

Interview from the preparation of

Fell's Point Out of Time



Frederick Douglass IV Interview, February 12, 2004

Kraig Greff, Interviewer. Jacquie Greff, camera.

[Fred]

My name is Frederick Douglass the fourth. I'm the great, great grandson of Frederick Douglass who lived and worked in Fells Points and gained his ability to read as well as developed intellectually here.

[Jacquie]

And, I guess, how's that shaped you as a person?

[Fred]

Well, first of all, having the name over the years has caused people to ask me questions about it, but, I find that what it does is give me an opportunity to talk to young people and tell them about some of the values that I think that my great, great grandfather had, particularly with regard to education. One of his most favorite quotations that I have is once you learn to read you will be forever free, and that is something that I pass on to young people. There are many other quotations that people have heard, but I think that's something that has great value to today's young people. [Cut for audio problem, 01:00:48:04]

[Jacquie]

And I guess Frederick Douglass learned some of this sense that he had about reading, he picked up in Fells Point?

[Fred]

Well, when he lived with the Auld family, Sophia Auld taught him some of the rudiments of reading and ultimately she was punished for that. You see, it was illegal to teach slaves to read, but he was a bright young man and he asked her a number of questions so she just decided that she would teach him and one day when Hugh came home she told him "Fred, I want you to go get your Bible and show Hugh what you've read and he began reading and Hugh snatched the Bible from him and threw it on the ground and told her, basically you can't teach a nigger to read. If you do you'll reveal to him that there's a world outside of slavery and he'll have dreams that he can't fulfill, and also he will have less use to himself he'll start dreaming about running away. He'll become less valuable. He'll become a recalcitrant, difficult slave. So he was very much opposed to it. And it's my understanding they had a law in Maryland at one time that you beat your wife for disobeying as long as you used a stick that was of no greater circumference than your thumb. Marriage counselors of that day advised that you do it often if you wanted to have a good wife.

[Jacquie]

And probably more so with slaves....

[Fred]

Well, yes, I mean, if you were a slave obviously you had to obey, but the Fells Point area has a considerable history in slavery. Austin Woolfolk of course, was one of the most notorious slavers. My great, great grand father talked about hearing the slaves in the middle of the night and seeing them, cause they carried on many of their activities in darkness. Maryland being a Mason-Dixon state was somewhat schizophrenic about the whole issue of slavery. So, he learned about slavery here, but also he learned to read and write and also much of his intellectual development took place here. He bought a copy of a book called "The Columbian Orator" and he would stand down in the harbor many nights at three or four o'clock in the morning reading Aristotle and Sophocles and Aristophanes and many others, so he was practicing his diction, but at the same time he was absorbing a great number of ideas which later affected him.

[01:02:54:28]

[Jacquie]

Okay, let's step back. How did Frederick Douglass come to be in Fell's Point?

[Fred]

Well, he was born and raised on the Eastern Shore. He was born along the Tuckahoe River and he was owned, he was affiliated with the Wye Plantation, so there was a relationship between the owners of the plantation and the Auld family. So when Hugh Auld needed a house servant, they sent him, they put him on a boat, sent him up the Chesapeake River, and he came to Fell's Point as a house servant. And, given the fact that he was a slave, he had to do the work that would have been done by the young men who lived in the house. And that's again how he developed a relationship with Sophia, because he was very helpful to her. That's really ... his early years here were in slavery. He left, went back to the Eastern Shore, and he came back later when he was more grown and older and stronger. And at that point in time, Hugh didn't really need a house servant, he needed someone who could generate some income. So later in his life he was used by Hugh as a slave who was leased in essence. He was rented out. In the process he met my great, great grandmother Anna Murray who was a free woman and who was very influential and encouraged him to run away from slavery.

[Cut, 01:04:14:19]

[Jacquie]

I remember, I read some stories about Frederick Douglass, I remember one, I guess he would do things for some of the white kids on the street in return for them teaching him how to read.

