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Mrs. Jane Swope

I am by profession a writer, mainly of local history - and I never met a person who didn't have a story.* As I grow older, people like to "pick" my brain, which is getting feebler - and I often have trouble remembering names, particularly since I have had a few T.I.A.'s. However, I am happy to share what I do remember with those who are interested.

* Julie Hanks.

I was born in 1916 at the Hospital for the Women of Maryland which was located at Lafayette Avenue and John Street and baptized that year at Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church at Park and Lafayette. I went to Sunday School at Roland Park Presbyterian Church, but returned to Brown Memorial to be confirmed, at the age of 13, by the Rev. Thomas Quithus Speers, who had just begun his ministry there. I was married there in 1937 (and hope to be buried from there) and the church has shaped a great deal of my life and opened my eyes and ears to happenings of which I would never have been conscious. My grandmother, who lived on Lafayette Avenue opposite the hospital, had been a member since 1906 and was head of the Missionary Society.

1940 Shortly after I was married at Brown Memorial I noticed that the younger women did not attend the meetings of the Women's Association, so I organized a Junior Women's Association. During W.W.II, we took magazines to the sailors' home on S. Broadway decorated a lounge for servicemen, had Tea, house tours, speakers, and otherwise enjoyed ourselves. I was also a member of the Board of the Presbyterian Home and directed Red Cross sewing there. Also got up a group of young women to dress up in the various colors of Red Cross volunteers and raise money at booths in department store.

Then I got interested in the goings-on at the Bolton Street Center. Robert Garrett had bought this building (formerly a church) to "protect" our property. Memorial Episcopal Church cooperated with us in this endeavor until the noise annoyed the neighbors ^{then murders} - then they pulled out. We had a group called the Pathfinders (6-10 years old); we also had activities for teen-agers, and dances at night. One day an 11-year-old girl named Margaret came to the door and said "But you have nothing for me." That did it. I could see that it was a very miserable age, so I scoured the neighborhood and made up a girls' club of black and white, Catholic and Protestant, privileged and underprivileged. We were fortunate to have a Mr. Hoffman, father of two of the girls, who showed us his art studio on Lafayette Avenue. We went to Federal Hill and I showed them the city. We went to the Walters Art Gallery and

1956

We also had a Day Camp at Graham Park to which we busied the children and a week long camp at Chesapeake Center

saw the beautiful illuminated manuscripts, and then back to the Center to make our own manuscripts with colored paint, gilt on parchment paper. We saw Suzen Lake at the Lyric and visited the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen. We had classes in grooming + posture by a model. We sewed aprons and pocket books.

At the same time, other volunteers, Mrs. Knipp, my mother, Frances Froelicher, Ted Guffith, David Mock and others.

dedicated Boy Scouts, "Lefty" Schultz + Don Dhonau, who were assistant pastors helped. There was roller skating, dances, basketball, a clothing room, and Bible Study under the direction of Loretta Andrews.

During World War II the Center had been used as a respite place for servicemen

A great many people had migrated to Baltimore from the Appalachian region to work in the war industries and settled in the region near Brown Memorial. We tried to get their children into Sunday School, and did so with some success - they had a religious background and blended in very well with our privileged children. But the parents did not feel comfortable with us and the police told us not to go into some of the lovely old houses on Setau Place which had been broken up into as many as 16 apartments and where inebriated men snored in the halls.

This brings us to URBAN RENEWAL which

URBAN
RENEWAL

1964

caused a great upheaval and disturbance as houses were torn down on Linden Avenue and replaced by people of ~~lower~~^{higher} economic income, leaving the Appalachian people to scramble to Calvert St. etc. where we finally lost track of them. There were a number of meetings held at our church to try to reconcile the needs of the two groups, at one of which Jeanita Jackson Mitchell came to me in great indignation and said "where is your pastor?" I introduced them and she said "Well, you should be in Annapolis." It seemed that there were 17 liquor licenses in the area, and she didn't want any more." (She was the grandmother of the political Mitchells and has a house where she is memorialized on Zetau Place.)

I cannot remember the date, but it was on a Palm Sunday when I walked out of the front door of the church and saw a great cloud of smoke, which looked as if the whole city was burning down. It was the riots when most of Pennsylvania Avenue and many corner

RIOTS stores were being set on fire by discontented mobs, and the National Guard had to be called out. This set the stage for the Green-willow effort later.

I am sure that Mary Walker and Catherine Marshall, who are older than I am and Edna Watts, whose son was in my Sunday School class, would have further information and I can give you the addresses of two young ministers, "Lefty" Schultz and Don Phonsie, who worked with us at the time.

Also, about the time our minister John Middaugh, picketed Gwynn Oak Park which did not allow "colored" people to come in although they lived nearby - and was taken to the Towson jail along with Eugene Carson Blake, Marion Bascom and others, which horrified just a few members of our congregation.

