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Interview

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| of: | Pearl Booze (Mrs.) |
| by: | Randall Holder Harold Bruton, Jr. |
| Date: | 1986 July __ |
| Q | How long have you or did you live or work in the Penn/North community? |
| A | Never worked here. |
| Q | Never worked in the community, well how long have you lived here? |
| A | Twenty-five years. |
| Q | Have you lived in the same house for twenty-five years? |
| A | Yes. |
| Q | Where did you work at? |
| A | Well, I worked at the Marine Hospital, at the Government Hospital. |
| Q | Can you tell us what your occupation was? What did you actually do? |
| A | Well, I served food to patients. |
| Q | Where is the Marine Hospital located? |
| A | It is over here at Wyman Park Drive. It is not a government hospital any more, it is a private hospital. |
| Q | I think I know just where that is. What are some of your earliest memories? |
| A | You mean of the Penn/North? |
| Q | Yes. |
| A | Well, it is all together different now, with the subway come in up there by North Avenue. There used to be a big shop and liquor store and the Regent Theatre and a coffee shop. |
| Q | What block? |
| A | It was right across from the library. Kind of hard to think that far back, because that was before they built the subway. |
| Q | Describe what living on North Avenue and Pennsylvania was like. What year are you describing? |
| A | I don't know about the year but it was pleasant living in that area before the younger generation came along. |

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| Q | I hear it was very beautiful with the flowers. |
| A | Yes, before they put the trees in. And there was an undertaker place across the street what they called Tickner's where they got those children, training them there. And that was a white undertaker. And they, ah, the neighborhood was much quieter and didn't have too many children. Like I say, the children's mothers at that time were young teenagers when they got married and had a family. It was pleasant, it's pleasant now, but you got a whole lot of hard heads coming through every now and then. Tearing the City up, like the trees and things. Like we have trees, but they act like they just don't want trees. And if you live in a neighborhood where you had trees and plants and things you don't want nobody else to come through there with other people's children breaking off tree limbs and giving you smart answers when you say something to them. Go along with the program. |
| Q | What do you think can be done to make it a little bit more like it was back then? What do you think could help? |
| A | Well, it could help if you just keep the trees in good shape and see that the young people don't destruct them. See, because they break off the branches and they say a whole lot of profane language. We don't need to have that. We can do without that. And, what Schaefer was supposed to do, he came up there this spring in the 500 block and promised to fix up those houses. He hasn't done anything. |
| Q | So you think as far as the political climate, as far as really renewing the place as they should, they have not? |
| A | They have not. But they started fixing up the houses right there on Cumberland Street. But in the 2500 block he said, well, he had some young people with him filling out the application. But he hasn't done anything up there. And they should be torn down, or built all over again so the people have a place to live. It's a lot of places you could have a home to stay in, if it ain't no more than two families, and on the other side too. |
| Q | What businesses have you seen come and go and which ones have stayed? |
| A | Well, the only business now is Roger's Beauty Supply, it's still there. |
| Q | How long has that been? |
| A | Oh, it was there before, I don't know how long it's been there. Before I moved there. |
| Q | Has it been over twenty—five years? |
| A | Oh, yes. And down on the corner, the confectioner's store, it's been there for quite a while. |
| Q | Owned by the same people? |
| A | They are Jewish. Yes. And then across the street used to be an apartment house that a colored man owned, and now the Koreans owns it. That's where you go in and buy food. |

