

Doris Link, Tape 1

DORIS LINK

Interviewed by Florence Pape

THE HOBOKEN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE: DORIS LINK

INTERVIEWER: FLORENCE PAPE

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LOCATION: LINK APARTMENT, HOBOKEN

SIDE ONE, TAPE 1

Ms. Pape: Would you state your name, please?

Mrs. Link: The name is Doris Link.

Ms. Pape: Where were you born?

Mrs. Link: In Hoboken. In Farr Sanitarium, which is no longer there. It was on 9<sup>th</sup> and Hudson, the far end of Elysian Park. There's a big white apartment building there now, but that at one time was a maternity hospital.

Ms. Pape: The entire hospital was devoted to maternity? You were born in what year?

Mrs. Link: 1929.

Ms. Pape: And your parents? Where did they come from?

Mrs. Link: I think... My father was born in Hoboken. My mother was born in New York. And they moved here when she was very young, very young. And she met my father. And we've been in Hoboken all our lives.

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Ms. Pape: Your mother came to Hoboken when she was a little girl. And your father was...

Mrs. Link: Born in Hoboken.

Ms. Pape: and raised in Hoboken.

Mrs. Link: Right

Ms. Pape: And what about your grandparents. Where were they born?

Mrs. Link: Let me think. That's going back. I think on my father's side they were half Irish, half German. On my mother's side they were mostly German. And they migrated here... immigrated.

Ms. Pape: What did your parents do for a living in Hoboken?

Mrs. Link: My mother when she was very young before she got married, was a telephone operator. That was the time when you sat at a board and had plugs to put in. That's how long ago it was. And my Dad always worked as a newspaperman; he was a reporter for the Jersey Observer.

Ms. Pape: And the jobs were in Hoboken?

Mrs. Link: In Hoboken.

Ms. Pape: They both had jobs in Hoboken. And where did you live as a little girl?

Mrs. Link: 9<sup>th</sup> and Bloomfield. And we lived there until my grandfather died. And then my grandmother was going to come to live with us. And we moved to 12th and Hudson, and that's where I lived until I got married. And then we lived on 12th and Park, moved from 12<sup>th</sup> and... Wait a minute. 11 and Park, and then we moved diagonally across the street to 12<sup>th</sup> and Park, and then we moved here on Hudson Street, 11<sup>th</sup> and Hudson.



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Ms. Pape: How long are you living here?

Mrs. Link: 42 years.

Ms. Pape: You're living 42 years in this apartment? How does this apartment differ from the apartment you grew up in?

Mrs. Link: Not very much. Of course they were smaller. But my mother's apartment when I was growing up, where we stayed where I was until I got married, that was a large apartment. That was 2 bedrooms, a dining room and everything like that, and that was a great apartment. At that time it was Hoboken Land and Improvement; now it's Applied Housing. So they've changed completely. They've renovated them all. I would not even know what was there now.

Ms. Pape: But you pass by...

Mrs. Link: Oh, I walk past my old houses all the time.

Ms. Pape: And you can see the changes that have been made?

Mrs. Link: Oh, yes.

Ms. Pape: What are the changes that you see? Have you been inside the apartments you grew up in?

Mrs. Link: Just the one where I grew up on 12<sup>th</sup> and Hudson. And that's entirely different. I mean, they've changed 5 room apartments to 3 rooms; there are elevators; completely different. From the outside they look the same, except they've removed certain stoops, but otherwise, inside, completely different. I wouldn't know them at all.

Ms. Pape: Do you have brothers and sisters?

Mrs. Link: No, I'm an only child.

Ms. Pape: And growing up in Hoboken, were there lots of kids in town when you grew up?

Mrs. Link: Oh definitely, definitely. My goodness. Compared to today, all you see are some little kids. You don't see a lot of boys playing basketball, or just playing ball in the streets. Of course, you had plenty of room then to play. But the kids were entirely different. We all stayed from the same neighborhood. All the kids that went to St Peter and Paul's, that's where I went to grammar school, we went together, when you came home, you went upstairs, you changed your clothes, you went downstairs, and you all played together, on the block. You stayed on the block. When your mother wanted you, all she had to do was put her head out of the window, and yell, "It's time to come up," and you, you came up.

Ms. Pape: How many kids were in your group when you were a kid... When you were a young kid, that was 12<sup>th</sup> & Hudson... how many kids did you play with?

Mrs. Link: I would say in my group, a dozen, at least, if not more. We weren't always all together, but a great majority of the time. And everybody's mothers knew the other mothers, so we all knew who we were with and everything... nobody ever had to worry.

Ms. Pape: And you were on the block.

Mrs. Link: Always on the block.

Ms. Pape: And what kind of games did you play?

