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ORAL HISTORY DEED OF GIFT

The oral history collection of the Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project includes taped interviews with significant Baltimore-area citizens who can provide first-hand accounts of some aspect of Baltimore history which would otherwise go unrecorded. Our goal is to supplement and enhance the more conventional archival materials held by the Baltimore Region Institutional Studies Center of the University of Baltimore.

You have been asked to give an interview for this collection. A tape recording of your interview will be made by the interviewer. In some cases a verbatim transcript will be made. In every case an abstract will be made of the tape. All materials connected with your interview will be deposited with the Baltimore Region Institutional Studies Center and copies will be sent to the Maryland Historical Society. This material may be used for research, education, scholarly publications and other purposes according to the educational and historical objectives of the Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project, the Baltimore Region Institutional Studies Center and the Maryland Historical Society.

I, Julia B. Candy, have read the above and, in view of the historical and scholarly value of this information, I knowingly and voluntarily permit the Baltimore Region Institutional Studies Center, its Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project and the Maryland Historical Society the full use of this information. I hereby grant and assign all my rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or not such rights are now known, recognized or contemplated, to the Baltimore Region Institutional Studies Center, the Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project and the Maryland Historical Society.

8/6/81
Date of Agreement

8/6/81
Date(s) of Interview

Acknowledgement of Maryland Historical to abide by the terms of this agreement:

Date

Signature of Curator/Director

847 North Howard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
(301) 396-1515

Gloria Aull
Chairperson

W. Theodore Diarr
Project Director

Ben Primer
Project Administrator

A project of the University of Baltimore and BRISC
NAME (including maiden name):  Julie Bluford Cundy
ADDRESS  2208 Mount Holly St  21216
No. of Years in Residence?  Life in Belt.  Own or Rent?  
Date of Birth  Aug 7, 1918  Place of Birth  Belt.

PARENTS:  
MOTHER  FATHER
NAME (including maiden name)  Annie Stefford  Jesse Bluford
DATE OF BIRTH  Nov 8, 1896  April 3, 1896
PLACE OF BIRTH  Eastern Shore, Md  Virginia
OCCUPATION(S)  Housewife
RELIGION  
MOTHER'S PLACE OF BIRTH  Eastern Shore
FATHER'S PLACE OF BIRTH  Virginia

BROTHERS AND SISTERS:  
Ellie Bodden  Dates of Birth:  Nov 1, 1919
Carrie Reed  Jan 30, 1921

SCHOOLING AND/OR OTHER TRAINING:  
Drumner Junior H
Douglas Senior H

DATES OF SCHOOLING:  
graduated 1934 - June

OCCUPATIONS:  
Utility Operator  Years in Occupation:  1942 - Jan 1969
Lender Bag Manufacturing  
Hyman Blundary Child Day Care  
Center - Parent Liaison  1969 - Jan 1981
Coordination - Family Mediation  
Clothing and Textile Workers Union
RELIGION/CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: Methodist, John Wesley United Meth.

DATES OF MEMBERSHIP: June, 1961 to present

MEMBERSHIP IN CLUBS/ORGANIZATIONS (Ethnic, Religious, Political, Union, Social, etc.; Include Dates of Membership and Offices Held or Duties Performed)

- Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers' - 1959 to 1981
- NAACP - 1980 to present
- Order of the Eastern Star, PHA - 1960 to present

PREVIOUS RESIDENCES:

23-29 Madison Ave. 814, MO

YEARS: 4
OWN OR RENT: Rent

SPouse's NAME(s):

William T. Cindy

DATE OF MARRIAGE: June 29, 1958
PLACE OF MARRIAGE: Belt

SPouse's OCCUPATION(s):

Retired from Army

YEARS IN OCCUPATION: 28 yrs.

NAMES OF CHILDREN:

Veronica Ann (Shipley)

DATE OF BIRTH: April 13, 1939

Ralph W. ...

DATE OF BIRTH: June 2, 1938

Edward Frank ...

DATE OF BIRTH: April 5, 1941
JULIA CANDY

I was raised by a foster parent and I lived in East Baltimore and went to school at the elementary school in East Baltimore and during the depression as a youngster I can remember people ringing our doorbell asking for money and, uh, my uh foster parent would give them sandwiches or a nickle or a dime if she had it. And I remember during that time that they sold what they called depression apples and pencils on the street, but we always had sufficient food at our home. It was, you know, well...it wasn't a three course meal but we had plenty food to eat. I came to live in a foster home because my mother and father was separated and she went to Philadelphia to work and she placed me with this lady. She didn't, you know, desert me. We weren't deserted or anything but we we were just placed with this lady and she raised me. I never lived with my mother. I saw her on holidays and during her vacation time she would come to visit us. My mother did domestic work. She was domestic in Philadelphia. And the lady that raised me was a musician in East Baltimore. Mrs. Lovey E. And she taught me music and she sent me to dancing school. I went to dancing school under the instructor Elsworth Tune at that time. And she exposed me to a lot of nice activities...plays, everything, you know. I was out with my foster sister just now, you know, and we're still very close although my foster parent is dead. Her two daughters...we're still like sisters, you know. And my own two sisters are still living but it's just two of us that was raised by this lady and my other younger sister, Carey, was raised on the Eastern Shore with my grandmother. And then when I, you know, finished high school I got married and I stayed home and raised three children. Well, until they were nearly school age and then I uh...through a friend of mine uh who was working for the uh raincoat company. At that time it was called the Koen Manufactory and they were under contract for the government making raincoats for the soldiers and the WACS and we made barmack bags for the soldiers and WACS. And um so that's uh I really didn't have to go and look for a job the job came to me through someone else at the company.
And I stayed there 28 years. And then in the meantime the company was not union. So the union ah finally got into the company which turned out to be the London Fog Manufactory. They changed over from the name Koen to the London Fog Company and then uh it became union. The people fought against the union coming in but they boycotted the union label. So that’s how they got in, you know. The company tried to resist the union... they got into the union in 1959. They became union in 1959 and then the company uh came uh they set and they bargained with the union, you know, and that’s how they got in. And at that time I became shop steward and uh was quite interesting work. Organizing the union... well at that time the boss uh would tell us uh the union wasn’t any good and they would come in and take our money and, you know, ah persuade us to do things that would cost us more money and they really fought against the union very hard, you know, but anyway the union got in. And we began to get better benefits after the union came in because before the union came in we did not get vacations, we didn’t get holidays with pay and uh, you know, you didn’t get overtime pay and uh then your job wasn’t protected and if the boss looked at you and didn’t like you, your looks, he would fire you, you know or take you off of your job that you liked and put someone else that he liked a little better, you know. I was a utility operator. I learned to operate all the machines in the plant, mostly all the machines and I worked on the floor and I got a lot of experience and I learned all of the machines and then I yum, I could teach others... the new ones coming in how to operate the machines and uh different operations on the coats. And that time, like I said we started on Baltimore Street and we moved from Baltimore Street to... to the Pratt Pac Industrial Building. It’s called the Pratt Paca Building. And then as they grew they moved from the Pratt Paca Building to a place on Hopkins Place. And then they moved from Hopkins Place to East 25th Street. And they moved from East 25th Street to Haven Street, Haven and Baltimore Street. And they moved from Haven and Baltimore Street to Clipper Mill Road. And that’s where they are now. And they’ve expanded and they have another
JUDY CANDY
PAGE 3

