

Verbeke24032003A-B

Interview with Mary Verbeke
Interviewed by Jessica Morris
March 24, 2003
1:20 PM
Rocky River, OH

Jessica Morris: It is March 24, 2003 at 1:20 PM. What is your name and can you spell it for me please?

Mary Verbeke: It's Mary Verbeke. V as in Victor, E-R, B as in boy, E-K-E.

JM: First question, what are some of your early childhood memories?

MV: Well, the first one I have is that when I started first grade I was only little foreigner in that class and the teacher, the teacher I had was Miss, Miss Hunter, she was a great teacher, she was also great in figure. But she was wonderful, I learned to read, I can't understand why kids can't read today. I learned to read. Of course at the beginning I made a few boo-boos, so to speak, and the youngsters would giggle, that didn't bother me. But that's the thing I remember, I always recall that and I love that teacher, she was very good to me.

JM: When did your parents move to Tremont and why?

MV: Well, that, when, we came, when my dad brought us here from Europe, he was, he was, my dad was born in this country in 19, 1885, and yes 1885, or 18, I forgot now, at any rate, he was born in Pittsburgh, and when my grandfather became ill, the doctor said go back to Europe, the climate was better. However, my dad returned, after, I was born and my brother was born, and we came back in 1927. So, now what does that include here, what did you want me say?

JM: Just why did they move back to Tremont?

MV: That's it. Oh that's it. So we came, most of the people of my nationality lived there, including many others, as you know. It was a United Nations community, it was wonderful.

JM: What language did your parents speak and do you speak?

MV: Slovak.

JM: Slovak. Where did your parents work?

MV: My dad was a mechanic for the B & O railroad.

JM: Did your mom work?

MV: No. She just took care of us.

JM: Did you work while you lived in Tremont?

MV: Uh yes, when I graduated from high school. I worked, I did office work for an insurance company, that had its office on Wall Street and that's where I did most of my work.

JM: Did you work with any neighbors?

MV: Not really, no. We were friends with our neighbors but didn't work with them.

JM: Can you describe what a typical workday would be like for you working there?

MV: I think it hasn't changed much, since people are going to work these days. I simply had to get up, have my breakfast; I always had breakfast, and dressed properly. I worked downtown, Union Commerce building and many times I worked overtime and I would come home rather late. But I enjoyed my work, it was fun, it was fun working downtown with all those beautiful stores and it was a busy, busy place with all-important people. And little ol' Mary, being so little, it was good to be among people who, who appreciated your work and were very, very kind.

JM: How did you get to work?

MV: Pardon?

JM: How did you get to work?

VM: Oh I took a bus; it was just a half a block from where I lived. And since I lived, I worked in the Union Commerce building it was no problem. It was downtown of course.

JM: Did you do most of your travel by bus?

MV: Yes. We didn't have a car.

JM: Where did children play in Tremont?

MV: I don't know. Really, I don't quite remember. I didn't play a great deal, we, I don't know. That's something I can't recall. We did, we did enjoy the park and it was a very lovely park. I think somewhat diminished after I left there, some, the neighborhood changed and a large pool was built there and it spoiled them, they uh gentility, gentleness of the park and it uhm, it just, it just, I just didn't feel comfortable anymore but that we, we would go there. There was a little pool there in the center, but I don't think they fill it anymore.

JM: Did you ever go to the Merrick house?

MV: No I didn't but I was going to but I just didn't have the time. A good many of my friends did and that's still there, it's a very important institution in that area.

JM: What kind of play did you do as a child then if you didn't go to a park?

MV: Play?

JM: Mhmmm.

MV: I don't, talk about playing, we used to play catch in front of our yard and I don't know what we did in the park, I don't recall. It was just, it was just a park, a beautiful scenery, and very calm and surrounded by, by churches and nice buildings. My church was just across the street from it, so but that I don't recall. But I know we played a lot of ball, catch ball, what other kind I don't recall right now.

JM: What would you say was your favorite thing to do as child?