Mrs. Link: Hop scotch. Jumping rope. Roller skating was a big thing in the spring; roller skating. When you were very little, we used to go down... now this is funny. We had 3 five-and-tens in Hoboken; we had Grants, Fisher-Beers and Woolworth's. On a warm summer morning, on vacation, we would go downtown, like 2 or 3 girls together, you always got a dime. And you bought either a coloring book or cut-outs, and, of course, we all had to have the same thing. And we either sat and colored, or

we cut out everything in the morning. And then in the afternoon after lunch, we went down and played paper dolls. Or blew bubbles, soap bubbles. Your mother gave you an old mayonnaise jar with soap water in it, and a old pipe, and you blew bubbles. You didn't have... you know these round things the kids have today, no! Your mother was very inventive then.

Ms. Pape: How was school? How was St. Peter and Paul?

Mrs. Link: That was the Dominican nuns. They were great. St Peter and Paul's was a great school. It went from first grade to eighth grade. No kindergarten. Just first grade to eighth grade. You just enjoyed it. Being a Catholic school, every first Friday we all went to mass early in the morning before school. And there was a little bakery around the corner on 5<sup>th</sup> and Washington, and after communion, we went around there and you could get - I'm pretty sure now, I'm not positive, it might have been more, 2 doughnuts for ten cents, 2 jelly doughnuts. Big jelly doughnuts, and, oh God they were good! And a big glass of milk. And then you went to school.

Ms. Pape: Through St Peter and Paul's, it was required that children go to mass on Friday.

Mrs. Link: No First Friday, first Friday of the month.

Ms. Pape: Only once a month?

Mrs. Link: No, you had to go every Sunday. I forget you don't know this. First Friday was something special. Every Sunday, you had to go to mass. In fact, you were questioned when you got to school Monday morning. "Who did not go to mass?" And unless you had a very good reason, you were in a lot of trouble if you didn't go.

Ms. Pape: What was the discipline like at St Peter and Paul? In what years... in 1929, you're talking about going to school, 1935 to 1943?

Mrs. Link: No, it was even shorter than that, because I went to high school from... I graduated from high school in '47, so go back 4 years.

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Ms. Pape: Right, that's 1944. You went from 1935 or 1936.... Did you go to kindergarten?

Mrs. Link: No, there was no kindergarten then.

Ms. Pape: There was no kindergarten? Was there kindergarten in the public schools?

Mrs. Link: I think some of them had kindergartens, yes. But see Catholic schools, just first grade; you went in first grade.

Ms. Pape: Were there nursery schools?

Mrs. Link: I don't remember any nursery schools. At that time, it was very unusual. You've got to remember, I'm going to be 76 years old. When I was little, my mother was a homemaker, and almost every mother I knew were homemakers. And they were home all day, so they had the kids to take care of, and that was it. You didn't have mothers going off to work, and dropping the kids off at day care. It was an entirely different world.

Ms. Pape: What kind of subjects did you study in school?

Mrs. Link: Do you know that old saying, reading, writing and arithmetic? Well, that's what it was. It was reading, writing, English, history, science, and they put a lot of emphasis, I remember in Catholic schools, on reading and handwriting. Every afternoon we had about a half hour of just certain types of writing. You know, circles, up and down, straight, and then capital letters, small letters, capital letters... and went all through the alphabet... They put a lot of emphasis on handwriting, you know, the Palmer Method. And we used to get... oh I forget what you call them... weekly readers –that's what it was – weekly readers. Every kid got one. And you spent the afternoon that you got that, everybody taking turns reading from it.

Ms. Pape: Did you wear a uniform?

Mrs. Link: Not in grammar school – no.

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Ms. Pape: Where did you go to high school?

Mrs. Link: St. Michael's in Union City. At that time it was both a grammar school and a high school. But that's where we went after St Peter and Paul's, and now I think it's strictly a girls school, but at that time it was co-ed.

Ms. Pape: And St Peter and Paul's was co-ed, too?

Mrs. Link: Oh yeah.

Ms. Pape: Your background is... you're Irish and German; you're mostly Irish?

Mrs. Link: I would say mostly German.

Ms. Pape: Mostly German... And what was the ethnic make-up of Hoboken growing up?

Mrs. Link: As I recall on the block that I lived, most of my friends were predominantly Irish, I think. And a lot of German. I don't remember a real mix. I don't remember getting into a lot of different ethnic things until I was in high school.

Ms. Pape: And how did it change in high school?

Mrs. Link: Well, it was from Union City, so naturally you had a whole different group of people. You had a lot of different nationalities that came – which was great. There was never any prejudice or anything.

Ms. Pape: So the people adjusted. There were no groups...

Mrs. Link: Oh, no, no.

Ms. Pape: I was reading how sometimes people visited each other's churches or parishes. Did you ever hear of that?

Mrs. Link: I don't remember doing that as a kid. I remember during Lent being a Catholic, we went to different churches because you would get

indulgences for each church that you went to... you got a plenary indulgence. Now you wouldn't know what that was, and I won't go into detail, but it was very important as a Catholic that you got these. But I remember when I was out of school and I became very friendly with a Jewish woman, and she had 2 children, and I think I had my second one when I was friendly with her. and she took me... we would take the children first to a synagogue and they would explain Hanukah and things like that. Now this was just between the two of us, my friend and I. And then I would explain to her children about Christmas and the Christmas tree, and the baby Jesus. Which was all, I thought, great.

