

DC Oral History Collaborative – Barry Farm Oral History Project

Narrator – Michelle Hamilton

Interviewer – Sabiyha Prince

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Narrator Bio and interview summary: Michelle is a native Washingtonian raised in Uptown, DC. She had lived in Barry Farm for 20 years before being displaced. Michelle is the backbone of her family and is determined to help the children in need from Barry Farm.

**Transcript:**

SP: Thank you, and I do want to repeat that at any point you want to stop you have a right to do so. This is the DC Oral History Project funded by the DC Humanities Council.

MH: OK

SP: And so I have a series of questions that I am going to ask you so I thank you for making yourself available to us. I will start by asking you, where and when were you born?

MH: I was born in DC as a Washingtonian, I was born at the Old Freemans hospital, and I was born in the 60s, 1966.

SP: 1966, OK and here in Washington DC. And what neighborhood were you living in at the time of your birth?

MH: Well my grand – my mother lived up in Ward 1 up by Belmont - but I laid with and moved with my grandmother up in Lincoln Heights and she was on the Council for Marian Barry. She was one of the tenant associations there.

SP: So you are saying you grew up in the Lincoln Heights area?

MH: I lived and was back and forth from Lincoln Heights and Uptown.

SP: So if somebody were to say, “where are you from Mrs. Hamilton, where neighborhood, what community did you grow up in?”

MH: I would say Uptown.

SP: And what are some of your earliest memories growing up?

MH: Well I was a good child and my family is small, parents didn't really believe in having kids. My mother had the most kids in the family. It was an organization came that is called Community of Hope, it came, it started out in Belmont, they took us to camp, they took us and they was rich and they took us and mentor us and mentor our kids and then they took us out of town and taught us and had a good time, I had a good childhood.

SP: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

MH: I only had one sister that's by my mother and father, and my babysister by my stepfather that raised us.

SP: OK so you have two sisters.

MH: Yes

SP: That's nice. And tell me what kind of stuff you guys used to do together? What you guys did for fun, what it was like growing up?

MH: Well my sister had to raise me at fourteen and she got pregnant at thirteen and they had it. My mother went through a divorce. I got discovered at - I was the first one to go to school at Marie H. Reed. And the music teacher, we did this play called the Wiz, I got discovered by someone from Howard and I started going, you know, to auditions. And my mother was going through a divorce and that didn't take off good. And we moved to Maryland, we moved to Maryland and my mother was young, and my sister she stayed uptown. And kinda left us on our own, my sister raised us, her and her baby father, he's Jamaican.

SP: When did you guys move to Maryland?

MH: 1979. When I was 14 years old.

SP: And about how long did you stay there?

MH: I stayed there until I was about 18, I had my first son. He's 34 now.

SP: Can you tell me something about that history, you stayed there until you were 18, and then what did you do?

MH: I dropped out of school in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, worked at job corps, hopped the fence and then got pregnant with my son. Wouldn't take it back for nothing.

SP: Amen. Tell me about your children, how many children do you have?

MH: I have three children. 34, 35 – hold on 34, 33, and 30.

SP: ok let me back up, I'm just a bit ahead of myself. Tell me about your parents.

MH: Well my mother is a good mother. We're close, she moved to Atlanta with my sister. My father been incarcerated all my life. My step father raised me. My younger sister father raised me 16 years before they had her. And I love him.

[5:00]

SP: What kind of lessons did you learn from your family would you say? What did they pass down to you?

MH: My mother was a housekeeper, my grandmother was a housekeeper, I was a housekeeper and I grew up in-- I did house keeping for 16 years, I had my first job and then I went on to Mariott it was the Sheraton and the Mariott, I went as a temp and they hired me permanent and I went on --they paid for me to go to culinary school I was a souz chef, line cook, prep cook, short order cook, I just went in the kitchen and stayed there and I've been there for 34 years.

SP: So you're a good cook, you're interested in food. Is that what you were always interested in?