ONE
CHURCH

Also, "about this time we became "One Church in Two Locations " as many of the suburban families did not want to bring their children in to town for meetings, and our interests really differed. For awhile (13 years?) we commuted back and forth between the new edifice on Woodbrook Lane and Park Avenue. We had one minister (and assistants) one Session, but two locations. We were afraid we were going to lose the Park Avenue Building, which would revert to the Brown family, but we hung on and strengthened our ties with Corpus Christi, Memorial Episcopal, and Strawbridge.

I became Sunday School superintendent by default. I had no training in teaching, but there was no one else to do it, so I tried. I had a wonderful group of teachers (as there are now) and I believe that faith

Caught, rather than taught. We were making a sand table model of a Palestine village in the second grade and the boys got restless, so Nottie and Prucilla Steff got their husbands Rodney and Charlie to sit on the floor with the boys and carve little wooden boats. It worked like a charm.

This was on the 2nd + 3rd floor of the Church House. Later we moved to what is now the 2nd + 3rd floor of the Sunday School building which had at the time one very tall room with a balcony around it, ideal for chasing little boys who had evaded us.

BUILD

This brings us to BUILD (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development) and we have had a part in their organization through insurance redlining, fighting the Gas & Electric Co., protesting low wages in city hotels which were subsidized by the city etc. etc. At least two of our ministers have headed this organization-

Mary Taylor started what is believed to be the oldest tutorial program in the country. At first the local schools protested at time taken away from their buildings but finally the principal of one of the schools marched up the street to thank us. Such luminaries as Henry Callard, headmaster of Gelman School, took part in the one-on-one tutoring.

1951
GREEN- remember - The Greenwillow Corporation. As I
WILLOW mentioned before. The lower part of Penn-
CORP.sylvania Avenue had been completely gutted by fire. A group of ministers from zone 21217 were in the habit of having lunch together when Clint said "we

can go home because you won't understand what it is all about, anyway. It seemed that by some miracle Model Cities Housing had advanced us some money (I forgot to say that preliminary costs had been put up by local churches and boards) and a man named Eugene Ford, of Washington had agreed to take it on as, I think, they call it "venture capital". So the Greenview Apartments, at the bottom of Pennsylvania Avenue where Martin Luther King Boulevard turns - got built - but we could not get a "colored" contractor ~~to~~ bonded to do what had grown to be a \$3,000,000 job. Mayor Wm. Donald Schaefer broke the ground and other dignitaries were present. Later, Model Cities Housing ceased to exist, and we were able to give the interest on some of the money we had left over to ^{help} build the Nehemiah project at Pennsylvania + North

should be doing something beside just eating together. Several ideas were proposed. but it seemed that affordable housing was the outstanding need. A group was formed of ministers and members from about seven churches (Vernon Dobson, Marion Bascom, Bernie Farnham of Memorial Episcopal, a couple of Roman Catholic priest etc.) For about eight years we kicked ideas around, listened to proposals - hired an architect to do a preliminary land study - when at last President Nixon cuts off government funds for inner-city housing. We were devastated. All that work - all those hopes. Then the officers got a call saying come down town and sign some papers and then you

can go home because you won't understand what it is all about, anyway. It seemed that by some miracle Model Cities Housing had advanced us some money (I forgot to say that preliminary costs had been put up by local churches and boards) and a man named Eugene Ford, of Washington had agreed to take it on as, I think, they call it "venture capital". So the Greenview Apartments, at the bottom of Pennsylvania Avenue where Martin Luther King Boulevard turns - got built - but we could not get a "colored" contractor ~~to~~ bonded to do what had grown to be a \$3,000,000 job. Mayor Wm. Donald Schaefer broke the ground and other dignitaries were present. Later, Model Cities Housing ceased to exist, and we were able to give the interest on some of the money we had left over to ^{help} build the Nehemiah project at Pennsylvania + North

Brown Memorial Park Avenue has always had a great interest in the city as well as foreign missions. In the earliest days, we had a "Baby's Milk and Ice" project in Curtis Bay under the leadership of Mabel Congdon(?)

And so it goes. I wonder what we will get into next?

For about 15 years, I have been privileged to be a member of a group called Women of Faiths. We are Catholic, Jewish, Protestant and two Muslims one of whom is the wife of the Imam. (He also came and spoke to us. We usually meet at the Carmelite Monastery, on Dulany Valley Road, which despite its name is actually a nunnery. We often meet at the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, on Park Heights Avenue and participate in their meetings. We have speakers on our backgrounds, political issues, ethical issues. It has given me the opportunity to know in depth women of other religious backgrounds. We were "sprinkled" by the Archbishop when the new sanctuary at the Monastery was dedicated and we had a day-long meeting when we discussed the Crucifixion (at their suggestion) at the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. What an opportunity - what a privilege! Our leader is Sister Mary Eileen McNamee who wears not a "habit" but a brown suit.