[Fred]

Well, actually, he says many times that he had to steal his education, and so what would happen is many times, he never spent a day of his life in a classroom. But when the white boys would come home from school he would ask them questions like "Well, I bet you can't tell me what comes after P" and they would mock him and make fun of him and call him ignorant and stupid and so on and so

forth. And they'd say "Anybody knows, anybody who went to school would know that Q comes after P." And so he would say "Well, then tell me, since you know so much then, what comes after W? And again they would mock him they'd say "Everybody who goes to school knows that X comes after W, don't you know that you idiot, you dummy?" He would not say anything, but he would think, "Well, I do now." And so that's what he would have to do, he'd have to trick people into giving him his education.

[Jacquie]

Cause they couldn't have told him that without him ...

[Fred]

Well they wouldn't have told him that. They were not interested in his education so that's why he had to involve ... he had to think up situations to challenge people and extract the kind of information he wanted out of them because, he could just not simply go to them and say "I want you to teach me this". They simply wouldn't have done that because they had picked up the prejudices and views of the day, so, no, that's not something they would have done. But, if he challenged them as he did, then they would reveal information, and so he would piece this together. After a period of time he was able, if he finished his work early, he might earn a few pennies and nickels doing some jobs for somebody he'd meet, or he might find some coins. And when he was able to get enough money together, he went and purchased a copy of the "Columbian Orator". And that was really the beginning of his formal education. Self taught! Self-made man! But he was determined.

[01:06:07:03]

[Jacquie]

So he was back in Fells Point at several different points in his life.

[Fred]

Well, primarily around 1825 he was here for a period of time, then he came back. I'd say the two important periods is when he first came here because that's really when he started learning to read and write. And then on his return when he developed his formal education, as formal as it ever got, you know, in terms of self teaching, development of his ideas, taught other slaves about reading and writing, met my great, great grandmother Anna Murray, became Anna Murray Douglass ultimately, and then he escaped from here. I know, you go through documentaries, but one of the things that Fell's Point is known for is the date September 3, 1838, because that was the transitional period, it's that like when he left here. And so many people know about his escape, and I think of a number of things that people know about Fell's Point, but one is that my great, great grandfather lived here and escaped from here.

[Jacquie]

Now was this an underground railroad site? Was there a lot of people able to free ...

[Fred]

Well, Baltimore was sort of in the middle, so many people passed through here. And yes, there were people here involved in the underground railroad in Fell's Point and outside of Fell's Point. But they

were trying to get north to the New England states. For example, my great, great grandfather ultimately settled in Rochester where he formed the Northstar newspaper, but the offices of the Northstar was right on the edge of the Genesee River, so many people came and stayed for a period of time and go out the back door, get on a boat and go across the Genesee River into Canada for freedom. So yes, Baltimore Maryland is an important stop along the way in the Underground Railroad.

[01:07:56:00]

[Jacquie]

And, I guess, Baltimore was pretty much divided when it came to the Civil War, too.

[Fred]

Well, it was schizophrenic in many ways. In many ways it still is schizophrenic. But there was much of the North and much of the South, so people were very much divided on the issue of slavery as well as just the whole concept of the Civil War. So you had people on both sides and sometimes it's split down family lines.

[Jacquie]

I think it was Steve Bunker that told us that the working people like the people around Fell's Point were very pro-North and then more of the landed gentry had a lot of ties to Virginia and they were more for the South, so there tended to be a big split right down the middle of Baltimore.

[Fred]

Yeah, there was a big split. But one of the things I would say, in Fell's Point you had a greater sense of equality because you had working people and so you had blacks working along side of whites while the prejudices continued to exist and were very strong. They were forced to know each other because they were in the same area because they had to work together. They had different relationships but I think this is one of the areas where it was more of a melting pot and where people really got to know each other despite their race, creed, or color.

[Jacquie]

But now I guess after the Civil War there were a lot of economic problems here and that's when, I think it was some of the white ship builders would try to cut out the blacks. Wasn't it, was that Isaac Myers, was that how he started his company?

[Fred]

Well, he started his company because of the need for economic development. Understand there was a lot of upheaval and growth in the harbor area so he had people like Isaac Myers who say what was going on and they wanted an opportunity to profit, but they also ... just as my great, great grandfather returned to the Fall's Point area later in his life to build houses because he was concerned about providing houses for former slaves and free blacks as well, you had people like Isaac Myers who were very concerned about economic development. So he provided jobs, but, I mean, he provided jobs across the board for blacks and whites. He became a very large employer.

But his thrust, and the thrust of the others who were founders in the company was to provide economic opportunities for blacks.