MV: Well, I like to read and I like to sing, but since I was 12 I did housework, we didn't have a great deal of money of course and uhm, but uhm, well we'd go out with my friends, we'd go to the Jennings theater and my brother and I would, especially when the cost of it was down to .05 I think. And my brother just loved the comics; I couldn't get him to come home. [Laugh] So we enjoyed the movies, we just enjoyed those. But we did play outdoors together and I can't remember all the things that we did.

JM: Did you ever feel bored as a child?

MV: No, never, never, no. I liked to read too, so we were never bored.

JM: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

MV: I have a brother who is younger than I am and my sister is younger, she was born here.

JM: And can you remember where teenagers went on dates?

MV: I don't know because I didn't date.

JM: Were you not allowed?

MV: No that wasn't it, I was just, I wasn't keen about it. And there was a lot of you know how it is teenagers dating and things. It didn't appeal to me.

JM: Did a lot of your friends date?

MV: Some of them I did, I think.

JM: But you don't recall maybe?

MV: But I didn't have the finances either to join them that was one reason. I could have if I wanted to.

JM: Okay. So you don't really remember what it was like to be dating?

MV: No. Somewhat, we, it was not like it is today, it was fun. I did go out, we went out to, we took some vacations as our little group did, and it was fun. We didn't have the kind of mentality that is prevalent today.

JM: Where did you or your parents' grocery shop?

MV: Well my dad used to go to the, first he went to the East Side Market. And he crossed the central Viadock Bridge, you wouldn't remember that, that was torn down, I don't know, then they built that long bridge along the lakefront more or less, I forget what that's called. But when that, that bridge came down he would go to the West Side Market. As you know, the food there was very fresh, especially the vegetables. But other, as far as grocery stores are concerned, he would shop in a couple of grocery stores on Professor Avenue. They had very good grocery stores there.

JM: Would he chose grocery stores that were the same ethnicity as you?

MV: Well, you really, yeah, you had no choice because they were. [Laugh] There were two stores that I sort of recall, and most people shopped there. They had very fine meat.

JM: Your father did all the grocery shopping?

MV: Yes he did. I think he enjoyed it very much.

JM: Where did you go to church?

MV: I went to Holy Ghost Greek Catholic church, right across the street from the park.

JM: Was that within walking distance from your home?

MV: Oh yes. Everything was over there. Like it is here.

JM: Did you go every, did you attend church regularly?

MV: Yes we did.

JM: Do you recall what it was like during the holidays at church?

MV: Oh it, we always attended the services at church all the holidays. It was very, very nice. It was very friendly; the people were happy to see each other and as you know the services are on a very high level, very, very interesting. So we always had a good time on holidays.

JM: What language was mass said in?

MV: At the begin, it was, when I was still there it was in Slovak. But I think they have English masses now. I haven't been to that church for quite a long time; I haven't been in there.

JM: Since you moved?

MV: No, yeah I haven't been in there.

JM: Can you describe what it was like, what were some of your holiday traditions?

MV: It's been so, I've been married, was married in '56, no Corey was born there, I was married in '47, it's a long time ago. We, they were always involved with church and with the preparation and visiting and with being with the family, extended family. We always had fun and it was, we always looked forward to it and during Easter we'd blessed our food, took it to church. And by the way, Saint Christopher's does that here too, which is very nice. We had quite a little group of Slavic people here now.

JM: Would you, as your immediate family, what was some of your personal traditions for Christmas? Did you open gifts at Christmas Eve or on Christmas Day?

MV: Well, to be frank with you, we never got into this Christmas presents stuff. Although as, as, we got older, we were, my brother and I were able to, to earn some money, earn, have an income of our own, we would do what the Americans would do. But on the whole, our folks, it wasn't a custom, in our country to do that. But we got Americanized of course.

JM: What about Birthdays? What were Birthdays like at your house?

MV: We did, they came and went.

JM: You don't remember any, it wasn't, do you remember a cake being made?