MH: I went for something, I'm a jack of all trades, cause I went to job corps to be a brick mason, I took up emotional assistance and I did landscaping, I did all kinds of jobs in my life, I went for something that I was good at because I was a stay at home, you know I raised my kids by myself and you can't go wrong for cooking and cleaning.

SP: I hear you, and are you still doing that work today?

MH: No, I went, I came out in 2010 I got sick I had a stroke. In 2010 I went upstairs to take a dietary aid a dietary meal for one of the patients and he got up and I tried to hold him up and he fell and I fell to keep him from falling I held up and I took a wear and tear on my spine, that's how I got in a wheelchair. But then during that time I had a stroke, a little mini stroke. So, I'm really disabled, can't stand long, can't lift too much and it took a toll on me, because I'm really young and I wanted to retire. But since I worked all my life I'm well taken care of.

SP: So, you were disabled on the job.

MH: Mmhmm, and they're still paying me. They're still paying me for the rest of my life.

SP: Was it difficult to get the proper arrangements?

MH: No cause we was in union and then I took my 401k and got a little bit of that and family and everybody, well they take care of me, my organizations my charity is kids living with HIV/AIDS they sponsor me every year. I have a camp that sponsors me and One DC and Empower DC and I'm just in the movement.

SP: Yes, and what has been the impact of those movements, like what role has One DC and Empower DC played?

MH: One DC, well lets go back, Our DC is affordable jobs. Empower DC is about housing and One DC take up the slack for everything. Jobs, housing, what's going on gentrification, everything, you know I'm in the movement and I learned a lot. You know Marion Barry told us that we wasn't going, our kids wasn't going to amount to nothing and our kids are the ones who are lawyers and helping us fought to keep Barry Farms standing for so long.

SP: Yes, I want to talk to you about that. We'll come to Barry Farms very shortly. What about, talk about the Job Corps, that was very important for you.

[10:00]

MH: I got pregnant, I was a child at one of the go everywhere and do everything and if I see something I said I want to do this I want to do that. I was confused about what I wanted to be when I grew up so that's why I got so many trades under my belt.

SP: So where did you get all those trades? You learned them through the job corps, your network?

MH: No, DC had programs back then to keep us off of drugs and free programs like Jubilee Housing and all kind of training centers and I took advantage of that, I took a class at cert critical emergency response team and I took a class in behavior health and I took a lot of cooking classes and healthy classes and I studied with drama options and I did a study with HIV women worker and I did studies that help make a difference.

SP: How'd you find out about all this stuff?

MH: Well you is out there people pass on information and then if some involved with money. It's something that they give you that help you cope and get there and eat stuff I took advantage of the money.

SP: If you think those kinds of programs were available today at the same degree or it has decreased?

MH: It has decreased and I wish they had more drug programs, more affordable housing, they taking everything from us and we're not taking advantage of it and I hope our kids take advantage of the programs and stay at school cause that's the key. I learned the hard way, I had to go back and take the GED, I failed three times but I got it, she went on it's a hit I tried it and I got it and that was the best day of my life. That was the best day of my life

SP: Can you tell me about some of the other neighborhoods that you lived in prior to coming to Barry Farms?

MH: I always lived uptown, I lived in Deanwood, I met my husband, we're childhood sweethearts, we grew up together. He showed me DC because we wasn't allowed to leave. We weren't allowed to go out of the ward, out of the street, our parents, every time that we moved to Maryland, that's when I start getting around. I didn't know SE, I didn't know Barry Farm until I went to the shelter and my grandmother said, oh there's a letter over there and we got three bedrooms. I said "oh, where's Barry farm?" My mom and grandmother said "Oh you don't want to live over there, naw don't take that." I said "When do I sign the lease and get my keys?" and I've been there ever since.

SP: Now you just said something about when you were in the shelter. Can you elaborate on that? What are you referring to?