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| | <p>And the library is fine, but if the young people would go to the library more often and get books to read, it would help a whole lot. They were talking about it a long time ago closing. But somebody in the neighborhood said they didn't want it closed. That maybe more people would patronize it. Cause I go there and get books. And I like to read. And I think if more young people would just pick up some of the books, you know the librarian is there and she can get you the books from downtown at the main office. I mean, you need to participate a lot right up there on the corner. I mean suppose you had to go way up to Walbrook, the one out there or out there on Reisterstown Road? There is one up here on, off of, where the number twenty goes right past it. Well, it is right up there, it sits up on top of the hill and it is just a small branch. But if they just participate with the one on North Avenue, go to it more often, then if they don't have what they want, then they can call down to the main branch and get what they want.</p> |
| <p>Q</p> | <p>How has transportation changed over the years and how has it affected the community?</p> |
| <p>A</p> | <p>Well, you used to get on the bus and the bus was fifteen cents. And when you got off the bus there was a bus waiting for you. To get off the bus now, and you miss it, shame on you. And you got some nasty women that drives them buses, I don't know what is wrong with them. I don't know whether their parents brought them up wrong or what. And the men ain't no better. I ain't kidding you. They ain't got no business driving no bus, they used to have all white bus drivers. They got more respects, cause when you can't get on, some of the older people can't get on the bus, they get up out of their seat and help them. The black men are slipping. I ain't kidding, I know.</p> |
| <p>Q</p> | <p>What has the political climate been in the Penn/North community, present and past?</p> |
| <p>A</p> | <p>Climate?</p> |
| <p>Q</p> | <p>What is the political attitude or the way politics has changed?</p> |
| <p>A</p> | <p>I don't know much about politics, cause when it is time for somebody to vote, I don't know where he is coming up from, and somebody don't even know nothing about it. And if you ask somebody, oh, I don't know, I vote for him. And you don't know nothing about him. They used to have somebody come around and sit down on the steps and explain it to you. How are you going to learn anything if you don't have somebody to do that.</p> |
| <p>Q</p> | <p>What are your memories for entertainment in the community? The Met, Wilson's?</p> |
| <p>A</p> | <p>Well, the Met used to be one beautiful theatre to go to. They had some pictures was worth looking at and some wasn't.</p> |
| <p>Q</p> | <p>At the time you moved here it was integrated, blacks were allowed to go in?</p> |
| <p>A</p> | <p>Yes. And the Wilson's place to sit down and eat, it was a pleasant place to go to it. It really was. Because you could go up there and sit down and pick what you want. And the younger generation would wait on you and they was better then than what we got today. What we got today, is something else. I ain't kidding.</p> |

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| Q | Did you attend school in this area? |
| A | Yeah, but I didn't go that far. I went. . . My mother sent me to Catholic School because she thought maybe I could learn faster. But, I don't know, there is some children that learn fast and then there is some that didn't. |
| Q | What can you say about the quality of education in this area? |
| A | Well, I think we had older teachers years ago in school. If what they got today would sit down and explain things to the children, and give them the type of education that they had instead of telling the child I got and you get it the best way you know how, that's not no good. Because a child cannot learn of nothing like that. |
| Q | What impact did churches have or do have on the community? |
| A | Well, we don't have but one church on the corner now. Simmons Baptist Church. Another one down there on North Avenue called the Fulton Baptist Church. I don't know about the one around there on Baker and Carey Street. |
| Q | So they had no kind of impact? |
| A | None that I know. |
| Q | What were some of your favorite places that you hoped wouldn't leave the community? |
| A | Well, I was hoping that they wouldn't tear the Met down because that was the only theatre we had unless we went way out there on Reisterstown Read. |
| Q | Do you prefer the Penn/North area of yesteryear or now? |
| A | In what way? |
| Q | Every way. What do you prefer? |
| A | Today. |
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| Q | Why is that? |
| A | Because I think the Penn/North could be much improved for both the older people and the younger people. Because they can learn something. You would be surprised just like that program they had here this summer, 90% of the young people couldn't read. I couldn't believe that, it was a shame. Your parents send you all to school and I know she taught you some of it. But to go to school and then sit up there and play and worry about the little girls. You got to get education. Not be worrying about the gals. |
| Q | Was there much violence in the community? |
| A | No, not at that time. Now, they may get into a fight. I remember years ago when the girls and boys used to sit on the curb and iron their problems out. But they can't do that anymore. They got to go home and get a gun, a butcher knife or something. That doesn't make no sense. Like them boys that got into it over them tennis shoes. Does that make any sense? I felt sorry for that little boy that his mother bought him |