plan in Eldersburg. And uh so I became shop steward and I stayed shop steward for as long as I stayed there. And they sent me to Union Leadership School and I went to Barred College for a week. I went to Rutgers for a week. I really enjoyed the union very much. They did get us a lot of benefits, you know and gradual increased in wages and uh....

In comparing women with men on this job uh, well at that time it was fairly easy for the women to get ahead because at that time the men were in the service and uh or they were in the war plants and a lot of women worked in the war plants too. But I didn't try to venture into the war plants because I had.....this was just my feeling...I had three children that I wanted to raise and I uh...I didn't want to be roaming from one job to another and I know the war plant work would not last but for so long and I wanted to be somewhere where I was sure I'd have a job, you know, as long as I wanted, you know. So that's why I stayed there, you know. People left there and went to war plants but I didn't do that because it meant I'd have to have transportation like working at Glenel Martin and uh Fort Meade and Fort Holabird. It was just too much traveling and I had to get home to my children. And then the boss would promise me, promise us, stay with me and you'll always have a job. Well you see that was my first job I ever had and I believed it, you know. And uh, so any way, I stayed with him and I'm very glad I did because from that job I went to the Day Care Center and I love children and it's always my dream to have a lot of children, you know. It just happened, you know that I uh was involved with all these children in a day care center at that time we had a capacity for three hundred children. We did have three hundred children for a while and then at you know, it sort of dropped off and that time when the day care center opened and all they were charging $1.00 a day for the children. If the children came to school...if a child came to school one day or two days it meant that only paid $1.00 or two dollars.

Things changed at the plant when the union came in. The bosses got strict, you know, they became uh more strict on us and uh certain things you couldn't do.
You couldn't play your radio. They had uh segregated bath rooms. Well, they had segregated bathrooms before the union came in. They had segregated bathrooms but they had segregated bathrooms up until the time we moved to um uh Clipper Mill Road in 1961. Now I went to work for them in 1942. But in 1961 in December I think when we moved on Clipper Mill Road, that's when the bathrooms became one bathroom. Black women were not really given different jobs than White women, no, no. They were trained to operate the sewing machines and the pressing...mostly the pressing machines at that time uh most of them operated the pressing machines and uh there were some who operated the sewing machines but where they could place White on a sewing machine they would but for them during that time it was hard/to keep White in the sewing plant. It was hard because they went where the money was in the government plants on the government jobs and they couldn't keep enough so they had to bend and give the Blacks the jobs on the sewing machines. When I started the wages was forty cents an hour and then not long after that I don't know how long 6 months or more it went up to .75 cent an hour and then a dollar and a quarter, you know. I think those low wages, in my opinion, were...was because they could get away with it, you know. The...we didn't have a union, you know and uh but after the union got in, you know, you started getting a little bit better wages...went up to .75 cents then a dollar and a quarter and then when they negotiated a contract you got like .05 cents more and then your union dues went up a little bit, you know but that's the...but at that time you know I don't think...well, things weren't as high as they are now either. Living conditions weren't as...In the union they talked about how women's wages were lower, yes they did, they did and they, you know, they worked for us and they fought it. We uh, we've sort of come a long ways after the union got in things really got better, you know. And right now, at the present time we can get 4 weeks vacation and that just happened last year...they got that fourth week vacation but before that we got three weeks vacation. In the beginning we only got one then two then three and as of last year they put the fourth week. Now I was in
Local 775. Um, now that local is the London Fog, you know and that's, you know London Fog is in what they call outer work. Outerwear. And they have sort of a separate contract from what they call the clothing workers. The clothing workers is under sort of a different contract. It's all in one family but the clothing workers is is uh has one little contract...the cotton garment workers have another contract and the outerwear is sort of separate but the insurance benefits are the same now it was negotiated that way. In the beginning it wasn't like that and uh London Fog had a strike in 1966 and that's when we came under the insurance that gave us the same coverage as the clothing workers if you could understand it because it's been awfully hard for me to understand why, you know, uh...you see clothing is considered folk who make men's pants, men's coats...everything for the men. Cotton garment is considered folk who make shirts and uh, you know, jackets for men and that's not considered clothing, you know, that kind of thing...gloves...gloves is under cotton garments, men's shirts, men's bvd's, things like that that's considered cotton garment. Outerwear is raincoats things like that. Umbrellas, rainhats, outerwear. So uh, we're under...we get the same insurance benefits. When the union came in, well, I was appointed temporarily shop steward by the people. They wanted for shop steward and I never lost the job. They still call me. They do. They still call me.