MH: I went to the shelter before I could get a place. I moved a couple of times, like when I was 16 I had my first place on the first floor with my baby and then my aunt gave me the place and then we moved with my sister up on Canyon place. I started living in rooming houses because my kids was with my grandfather and I worked all my life so my job consistently is traveling so I didn't have time to take them everywhere but I would homeschool them and get them tutors and they would stay with my grandmother and my aunts and them. And I had to travel with my job consistently. I think I put my job before my kids.

SP: So, you're saying your kids were with your grandparents?

[15:00]

MH: And they was with one of the tutors that came Belmont and congressman Mike matter of fact daughter, I know people in high places, they took my son down there because DC schools wasn't helping but he came back when he was like 14 or 15 but I was on hand and made sure I was there for varsity he was the only black child doing Lacrosse and only black child on the swim team and I was there every step of the way. That I'm mad because I would buy him new tennis shoes every week. I would stand in line, it would be cold it would be snowing and raining but I'd be camping out for them tennis shoes. I'm glad I got over that. And then with the James situation, Sega Genesis the Nintendo it was on and on and on and on.

SP: And just so that I understand, at what point did you go to the shelter and for how long?

MH: Oh, I went to the shelter for 30 days. I had a job when you have a job and a program you don't stay in the shelter. People stay there cause they don't want to progress. Only there for 30 days. And my family is close family and I care what we do, they don't see no wrong in us, they don't see no right or wrong cause we were the only kids and they protected us.

SP: What was the experience like being in the shelter?

MH: Well I didn't go to the shelter, I went to a transitional first, I had a roommate her name was Penny, she was white. We got to bring our TVs, she would leave and I would bring the kids

and they would stay. It was a nice house it was a 3-story house and two girls to a room and they would save our money and when we got our place they gave the money back.

SP: How old were you?

MH: I can't remember, I was in my early 20s. cause I've been in Barry Farm from 20 years. I've been in Barry Farms for 22, no 21 years.

SP: When did you come to Barry Farms?

MH: I came in 1998.

SP: 98? You and who else?

MH: Just me and my husband in that three bedrooms. And we moved in every room and I said baby, we need some kids. Soon as I said that we needed some kids they came. I took in my godsons, I had three godsons, and I had two foster children and now all the kids have a key to my house, if they need a place to stay they have the keys that's what I told them give me four dollars cause you're going to get a key. They don't play with me. Give me a key, cause I'm sick. I been there and been sleep off that medicine and when I wake up them kids come in and they check on me. Even if they say "ma you want some water?" or "Ma I'm on my way" or "Ma, how you doin today?" My kids are very close to me. I'm very close to my kids. And other peoples' kids too. I'm like the team mom, I'm like the mayor, I'm like the godmother. That's why I got 16 kids in the camp and still beggin. And take care of them by myself. They say "how you do it?" I say, "I got a little stick. You gonna get a spankin. I'm a tell your mother and you're going to get kicked out the camp."

SP: So, you went to Barry Farms, you and your husband had a bunch of kids there.

MH: My kids, let's go back, my sister has 6 kids. And I had raised them. She got pregnant with one of them. Ms. Rel, she was like the godmother of Barry Farms, she got pregnant by one of her grandsons. He dead now because he got hit by a car soon as he got out of jail. God bless his soul. When I first came to Barry Farm an old lady walked up the street and said "hi, you just moved in?" I said, "yes ma'am" she said "Welcome to Barry Farm." From that day to the day the lady died I loved that lady she was close, I was close to her.

[20:00]

SP: What was her name?

MH: Ms. Ferrell, she had a children's center and I had my CDL and child development certificate and I took that class. And she said "Well why don't you come and work at the center?" I said "OK"

SP: A CDL is a commercial driver's license?

MH: That's the CDL, but child development license, I went to child development learned how to cope with my kid and deal with kids. I had a daycare at my home in Barry Farm, so I took up that class.

SP: Tell me more about some of your personal connections at Barry Farm?