Ms. Pape: What was her name?

Mrs. Link: Gloria. I don't remember her last name.

Ms. Pape: Is she still in Hoboken?

Mrs. Link: No, she moved away quite a while ago.

Ms. Pape: A lot of the kids you grew up with in Hoboken, where are they today? How many of the original group stayed in Hoboken?

Mrs. Link: One of my best friends lives in this building. She lives on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Pat Mitten. She was a nurse; she was in the health center here in Hoboken; she worked. Now she's retired and she lives here in Hoboken. The woman who owned this building, it was through her daughter, who was also a high school buddy, that I moved in here. But she's out of Hoboken now. In fact, another one of my... they live in like Rutherford, Lyndhurst, places like that. And quite a few of them, sad to say, are gone.

Ms. Pape: When you were in school, was that smack in the middle of Prohibition?

Mrs. Link: No, Prohibition was like the 20s.

Ms. Pape: But when you were going to school, Hoboken was in the Depression?

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Mrs. Link: Yeah, in the 30s.

Ms. Pape: How did that affect your family, your father's job.

Mrs. Link: Well, my dad was a reporter on, as I said, the Jersey Observer, which was absorbed by the Jersey Journal later on. So it really didn't affect him too much. And I'll tell you it was great for me. As an only child, he sometimes took me wherever he was going on assignment and everything. And one of his big things was Police Headquarters. He used to read what they called the blotter, and pick up stories to put in the paper. I would sit outside in this little room. And people would come through. And being real young, and not the least bit shy, I would be talking to people: police lieutenants, captains, and then one time my father came out and found me talking to the mayor. And I had no idea how important he was.

Ms. Pape: Which mayor was that?

Mrs. Link: McFeeley. God bless McFeeley. I think if you're an old Hobokenite, everybody remembers Mayor McFeeley.

Ms. Pape: What do they remember about him?

Mrs. Link: Nepotism. Everybody in his family had a good city job. I'm not saying anything that no one knows.

Ms. Pape: I've read about it a lot.

Mrs. Link: But it was a great town. My father-in-law was a policeman, my uncle was a policeman, my father was a reporter. You know, it was something in the city that we knew about. To this day, I would not leave Hoboken. I love Hoboken.

Ms. Pape: What do you love about Hoboken?

Mrs. Link: I miss seeing a lot of people that I knew on the Avenue. It's just got that small town feeling. And even though I don't know a lot of the people

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anymore when I walk downtown, the young people that have moved in – they're all friendly. And I meet so many of them up the Y, because I have a part-time job up the Y. I think they're all great. They tell you about where they came from; you find out all these things about different parts of the country, which I have no interest in visiting, but I love to learn about them. But as far as traveling from Hoboken, the furthest I ever want to go is New York.

Ms. Pape: Where have you traveled?

Mrs. Link: New York. Oh, the Catskills, all in Jersey here. But I'm not a big traveler. No, no. I've learned about Japan and the Philippines from my husband, from when he was in the army and everything; I've seen pictures. But I'm not a traveler. I like to be home in my house every night. I like it here.

Ms. Pape: When you got married, you have 3 children...

Mrs. Link: 3 boys.

Ms. Pape: What was it like raising your kids in Hoboken, in terms of activities for them?

Mrs. Link: Even then it was still this quiet little place. You could always find – you're going to love this – you could always find a parking space. There were plenty of parking spaces. Just like when I came home from school, I would change my clothes and go down and play. The boys, the same way, they would change their clothes and go down and play. And I would call them up. Or, when they were very little, I would take them over to Elysian Park right across the street. And they would play there. Plenty of room to play – always a lot of playmates. They did go to public school here in Hoboken; and they were great. I thought the public schools in Hoboken were very good.

Ms. Pape: What public schools did they go to?



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Mrs. Link: They began in number 6; Wallace School. That's the old Wallace School. And then they went to Brandt, and Hoboken High. And they loved it.

Ms. Pape: Jimmy graduated from Hoboken High, what year?

Mrs. Link: I have no idea – you're asking too much; you're asking too much. You got to remember Jimmy is my baby, and he's 41 years old.

Ms. Pape: So that's 24 years.

Mrs. Link: That's a long time. Listen, I'm lucky I remember their birthdays. Never mind when they graduated from school.

Ms. Pape: What kind of industries existed in Hoboken when you were a kid, and also when you were raising your kids.

Mrs. Link: There was the Tootsie Roll factory; that was a biggie at that time. There was US Testing; that's been there a long time. And there was quite a few industries in the back of Hoboken which I didn't know about too much. Because it was one of those things that you didn't travel that far downtown. There was a lot of industry, a lot of factories which are now condominiums. It amazes me when I walk downtown – my husband and I will take a walk, and I look and I'll say to John, "What was that?" And he can remember what factory it was, but it's a beautiful condominium building now, with a courtyard and everything. Really they did beautiful jobs.

Ms. Pape: What was the transportation like?