If someone came to me with a problem...for instance, a lot of times the people, the people are not right, you know, they're wrong sometimes. But before...if I know, I know that you were wrong and you came to me with the problem and you said Harriet who is your supervisor says, you know, this or that. I say well what happened. They say well I did this and that. I say well you know you're wrong don't you. So I'll have to fight for you 'cause see I'm your lawyer here. So I say well we'll have to go in the office. Harriet said for you to go home I have to go in the office and see what we can do about it. But I want you to keep your mouth shut and let me do the
talking. See because you go in the office and they'll mess you up. So I go in the office and uh I'll take up the problem. No, before you go in the office you have to go to the supervisor and ask her what happened between you and Clara. So she'll tell me and all. So, if I can't settle it with the supervisor then I will ask for my business agent to come in. And if the business agent can't straighten the problem with the immediate supervisor on the floor and the worker... If the business agent can't straighten it out, first of all, I couldn't straighten it out with the supervisor. So if the business agent comes in and can't straighten it out with the supervisor we go to the boss in the office and talk about it. Now, if we can't settle it there we will go to the manager of the Baltimore Regional Joint Board who is now Mr. and if it's a big problem and he can't straighten it out we go to arbitration, you see. The arbitrator will have to settle it. That's the procedure.

Initially in the organizing of the union... they had an election. Well, they gave us cards and we tried to get people to sign them. I didn't get involved in that because I didn't really want to be involved in it. But anyway they had enough cards signed up so they had an election in the shop and the union lost the election. They had enough cards to hold an election but when it came time to drop those ballots... the union lost by a few votes. So the union kept on trying to get London Fog. So what they did, they boycotted the union label. They went to stores and uh, through the stores they boycotted because they didn't have a union label. So, it had begun to affect the business... the selling of the coats... started to affect the business. So then the boss decided... well, I'd better try to do some bargaining and do some talking with the union. So that's how the union got in. I guess at that time, on more or less the bosses terms, at that time to a certain extent I would say. I didn't vote for the union the first time. I'm going to tell you the truth, I didn't. To be honest with you I can't be truthful to tell you exactly how long the boycott lasted because I
don't know how long that boycott went on. The first ballot was in, wait a minute, it was in uh, I think, it was in late in '58, '58. I voted against it because, well, the boss scared the hell out of me. You know what I'm saying. He really scared... and look... I'm by myself. I've got three children I'm raising. I don't want my children going out here working in private family and nothing. I always thought about them going to school. I sent them all to school. And they got the little good jobs and everything but that's why... that was my concern... that was, I was just thinking about my children and that was... and the boss said, you know, you know stick with me and, you know, you'll be all right, you know. And look, I was rather, comparatively young. Well, I'd never worked. It was my first job. I never worked anywhere in public. Maybe, the only thing... babysitting after school and what have you. See then I got married from high school and then after I had my children and then Billy got me, "Come on down to work with me, you can make good money." So through Billy I went to London Fog and then I stayed there and I know nothing about unions and you know I would read in the paper all these awful things that happened in the union. The union this and you would read about Hoffa. Not this latest thing about Hoffa but uh way back then when things were happening and they were embezzeling money and they were mess, see and the boss would say, "See what that union did," you know, and he just scared me to death and I was green. I didn't know anything about unions. I just thought that they were a bunch of mafia, gangsters or something. I really didn't involved know. I wasn't / in the workworld when they were having a lot of big labor strikes around the country. That was in the '30's. My children, two of them, were born in the late thirties. I was in school in the earlier part of the thirties. Then my children were born in '37 and '38. I didn't get into the workworld until '42 and I didn't know, you know uh... I just didn't know too much about the unions. You know, you hear people talking and you just say, "Umph, that must be terrible," you know. "Unions must be awful." And you hear people... I have an uncle who worked at Sparrows
Point and he hated unions. He would never join a union and he always impounded, he hated unions, "I'll never join the union." And then when they got the benefits and all he got as much benefits as the rest of them. He didn't pay union dues or anything. I don't know, I, I don't know what made him so hateful toward unions. It was before the war and it was in the thirties that I remember him working at Sparrows Point and in the forties too he would never join the union. He just didn't see any sense in it. Why should he pay union dues and he can get the same thing. I really got into it in my later years and I found out that he was just ignorant of a lot of things and some people just don't take time to find out what it's all about, you know. And uh I think that that was most of his problem. Just ignorant to the fact that he just didn't know what he could gain and how he could help himself and others, you know, by joining. Ah, but, I just remember him talking against the union all the time. There're still a lot of people like that. I don't know if the racial problems had anything to do with it or not.

The company was getting larger. That's why they had to move so much, expand. And uh, we did more work up until the war ended. What was that? In 45 or 43 I think, And then they went into ah this ah other type of all weather coat, you know. The all weather coat after the war. And they finished up the war work. They went into the all weather coat. The London Fog. They started really big in 1961. They were getting bigger, bigger and bigger all the time but I would say they really got big...ah it started in '61 when they moved to Clipper Mill Road. And now they're real big because they have a huge place in Eldersberg.