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| | <p>a pair of tennis shoes for Easter and that boy walked up and told him to take them off and then shot him. He didn't have to do that. Uncalled for. I remember when you could get a pair of tennis shoes for \$6. But them tennis shoes you all are wearing today. And them rings, too.</p> |
| Q | <p>How has segregation affected the community:</p> |
| A | <p>Well, it's not that many white people that are coming through there, driving through.</p> |
| Q | <p>In the past, how did it affect?</p> |
| A | <p>Well, the segregation at the time there was a lot of places you couldn't go. They didn't want blacks to come in and there wasn't nothing you could do about it but accept it.</p> |
| Q | <p>What changes would you like to see occur in the Penn/North area?</p> |
| A | <p>Like what?</p> |
| Q | <p>Like persons being restored, buildings being put back up that were torn down, transportation?</p> |
| A | <p>Well, the violence, to get rid of these hardheads and put them out in the country somewhere to plow corn and potatoes, because I'm telling you this young generation today, these boys is worse than the girls. Well, these little girls think that they should have a boyfriend. Education is more important than the boys or the girls.</p> |
| Q | <p>We were wondering if you would happen to have any photographs or mementos of the time twenty-five years that you were here. Any pictures, photographs or mementos?</p> |
| A | <p>No, I don't because at that time I didn't think it was worth it. A lot of people were taking them, but I didn't.</p> |
| Q | <p>Did you marry?</p> |
| A | <p>I married, but I didn't marry no more, my negro husband. I have two children.</p> |
| Q | <p>Are they all grown, all finished school? Any other comments?</p> |
| A | <p>Well, just getting rid of like I said, getting rid of some of these young generations they got out here on the street that don't want to go to school and don't want nobody else to go to school. I think it would be better if the parents would know how to handle them. The parents don't know how to handle the children now. They let them get out of hand. When I was raising mine, I had to work. I told them If I catch anybody in the house I am going to put both of them out in the street. Cause I am not going to be working and you coming into the house tearing it up and eating my food. If you can't</p> |

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| | stay home and eat your mother's food, you ain't going to eat mine. And I never had any trouble with mine like they are having today. |
| Q | Well, how do you think we could change some of this stuff going on today? |
| A | Well, I figure this way. If you have a problem you, if you can sit down and talk to your parents, that's the big help. Because we got a lot of parents today that ain't got time to sit down and talk to their children. And another thing. If she would stay at home. Because when I was growing up, my mother stayed at home and when we came home from school, we had to take off our school clothes and clean up our room. But now they ain't cleaning up nothing. The downstairs looks terrible. But the parents need to be more with the children. |
| Q | Well, they have to work today. |
| A | Well, yes, they have to work. But they could get home in time enough to be home. Cause everybody ain't working unless they are living in. They have enough time to be at home. Now, of course, the little ones, they need a bigger brother. To pick them up, take them to school, take them back home. And he needs to stay there in the house with them. Until the parents come home. But they ain't going to do it. The little ones. |
| Q | How do you feel towards teenagers? |
| A | I don't have no problem with them. Just like a lady told me one time, she said I am scared of them. I told her I'm not scared of them. You don't act like you are scared of them. You got to make yourself act just as bad as they are. And they will treat you that much better. I was sitting on the steps last summer and about 15 or 20 of them come around. I heard one of them said, let's see if we can ruffle up this old lady. And I stood there. They thought I was going to move. But some of the other ones, they said, no, we aren't going to do nothing to her. When they got a little closer to me they said hi, grandmother. I said hi, grandsons, how you all? And they just went on down the street. They laughed, they thought that was funny. See, that's the way you have to treat them today. You got to handle them with kid gloves. Cause if you don't they will ruffle you up. Now, that thing that you all had, that lot last summer. They wanted the dance, and they couldn't. They put up the platforms and they thought they could dance. One of them boys was so bad, he could fight all of you all. I just looked at him. But he was some hot, I ain't kidding you. But they was some mad teenagers. I wouldn't want to meet them in the street. I don't know where they come from, but they was some mad young men. |