MV: No we, we didn't do that. But nobody, it was a happy family however. And nobody cried because you didn't get a Birthday cake. It was just, we just had a very simple life and it was happy life though.

JM: What were some of the social places you or your parents often visited?

MV: Golly, I don't remember. I don't know. I really don't know. They would go to weddings of course; there was a lot of dancing, and meeting old friends and so forth. But as far as visiting, they would visit each other's homes, I don't know. Oh my dad would like to, he like to go to, take us to the amusement parks.

JM: Which amusement parks?

MV: Well, I can't recall the names right now. I don't know, I can't remember, they were, we used to go to Pieridice Park too. The amusement park I can't recall, they were on the east side. They're long, been long gone. They've been dismantled.

JM: You lived in Tremont during 19, you moved there in 1926 is that what you said?

MV: '27 I came here '27.

JM: Okay, so do you remember World War II or the depression? What were some of your memories of that?

MV: My father was laid off for a while, quite a while. The only thing was that when he was called to work to help. When they needed him, he would rush to work and I got a picture of him, the back of him in his work clothes and we always laugh at that, cuz it's kind of, kind of, it's precious to being with [laugh] and then mom would have to go, he worked so long, they kept him working so long, that she'd have to go down there and bring him his dinner. But that's about what I remember, it wasn't easy but we got along. My dad knew how to shop, we never had any help, and nothing and so many people in our community did. My mother used to bake wonderful bread and some of our neighbors got a lot of that too.

JM: What were some of the things that your mom did during the day?

MV: Oh I don't know. She, she did some sewing, hand sewing, but I really don't know. She like to work in the garden in the yard.

JM: Did you have a big yard?

MV: Not a big yard, no. Of course she had enough to do just to keep us kids going. We had, at first there was no, laundry had to be done by hand and then dad of course bought a Maytag washer. You had to hang the clothes outdoors or in the basement, but she, there was plenty of work to do for her. And then I think she liked to listen to the radio when she was tired.

JM: You had a radio?

MV: Yeah, mhmm.

JM: Did you have a telephone?

MV: Not until I got, I started work.

JM: Did a lot of your friends have telephones?

MV: Not too many of them but they began to at the time we got ours, they began, most didn't, good many of them had phones. But we didn't talk on phones the way they do today, member if if you heard, they were party lines. So you couldn't always get on the phone.

JM: Can you explain that for me?

MV: Well that there were several families on one line and uhm, its just as if you had two telephones in the house here or half, half, maybe, probably three people on the line, I'm not sure.

But if one of your, if your mom or dad was using the phone then you can't use it either. It's the same set-up.

JM: Did you get married in Tremont?

MV: I was married in my church Holy Ghost Greek Catholic church.

JM: And did you have a reception?

MV: A very family reception simply because my husband, he was clever, not so, not so clever, but he was a very good planner. His, he could take some time off from work, and we had to, the company was sending him to Washington state, I think yeah, at any rate, he had a few days he could take off so we made the [] to get married in my church. And I, it was a regular, a very very nice marriage. We were dressed in the formal garments and in fact it happened to be Holy Day of Obligation and all my mother's friends were there. It was very very nice. Ann Guyswite, you know Kathy Guyswite?

JM: Mmmnnnm.

MV: You mean to tell me you didn't read the comics? Well Kathy's mother is a distant cousin of mine. We went to school together and our parents are friends and she sent me her, something borrowed, something blue. She sent me her long coat, warm coat, a beautiful coat, which is borrowed and blue. So that made it a complete ensemble for a wedding. But she, they weren't able to come here. So we had a wedding here and we took a short, a short honeymoon, we went to Carnegie Mellon. Charlie wanted to see the school that's from which he graduated. And we stayed there; we didn't even stay there the whole time. The dirt in Pittsburgh was so bad, and we were in a very, very beautiful hotel in the college area. Even so, we woke up in the morning our faces were black and our nostrils, and we could hardly breath from al the dirt. However sometime, not too long after that, Pittsburgh was able to clean that up, clean their air up, so we didn't stay very long in Pittsburgh but that's where we went. Got a chance to snoop around and look at old haunts that Charlie had occupied when he was still in school.