L We had the nickel jitney on Washington Street. It was a bus that came from 14<sup>th</sup> Street and went down to what we called the tubes. And it was a nickel. That was the main way of traveling. And then we had the trolley. When you got down as far as where the subway is now, up above that ground there was what they called trolleys. It was a very high thing... It was the most fun to ride – I think it was a dime. I won't swear to that, but I think it was. The Jackson Trolley. You would get up there, take it, and it would take you to Journal Square. Now Journal Square was a big place.

We had 3 big movie houses up there, lovely restaurants and places to shop. Only if you couldn't find something in Hoboken. I have often said, "If you couldn't find it in Hoboken, when I was growing up, you wouldn't find it anyplace." We had men's stores, ladies' stores, butchers, grocery stores, vegetable stores, anything you wanted – you had it in Hoboken. We had the best pork stores; if you were German and you wanted a good piece of meat, you went to the German pork stores.

Ms. Pape: What kinds of... I read about the number of bars...

Mrs. Link: Oh yeah!

Ms. Pape: ...that existed in Hoboken. How is bar life? Or the number of bars that existed in Hoboken compared to today.

Mrs. Link: We're loaded with bars in Hoboken today. What happened was... what they talked about years ago. On River St., there was one bar right after the other. But they had started as beer gardens, so it was mostly, you know, they served beer. And you got to remember sailors came in through the port, and that's what supported them all. And when they started building things, all those bars disappeared. So now they're all on Washington St. or they're uptown.

Ms. Pape: Hoboken was used as... it's a port city. Do you remember the ships coming in, or the military?

Mrs. Link: I remember World War II. That was when a lot of times they docked here for repairs and everything. You would see a lot of sailors roaming around, and soldiers. I was in high school at the time, and I was warned, "You do not talk to these people." Your mothers worried. But also up in the YMCA, they had a USO. I remember my mother going up there as a hostess. They had the younger girls who would dance with the soldiers and the sailors; and the other women, the married women, would serve sandwiches and doughnuts and coffee and everything.

Ms. Pape: At the Y?

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Mrs. Link: And then we had a Red Cross on Hudson Street, about 3<sup>rd</sup> and Hudson; and that's where you went to donate blood. I remember my mom and dad going down, they would get a button after so many pints of blood and everything. My father always got sick – the needle. Had to put his head between his legs all the time. But they went all the time, gave blood.

Ms. Pape: Were there hotels?

Mrs. Link: Oh yeah. There was – now John would remember the names of them. But there was a big one on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Hudson, and right across the street there was another one. And there was a Victor Hotel by the train station.

Ms. Pape: I read about the Hotel Victor. What kind of hotel was that?

Mrs. Link: I think that was an overnight thing, because they had a big restaurant on the first floor and everything. But it was a well-known hotel.

Ms. Pape: Is that what they called a flop house?

Mrs. Link: Just about. I wouldn't exactly call it that, but it was, you know, a little. Of course, the Y always had rooms. At one time, they had men and women in there, but then it turned into all men. At that time it was strictly a YMCA, and they only had rooms for men. And then there was, now I think anybody who was listening to this remembers Tommy Vezzetti. He was a school buddy of mine, and his family owned the bar on 14<sup>th</sup> and Washington. They had rooms upstairs. And that was more or less a flop house. Tommy, though, had a big heart. He would let people who were homeless sleep on the tables in there and everything overnight. Tommy was a good man.

Ms. Pape: And you went to school with him?

Mrs. Link: Yeah, we graduated from St. Peter and Paul's together.

Ms. Pape: Do you remember fires in Hoboken?

Mrs. Link: Yes. The earliest one I remember, where Maxwell House, the coffee factory was, originally, as far as my memory goes, was a lumberyard. And one day the whole thing just went up. And I was just a block away; we could see the whole thing. After that, they built Maxwell's. I cannot believe that I saw that place go up; I toured it when they first opened it and everything. And now I'm watching it be demolished as it goes. And then, of course, I remember when property was becoming very valuable in Hoboken; there were an awful lot of suspicious fires in Hoboken. I think everybody remembers that. There was one on 12<sup>th</sup> and Washington – the whole building went up. And down on Park Ave., 11<sup>th</sup> and Park. There were quite a few suspicious fires around.

Ms. Pape: What do you think that was about?

Mrs. Link: People wanted to get the property and build and everything. It's a sad thing, it's a sad commentary. But you could never say "Well, somebody did this," you know. It was sad.

Ms. Pape: Were there festivals in town. I know we have some today but they seem so...

Mrs. Link: St. Ann's festival goes back for years. As far as I can remember they had St. Frances' and St. Ann's, those two festivals. And I can remember when I was in grammar school, even in high school, St Peter and Paul's used to have carnivals in the park right across the street. That was a lot of fun. You know, you'd get all dressed up in the evening, meet your girlfriends, see what boys you could meet when you got down there. And they had rides and chances and everything. It was a lot of fun.

Ms. Pape: How did you meet John, your husband?