[01:10:14:10]

[Jacquie]

I don't know how much you go into seamen thing, but I guess with the seamen they were all races and nationalities.

[Fred]

Well, I think that was one of the greatest influences on Fell's Point and Baltimore itself was that you had an area where people came in from all over the world, brought in different ideas and different values, so it was a very kinetic kind of environment in Fell's Point. You had people come in and bring different kinds of food, you know, they would have conversations about what it was like in this country and what it was like, so it was an exciting place to be.

[Cut. 01:10:49:04]

[Jacquie]

Is it your understanding that the housing ... when people lived, did they tend to cluster in their own ethnic little block or whatever, or was housing fairly mixed?

[Fred]

I think people clustered along ethnic groups, common interests, language, ethnic groups. Yeah, I would say it was, not necessarily by way of segregation, but I think people do have a tendency to congregate in that way.

[Jacquie]

Tell me about the trail of tears. I heard about it by reading an article when they were talking about the slaves, I guess, having been taken, it sounding like someplace in the Inner Harbor, and then put on ships in Fell's Point, and one of the ships they had rebelled and basically took over the ship. Give me some more history on that.

[Fred]

You know, Austin Woolfolk was one of the most notorious slavers in the area. And in the area where you have the Inner Harbor he had his slave pens. So, over a period of time he sold numerous slaves, but at one point of time they felt the need to revolt. Nobody wants to be a slave. It's not a chosen profession, and so when you have situations, people are going to look for an opportunity to escape. One time, somebody raised the question "Who was the most imprisoned by slavery, the slave owners or the slaves?" Well, the slave owners had to have guards, they had to have all kinds of machinations in order to preserve the institutions of slavery. And that was the case with Austin Woolfolk. You know, the slaves would be marched through the Fell's Point area and my great, great grand father mentioned, you know, he would hear the chains dragging along the cobblestone streets. And one time he mentioned just seeing a slave woman being beaten and she was told to get up. She was walking down the street and he was looking out the window, it was about midnight and he saw her fall, the child she was carrying fell to the ground and the slave driver told her to get

up. She told him she was tired and she could not, and she was warned and she was warned again and she just couldn't get up, she was just too tired so he started beating her with three lashes. He recalls just seeing her reaching behind her back and just hold her hand up and seeing the blood drip, as he said like crimson rain against the full moon. So, it was a very difficult and very painful kind of experience. Sometimes, as I mentioned earlier, Baltimore was schizophrenic about slavery, so sometimes they would even hide the slaves in buckboards and cover them over with quilts so that they wouldn't offend the more gentle citizens of the town. But as far as the trail of tears is concerned, it was a path that the slaves followed as they proceeded to the slave markets where they would be roped. Being sold was a very indelicate kind of situation, because people came up and examined you as they would a horse. They would put their hands into your mouth or your private parts or whatever in order to examine their potential investment. So Woolfolk had a particular revolution and they did take over the ship. And there were other revolutions at the time. Slaves were always looking for an opportunity to get free.

[01:14:04:06]

[Jacquie]

How did life change then after the Civil War? Because there wasn't, as I understand it, it wasn't like a real simple quick transition to freedom and equality. What was Baltimore going through after the Civil War?

[Fred]

Well, I think Baltimore went through what many other cities went through, I mean, in terms of your slave population, you know. During the Civil War and previously a lot of people don't understand there was an emerging black intelligentsia, an emerging black middle class, but the overwhelming majority of blacks were living in poverty while trying to find a way to survive. So when they emerged from the plantation as freed slaves, they had little more than what they had on their back. They didn't know how they were going to survive. If you read the Slave Narratives particularly those interviews that were done with the last slaves, they talked about standing at the edge of the plantation. And the slave owners who were now bereft of their property were saying "Well, I'll be in essence a good employer. If you stay, I'll feed you, I'll cloth you, I'll pay you. I'll give you all these things." And they would look back and over and over again they said that they were tempted because they didn't know how they feed or clothe their children, how they were going to earn money, but anything was better than slavery, so they left. And that was really a fantastic leap in faith. And my great, great grandfather spent a lot of time, you know, he understood that once the emancipation proclamation was issued, I mean, he thought about this, that something had to happen. So he spent a lot of his time trying to find ways to provide education and opportunities for former slaves to enter to the main stream of the American economic society. So, yes, Baltimore went through a lot of changes as this population moved forward, gradually evolving. But in essence they became almost like new immigrants, I mean, they had come out of slavery so they were penniless and just as many other, in quotes, new immigrants do coming into the country, they find a way to survive. So that was a kind of bizarre transformation. They were already here, but really after the Civil War ended, they became the new immigrants in many ways and had to find way... And because of the prejudice, because also the influx of others from Europe who wanted jobs that were at one time the sole providence of slaves... For example, Frederick Douglass, caulker, that was once the providence of slaves. But you had people coming in fleeing the potato famine and other