MH: Well I was close to Ms. Ferrell. I met all the kids first, I met all the kids first, I met them at the park... I met the kids first cause I knew that there was a need my kids grew up middle class, when I came in these kids was broken homes, broken families. And I made a big difference, they didn't ask for candy, they didn't ask for money, they didn't ask for food. They had cereal they had milk. I washed their clothes, let em take showers. Instead of me talking about the boys I had everything I needed, I asked people, "could I take them to a football game? Could I take them to a basketball game?" Something their parents wouldn't go and take em. I don't do Barry Farm, I didn't do Barry Farm like that. When you saw me all them kids were "I wanna go, I wanna go." That's when I came up with the camp. And the camp is called Camp Nowhere. We had nowhere to go, nothing to do. It was based off East of the River Paper and Food Stamps. cause that's all the parents had to donate, and all we needed was food, free lunch programs. Thanks to my job I used to make good money so I held the camp down on my own and made good money. Then when I got sick I started asking, they said "Why don't you ask for help? Let somebody help you?" So, I asked for help, I asked OneDC, Empower DC so the kids could go to Circus and we had lovely seats yesterday. We had box seats, they catered from Southeast Collaborative. The kids had a beautiful time last night, I didn't even want to go to sleep I was so hyped.

SP: Oh my gosh, so you took them just last night.

MH: That's my family and then I get 5 kids that are not my family. Once you go out the family you have to start getting licensed and having lawyers you have to have insurance, it's a lot of stuff when you go outside like when I had the daycare. It's too much so I started just dealing with my family.

SP: I see, so you were saying you were doing that for the larger community when you were at Barry Farm.

MH: Oh, these Africans came to Barry Farm and gave me a center. And the girls from Trinity, Howard and American University would come and tutor them for me.

SP: What time period was this?

MH: It was a couple of years ago. cause I've been here two years, they took the center last year, and moved a family in there, took our computers, took the kids' stuff. The Lawyers owned that center. They came to Barry Farm, and they said "We only come on Saturdays you can utilize the center cause I see you out there with the kids" and they gave me a center. Three bedrooms.

SP: When did you leave Barry Farm?

MH: Two years ago.

SP: And can you talk about the circumstance in which you left?

MH: I lived on Stevens Road for 19 years. I lived on Stevens Road for 20 years.

SP: From what to what?

[25:00]

MH: 2000, no 98 til three years ago.

SP: 2016, 2017

MH: I was living in horrible conditions. I didn't want to give up my 3-bedroom so I sat living like that which I didn't have to. I was scared to leave my friends. I was scared I wasn't going to get my three bedrooms in case my family needs somewhere to stay. And you know I did deal with the mice and the roaches. Didn't realize I was getting sick from that. Didn't able to move and I never in my 50 years knew what a bed bug was and we had the bed bugs. I went to the Wilson Building I told the front office. cause I never knew, they didn't bite me, they bit my husband, my husband knew about it. He said, "I'm getting bit up and there ain't no mosquitos in the winter time." I said "Sit your drunkard tail down" he said "I'm telling you there it go there it go" so I got to see it. Babies legs was all bit up. I went downtown to the Wilson building and told Ms. Anita Bonds. I said if vampire bug bite me I'm going to bbc and cc. So, I took them to court. I was paying for a freezer a \$2000 freezer from Avons because the mice came out the refrigerator so I went and got me a nice one. So, the baby went to Children's Hospital and I told the lady that a mouse climbed on his bed but he was trying to stay under the bed, the 12-year-old, under the bed so I got him a bunk bed so the mice wouldn't get him, that was \$800. Housing had to pay me \$5,000 for everything I went and got: Washing machine, dryer cause the mouse bit the cord, bit the hose, the water hose, girl they was terrible. One mouse came down the wall and jumped my husband while he was trying to get the other one off the top. They was mean. So, they moved me, I had a mandatory move. The lawyer gonna say: you got two places and one place you don't wanna go. I said didn't want to go to Lincoln Heights, that's for sure. Well you got two places, two choices. And they dragged they feet with it. So, they moved me over to the next street, Eaton Road. When they moved me to Eaton Road my king size bed couldn't fit upstairs so I stayed downstairs and let the kids have the three bedrooms upstairs. I was laying down, lord to be whole, it was a rat, two rats fighting in the kitchen. I went down Georgia with my niece and I told them "when I come back I better have me a place" and I said "I'm not fighting for Barry Farm no more, I gotta go cause I can't live like this, I wasn't raised like this and I'm not going to live like this no more." They gave me an apartment over the Sheridan I fell in love with it, I went over there and looked at it at night. cause it was Old Valley Green.