Mrs. Link: John and I met in the first grade. We went to St Peter and Paul's in the first grade, and we went through school together. He went to Hoboken High... well, it was Demarest at that time. He went to Demarest, and I went up to St. Michael's. And we knew one another all through that time because he lived on Washington St., just two blocks from me; we had friends together. But he went in the

Army; he went in the Army when he was 17. And when he came back, just picked up and... At that time, it wasn't a big thing for going steady. There was always "the gang." There was a bunch of girls, a bunch of guys, everybody had house parties and you all went together. There were dances in all the different schools, and we went to dances together, and then we went for ice cream. And occasionally a boy would walk you home. I'm talking about high school now, too, I'm not talking about grammar school. But that was it.

Ms. Pape: What kind of dances did you do?

Mrs. Link: The Lindy. The Montclair – I don't think anybody remembers the Montclair. The Peabody. It wasn't until much later that we got into the rumba. But the Lindy was the biggie.

Ms. Pape: Did you take... Were there any ballroom dancing classes?

L: Oh no, no.

P: There was no formal?

Mrs. Link: Oh, no. It seemed like every school had a specific type of dancing that they did. Like it was a little different in St. Michael's than in might have been in Hoboken High. But the Lindy was very common, and everybody knew it and that's what... And then, the slow dances.

Ms. Pape: So you had the dancing...

Mrs. Link: We had parties.

Ms. Pape: ...and parties. And walking around.

Mrs. Link: That's another thing. Washington Street. Now on Friday night, all the stores would be open until 9, 9:30. So after you finished supper, if

you wanted, and you had money, you'd get your girlfriends, and we'd all walk downtown and see what we could buy. Because that's the only night the stores were open.

Ms. Pape: Friday night?

Mrs. Link: Friday night.

Ms. Pape: Only one night?

Mrs. Link: Only one night. Otherwise they would open 10:00 in the morning, and 5:00 in the evening they would close. Everything closed. And Saturdays you made sure you got whatever you wanted in the house; I remember my mother saying "I have to get this, I have to get that." Because Sunday there were no stores open. Sunday was definitely nothing. You did nothing except go to church, have a big dinner, maybe go to the movies, but there was no shopping.

Ms. Pape: You talked about movies in Journal Square. Were there movie theaters in Hoboken?

Mrs. Link: Oh, yes. We had... where CVS is now, was the Fabian. The Fabian took up that whole space, even back as far as where Barnes & Noble is. That was the biggie. Between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> was the US; that was on the east side of Washington. It was a smaller theater. And that was all the young kids, like grammar school kids, for Saturday afternoon matinees. That's where everybody went for that.

Ms. Pape: Right in Hoboken. You're talking about films, movies?

Mrs. Link: Two feature films, the news and a cartoon.

Ms. Pape: So there were two places to go in Hoboken. Were there theaters to see - live theater?

Mrs. Link: Now I'm going back. I remember my mother telling me about this. There was a theater on Hudson St. I don't know what's there now. It's

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not a theater there anymore. They used to have live theater there. Of course, the Fabian used to have vaudeville on one night a week; gave out dishes and everything.

Ms. Pape: Tell me about vaudeville. Do you remember vaudeville?

Mrs. Link: Vaguely. It was when I was in grammar school. My husband remembers it – he'll be able to tell you about that.

Ms. Pape: Tell me what vaudeville is. What did they do here?

Mrs. Link: It was live acting. Where you went to the movie to see a film and things like that, they would stop in between and have live acts. You know, singers, dancers, maybe jokes, and stuff like that. And they gave away dishes.

Ms. Pape: Dishes?

Mrs. Link: Life was very good back then.

Ms. Pape: What made it so good?

Mrs. Link: Life was very simple. We didn't have television, we didn't have... We had the radio, we had board games. And when you were home at night, even being an only child, I either had my grandmother or my great-grandmother living with us. We sat in the evening and played games. Or you read, or if there was something good on the radio, you listened to the radio. "The Shadow"... "the Shadow knows"... And as a younger child, I remember "Let's Pretend." I bet a lot of people will hear that. It was on Saturday morning, and you would get up, and it was always like some fairy tale, and it was all acted out on the radio. And it was wonderful, wonderful. And then of course you had all the other... "The Lone Ranger", and all that. Of course, being a girl, I wasn't into that.

Ms. Pape: But this was all on radio.

Mrs. Link: All on radio.

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Ms. Pape: When did you get your first television.?

Mrs. Link: I must have been in high school We didn't get it, my grandmother got it. She used to live 4 or 5 blocks away from us. And it was a small set. And you could buy some kind of a screen to put in front of it to magnify it. And the one big show on it was Milton Berle. Oh, we thought he was fantastic! And basketball; I remember they had a lot of basketball. It wasn't on all the time. All you could see was Milton Berle, and occasionally some sport show or something. And then finally my mother broke down and got one. But I have to tell you; there was always something going wrong with the television sets then. "Kukla, Fran and Ollie" – that was one of my favorites. I remember that. And with the boys, it was, I used to make them say "Watch Mr. Rogers." They didn't think too much of him, and I thought he was fantastic. "The Friendly Giant". But then of course, all the cartoons – the Jetsons, and all those – that's the ones they liked – and sports events.

Ms. Pape: What kind of work did John do, and where?