I also had a second job, because London Fog didn't pay me enough money to take care of my family. So I had a second job and I worked for a lawyer, Anthony S. Federico, as his receptionist in the afternoon. After I left The London Fog Company, I would go to his office and 6 o'clock and work, you know, 3 or 4 hours in the evening and I worked for him for 26 years. At London Fog, I would be on the job at 7:30 but work didn't start until 8. I enjoyed my work. My day was like...I, I'd have their clothes ready for school the night before. When I got home from the lawyer's
office I would get their clothes washed up. From the lawyer's I was home...I'd say
ten of nine or 9 o'clock. I rode the 21 bus. It was about a 25 minute ride...between
20 and 25 minutes. So, the evening before I went to work I would start by getting the
children's clothes prepared. It wouldn't take too long because, see, I would get most
of it done on the weekends and then I wouldn't have that much to do in the evening
because I would have enough for each day. Then on the weekends I'd get everything
washed up and ready, you know, and then during the week and come the weekend uh
Saturdays I'd get the laundry all done and enough to last them all the week, you know.
And uh, you know, I always had like two pair of shoes for each child. They'd wear one
pair to school and one pair to church. And, and the real old pair they'd scuff around
in when they came home. When they came home they had to change it. But say like
Christmas they'd get a brand new pair of shoes with the ones they had and they would
start over like that. The girls that I worked with...I have a white girlfriend until
this day I talked to her yesterday. We get on the phone and we talked for hours.
She gave me the first suit my child has ever had in his life. This is my grandchildren
here. But my son, she gave me his first suit and we talk about it and I have his
picture somewhere. We're just, we're still friends. I don't ever see her, but we
talk all the time. Well, like I said, I'd get their clothes ready at night. I'd have
everything ready on the weekend. And what I wanted them to wear to school. I'd have
it out for them. And uh, I'd have their breakfast ready for them. Oh, I got up at
uh 5:30, 5:30 and uh I'd have cereal and something that they could get and they had
a key around the neck because see they would get home from school before I could get
home from work. And I had them very much under control and they did what I said. I
didn't have any trouble with my children. I had one I had a little problem with. You
always have one. But uh anyway uh he wasn't all that bad either. He uh, a little girl
called him one night about eleven o'clock and I told her that Frank had gone to bed
and I thought she should be in bed and uh he could not talk to her at that time. He
was in elementary school. He must have been about 10, 9, 9. And uh so uh when he found out that I had talked to this little girl like that it embarrassed him. So he did not not to school for a week. But I didn't know that until that Friday. See when the elder brother came home from school he would always find Franky home. So, he finally told me, "Mother, Franky hasn't been to school this week." So uh, when he found out Ralph was going to tell me, he got a shopping bag and packed up his little clothes and left me a note and said, "Dear Mother, I'm gone. I will not be back anymore."

And then, see, look...I got home from London Fog...then I had to rush to the lawyer's office and uh I had, just had to be there. So I said, "Ralph, why did you let Franky leave like this. Why didn't you do something," you know. He's three years older than Franky. So he said, "Oh mother, I don't know." I said, "Well what am I going to do? I've got to go to work," you know. He said, "Ma, go to work. Just go to work and we'll take care of it when we come back." Well see Ralph was my oldest child, oldest boy and uh I did like Ralph told me to do. I went to work. So when I came home from the lawyer's office about 9 o'clock who should I meet at the door but Franky. He came back home. Well, he had packed his clothes. He had dungarees and a shirt, mashed potato sandwich and a chicken back and a chicken neck. That was left over from dinner. And this was all thrown in the bag in the closet. So I said, "Franky," I said, "Oh," I got real independent, I said, "Umm I got your note. You left home." This was in February. He went to the park. I said, "So, why did you come back?" "Well, I sat from one bench to the other and I thought about it and I thought it over and I thought I'd better come back home. I think the cold changed his mind. But anyway that meant I had to go to school with him that Monday morning to see his teacher, you know, because he had not been to school that week. So, the little girl that had called him...Well the teacher called her up and Franky and we talked about it. While the teacher was getting his class together so he could come and talk to us, I said to the little girl,
and she was pretty, you know, she had long heavy braids and she was pretty, so I said
"Look, you see what trouble you've caused both of you. You've caused me so much trouble.
I've had to take time off from work. I don't get paid when I don't work," and uh I said, "This is really inconviniencing me, what you have all done." So she said, (tearfully)
"I'm so sorry." The tear were blinding. "I'm so sorry because I just didn't know that Shipley thought so much of me." I didn't tell her Shipley thought anything of her. But anyway that was an experience. That's the only problem I had. So, all three of them finished high school and, uh, you know, my daughter finished college and uh Ralph went to college but he decided he wasn't college material so he went to work as a guard at the Patuxtent and that was prejudice down there and they gave...before two weeks was up when he would make his uh you know time from probation they asked him to resign and he don't know until this day why. But at that time they were very prejudiced down there. So he resigned and that same day he went out and got a job with the transit company and he's been with the transit company ever since.

It wasn't hard for me to do all that I had to do because you see the union work and the shop steward work took place during my working hours and I did not lose money being ah stopping doing my work on the floor to take up a problem because I was always a time worker. I was a time worker but you know in these shops how they get new men come in, new supervisors, new bosses and so they'd look at me and say, "She's not doing enough work," you know, "for her money." So one boss decided that I should have one operation, just one. Because he felt like I was losing too much time and wasn't doing enough work. O.K. I'll do one job. So I did one job and that week that I did one job I made over $60.00 and that was a lot of money then. They took me off piece work. I didn't do piece work from that day to this and I just worked as a utility operator. But if a person had a problem and they'd come to me, I would stop what I'm doing and I'd go take up their problem. And if I couldn't settle it that day I would, a lot of times, wait if I thought it could wait and say we'll take it up at
the union meeting. And we had our meetings the second Wednesday in every month. It is hard getting women involved in the union. It's hard to get people to attend their union meeting. But I never missed a union meeting and I always held office in my local. I always held an office. I was uh shop steward in the plant and I was financial secretary treasurer at my local until the day I retired. And uh I was always being sent as a delegate to the conventions and uh to union leadership school. And I enjoyed union work after I got involved. I really enjoyed it. My children were fairly young when I went to work. My mother-in-law, their grandmother, helped and my mother helped then I had friends. When I lived at 1836 Druid Hill Avenue I had the first floor and my children's cousin on their father's side had the second floor and she more or less kept an eye on them too. And then their grandmother their father's mother lived in the same block of Druid Hill Avenue. So they were, you know, back and forth like that. And then in the summer uh naturally I lived the next block from the "Y" you know on Druid Hill Avenue, and I had a Mr. Lee lived at that time and uh I went down and had a talk with Mr. Lee and I told him I wanted to enroll my children in Day Camp. See, at that time they had what they called a Day Camp where they could every day and it was $7.00 a week. So, at that price I enrolled them over and over again during the summer. Seven dollars per child. See, at that time I think a certain amount of money was appropriated for children who couldn't afford to pay to go to camp, I mean to stay at camp. So Mr. Lee had me to wait until nearly the end of the season to see how much money was left over and then he would let my two boys go free, you know, at the end of the season they did get a chance to go to camp for two weeks because of the money that was left over, you know, he would... that's how he used it up...for children like that. He was the director of the "Y" at that time. He's dead now, un huh.