JM: How old were you when you were married?

MV: Lets see now, [laugh] I can't remember. See now I was born in 1921, and so at any rate, I can't, my mind, I can't compute. I was about 25 I think, so Charlie passed away, he'll be, lets see now, 8 years I think. He was 12 years older than me.

JM: Do you remember what it was like in Tremont when Carl Stokes was elected mayor of Cleveland that was in 1967?

MV: I don't think I was here.

JM: Okay.

MV: Maybe, '67? I was here for a while. I was here for a while; we did a lot of traveling. My husband's job took him all over, where ever they wanted to send him. It was fine, it was okay. I thought Carl Stokes was a good, a good mayor. He was very conscencious; the fact that he was black made no difference to me. In fact it was, I think it was a very fine thing that he was mayor. Our black community seems to be terribly sensitive, overly sensitive to the difference in color. I don't know, that didn't bother me at all.

JM: When you first got married, did you live in Tremont for a little while?

MV: No.

JM: Okay. Do you remember any of the construction for the highways while you were living in Tremont?

MV: The only thing I recall is that when that Central Viadock Bridge came down, it they tore it down, it was torn, it was demolished! And the reason for that was, seems to me, because they were building those new highways and the other bridges closer to the North. But the only reason I remember, well Dad use to cross it to go to the market, west side, east side market. I can never forget, because in those days, if someone got sick they could call a doctor and he would come at any time of the night and this time, this particular time, a doctor was called and he wasn't aware of the fact that that bridge was not there and he drove over into, the, whatever, you know, just terrible, I never forgot that.

JM: What was it like being sick living in Tremont, like you said; all doctors would come to your home?

MV: They would come to your home, we never had, needed that kind of service. We had our family doctor, who was a lance man so to speak, he was a friend of my dads and came from the same country we do, his father was a priest. In those years the priest could marry. At any rate, no we didn't have that problem.

JM: Back to your education in Tremont, what schools did you go to?

MV: I went to Tremont Grammar School and then I went to Lincoln High.

JM: And, do you, were you involved in any extracurricular activities through the schools?

MV: Not too much, because I said I did, I did work. There weren't that many. I belonged to the German club, and Friendship club, or something like that, I've forgotten. They didn't, those activities didn't stay in my mind somewhat. Perhaps they weren't that interesting, I don't know. I enjoyed school, I did.

JM: This may be a sensitive topic, but did you feel that, as a women, were you discouraged at all?

MV: No. I don't know I would be.

JM: So you felt you were treated fair and equal?

MV: Well I guess so, although I, being, having come from Europe and perhaps my maiden name, there was some, I can't think of the word I want to use, but it was snobbishness. But otherwise I was accepted mo, pretty well.

JM: What was the diversity like in your classroom?

MV: You mean in nationality? I didn't pay much attention to it. Good many of them were Slovak as I, as I was or am. We had Greek, Syrian, Polish, Italian, and uhm I don't recall any, there was a black girl in our class for a brief period. She was very nice and I didn't mistreat her, I mean I didn't, I wouldn't do it, for no reason at all. She just seemed to disappear. She never returned, but I was disappointed when I looked for her one day, she wasn't there.

JM: What was the race make-up of Tremont when you lived there?

MV: We were all white.

JM: There was no African-Americans?

MV: No, this little girl, was African-American and maybe because she was the only one she wasn't comfortable I don't know. Whether she was mistreated in ways or not I don't know.

JM: You don't remember seeing anyone of different race in your neighborhood?

MV: Not at that time, no.

JM: What about crime, what was that like?

MV: When I lived there we didn't have any crime.

JM: Do you, you don't remember seeing any policeman ever?

MV: Well, you saw policeman, but just as a patrol.

JM: Okay. What were the chores that you and your brothers and sisters had to do around the house?