Mrs. Link: Well, he was in the army. And when he came back, he worked for Shultons; that was big perfume and stuff over in New York. He worked for them for a while. He worked for Maxwells for a while, the coffee place. And he worked for US Testing. He had a nice job at US Testing. And then he was working for Stevens, Davidson Laboratory in Stevens.

Ms. Pape: What kind of work did he do?

Mrs. Link: They tested ship hulls. It's a very well known place to work there. They tested the ship hull that went into the American – oh, I forget what they call it now – the sailing ships, the ones that have big races and everything. It's a big place. I don't think there's many down there now.

Ms. Pape: He worked most of his life in Hoboken. After the perfume...



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Mrs. Link: Yes, almost all in Hoboken. That's what I say, Hoboken's great!

Ms. Pape: You just have everything here.

Mrs. Link: Exactly – everything. If you needed clothes, there were any number of women's stores, men's stores, shoe stores. We had at least 4 or 5 shoe stores here in Hoboken. As far as food goes, every corner you could get something.

Ms. Pape: Where were all these shops? Were they on Washington St.? I heard First Street at one point was very active.

Mrs. Link: First Street going downtown; they had a few furniture stores down there. Not very big stores. We never went down there that much. Everything we wanted was on Washington St.

Ms. Pape: Were there lots of restaurants?

Mrs. Link: There were nice restaurants, yes. We had a few really nice restaurants in Hoboken. Of course, the Clam Broth House, that I remember. And there was another one, I can't remember the name of it, it was right at the bottom of a hotel, and they were known for steak. I remember going there with my mom and dad. At that time, I would go with Mom and Dad, and they would have a drink, and they would order me Port wine. And nothing was thought of that. They brought you Port wine, even when I was just maybe a freshman in high school. They thought nothing of bringing... as long as your mom and dad were with you. You had a glass of Port wine.

Ms. Pape: So if the parents allowed it...

Mrs. Link: The restaurants thought nothing of it.

Ms. Pape: When did you start working for the Y?

Mrs. Link: The Y has always been there for me. When I was very young, in grammar school, the fire house, which is still next door to it, used to put out

hoses on hot summer days – not hoses, sprinklers, and we would go up there. And of course, when you got a little older, you could go to the Y, and girls would swim at one time and boys would swim at another. You had to wear their bathing suits. The girls had to wear their bathing suits. They were god-awful, but we didn't care. And then as I got older, I went to camp, Camp Tamaqua on Lake Kenawakee. I went there for 2 years.

Ms. Pape: Through the Y?

Mrs. Link: Yes, through the Y. At that time, you had to pay for it, and later on, they had so many weeks for the boys and so many weeks for the girls, and it was a very small amount. That's another place where they had dances. We would go up there on a Saturday night, and we'd have a dance. And then once I got married, you fell away from it, because I had the children right away. But once the kids got a little older, I had a cousin who wanted to go swimming. So she said, "Come on. They have Ladies' Night up the Y on Tuesday and Thursday. Let's go swimming." So we did, we went on Tuesday and Thursday night. And they also had an hour of exercise. You swam from I think, it was from 7 to 8. And from 8 to 9, or 9:30, you had an exercise class. And then you could take showers, and then they'd put you out because you were women. They didn't want the women there. But then when all the newcomers started coming to Hoboken, they wanted a place for girls to exercise too, and that's when it became co-ed. But when I started working up the Y as an instructor, we still had just Tuesday and Thursday night for exercise and swimming, and then you left.

Ms. Pape: So other than the Tuesday and Thursday night for exercise and swimming, the women did not use the Y at all.

Mrs. Link: No. And the men were not too happy having us there on Tuesday and Thursday night, but we overcame. Women do overcome, you know.

Ms. Pape: How did you become an instructor? Were you a student in one of the exercise classes?

Mrs. Link: Yes, I was, and I loved it. The woman who was giving the exercises, her husband worked in a hotel someplace around here, but then he got

transferred to Washington, so she had to leave. At that time, Mr. Leveredge, I hope some people remember him, Mr. Wes Leveredge, he asked me if I wanted to take over the class. And you had to go and take some courses and everything, and be certified. Then I took over some of the classes, and we had a ball.

Ms. Pape: How many years have you been teaching your class?

Mrs. Link: I think, let me think, it's approximately 35 years. But remember, the first part was just Tuesdays and Thursdays. Now it's 6 days a week, and we have a lot of instructors. Anybody who wants to come up, you would love the Y. We have Pilates and kick-boxing and step; the swimming pool, the jogging track. We have teams for all kinds of sports. It's great up there.

Ms. Pape: How did you devise the curriculum? How did you work out your particular routine? How did you learn about it?

Mrs. Link: At one time I was doing aerobics along with calisthenics, but I'm not big on aerobics, so I switched it all to calisthenics. And you just start... I don't know, let me think now... You warm up, you want to use all parts of your body; so you use weights while you're standing, and move your body around. Then you get down on the floor and you do leg raises, you do crunches. It all just falls into place.

Ms. Pape: How do newcomers to the Y feel when they attend your class, and they're confronted with a 76-year old foxy lady.