problems in Europe, they wanted any jobs. So the whole atmosphere of competing for jobs became very intense. You had the former slaves who wanted any job, you had other new immigrants who wanted any job, so it was an area of conflict. And over a period of time I would say that remarkable strides were made by people like Isaac Myers who saw ways to come up with economic development and lift up the status of former slaves.

[01:17:09:22]

[Jacquie]

I think that you really can't get a picture of true Fell's Point without having an understanding of greater Baltimore. Could you tell me how Baltimore has evolved from a racial standpoint in your view from back in those days 'till today?

[Fred]

Well, Baltimore had various neighborhoods which, you know, there was segregation obviously in Baltimore, and you've had different neighborhoods. Ashburton is a well-to-do neighborhood, formerly a white neighborhood which transformed into a black community, yeah, Edmondson Village... So, you've had a movement from one community to others, but there still has been a degree of segregation. There still exists a degree of segregation just by choice and by economics. You find that different ethnic groups are separated. But I would say there's been, accompanying this pattern, an upward mobility. Now, some have chosen to move outside the city, some have chosen to move into ... in close middle class neighborhoods. But Baltimore over the years has had its patterns of segregation in terms of the school system, in terms of housing, in terms of economics, and overall, I'd say that a lot of gains have been made. There's been a lot of hard work. You've had a lot of people who've dedicated themselves to making these changes. And so, I think the black population has prospered along with the white population in the city, but there's still a lot of work that's left to be done.

[Jacquie]

Yeah, especially around education.

[Fred]

Particularly around education. Education is a major issue, and you find that Baltimore, like many other cities, is returning to the pattern of segregated schools. Now, some of this segregation exists just because of the movement of people. The outflux of people into the suburbs, the outflux of people from particular neighborhoods, it just leaves the population, so when the schools draw upon the nearby population, we see a return to the segregated patterns and that's one issue. We also have the issue of the under-funding of schools and just the need to improve the aging infrastructure. In many ways, Baltimore needs to be rebuilt. You're rebuilding the downtown area, you're rebuilding the Inner Harbor, but there's a need to go back and rebuild your educational infrastructure, too.

[Jacquie]

Do you see money coming from, I mean, one of the things that people thought about developers around places like Fell's Point is, Baltimore needs to build its tax base, Baltimore needs to so it can

have money for things like that, do you see the money going into the general good to some extent, or do you see it kind of staying in ...

[Fred]

I think, over the years that I've been here, there's been a movement of funds down towards the harbor area. Sometimes funds that was supposed to be used in the outer area of the city for development. But I think that some of our city fathers, some of our elected officials made a gamble that if you improved the harbor area, then the whole city would benefit. If the harbor has benefited, I think there is a need to spread out some of the economic development money into neighborhoods so you bring up the neighborhoods, and I think this will stem some of the tide of people moving out to the suburbs. Now, true, you have people moving into the Fell's Point area, into the Inner Harbor area, but you still have many neighborhoods where people are moving out and abandoning their houses. Right now, Baltimore has a phenomenal abandoned housing problem, and if we're going to continue the progress of the city, there has to be a greater focus on turning around the housing stock and getting more people living here and making the neighborhoods outside the Inner Harbor area more attractive.

[01:21:06:01]

[Jacquie]

One of the things that people talk about a lot is the fact that Baltimore used to be very industrial, it was very blue-collar, lots of jobs, lots of union, and a lot of those jobs have disappeared. Do you see this development around the harbor and some of the improvements actually providing jobs that pay people livable wages, that ...