It was in 1943 when my first husband and I broke up. He didn't go into the service during the war. I was on my own with the children from 1943...wait a minute
I was on my own from 1940... Yeah, the beginning of '43 until they were grown, finished of '59. school. I remarried September, no, June 29th of 1959. June 29th/(said softly and thoughtfully)

I was shop steward for 28 years. Well, no, no, it wouldn't be twenty eight. From 1959 when the union came in. From '59. The union gradually addressed the segregated and racial problems that we had. Gradually, that sort of worked itself out because like I said, they couldn't keep you know as many White as they wanted. They couldn't keep them because they went where they could make money, you know, in the war plants and government and during the war, you know. And uh therefore they gave the Blacks a chance to get into the better paying operations of the coat. Like sleeve setting paid more, collar setting paid more, you know. After the war, well like in the sewing industry it's good and bad, up and down, you know and uh in the sewing industry work is seasonal and people go and come, you know, so but they sort of maintained a fairly good uh employess pretty good because even now at Londontown there are people that have been there quite a number of years. And Londontown now, when you're there 10 years, they'll give you a watch. And when you're there 20 years they give you some kind of tray or cup or something else, you know. So they have quite a number of old employees still with them but they have a number of new ones too. It's a big turnover in the sewing industry. It's a big turnover.

The union wasn't really involved in any way during the civil rights movement in the '50's and early '60's. We supported the March on Washington, you know, we had busses. and went over and even my son's job, you know. But at that time, that was in '63 right? Well I was in the hospital that whole year. For one whole year I was in the hospital. So I didn't get involved in the March on Washington. I thought that the movement was great, I really thought it was great, I thought the time was right and it's something that had to be done, you know, and somebody had to take a stand and uh so they did, you know. I wasn't involved in any way at that time. I support the NAACP ah you know I'm a member. I have my membership paid (285) but I wasn't a member at that time, but I am a member now. I saw what I think was sort of a slow
uh movement but we've come a long way. I saw gradual changes, you know. I think, you know, you couldn't go in certain stores and try on but that all changed, but to me I didn't get involved to that extent because it didn't bother me that much but like the lady that raised me she was involved in it quite a bit but, you know, like we didn't have that much money to worry about going to Onields and I know you don't know nothing about Onields but that was a big time store downtown and if I went in Onields I'd better have a black uniform with a white apron, you know. And um my boss lady better be sending me in there with a note. That was Onields. But those things just didn't bother us too much because we didn't go into...you know this was just our personal life, we didn't go into those stores too much because the lady that raised me, she had uh it was this company a lady that had this store called Exquisite on Baltimore Street and they used to bring garments and clothes to our house and uh the lady that raised me would buy us things that way out of the suit case. The lady would come to our house and she would get our Easter clothes and Christmas clothes and whatever we needed it would come to the house like that. We didn't go into the stores that much. There was much segregation in Baltimore at that time. It was segregation in the 10 Cents stores. You couldn't set at the counter and a number of stores, you know, downtown that you couldn't go into and hotels and everything else. Oh now, about hospitals, you know they're like...one hospital I remember as a child... I went to South Baltimore General Hospital with the lady that raised me and we went there to see somebody and the Blacks were housed in a little delapidated broken down house on the back end of the hospital. I remember that and the Whites were in the big building, the hospital, you know, but the Blacks were in a little house. Now that's the only thing I remember about the segregation in the hospital and when my youngest child was born he was born premature and he had to be placed in an incubator and he was born in Baltimore City Hospital and they did not have an incubator for Black
children. So he had to be placed in the incubator on the White people's side. They did not have incubators on the Black side of the hospital. They had separate facilities there also...when Franky was born in 1941. I don't remember segregation on the buses...it wasn't buses it was streetcars, the electric car then. You could set anywhere...The only discrimination London Fog had was the bathrooms and like I said where they could place White on the best operations they did and the Blacks would take the other jobs but that didn't last because they couldn't keep people and with the union we had a seniority system. Now the way the seniority worked...when the union came in...only if there was a lay off, the person that had seniority, you know, did not get laid off first but the one that had the least seniority did but at that time the seniority went like seniority on the job. For instance if you are a sleeve setter and you've been a sleeve setter for the longest period of time, so this type work is running out and you no longer have sleeve setting so they have to put you on welts, pocket welts or hemming and uh so you've been over here uh a short while so the other girl that's doing that job...so you would be the first one to be laid off on that job although you've been working for the company longer that the people that's on that job because you don't have enough seniority on setting welts and that category but now in case of a permanent lay off then that's when seniority counts now when it's a permanent lay off, see, you know so that's the way, you know, seniority counts. The union did not have a plan or affirmative action or seniority system. They had segregation in the office, too at Londontown. It's only, I guess, in the last 10 years or so that they have started putting Blacks in the office out there. Whites always had the office work. Yes, you know I would say yes there was segregation in the union because like our headquarters is 1505 Eutaw Street and uh in that office there is one Black girl, one, as of today. It's one Black girl there. Now they did have one Black business agent and they fired him and they replaced him with White so they have
no Black business agent at all, none, not on Eutaw Street. They have no Black business agents at all.

I enjoyed my childhood, and uh I was just exposed to so many nice things, you know by my foster parent and she taught me music and we were just involved in beautiful music. She was a Peabody graduate and uh I had a beautiful life but when then, you know, segregation started to, you know, come into life and things were supposed to change I wanted it to change. Yeah, I was for it, you know, but I had a beautiful life. Some of the things that happened were not all good. They were talking about tearing down Douglass High School. No! Blacks don't want Douglass High School torn down. They're fighting now for Bates in Annapolis. No! We don't want to tear Bates up. That's our old Black high school. But still they were fighting, "I want to go to this White school, I want to go cross country to this other school," you know but still they want to hold on to that old Black School. But that's good. I'm glad, you know. I'm glad. I think it's nice. It's all right. But uh I had a good life and good teacher at Douglass high school. They were the best. And you'd better walk that hall straight and you'd better not bat that eye and act like you don't want to walk straight, see, cause they would ring your ear and you'd better not go home and tell your mama. You would get the other one rung, and that was good. That was good. But it's not like that anymore. A little 4 or 5 year old says, "If you spank me with that ruler I'll go to the principal," they'll tell you. I have friends that have told me. Five year olds go to the principal on their teacher. That's right.