[30:00]

SP: You said where was it?

MH: The sherdin, Sheradin station. Over there by the subway, the Sheridan station. I said "baby, someone is in my parking space" cause it was handicapped. He said "you ain't even got the place yet, ain't nobody in your parking space." I went one day and they gave the place

away. My whole heart dropped, I fell in love with that place, I couldn't sleep. I said, "you know what, on God, when he do things he do them for a reason, he gonna give me something better." The white man called me said "we got a three bedroom for you" I rolled down the street, I rolled around the corner, I rode up the street and I got out the wheelchair and I looked in the house and I said "Ah this is nice" so we went down the street. So, I said "we going to 2, 104?" and he said "how'd you know?" I said "cause God told me." I had swimming pool cross the street, a rec right there, Harris Teeter is my corner store, not the Chinese store, and everything I go to a restaurant every month, that's my kid me and my daughter pick a restaurant to go to every month. I have a schedule of all the events, all the movies on the lawn, the night we are going to the concert, they face paint, they fish, there's a whole new city, you know the Yard? There's a whole city back there, that's my little playground back there.

SP: The water park, its cute.

MH: That's why I get my kids, God put me where he couldn't have gave me nothing better and I'm secluded from the building I don't have to deal with the building. It's like a house on one floor, I'm outside the building I've got the whole side and I got my grandfather flag in the window. And the marines he says "Are you a Marine?" I said "No that's my grandfather flag in the window."

SP: So, you're happy here.

MH: Oh yes, it feels like I'm at a resort every day. And I love my city because there's everything to do here. And when it ever go down, I'm going down with it. Like with the BBQ battle I was treated with VIP treatment because the chef that I work with they was all complimentary tickets to go to the battle.

SP: Well it sounds like you've adjusted well. Is there anything that you miss about Barry Farm?

MH: I miss my friends. I miss my friends. But you know what? I got most of them to move to right here to where I'm at. I got Ms. Barbara Jean to move. All of us right here down this aisle.

SP: Ms. BJ is here?

MH: Ms. Barbara Jean live right next door, Ms. Joanne live right there in the single building, Ms. Ethel, most of them live right here. I cook And I go take Ms. Barbara Jean food. I miss my seniors, I used to spoil them. They eat ham and chitlins and pig feet. I miss my seniors, cooking for them.

SP: And what don't you miss?

MH: I don't miss the shootings. And the killings. I am not afraid of death anymore. I am one of the parents that goes outside and the police let me come over the line and identify the kids. And I'm the one that have to go tell the parents "Your child is out there dead." And I have buried 16 kids in Barry Farm, I'm with three churches. I'm with Matthews, Campbell, and Temple of Praise because I have to go ask the Bishops could they bury these families because they don't have a church home.

SP: Have you been displaced before?

MH: No.

SP: That was a first time? How about with the rest of your family?

MH: No

SP: That isn't anything anybody else has experienced?

MH: My family is well educated, doctors lawyers, they didn't believe in having kids. Their jobs came before us. As long as we were taken care of, looked pretty, dressed up, you had to put up an image.

[35:00]

SP: Let me go backwards, not going in chronological order, when did you first hear about Barry Farms was going to be displaced?