[Fred]

Well, I think the greatest growth industry in the state of Maryland would be under the rubric hospitality, hospitality management. So you have tourism, you have the restaurant trade, you have hotel... I think that's one of your areas where your jobs are developing most. I don't know if we'll really ever get back to that heavy manufacturing kind of support, economic support, but I think we have to realize that the whole thrust of Baltimore's changing. We have two stadiums, we have the harbor area, so we have to look at how do you capitalize on what's really happening here, the reasons why people are coming here, and make that a source of employment. Again, hospitality management is really a boom area in the state of Maryland.

[Jacquie]

It also tends to be fairly low paid, doesn't it?

[Fred]

Well, it's low paying... But, you know, hospitality is a much broader industry than people understand. I mean, there are lots of options. It's not being a waiter and it's not just being a chef, you know, chefs make good money, but there's the management of the hotels, there's the economics that comes off of those businesses that thrive on the tourist trade, there's a whole end of going into this area at entry level, and then learning how to operate a bread and breakfast kind of facility. So the jobs are initially low paying, but I think we have to just understand that, but also...

See, right now you can get a degree in many schools in Baltimore and the Baltimore area in hospitality management. So it's a much broader field than a lot of people understand.

[01:22:58:22]

[Jacquie]

Changing the topic. Could you tell me a little bit more about the houses that your great, great grand father built and why he did it, and, can you trace that area through time at all for me?

[Fred]

Well, he built the houses on Dallas Street. He lived and worked in that area in Fell's Point and there was a church there called Strawberry Methodist Church that he attended periodically, so he came back and, number one, he was very concerned about the status of the area because he saw it falling down. So he built the houses as an effort to upgrade an area that he regarded, you know, that he had very much in his heart and loved. Also because he was concerned about the need to provide adequate housing for former slaves and those who were originally freed blacks, so those were his reasons. And he built those around 1890, when he built them and so they were rented out. But that was his improvement, I would say he was a visionary for approaching the whole concept of fair housing and accessible housing at that point in time and also the idea of just building houses to upgrade a neighborhood. So that showed his interest in economic development.

[Jacquie]

And how has that little area of Fell's Point, how has that changed through time, from what you know?

[Fred]

Well, the original houses were covered with Formstone that he built, and interestingly, when one of the people who purchased the house pulled off the Formstone, they discovered that there was a marble plaque that said Douglass Place underneath. So you see different things, you see different housing styles, but in that general area the housing stock has stayed pretty much the same as the original housing. It's right on top of a heavy industrial area and so you also have the impact with traffic in economic development area. A lot of the houses nearby have been torn down and there is conversation about putting in more high-rises and other kinds of housing. So I don't know what pressures that will bring on those houses because they are fairly small and perhaps even some people might look at it as primary targets for economic development. So there's a historic designation and so forth for that area, but I just see it as, in a sense, becoming more and more isolated and shut off from Fell's Point, you know, because of the industrial growth that continues to go on in that area and the needs of industry makes it less accessible to tourists who come here. You know, there's signage that's been put up, I was involved in a project to put signage in some of the historic locations, and you're guided there, but to get you from Broadway over to Dallas Street is kind of a difficult task, unless someone actually leads you along that path. So, I would like to see not only the history of my great, great grandfather, but more the history of Fell's Point just tied together so that people can come and tour it and come away with a greater understanding of all the different developments that took place as this evolved from a seaport area and now it's becoming residential but then there's more development of marinas and so forth, so there's a lot of development, it's incredible all the development that's going on in this area right now.

[01:26:24:10]

[Jacquie]

You were telling me a little bit before about Baltimore being a case study for how outdoor events can transform a city and you were telling about the early days of the Fell's Point Festival. Can you repeat that for me?

[Fred]

Well, certainly. I remember coming to Fell's Point. I always came here because of my great, great grandfathers affiliation with the area and this was before it was a destination, a tourist destination, but Fell's Point was very much a seaport. The sailors came in and they frequented the bars, which were not, shall we say, as pristine as they are now. I remember one place in particular called Cheeos which was on Baltimore Street. It was one of the early discos and one night I went in and they had some Greek sailors who had come in and they changed over from the disco music, and I don't remember what songs were particularly popular at that time, and they started playing Greek music and the sailors got up and they started dancing and smashing the glasses and so forth. It was a beautiful cultural, it was fascinating to see, and when they finished a young man came out and swept up the glass and mopped the floor and then they went back to the disco music. So, it's an area where there's been a lot of exchange of ideas and cultures and so forth, but I think that the festivals helped draw people down to this area.