Getting back to day care. Day care was a negotiated benefit for the working mothers and fathers of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and uh Mr. Notello was inspired with day care after visiting day care abroad and he wanted it for our working mothers here in this country and uh we did have six day care centers ah the first one opened in Virginia, Virginia and the second one opened in Baltimore which has a capacity for 300 children. The one in Baltimore opened in November of 1969 with capacity for 300 children and we had 32 teachers and at that time we had 3
kindergartens and our kindergarten teachers are certified in early childhood education. They have their degree in early childhood education, we had 3 kindergartens. Um so as the time went by and the industry started to decline the children...the membership of the children dropped and uh at the present day we have about 135 children and because the membership in the industry had dropped so low we opened uh the center to outside children which we call public children and the public parents pay a higher fee than the union parents. At the present time the public parents pay $45. The union parents pay $15. When the center is closed for vacation the uh parents do not have to pay for the children. At one time the center closed down for two weeks. That meant the parents had to find other means of placing their children because it was for the union parents who worked in the shops and the shops would close. Now that we're open to the public um the teachers work on rotations rotating their vacation and but if a child goes on a vacation with a parent they don't have to pay a fee for the time that they're absent from the school. They have to pay. In the beginning the membership, the people in the shop did not pressure anyone into day care. It was brought to them by the manager of the Baltimore Regional Joint Board and uh then uh he had flyers made up and I distributed them through my shop uh telling the people that we're going to have day care for our children and uh I tried to get them interested in enrolling their children in the day care because at that time it was only one dollar a day. One dollar and they got three meals and they got a hot breakfast, a hot dinner and an afternoon snack for one dollar. We had a full-time registered nurse. That's right. Then as the membership declined we opened the doors to the public, you know. So uh now we have about 35 no I'll say 30 public children and we have about a hundred union children. I started working at Hyman Blumberg January 20th of 1969. Now the building was not up at that date but I worked at the union hall as a recruiter going into the shops, all the shops uh registering children and, you know, getting them ready for the day when they would come in to get their physicals and enter the day care center. Now the day care center
was open for business November the third 1969. See, so I had from January up until that date to get my children lined up. The lady that was appointed director at that time came into the Londontown and she had a little office and by me being the shop steward I spent a lot of time with her and I would go through the shop and bring the parents to her so she could talk to them about this benefit, negotiated benefit and the day care center and what it would offer. So, as I would bring the children to her, I did all the talking. I said, "You know we're going to have this day care center and we're going to have a registered nurse, we'll have a pediatrician to come in once a week and you're gonna get three meals," so I just did all the talking. So the lady said to me, "Well, you've done all the talking." So each day she'd come in and I'd bring a new set of children, I mean a new set of parents to talk so then after we did all that I told her now, "If you should have a need for someone I would like to be considered to work there." She said, "Well, I certainly will recommend you." So I was recommended by her and um I was appointed parent liaison coordinator of the center and I dealt with the parents on problems, things that I needed to talk with the parents about, disciplinary problems or correct clothing that I thought the child should have, shoes and I bought many shoes myself for a child that needed shoes and uh so that's how I got involved with it. When we first opened we had about... we started out with about 1'd say 55 or 60 children but eventually we got up to 300 children, eventually. And uh we had 2 classroom supervisors for each class. We had 13 classrooms open at that time and we had two group supervisors for each class. But like I said as the industry declined then that number was cut in half. Eight classrooms were closed down and we have 8 classrooms open now. The membership were very happy about the day care center and uh they were very pleased, uh you know, with the day care center and their children have done so well in public school. I got a lot feedback from a lot of parents on how well their children have done in school. I have uh...this is one little picture of a group here. This is a three year old class and this is a class that graduated. They graduate them now in caps and gowns. We rent the caps
and gowns and I have no problem with getting that money for that cap and gown. No
problem since the parents are very happy to get it. And we talk about not having it
this year you don't get away with it. Those parents want the caps and gowns. They
were only providing this service for the women and the men really got upset. The men
really got upset about it and uh it started with some men that worked in one of the
shops...I think the shop was Cambridge a matter of fact and this particular fellow
who worked for Cambridge was a cutter for the Cambridge Manufacturer and he went to
his business agent and he, you know, just let his feelings be known. "I'm a union
member, I pay union dues...I have a child and I want my child in the day care center."
So, through his business agent...went to Mr. Notello and said we're not going to get
away with just mothers and the men are upset. So, it was no problem. It was no
big deal. But see off the top of his head Mr. Notello said it's more women working
there and women are, you know, they have a thing about their children. They, you know,
they sit and they work all day on these machines and they're worried about how their
children are doing in somebody's private home or how they're doing with grandma. He's
not learning anything with grandparents and you know so uh Mr. Notello thought that
a child should be involved in a better situation/that...in a learning situation. We have
a lot of field trips and uh we had quite a few workshops at the daycare center with this
lady named, her name was Susan. She'd come in and do different activities. She'd have
a workshop with the teachers and show them different things, for children in different
aged groups. Now this is a three year old group, then we have two year olds and she
would teach them what a two year old could do, what the three year olds can do and it
was no problem with the kindergarten because the teachers were certified. Now these
other teachers have credits in early childhood education. They have to have at least
up 6 credits. So they had a lot of workshops too because I think they went to Community
College and got quite a bit of experience on how to work with the children and what
have you. But it really worked out nice. They're doing a good job with the children here.
Day Care Center. I remained the Parent Liaison until I retired.