MV: The chores?

JM: Mhmm.

MV: We weren't really assigned any chores. We just helped when it was needed.

JM: Do you, were most of your friends from your little neighborhood, were they all neighbors most of your friends?

MV: They were mostly from my class, at school. And some of them of course went to the same church, were members of the same church. And I did have friends outside of my immediate neighborhood and or my nationality, quite a few of them.

JM: What age do you think boys and girls started mixing together, as friends?

MV: In high school.

JM: In high school? Okay. Did anyone you knew had a car?

MV: Yes I guess a couple of boys did.

JM: What year did you move out of Tremont?

MV: Pardon?

JM: What year did you move out of Tremont?

MV: After I got married in 1950, no '46.

JM: Have you been to Tremont recently?

MV: Ohh, couple, yes I been, I was there last year.

JM: How do you feel the neighborhood has changed?

MV: I don't like it. I, Molly Alstat had a sort of seminar, whatever you want to call it, or no she wanted to introduce some of the, our friends to St. Theodosius Church and the architecture and so forth. And so I got there early, and I couldn't get into, I thought well I'm early I'll sit in the pew and enjoy the church and have a chance to really look it over carefully, the artistic work. However there was no way I could get into that church, it was like like a prison. It was all enclosed in high fencing and I was able to get around to a door, two doors and I rang the buzzer or the bell or whatever it is, there was no response. It was very discouraging. And some of the houses and things aren't quite, well it didn't please me. However, I think there's a big effort being made to revitalize it, because it's a wonderful location. There is a lot of back, intellectual background to that area. In fact where I lived, my house, the house would have been the second house from where I lived, belonged to people who, no, the Higbees lived there, in this area where my house was. Then, the property was there, the house that was constructed after the property was, Higbee property was demolished that what I, I mean that's what I heard, there's a grocery store there and whatever. And the people who owned it, there son was, lets see what's his name, sometime I have trouble remembering, his, John Kennedy-Players, that's was, he was, he lived there, he was brought up in that area. Right next, second house from us. So there were a lot of people, the Higbees lived there I think and on West 14th Street, some of those houses were very,

very luxurious. And eventually it all went over to the far east side. Some of those houses are very very old and they're still standing and I am glad to hear that it's being restored, because it's such a good location. There is a lot of history in there that should be revived and respected.

JM: Do you remember going to any restaurants?

MV: I don't know, not too much, we ate at home. However, lets see, when I was a youngster you mean?

JM: Mhmm.

MV: No not as a youngster, we always ate at home, that's the reason we're so healthy. [Laugh]

JM: What was your favorite meal that your mom would cook?

MV: Oh I don't know, she was a wonderful cook. The best, she made great soup, especially chicken soup and beef soup and she was a great baker. Ever-, she was just great, everything, she was a wonderful cook and I learned to cook from just watching her. She'd make her home-ade noodles, and just everything; we stayed healthy because of my mothers cooking.

JM: Have you continued on traditions with your own family now?

MV: Well, what do you mean by that?

JM: Were there any traditions you practiced in Tremont?

MV: Oh yes, one thing, I take a basket to church at Easter time. Do you do that to?

JM: Mhmm.

MV: That's one tradition I do.

JM: To get it blessed?

MV: Yeah. And we color eggs and we have certain foods that you put in, some of the villages as you know, might be a little different, a little variety but basically it's the same because it has meaning, all have special meaning.

JM: What types of food do you put in your basket?

MV: Well now, I kind of sluffed off. We all, we had, what was called a paska, which I bake every Easter, and eggs, colored eggs, and there was always sausage, and I think some ham and some, lets see now, salt, and I, that's about well, there are a couple more things that I can't recall. But it was a very, very interesting basket. And we never ate any; we would fast until Easter morning.

JM: From the beginning of lent?

MV: Yeah, mhmm.

JM: All day fast?

MV: Yeah, mhmmm.

JM: Ahh, you briefly talked about Lincoln Park, was that, was that more popular during the summer months or were people out all the time?