It was not really a tourist destination. So at first the festivals were really just loud and wooly and after a period of time, they started becoming more gentile and the area evolved and you had more tourists and I think that also brought people down. They saw the unique housing stock and became involved in it, and also saw that there was a great deal of preservation spirit. You know, they stemmed off the highway that was supposed to come through here, so I think people found that it attractive and I think overall if you look around the Inner Harbor itself where the buildings stand now, that's where the city fair started, and I think that's one of the things that started bringing people back downtown, as well as outdoor jazz concerts after work which draw a few people downtown, and lunchtime concerts. I think this whole idea of outdoor events – Artscape, which has become one of the largest festivals of its kind is an outdoor activity that draws people into the cultural area. Interestingly, one of the things that seems to make these kinds of festivals work is oldies music, black music of the 60's and 70's, or the music of the 70's. When they try and do these activities with rap and heavy metal, chaos breaks out.

[01:29:04:10]

[Jacquie]

I've had some people tell me that lived through the era when Fell's Point was transforming that, when the preservationists first came in, you had people from outside that were fixing up these houses and trying to save Fell's Point from the road, and there was apparently a lot of hard feelings among the people that lived there that, you know, had been there for some time. Were you ever aware of this?

[Fred]

Well, I think when you have people who lived in areas for a long period of time, they settle into, shall we say, a groove, and they would like to see things stay that way. And so when they see people coming in and doing things then they get upset, you know, cause they feel pressured "Well, do I have to do that" or somebody comes in and says "Well, we want to turn this into historic preservation area" and that's going to keep things the same way. And they say "maybe I feel like painting my house purple or whatever", so there's always going to be that kind of conflict when you go into a neighborhood where people have lived for 20 and 30 years. They just feel a sense of community and whatever you do changes that. But I think that changes overall have benefited this area. I've been involved in urban planning for a period of time by profession, so I've seen neighborhoods that have been torn down, and interestingly, you know, you have this whole concept of shopping centers, they say, well, come in and they tear down something and they put up something sparkling with all this chrome, then the next thing they say is "Well, you know we have to go back and we're going to put a facade on this building which looks like old Main Street". So they turn it around, so to me, in an area in which you have these mega stores that gobble up everything that kill Main Street. I like the idea of seeing an area like Fell's Point where you can preserve the original buildings and the streets and have some continuity and it does give you a sense of history and connection to the past. So I see a lot of pressure on Fell's Point. I hope that it can come up with a balance to preserve as much of the past as possible and still allow the economic development to go on the other things that are needed to keep the area populated.

[Jacquie]

As someone with a background in urban planning, what's your take on gentrification? Usually it's used as a nasty word. What is it to you and what are the issues?

[Fred]

Well, gentrification has its pluses and minuses. I think that, from my standpoint, what I would see, is a need for education particularly those who have lived in an area for a long time as how to make the transition as the neighborhood changes. You have people with a misconception about what's involved in living in a house. For example, I've met people who rent houses and have rented them so long that they think that they actually own the house. And they don't understand, or they just don't get it fixed in their mind, that somebody can come along and purchase that house and move them out. So, as areas change, I think there is a need to provide more education for people in terms of how do you become a home owner and how do you participate if the area is changing, what do you do about taxes, and how can you improve your property. I think, whenever you make improvements, whether it's bringing in a public building or an arena or whatever, it's going to cause those kinds of changes. You're going to have population shifts because what it does, it makes the property more expensive. It makes it more desirable, which was your goal. But then for some people it makes it unaffordable. So as we move into these kinds of changes, if we're going to keep Baltimore populated, then it has to be a quantum shift in how we approach housing and how we encourage people to become home owners. I mentioned before we have a tremendous problem with vacant houses. There's scads of vacant houses in Baltimore, but I'm convinced that if you have programs to provide more education to people who are renters, if they are living in an areas where it's gentrified and maybe they can move to another area, acquire a vacant house, and become

homeowners. It's an inevitable part of urban growth, that you're going to have these kind of changes and we just need to prepare people to deal with it.

