

Joe Mongiatt's interview
with Barbara Maki

Joe Mongiatt interviewing Barbara Maki, we
are at my house on Feb. 21, 1997

Me: When and where were you born?

Grandma: I was born in Ashpeming on December
12, 1933

Me: What were your parents names?

Grandma: Ellis Hecko and Agatha

Me: and what were the names of your
brothers and sisters

Grandma: My next youngest sister is Elizabeth
and the youngest one was Susan.

Me: Were you married?

Grandma: yes

Me: When and where?

Grandma: I was married in Ashpeming on
September 20, 1951

Me: What was your spouse's name

Grandma: Marvin Maki

Me: What did your parents do for a
living

Grandma: My mother was a housewife and
my father was a self-employed
carpenter.

Me: Where did you go to school

Grandma: I went to the Ashpeming school
system. I graduated from Ashpeming
High School in 1951

me: do you have any special memories of growing up in this area

Grandma: I remember the centennial parade but I don't remember anything extraordinary that happened. I led a very boring life. I went to many different schools in Ashpeming and we had to walk to school

me: what schools did you go to?

Grandma: Cleveland school, down the street from my house. I went to central school for third & fourth grade and went up to the Rich street school for sixth, & up to the Grammar school for seventh and eighth and then back to the High school. We always had to walk to school, we did not have any buses. I never really did that much. I used to visit my Grandma on weekends and I'd go up to Laurium in the summertime to visit my cousin, other than that we never had a car so we never went anywhere, I mean we never

Grandma: travelled anywhere

Me: what special features stand out in your mind about the city of d shpeming and negaunce from when you were younger, How have they changed?

Grandma: The stores are pretty much the same now, we used to have more stores on division. I don't know, I'm a poor subject to interview, I'll tell you. We had more churches in the downtown area. We used to have a church where the high school parking lot is, across from the hospital, and over where Joseph's old store, St. Vincent de Paul, there used to be a church there. I didn't do that much in high school, other than when I was a senior in high school I worked in the high school office in the afternoon, and I worked at the telephone company 20 hours a week, I went to school in the morning

me: What things did you and your friends do when you were teenagers for entertainment?

Grandma: we to the school dances, to the movies, we used to go downtown to a restaurant called Auntie's, across from the Mather dn, which is now called Sheila's

me: where did you "hang out"?

Grandma: Well, that's where we used to kinda' hang out there at Auntie's, it was the place to go, we used to go to the basketball and football games, and everybody went to auntie's after for coke & french fries & used to get a big plate of french fries for 1.00

me: Do you have any interesting or funny stories about shipping from when you were a kid?

Grandma: not really

me: How old were you when you got your 1st job & where was it?

Grandma: a babysat after school when I was a junior in high school, I would of been 16

Grandma: For Edmond G. Thomas, who was an attorney, he's still living, he was an attorney at that time, and then in my senior year, I went to school in the morning, and I worked in the school office in the afternoon, and 20 hours a week at the telephone company, as a (laughed) "number please" operator

me: what things did you do at your first job?

Grandma: Well babysitting, I had to read to their daughters, and I had to straighten the house, do the dishes, I used to usually do the dishes that were in the sink, or if the little girl had homework I'd help her with it, or I'd read to her. I was only like 2 hours or an hour and a half after school

me: what did you do in the school office?

Grandma: I sold school supplies, I did some typing, the different schools used to come down there to get their reading books, and I'd have to go down in the

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Grandma: basement, and get them, each class would come over and say they wanted 24 books, and I'd have to go down & get them, they had specific books that they read. I worked there from like 1 to 4

Me: Was that during school?

Grandma: I went from school from 9 to 12, this was in my senior year, & then from 1 to 4 I worked in the school office, and for babysitting I got $\frac{1}{2}$ credit, & for working afternoon I got 1 credit in a year's time, and then the working at the telephone company was just an extra job, where I worked some Saturdays & some Sundays in order to get 20 hours

me: what did you do at the phone company?

Grandma: I was a telephone operator and I had to sit at a switchboard where you'd take all things out and put it in there, & take the other one and put it to the number they were calling.

Grandma: You'd have to say "number please" if they wanted information you gave them it

me: wasn't it hard to know where every number was?

Grandma: No, because they had boards in front of you & you had to take that one & the one to the left and to the right. They had numbers like 100-500 on one half. We had like 13 boards, all the way down the 1st half was up to 500 & the other numbers were 600-1000 or whatever, so if you had 495 you'd have to put it in as special jack & then dial the other number if it was over 500 & that was upstairs from where the wilderness sports is now.

That used to be the telephone company

me: what stands out in your mind most about your 1st job?

Grandma: I don't know, I always babysat when I was growing up ->

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Grandma: so that was nothing really unusual

Me: How many years have you been
wopping so far in your lifetime?