Then I was a...and see my job was uh I had charge of the entire enrollment of the children. I had to screen them as they registered...who is the mother, and the mother's name and all this. Then I had a lot of parents come in who said, "I'm the foster parent," or, "This is my adopted child," but I had to be sure this was true because uh you know they would try to get over but, you know...So I was in charge of the entire enrollment at that time but uh it got to the point like I said the membership was declining and uh, and uh so I worked with the parents on different problems and all and how it could deal with the child and on different problems that the child might have and we had quite a few but it all...We had PTA and we had a lot of activities and raised funds for field trips. See, now the Union Clothing Workers didn't give us money for field trips. The parents raised their own money for field trips and we went on...we went to pumpkin farm, and we went to the...We had the Theatre Guild Players to come over, because we have a beautiful auditorium at the union hall and uh we had plays there uh for the children, it was, we really had a beautiful time, beautiful experience there. The day care center was not a big issue at the conventions. It was not one of those national issues. Day care centers were mentioned at /the convention/d, it was just mentioned and uh we had little booklets that was passed out, but it was no big thing at the convention. The convention mostly was concerned...the workers in the shops and uh what we're asking for, what benefits we wanted and uh this year mostly political you know uh urging the people,"Look, we're going to vote for Kenedy one or whoever was running you know and we're going to support this and we're going to support that one and they would try to get it into the people's mind who they wanted they wanted in Washington...Who would be a friend to labor as far as uh the needle industry is concerned. The national conventions happened every two years and I did go to some of them. They elected officers...and the same ones unhuuuu, emmhm...yes (laughter) (283) you'd write down you know certain names like we had uh a guy, he's
a good guy (286), he's a Black guy. Bill's (287) just got up and that's it. But we would write his name in because that's who we wanted but that, you know.

Well, uh uh you know a lot of the members...there were quite a few members resented the union because if they didn't get what they wanted then the union was no good and I would just try the best way I could to say, "Why say the union is no good when you are the union. You are the union. Don't say the Union is no good. Now if you want to get a point across and you want to hear what's going on, attend your union meetings and make your feelings known on the floor. Don't sit in the shop and complain about the person across from you and in the back of you and take it no further. Come down to the union hall and let's talk about it," but you can't get...it's the same uh ten or twelve that come to the meeting. The same ones, you know. Unless it's contract time. Now if it's contract time they'll come down and see what we...see first of all the contract is negotiated nationally, on a national level and then that's brought to the membership here and then whatever else is done is worked out locally with the shops, you know and other little things to be cleared up can be worked out locally but contract is negotiated nationally. So the membership is called down to the union hall and presented to the people what was negotiated up in New York. See. And uh my experience was to just to convince the people they...you are the union and it's up to you to ratify this contract or not. But, you know, it was ratified. It was ratified, you know. Cause we have uh a business manager, when he opens his mouth the contract is ratified, you know. So anyway uh but most, generally on a whole it's usually good. It's usually a good contract. Because I tell you why. In the needle industry it's so much competition. You have hundreds and hundreds of shops. Competition. See. It's not like the automobile industry that have about four big conglomerates American cars, you know. And like the steel industry they only have about what... about two or three. See, but the sewing industry has hundreds and hundreds of uh shops to compete with. See automobile don't have that much to compete with neither does steel
but the sewing industry does and then you got all of these non-union shops that's happy to do the work if you refuse to work, see, so it's really hard to negotiate everything that people want in the sewing industry, it's hard. But I think on a whole it's been good...it's been, I would say, "Good." You know I said today...Unions have just about served their purpose, you know, I think...because look what's happening over in Washington with the airplane strike...See how they're defying the government, you know, and the union is really getting weak. It's getting weak. Truthfully, I feel that the people are wrong in that particular strike. Now they read a contract and they signed a contract. It's against the law for them to strike. It's against the law. And they're defying the president of the United States. How do you think that looks overseas. How do you think it looks to the leader overseas at us with the way they're...I just don't know. It don't think it should be a uh no strike law in the contract uhm if the contract is up. But I don't think there should be wild cat strikes like that...just walk out like that and you know. There contract is up you say...well, see they read that contract, their leaders read that contract and now they should not have signed that contract...Oh, I see what you're saying...they're striking because now they're allowed to strike because their contract is up. I see what you're saying...(431)you know, and I've never been before. Just like the same friend who got me involved in that thing over in Washington a few weeks ago uhm the protest ah for cutting social sec on the uh yeah I was over there going back on the 19th of September for something (thoughtfully) for Solidarity (knowingly) yeah Solidarity. I'm going over for that too. I think all the unions and senior citizens were involved in that because I was over there and uh I mean the steel industry, the auto industry everybody was over there by the thousands. Yeah we was over there in that. With day care...I would like to see more day care centers and uh because I think it's a necessity and I think that the uh children uh it's good for the children, you know. It's a good background, they get more out of it
because uh I think that uh that mothers that keep children home and put them with grandmothers and all... I don't think the children are exposed to enough learning situations and I think day care has more to offer, you know, because it gives the children a chance go get involved with other children. In our day care center we have several children who are only the only child and uh they it helps them get out of being selfish and uh they learn how to share with one another and uh I think (End of Tape Side A of Two) Generally speaking most of the ladies got along fairly good but there are uh instances throughout the shop in the sewing industry where maybe from four to six people might be on the same type operation but at the same time it's different style work coats, material coming through. Some would go through the machine like a breeze. You could make a lot of money like this. The next would be a work that you would have to handle... maybe you would have to put more fullness in it or you would have to pull this or push that and it would be harder to do so they couldn't make as much money. But say maybe you would get most of the good work and I would get the bad work so that's when the argument would start and that's when they would get frustrated with each other and that's when they would get up set with the bundle saying, "You gave her more of that good work than you gave me," what have you. Then maybe the shop steward would have to go in and say, "Look, John, you know, divide this work up please, divide it up or,"... then there would be other instances when uh confusion would come about during the time when samples... Sample time would come through. Say for instance in the spring the winter work, winter samples would come through and uh um salesmen would be on the road uh trying to sell these coats so the samples would have to be made up. So this means you would have to get off of your operation that you were making good money on and help get these samples out because we've got to get them into the hands of the salesmen so we can get some orders in for Christmas or whatever the holiday would be coming up. So that uh when this type thing would come through the shop that would cause confusion because nobody wanted to
stop to do the samples because that would uh cut down on their average, see, that would cut down on their average and that would cause a little friction but the shop stewart would go and say, "Look Mary we gotta make samples because if we don't make samples we're not gonna have any work next winter, you know, let's cooperate," and sometimes you can get over on people. The work was piece work. And then other things would cause contention in the shops like the people who inspect the coats would find missing stitches or too many strings or something twisted or something wrong and then the supervisor would take your bad work out and say, "Look, you did this, it's your number on your paper and you've gotta correct it. Then that would cause a confusion, you see, so that uh things like that mostly is why people would have disagreements and what have you. Some got too much bad work and some had too much uh too many repairs to do and like that. And then there are times when the boss would have a utility operator to sit and do all of the repair work, you know and then if they felt like giving your bad work back because you did too much bad work then you would have to do it on your own time and lose money. So to really be able to make any money you have to be able to develop a skill to be able to work fast but yet put out some quality work. And then other problems that would cause contention uh in the shop would be when something happened to your machine...so your machine would break down. So you gotta call the mechanic...so he'll come and do something and uh you're losing time there so here comes the operator saying the the shop stewart, "Look, he's been working on my machine for uh 15 or 20 minutes, do I have to lose money waiting for a machine?" So then uh for a problem like that we got uh we have an agreement, "Look when your machine breaks down you write down you time that your machine was broke down, when your machine is prepared write down when you went back to work," and then we got paid for that lost time or they'd call it down time. We got paid. So uh...eventually this kind of thing was negotiated in the contract. I still have friends that I work with. I just left one today. She called me...I tried to locate her and her family...she'd been
sick. So I went over and made some chicken soup and got her some juice...she no longer works with the company uh but I did work with her for a number of years and now she works with Rite Aide. But I have a lot of friends that uh in the shop, a lot of friends. I worked for the London Fog 28 years and with the day care center 12 and 26 years with the lawyer and I still do the lawyers Christmas cards every year. I have to do...he's...you know when they had uh the riot when Martin Luther King got killed uh so you know I worked at his night office. I got there at 6 o'clock. His night office was on Caroline and Gay over top of his father's package good store. He had a beautiful office up there. So he got burned out. So therefore ah when his building was burned down I went to work with him at the Munsey Building on Calvert Street. When his building got burned down, his office on Caroline and Gay, I went to work for him in the Munsey Building and he's still there and uh all together I worked for him for 26 years and I still do his Christmas cards to all his clients. My husband would go down and pick them up and bring them here and I'd do them at home and mail them. So uh I can't get rid of that lawyer. A lot of the women who left London Fog and went to war shops when the war was over they came back, they came back, they were rehired at London Fog and uh say but uh they just wanted to make that big money and they had means of getting back and forth to wherever they went to work but I just didn't want to go that far and be away, so far away from my children. I wanted to be where I could be reached and get home quick and uh that's what I did. And I'm glad I did because see I would not have had the opportunity to go into this day care center because I always wanted to work with children and I had my opportunity to work with children for 12 years and as I little girl I always wanted to work with children and in my block I was the mother in the block for the children so I enjoyed that and uh had I not been with London Fog I would not have had the opportunity to work at one of the largest day care centers in the United States. So uh you know, so I'm very pleased with that and I uh had a program director that worked with me, a beautiful girl and in the meantime she went to ah she had her Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education and then she went to the University of Maryland to get her Ph.D. and she graduated from the University of Md
and now she is uh assistant professor in early childhood education at the University of Indiana and here's a picture (131) she's assistant professor at the University of Indiana. She was very good at the day care center. She did a lot with the children and they gained a lot out of her leadership and her program coordinating.