[Jacquie]

So is it accurate to say that the biggest negative effect of gentrification are on the renter?

[Fred]

Well, I would say on the renter, but on some of the older home owners or home owners who find that they are all of a sudden in a higher tax bracket because, you know, on the good side, their house has gone up in value, but on the negative side, they're paying more taxes. They may not be in a position where they can hold on to the house in terms of the restrictions that may be imposed by the historic designation, so it can have an impact on them, too.

[01:33:49;25]

[Jacquie]

Now on the fringes of Fell's Point, there's some fairly poor neighborhoods still, and there's one example of a neighborhood that's kind of turning around and changing, and that's Spanish Town or Upper Fell's Point. Do you want to talk a little bit about how the changes that are happening in Fell's Point might affect these other neighborhoods?

[Fred]

Well, I think, you know, it kind of works sometimes in concentric circles. You start out with a center and improvements kind of spread out in rings, OK, and each time that ring spreads out you're going to have a change in the population, so on the fringes of Fell's Point you have an influx of the new immigrants. I know Fell's Point and Canton have always been areas where new immigrants have migrated partly because there were jobs available in the harbor and so forth, so I think you still have many new immigrants coming in particularly of Spanish origins and many of them are living on the fringe areas where the housing is cheaper. Now they may get pushed further out, you know, as these developments take place. And some, some will assimilate into the population. They'll make more money and they'll be able to afford... By the other token, you're going to have some areas in Baltimore which are going to start to go down and again we have to find ways to save all those houses. It hurts me, I mean, I think Baltimore has some of the most beautiful housing stock in American, so one of the things that really bothers me is what I call the missing tooth approach where they go in and tear down a house in the middle of a block and just destroy the architectural integrity of that whole area. So, Baltimore has gone through a lot of change. You know, you have people moving back into this city at the same time you have people moving out. I don't know that the population numbers are going up. It's just that you have certain areas which are going up. And I know that there's some developments which are going to take care of some of these vacant houses, but at the same time you have to look away from the harbor and the downtown area and put some investment in neighborhoods because you have to hold on to those people who populate those houses and hold onto your tax base.

[01:35:59;16]

[Jacquie]

You have any good stories about any time period, it's kind of like open range, something that might have happened related to Fell's Point that might be of interest.

[Fred]

Well, I think that just going back to this whole transformation of Fell's Point by the festivals, I think that that had a tremendous impact. You started out with festivals that had 2 or 3 thousand people and now it's hundred thousand range. I think that that's had a tremendous overall impact, but I think that the most attractive thing to me about Fell's Point is just the diversity, that you can come here and you can find different types of restaurants, you can find a high-brow store, you can find a low-brow store, you can find some very eccentric kinds of merchandise. In terms of stories, I just think every day in Fell's Point is a story. I mean, the story is walking around and looking at the people and just hearing all the different things they have to say about where they came from, where they started, and where they're going.

[Cut. Brief end of tape discussion. 01:37:07;04]

[Jacquie]

Is there any thing, any words of wisdom, words of warning, anything that you as, maybe as an African-American person, seeing this very gentrified, mostly white community here, do you have anything you'd like to leave with me?

[Fred]

I think that one thing that has to be understood by everybody is, what happens in the black community is an indicator of what's going to happen in the white community. So, if it's a musical trend, if it's a crime, if it's education, you know, don't think that you can just push people off into a corner and isolate yourself from what you see as their problems. Whatever, good or bad, is going to become something that's going to have an impact on you. So I think that we need to celebrate the diversity of Baltimore, appreciate and respect each other, but we all need to work together to make it a better city where everybody can live together. Otherwise, it could implode.

[Jacquie]

What should we be doing differently? Do you have some specifics things?

[Fred]

Well, my wife and I do reenactments, but more so, we hold what we call diversity dialogs. And in those dialogs we encourage people to talk about their life and their cultures and the things that make them different in hopes that they can have a better understanding. The bottom line is we're trying to get people to express themselves so we're not strange, and I think that we just have to these kinds of dialogs about all the things that are part of our past, whether it is slavery or being indentured servants, we need to talk about religion, all these things so we can really understand and appreciate each other. That's what I see a city being, a place where people live and appreciate and respect each other.

[Jacquie]

Thank you.