Mrs. Link: Thank you. Sometimes they look a little taken aback, you know, like "What is this old lady going to be doing?" but in my own behalf I will say, I'm pretty good at what I do. I watch what everybody else is doing so I'm sure they don't hurt themselves, and we get along good. I have a good-sized class up there.

Ms. Pape: Do you have any interesting people who attend your classes? Do you have any stories to tell, funny things that have happened at the Y in your class?

Mrs. Link: We have a wide variety of people. For a while, I had a lot of waitresses who were would-be actresses. You must have heard of John Sayles. He plays basketball up the Y. His friend, Maggie, was a producer for him, and she came to my class. There was another young lady, what was her name... she's a supper club singer now in New York – beautiful voice. Mary Clear Heran, that was her name. She was great. There were quite a few of them made it pretty good, they made out. Most of them today though, it's not so much actresses, they're into the business world... teaching. I've had a few teachers, and they're great. In fact, one of the women that comes up to my class, she teaches clogging. She was a teacher and she's retired; she's into classical music, and there's from one extreme to the other: classical music and clogging. And she is fantastic at it. And I might add, that my interviewer is a fantastic actress and a great businesswoman – Florence.

Ms. Pape: Was Hoboken... you talked before about all the kids, lots of kids in Hoboken. What was the population growing up? I know it's about 40,000 today. Do you remember how many there were? Or how it felt?

Mrs. Link: It never felt crowded. I don't think the population is that much different, but it was... how can I put this? You knew everybody on your block, and you were all friends. And as I said, the big thing... I remember the young fellows in grammar school playing marbles in what you call the gutter. Because if there was one car parked on the street, that was a lot. Because families just didn't have cars. It was too easy to travel by train, you know subway; there were buses to New York. Just the same as today: buses to New York, the subway downtown, and there were ferries. The ferries were a great way to travel. In fact, at one time besides the ferries down by the tubes, there were ferries up on 14<sup>th</sup> Street, too, the same as they have boats now, that little ferry. You didn't need a car, because you didn't go that far from Hoboken. Like I say, if you wanted something, you went to New York – that was it.

Ms. Pape: And it felt safe?

Mrs. Link: Oh, yeah. I can't ever remember not feeling comfortable in Hoboken; you could walk around. Of course, you were home at a decent

time, all the time, too. Because there wasn't that much... what were you going to do out on the street? The only time I remember congregating was when we were in high school, and it was a nice evening, you went to somebody's stoop. There was always somebody's stoop. But, there was always a policeman on patrol. I remember sitting on the stoop, and teenagers get a little loud, and all of a sudden there would be the cop. I remember one cop's name was Cabot, and he would say "That's enough. You're too noisy. Go home." And we would scatter; we would go home. Because you were afraid; this was a policeman; you respected them.

Ms. Pape: These were foot patrols.

Mrs. Link: Foot patrols. Almost every block had foot patrols.

Ms. Pape: It felt like there were more policemen?

Mrs. Link: Oh, yeah. Well, now I think I see a lot... you see a lot of police cars now, but at that time you saw a lot of foot patrolmen. They were always around, watching. They carried the nightsticks.

Ms. Pape: Even the restaurants, what time did they close at night? I guess, did people go out to dinner as much, or did everybody eat home?

Mrs. Link: I don't think many... over the weekend, you might go out to dinner, but during the week, you stayed home. There were quite a few nice restaurants in Hoboken; nothing like what we have today. I mean, no matter what type of food you want, you could find a restaurant that serves it in Hoboken today. And, uh... nail places... But you don't have the nice stores we used to have.

Ms. Pape: What was your favorite store?

Mrs. Link: There was one called the Hollywood – it was a ladies' store. The Reliable. There was The Reliable, you could go in there, and it was skirts, blouses, underthings, pajamas and house coats, stockings, socks, all that. But I have to tell you, my favorite store was on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Washington – the Mary Oliver. Strictly a dress and coat store. They had the greatest dresses in there.

Doris Link, Tape 1

(gap)

Ms. Pape: What did you do before you got married?

Mrs. Link: Before I was married, you know I was a secretary.

Ms. Pape: Where were you a secretary?

Mrs. Link: In the Royal Liverpool Group, in New York. An insurance firm, a big insurance firm, an English firm. I hated being a secretary, I'm sorry, I just hated it. But we used to put money away, all the secretaries and the women who worked in the department, and like once a month or so, we would go to a play, have dinner out, and then go for a drink afterwards. It didn't cost you that much. I can remember having one of the best seats in the theater, and it cost us like \$12. And dinners didn't cost that much, so we did that every once in a while. But when you got paid, you headed for Mary Oliver, and a new dress. And then of course there was Russek's, in New York, which had suits, business suits. Rose Becker, there was a store right across the street from the Sacred Heart Academy called Rose Becker's. She had great clothes. Suits, and coats. Not dresses, really. Just suits and coats.

Ms. Pape: Hats?