So when I went to leadership school for the union I had the opportunity of having lunch with Mrs. Roosevelt at Howard Park. I have a picture. That was in '61.

I'll show you a picture of her. That's Mandel, his wife (148). This is a Christmas one of play that we had in the classrooms. This one uh one week at union leadership in 1961. This is Roosevelt and uh we had lunch with her on her lawn but uh I was trying to get her to sign my autograph and these people got in front of me so I was mad. And this is one of the classes. This is one of the classes and this is another year that I went to union leadership school. I guess that's the only picture I have. I had some others in this room but, here she is again and she was sitting on her lawn and she was talking to us and this particular year she was talking to us about the Cuban situation... during that time. In union leadership school they talked to us on political, you know, politics, economics and how to take up problems in the shop and you know what procedures we use and then beside the classroom work like that we had a lot of activities you know, just for fun, you know. And this is President Roosevelt's grave, I snapped that while I was there. This is the fellow who was the Black business agent and they fired him for something. No special reason... But we were at a convention at that time. And this is one of the day care centers in uh Winchester, I think it was Winchester Day Care Center dedication. And this is another. This is when I went to Rutgers. I went to another one. I should be the most educated union leader. This is at a convention in uh Atlantic City and this fellow is Hyman Blumberg and that's who our day care center is named for. And he's an old pioneer who helped to organize unions in Baltimore at that time. And this is when I retired. Oh, we used to do a lot of demonstrating at conventions and what have you. And this is when I retired from the whole business. /that was my dear friend. This is Mr. (199) who's
manager of the Baltimore Regional (200). He was the one who helped develop the day care center. Right, right, that's the one. And uh that's uh convention time. All of this is convention time and that was taken from the plane and uh this is some of the graduates...this is a graduating class from our day care center. These are...they graduated from kindergarten. They are ready for first grade. This is a....this was at um Union Leadership School. This is just pictures on the ground. One year we went to Bard College and another year we went to Crystal Lake Lodge and another year we went uh Crystal Lake Lodge and Bard College and uh Rutgers. This was a rally in Washington about something that we were demonstrating. No! It was not the unemployment march. These are some of the little children at the day care center. We had pictures taken. They'd give me the pictures and that's it. (End of tape (230)