MH: When I moved to Barry Farm the lady said "Don't get comfortable because they're about to close down Barry Farm." One year went past, 10, 25, went by and nothing happened. One day I comes outside, all these green signs all over the property. So, I take down one sign, take it to, take it to my neighbor and said "Can you read this, what is this?" They're saying "There's a hearing." I said, "A hearing? For what?" "They bout to relocate, you got to go to a zoning hearing, they bout to take Barry Farm" That's when I was living on Stevens Road. We formed, they did everything they could do, I tell you, Lord have mercy. They signed your name, they tell you to sign in, when you sign in they use that to say we agree to what they sayin and they sold out the resident council and the resident council sold us out for housing authority. And we went down there and we fought the zoning because they tried to take the 6 bedrooms trying to bring them back to the master plan. Had the people come that wasn't even residents. And then the residents kept on saying I wanna move and I wanna voucher and I wanna get out of here. Now they have problems with the vouchers and are living in horrible conditions worser than Barry Farm. All our seniors dying. It's like a funeral every week, every month there's a funeral. Somebody died. Now I go to Barry Farm, I go there to check the mailbox though I know there's no mail coming here. It's like we left all our kids. They all out on Sumner Road. And 5 of them got shot last month. It's like we left and I told Dominique

SP: Who's Dominique?

MH: Dominique is one of the executives of One DC? The one that stutter? I said "Dominique we have to go to Barry Farm and get these kids. These kids, what are your major problem?" "I ain't got an ID. I need a birth certificate, I ain't know where nothin at. I'm just on the street selling drugs, I'm just homeless, I'm just stayin out here." I said "I have to go, get these kids off the street." There has to be a way to try and work something out with Homeland Security to get these kids birth certificates, social security cards and IDs and try to get them back in school get them training, but they're so used to being at Barry Farm they don't know no other way out.

SP: So, you're saying these are kids

MH: Them our kids, we moved, all the parents, our kids still hang out there. Like my kids didn't do Barry Farm. My kids stayed and came and visit.

SP: What kind of, in terms of yourself, that was your only experience being displaced? What are your hopes for the future for yourself and the former residents?

MH: I don't want to go back there. And they need to take the dirt and put it in the landfill. Put in some new dirt, pray for it and turn over. I don't, you cannot bring the same thing that left and bring it back there, cause it's going to go down again. Like, what you call that place?

Highland. They put all the Barry Farm people up in there. Told them they couldn't grill, told them they couldn't sit on their front, and they shot at the daggan guards and now they ain't got no guards up there. Its off the chain. Its off the chain. I'm glad I'm where I'm at. I don't have to worry about nobody dying. Or picking up nobody children or hearing gun shots and ambulance all night. I don't miss that. I had to bring these babies up and this is not what they gonna see. They're not going to see this.

SP: Let me end on your children, how are they doing now? They're all in their 30s you gave me their ages.

MH: Right, my son just graduated from, what you call it, the 100 buy homes where you sell homes.

[40:00]

SP: Real Estate?

MH: Right, he just got his real estate license. And my daughter, she's been working on NIH ever since he got out of school. And my other daughter she is a concierge at a big nice firm out there in VA, so they're all going good. And I got 5 grandkids. They ain't children of the corn. Them kids is terrible. My grandkids want "Grandma grandma" I said "nope, everyone is gonna be treated the same." But that little 5-year-old, I got so many kids, cause they all call me grandma. All the kids at camp, my sister that came in, all them kids call me grandma too. They live in Atlanta, we family, I'm going to take care of them kids. They call me grandma and my foster kids, I got they kids. Its 11 kids all together. Its 11 boys. And all their kids come and they're all invited and we have Soul Food Sunday every Sunday. This Sunday we're going far out. I said "gotta bring anything?" and I said "Yeah bring something cause I ain't good at salads" I said "what you want me to bring? "Tuna Fish salad and some deviled eggs" I said "OK"

SP: How's your husband feel about all them kids and the activity.