MV: I don't recall. About wintertime. We sp-, my memories are more of the warmer cli-, warmer days. The thing I do remember was during the war we had a parade during the war, the Second World War. And I participated in it and I remember marching, so that's the only time I ever did anything like that in my life but that as you know, it was a very important because I graduate from high school in 1940 and all my brother had to go, he went in a little bit later, and but the boys in my class had to had to go. In fact three of them, were about the brightest three, bright real bright students never came back. So it was a very, very wrenching time in our lives and now it's happening all over again.

JM: Did you after school did you come home immediately?

MV: Oh yes.

JM: Was that followed by homework right away or?

MV: Yeah I did that.

JM: What types of classes did you take?

MV: Well I took a business course. That's what I did.

JM: In high school?

MV: Mhhmmm.

JM: What types of classes were offered in elementary school?

MV: Well the ordinary classes, I don't recall except, things I recall about elementary school, I learned, I learned the math, arithmetic we called it and we did a lot of singing but this makes me giggle all the time. I got an A on my diploma; I have an A in music. But the school never taught me to read music but I could sing and I can't any more but I couldn't understand that, so I got an A in music.

JM: Did you have art class?

MV: Somewhat, minimal art stuff. We had a little bit of everything.

JM: Uh, were, as a student were you encouraged to go to college or?

MV: Somewhat, not, not, we were if we could, if we could afford it. It was depression then, you see that was the problem. Oh I was going to go to what was that Cleveland college, it's a before it became Cleveland college it was called something else. They had a introductory meeting and when I got there and I never went back cuz I thought they were treated us like like dumb little kids going to kindergarten. And that was sad, because I did want to go to college, I could of, I could of gone. What I had planned to do was to go evenings. And I never went back.

JM: What would you have gone for?

MV: Well I probably would of, probably commercial, however I was interested in other things too.

JM: What were some of your dreams as a child, what did, what did you see yourself doing later in life?

MV: I, I really didn't. Because I think during the depression, we didn't have time to think about that. Although I didn't, I wanted to learn as much as I could and be as good as a child as I could and have a happy life and just fit in.

JM: Do you recall any children around you ever being made fun of during, at school?

MV: Well they giggled at me one time, when I started to, it didn't bother me though, I had a certain sense of assurance or whatever, I don't know, self-respect maybe, when I was reading in front of the class in first grade, they would giggle and sometimes when I made a mistake in pronouncing a word they would giggle. But in, as a whole, it was a little bit hard to, not to be a looked down on, in a way. It didn't take me long to learn the language.

JM: That's surprising because there's so many different ethnicities, I would think there would be a lot of children that spoke with accents?

MV: Well I didn't speak with an accent, sometimes I'd miss pronounce a word. However, the fact was I simply had to learn a new language that's all. And I don't know of any other youngsters there, I mean, what I am trying to say, I just come over and it was different with the other children, they'd been here. So I had to learn from scratch at a later age.

JM: What types of clothes did you wear?

MV: Oh I had nice clothes. Well American, nice clothes.

JM: Would you go school shopping downtown?

MV: Yeah.

JM: Was that a day activity?

MV: Well, whatever it took. But we always had nice clothes.

JM: Do you remember, what would be something that you would do as a family as a whole?

MV: Go to church together when we could. I mean my dad would, off from work on Sundays. And we go to the church fair together.

JM: How would you describe your relationship with your mother?

MV: It was very good. We were close.

JM: What about your father?

VM: Same thing.

JM: And your brothers and sisters?