Grandma: Well, I started when I was 16 and
worked until I got married & then
I moved away after my children
were in school, I worked as a
cashier in a grocery store. When
I was married to Marvin, he
was in the navy, & we moved back
here & I worked at the cleaners
in Espiming, it's behind what
used to be Stan's or Buster's
sport shop. There I took in
clothes & tagged them, put
numbers on them, before they were
cleaned. Then after they were cleaned
and pressed I sorted them as to the
ticket ~~for~~ for the person who
brought them in, because the ticket
had a number & we used to put the
number on a little piece of paper
& pin it to the garment before
it was cleaned

Me: Where have you been employed
the longest so far?

Grandma: Where I'm working now & I moved
away from here in 1956, & we moved
to Glenbury Maryland where Marvin
was ~~in~~ employed at Capitol Airlines
& when Capitol Airlines merged with
United we got transferred out to San Francisco

Grandma: In 1962, because John was born in '63 + I got divorced + came back here in '66, + that's when I went to the skill center '56-'62 we lived in Maryland, + I had 2 children then + my 3rd child was born in California. When I moved back here I went to the skill center to school to brush up on my secretarial skills, + that was the predecessor to the Jacobetti skill center, it was called the Area Training center at that time, + the classes were held in the old orphanage by the Jacobetti veterans center, + I only went for 26 weeks. When I 1st ~~was~~ moved back, I was at the Sizzard as a seamstress for 2 years before I went to the skill center, after I graduated from the skill center I worked attorney Neil Lynch in Niagara as a secretary, I was his only employee for about 5 years, I worked for a total of 8 1/2 years, and then I came to Clansy Hansen, and I've been there for 16 years.

me: what do you have to do at your job ~~to~~ now?

Grandma: I'm still a secretary, and I work for 2 of the attorneys, but I do some work for the others. I type, I file, I file pleadings from the courts, I make appointments, I answer the telephone.

me: What training did you get to be a secretary at the Skill Center?

Grandma: I had the secretarial course when I was in high school, and never used it. When I went to the Skill Center, I was more or less brushing up. I was taking typing, shorthand, office machines, English, take dictation, use the different office machines, like adding machines, a duplicating machine, we did have electric typewriter, we had 1 electric typewriter when I was in high school we use computer.

me: Does this job have any special rules or regulations you have to follow?

Grandma: The main one is confidentiality. I don't know what you call rules & regulations. You have to come to work at a certain time. We don't have any kind of a contract.

me: What was the most rewarding part of your job?

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Grandma: I enjoy my job, it's a lot of repetition each case is a little bit different.

Me: What's the hardest part of your job?

Grandma: Well, some days are harder than others, because you have to sit in front of a computer + type steady. It sometimes becomes stressful, there really isn't anything hard about it, it's tiring. ~~your~~ Your eyes get tired your back gets tired, your arms get tired.

Me: How has your job changed over the years?

Grandma: We started out with typewriters + had to use carbons to make copies, and then we had a Mag-card where you could put whatever you type on a magnetic card. You can put 1 page. So if you had a 10-page document you had 10 cards. Then, if you ever had to go back in and correct or add anything you would feed the card into the machine and it would put it into memory on the typewriter where you could correct + print it + put it back on the card. From them, we went to the card + laser printers, and we now have computers.

Grandma: Fax Machine, which they didn't have a while ago. When I worked for Neil Lynch all I did was carbon & typewriters

Me: What did you have to do to learn how to use the computer?

Grandma: I learned on my own, I went a couple of extra days & sat down at the computer, & typed out a document, & went over all of the functions with that document. That was my introduction to the computer

Me: What are your co-workers like?

Grandma: They're all very nice people, we get along well. We work well together. There isn't that many there. (laugh) There's only, other secretaries, a receptionist & a couple in the bookkeeping dept.

Me: Did you ever feel like changing jobs?

Grandma: I don't really want to change jobs, I'm getting ready to retire (laugh)

Me: What's your biggest responsibility?

Grandma: Just doing my job.

Me: What are your favorite leisure time activities

Grandma: I like to read, sew, crochet, watch old movies.

~~Me: ~~was~~~~ Were you a member of the union?

Grandma: When I worked at the Gozard
I was

Me: What

Grandma: ~~was~~ Garment workers one

Me: If you had the chance to do it all over again would you pick the same things?

Grandma: I think so

Me: Why?

Grandma: I worked at the Gozard because that was available at the time, I used to sew, I knew how to do that, I enjoy working at the attorneys'

~~Me: ~~was~~~~ Me: What was it like during the depression?

Grandma: My father worked for the coal companies. My grandpa used to grow potatoes & potato field

Grandma: near the gravel pit, there used to be a rock track & berries were raspberry & strawberry bushes where we used to pick for selling. My driving lesson was when I was a Junior, My father had a Ford Panel truck. He took me out on the racetrack & we drove around the race track 3 times stopping and starting & that was drivers lesson. I didn't get my license till I was married & living in Maryland. It was the 1st time I ever parallel parked. I remember when I was in high school it was flooded & all the stores basements were flooded from the rain.

Me: What was it like during the war?

Grandma: We had to buy our meat & sugar with stamps. You had to make your stamps stretch, we learned not to waste. They didn't have jeans, I had to wear a dress most of the time.