MH: My husband said he gonna leave me 50 times. "I'm gonna leave you and them bad kids. You can have this" but my husband died right beside me. I said "baby get on your side of the bed what you doing here?" And um he was gone, he had died. He was gone he got on dialysis. Even before he got on dialysis he said he'd be glad when it was over and I said "don't you leave me with these fools" And that day he said "I'm tired" two days before we went to Atlanta and

we flew, he flew for the first time. cause we would drive everywhere, cause he wouldn't fly, he would go with me but we would drive. I made him get on a plane. He was getting sick down there and they wouldn't dilate him. So, I said "look I gotta catch the bus, anything let me get my husband from down here." That was in December, January he died. And he died so peacefully but they brought him back, but they said his brain was dead. They told me I had to pull the plug. But my husband knew I wasn't gonna do that cause I'm thinking he gonna come through this time again he gonna come through it. They said you gotta make a decision, my sister said bring your preacher in, I gotta go to Las Vegas and gotta hold up the funeral, the brother said No, No. My husband died on a Monday and we buried him Thursday. He had a big funeral, it was so big we had the chateaux, we had his reception in the chateaux because it was so big. My husband got a big family.

SP: He was a native Washingtonian too?

MH: He had a big family.

SP: Sorry for your loss.

[45:00]

MH: You know the kids keeping me sane. You know last year, it has been a year. The first 6 months were suicidal. The same day my husband died I was getting ready to die that same day. I took my medicine and it overpowering me. And I told my kids something ain't right. I went to the door and said "I see light I see light, I see white, I see white" and I fell. And they said "ma, ma what you doing down there? Get up? Why you go to that door." And I went to the hospital. I didn't want to go to GW my husband just died here. They said pull the plug. My husband start coming down by himself. He did it on his own. His blood pressure start dropping because I couldn't make that decision. I told his brother you do it, I'm not doing it. Finally, the preacher came and my husband start coming down. They said sign his favorite song. I said he like "Santa baby" and I said "Baby you say I cannot sing but I sing to you now." And the babies keep saying "grandma, granddaddy still sleeping too long, he sleeping too long," and they said "where granddaddy?", when the kids came up they say granddaddy, they say "where granddaddy at?" I say "he still at the hospital" "we going to see him?" I say "we can't go see him." But I cremate him. So, every holiday, every party we party with him and put the ashes right there and party with him.

SP: Is there anything you want to share that I haven't asked that you want to make sure is in the record about you, your life and your family?

MH: I'm the backbone of my family and I keep my family and I'm very oriented and I'm very protective of them. And I'm the only one in the family that can go to everybody house in the family. I want Barry Farm to come back. And I want the streets to stay named after abolitionists. And I want the history to stay there. And I want our kids to come back and start owning something and doing something. My kids do, because that's what we do. But those kids that's lost I hope they find their way. I hope that somebody can help them. And I'm going to try my best to go over there and get everybody. To put these boys on they feet cause they got kids

and all these kids are fatherless. It's just sad. It's just heartbreaking. And it's all over. It's not just Barry Farm. It's all over. But these kids actually lost because they can't find their way out. It seem like they don't know, they can't go nowhere because if you're from Barry Farm you're targeted. Can't nobody come in to Barry Farm because they targeted. And they doing that construction, asbestos, and they just there. They even still have that bus. The rec look a mess. They build that \$5 million rec and our kids can't even go in there. The camp is for all the kids in Maryland. You go in there ain't no one Barry Farm kid in there.

SP: At the rec?

MH: The swimming pool, they let the white people in there. 6 o-clock the kids can't go in there. But they said they can't build in place because, but they build that rec. Talk about the dust. They made up, they came for everything they could. But we won that lawsuit. We foughth them. We went down there. It felt like the native people, our ancestors were with us. And that lawyer he good. Ari Theresa is good. We have a team of lawyers. But that one he was good with that zoning. I need him. And the civil right lawyer we got them we called everyone they love me.

SP: And Empower DC was a part of that.

MH: They loved us, Schuyler. Neglected her family for us. She kept saying "don't move don't move stay in place fight fight" and I said "girl I ain't fighting these rats no more" but yeah.