VM: Yeah we had a, my brother and I when we were kids we played a lot together of course. Now this one story I have to tell all the time is because mom went to, this was in Europe, she went to, she had to go to town, I don't know what city it was, the closest one I suppose. And this, she warned us, she said you're to stay home, don't you, don't you go anyplace, well, two kids, it was strawberry time, so we didn't mind her, her, we didn't head her warnings. So we went strawberry picking and I've got this little jar and we filled that up with strawberries and it was up on a little mound, little hill and my brother he wouldn't come down, he was scared, and he wouldn't come down. And I oh gosh what am I going to do, my mother is going to crown us. But we finally came home, I finally got him down, convinced him to come down and we got home. I don't know what happened after that but when we got home those strawberries were all mashed, mashed up in there, more like jelly. And so [laugh], but that's what I remember playing with my brother there. And we had, there was a brook there too in the country, we had a great fun over in that area, beautiful countryside.

JM: What types, how would your parents punish you as a child?

MV: We'd get a spanking on your bottom.

JM: You weren't grounded?

MV: No, that was American, I don't think the folks new about that. We weren't that bad

JM: What was your house like, did you live in a house or an apartment?

MV: Yeah, no we lived in a house all the time.

JM: Can you describe what it looked like?

MV: Well we had two bedrooms, nice furniture, my dad bought just went ahead, just like Charlie did when we moved in when we got married, he would do things and it was all planned in his mind, we had nice furniture. My dad knew what we needed and he just went ahead and bought it.

JM: Was it one floor?

VM: Yeah. Well sometimes, we lived in not the same house all the time, we would, I think we moved a couple three times, maybe when the rent was less or the facility was better, I'm not sure, I think when the facility was better because at one time we only had, we needed an extra bedroom, we really needed an extra bedroom I think. Or or we had to the bathroom, the commode was in the hallway or something like that, I've forgotten. But no, we we did very well.

JM: I'm going to stop the tape and flip it right now.

VM: Okay.

End of Tape 1, Side A

Start of Tape 1, Side B

JM: We were, on the other side of the tape we were talking about your house. What was your, what filled your yard?

MV: We had a very small yard, my mother would, in fact it had no grass, and when she, when we moved in she planted grass and it was creeping bent and it was just like it like a carpet, very, very nice. She put in as many flowers as could but it was a very small yard. But our se-, the house that they bought later had a nice large yard. Very nice, over in the Kam's Corner area.

JM: During, when you were a child, you said you played baseball, were there any other sports that young men would play?

MV: Not that I recall, I don't know what my brother did. But mostly baseball was at that time, I don't recall anything else. I don't know, I may have just forgotten.

JM: What about board games?

MV: Yeah, we'd play checkers sometimes and once in a while cards.

JM: Do you have any family that lived in Tremont, other than your parents?

MV: No, my grandmother and my aunts moved up to Brooklyn. They're all gone now, my aunt died a couple Saturdays ago, she was 94. She was the sick one in the family so to speak. And she knew how to take care of herself. [Laugh] She lived longer than any of the others.

JM: So when you would get together, how often would you get together with the larger family?

MV: Well, we'd, not that often, but often enough, holidays and on some special visits. Transportation was, well it just took time, we had to get a streetcar and we never had the money to buy a Ford [laugh]. That time you could buy a Ford for a few bucks but not anymore.

JM: You were telling me while the tape was off about Lincoln High School, one of your memories of what it looked like?

MV: Well I just enjoyed the rotunda or whatever you call it. It was just, it always fascinated me and I always pictured something very fancy, dancing down on the first floor and I just loved it cuz you can stand there at the rail see the other youngsters, it was, I thought it was, far as architecture is concerned it was kind of a saving grace.

JM: The woman I spoke with last week, she was mentioning at the Tremont Elementary School there used to be a well and during Christmas time they would fill it with a Christmas tree?

MV: Well that was, I don't think that was Tremont, that was the high school.

JM: Oh was it? Okay.

MV: Yes, they always had a Christmas tree there.

JM: She said they would, the students would line up around it and sing Christmas carols?

MV: I don't recall that but perhaps we did.

JM: Okay. Okay. Well we're about done with the hour.

MV: Is that so?

JM: Yep.

MV: Good, good.

JM: So I just want to thank you for taking this time to answer some of my questions.

MV: Do you think you can translate that?

JM: Yeah.

End of Tape 1, Side B