it. We talked about pretty much everything.

Joe: Just the usual chit chat?

Mrs. Reaves: Uh huh.

Brian: So race just wasn't a factor?

Mrs. Reaves: Uh ah, it wasn't a factor.

Brian: That's honestly really refreshing, I mean from just a personal point of view. It's still such a huge factor in so many people's lives.

Mrs. Reaves: And it's umm, I don't know where, where it came from. I've never had any problems with anybody; I've never had any ill feeling toward anybody because of their color. You raise your kids the way you feel.

Joe: As I've gone through all these questions, has anything else popped into your mind? Any pictures popped into your head?

Mrs. Reaves: Mmm, mmm (negative). Hmm, there's umm, I distinctly remember it happening, I wasn't frightened though. I remember it. I remember being more frightened during the Cuban Missile crisis. I mean, that, that, I remember that more than anything. I didn't know until afterwards how right I was to be frightened. But I was more frightened during that then I was during the riots, it really didn't bother me that much.

Brian: [Some inaudible comments about Fidel Castro]

Mrs. Reaves: I remember at the time that I kept my children more under my watch.. I had to be able to see them [during the Cuban Missile crisis], it was scary when I think about it.

Joe: During the riots, how was the home life? Did you cook dinner on a regular basis?

Mrs. Reaves: Oh yeah.

Joe: Get the kids in at the same time?

Mrs. Reaves: Life was pretty normal.

Brian: Did their school close at that time?

Mrs. Reaves: I don't think so. I think the riots mostly happened over the weekend, Em not sure. You've probably talked to more people than *me*.

Brian: We had this little guide here, with newspaper articles and stuff. It looks like most of it was on the weekend, like Saturday/Sunday.

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah, yeah. That's what I remember, that it was mostly over the weekend. I don't remember schools closing at all.

Joe: Now, how did that effect, like, church life?

Mrs. Reaves: Umm, we probably didn't go because over the weekend if the riots were going on then Earl was working. And if he was working then he had the car, although my brother was there and he had a car also. It would've meant that we didn't go to church.

Brian: Where was your church at the time?

Mrs. Reaves: At that time we were going to St. Marks, down on St. Paul's Street, 1900 block of St. Paul's St. No, we weren't, we were going to St. John's. It was in '68; yeah we were going to St. John's

Joe: As far as you know, did any of them close because of the riots?

Mrs. Reaves: Mmm, mmm (negative).

Joe: Was anyone else in your family or in you close network, working inside the riot area?

Mrs. Reaves: My brother was working, but I think he might have been working over in Hampden, somewhere in that direction. None of the rest of my immediate family was in Baltimore City. My sister was in Pikesville. I don't know of any problems.

Brian: Do you recall any events prior to the riots that was sort of an outlet for the sort of a . . . Civil Rights movement? Any rallies or anything like that?

Mrs. Reaves: I don't remember anything.

Joe: What time of the day do you think was worse for it? Do you think it was the day time or the night time?

Mrs. Reaves: I think it was the evenings. I think that is when most of the problems happened, was in the evenings.

Joe: Did you bring your kids in earlier because of that?

Mrs. Reaves: Umm. no cause the kids played in the back yard or sometimes in the alley. But umm, I think if there was curfew I think it was.. .I can't remember what time the curfew time was. I think it was probably dark, I think it was dark. You had to be in the house, there was a curfew

Brian: I think it was eleven at first and then **it** went to six or seven and then it went to like four

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah, I knew there was. . .I remember the curfew. The kids were pretty much in the alley, in the yard. In the back of the house or in the alley, right in the back Of the house, they weren't old enough that they were out and about that much.

Brian: There's still racial tension, you can go a block down that way and still feel the racial tension. Was it better living in the city? Was it better even in your neighborhood? Was it better relationship between the races then, then now? Even on a national level, do you feel it's in a better direction?

Mrs. Reaves: I think after the riots, after this thing, I think there was a lot of distrust, a lot of anger, umm. . .I don't know what the other word is. I think it's taken a long time to go away. I'm not sure, I think that there's people who were living then, that lived through that, who's never changed. I mean there's still distrustful, anger, and any and so forth and such. They'll probably stay that way for the rest of their lives. I don't think that in itself was enough, sometimes people just love to have a reason to hate people, and that was a good reason. I don't think that basically it had, you could use incidences for anything,

you can use it for good or bad. I'm not sure that the whole, the good, the bad, how it works out.

Alisha: Was there a lot of buzz when your husband was working and King spoke at Morgan or Coppin whichever one it was? Was there a lot of talk about the fact that he was in town and that he was speaking? Or do you think that the reason you were aware of it was because your husband was working for WBAL?

Mrs. Reaves: I think I was more aware of it because Earl was there. I don't think that being; the two families that I knew so well were military. There was not that much connection with Martin Luther King. We knew about it because of Earl's job, more so than because of the neighborhood chit chat.

Joe: Now, before the riots started, did you take the kids out oh Saturday nights to a dinner or movie or anything like that?

Mrs. Reaves: There wasn't any schedule of what was going on, mostly the big thing on Saturday was going shopping with dad, going down to North Avenue market. Do you know if the market, the North Avenue market was affected by the riots? That comes to mind.

Brian: I know Sears was. I think a lot of it was on the east as far as North *Avenue*.

Mrs. Reaves: The North Avenue market was at North and Maryland.

Brian: I really don't know, from reading this, I really can't tell.

Mrs. Reaves: I know it closed down. I just don't know if it was economic or

Brian: Probably just to be safe. Right around Maryland and North, not a lot of things happened, I'm sure it was fine right around there.

Mrs. Reaves: That was our big thing, going out and going shopping. We used to make it a little adventure.

Joe: Now, did that change during the riots?

Mrs. Reaves: Well it changed the fact that he wasn't home so we couldn't go shopping.

Brian: But afterwards it was back to normal?

Mrs. Reaves: Yeah it was back to normal.

Alisha: Now, during that time, I know your in-laws were here, was there any concern? Did they have any concerns, as far as things went during that time? I don't know what this neighborhood was like. Was it more integrated or no?

Mrs. Reaves: No, this block was not integrated at the time. But they weren't concerned. To the best of my knowledge they were fine. And dad was working so he would've gotten the buses downtown but, not on the weekends, he worked Mondays through Fridays. So, I don't think it really affected them.

Brian: Wow that was great.

Joe: Yeah, a wealth of information. If there is anything else you can think of just shoot us an email.

End of interview

Brian: I think you have my number, but I can give it to you again. If you come up with anything that you'd like to talk about, just give me a call. I don't know if we can set up another interview now, before we get to next week. We have to do a presentation on it so. This will probably be the only one.

Mrs. Reaves: If I remember anything, I'll call you.

Brian: Because even just one of us could swing by.