Mrs. Link: There were a lot of hat stores in Hoboken. When I was working, you could not go to work without a hat. And shoes and gloves always matched. If you wore navy blue shoes, you wore a navy blue bag. And you always had gloves, always. Slacks didn't come in for a long time, after.

Ms. Pape: You got the job after graduation from high school...

Mrs. Link: No, I went to Drake Secretarial School, up in Journal Square, and then I got the job.

Ms. Pape: You learned typing.

Mrs. Link: And shorthand.

Doris Link, Tape 1

Ms. Pape: And how long were you a secretary?

Mrs. Link: About 2 or 3 years.

Ms. Pape: And then you got married.

Mrs. Link: And then I got married And as soon as I got pregnant, I quit. At that time, you didn't work up until the time you were going to have the baby. You worked for maybe 4 or 5 months, and then you stayed home.

Ms. Pape: When you started to show...

Mrs. Link: Yeah.

Ms. Pape: So the hat stores, and the shoe stores...

Mrs. Link: Everything, everything in Hoboken

Ms. Pape: And the butcher shops, vaudeville...

Mrs. Link: Yeah, see what you missed. It was a great town, great town.

Ms. Pape: Were there summer jobs in town? What did kids do, other than the couple of weeks that they went to camp, and the sprinklers that the fire department had. Did kids work during the summer?

Mrs. Link: Now you're talking about young kids.

Ms. Pape: What did the little ones do, and what did they do in high school?

Mrs. Link: I told you, when you were very small, it was a trek downtown to one of the five and tens, and you bought coloring books or cutouts, or you blew bubbles. That was it...

Ms. Pape: And you played on your block.

Doris Link, Tape 1

Mrs. Link: Where I lived, there was a courtyard between Washington and Hudson, so your mother could see you even when you were down there. You sat down and you played, on the ground. You roller-skated. When you got older, when I was in high school, then you looked for a summer job. I can remember working in the five and dime. Loved it, loved it. I first worked on the ribbon counter; can you believe we had nothing but ribbons. And I loved that. And then, maybe what was a little bit better, I worked at the candy counter. Oh, god, did I love that. I shouldn't admit this, but when my friends would come in... You could get a bag of candy for twenty cents that would choke a horse, but if it was your friends, you threw a little bit more in all the time. That's what you took to the movies with you.

Ms. Pape: And the five and dime was...

Mrs. Link: There was Grants between 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, Fisher-Bierce between 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, and then further down, Woolworth's. Woolworth's was the best; that's where I worked. They had everything.

Ms. Pape: So you really didn't have to leave town. How do the shops today compare? In terms of what you get, compared to...

Mrs. Link: Let's face it, there are no clothing stores in Hoboken to speak of. You can go up to Burlington, that's about the one big place that you can go. But on Washington St. there's a lot of, what you would call a boutique. I mean, let's face it, there's one place next door to Benny Tudino's, the pizza place, and if you're anything bigger than a size 4, you couldn't buy anything in there. So there's really no stores in Hoboken that I can say I buy clothes in... nothing. Burlington's about the only place I go up and look for a coat or something. But otherwise, I go to New York.

Ms. Pape: We talked about fires. Was there a time when there were riots?

Mrs. Link: There was once. I can't remember what it was all about. Longshoremen – that's what it was. It was the longshoremen - all in front of City



Hall and everything. But it died down very fast. It was nothing. You can't say anybody was hurt.

Ms. Pape: Was anything not to your liking growing up? And raising your kids in Hoboken?

Mrs. Link: Seriously, I can't think of anything that I didn't like. I have had, thanks be to god, a very happy life in Hoboken. I had a very happy childhood. I loved the schools I went to, the friends I made. Once I got married, it was all.... when I got married, it was all people that I grew up with. So it was like one couple all of a sudden, and then another. And we all stood up for one another, went to the receptions and everything, we all started having babies together. So I can't really say there was an unhappy time in my married life.

Ms. Pape: Continuity

Mrs. Link: Yeah. One thing flowed from the other. That's what I think a lot of young kids miss today. They move from their hometown. A lot of young kids come to Hoboken and work in New York. But they're from different states. I think it must be hard for them to make... I guess it's easy enough for them to make friends. I know they make a lot of friends up the Y. But what happens to the childhood friends you had growing up? They're all scattered all over. And we didn't have that; we all knew one another. Even when some of them moved, they didn't move that far away. You can take a train. My oldest son lives out in Rutherford. It takes less than 5 minutes on a train to get to Rutherford, and from the train station I can walk to his house. So that's that. And the other two boys still live in Hoboken, and they love it, they love it.

Ms. Pape: You can see one son out your window.

Mrs. Link: Yes, I can. If I look out my kitchen window, I can wave to him. His kitchen window faces my kitchen window. In fact, when my first son moved out, my oldest son, he lived right across the way, too, and I could wave to him.

Ms. Pape: So your children are continuing the same pattern that you and your parents continued in terms of staying close.

Mrs. Link: Well, they do. But Thomas, my middle son, he traveled. He went on diving trips. He's a scuba diver. So he's been around. And Jimmy, first started school here in Hoboken, college, in Stevens.

Ms. Pape: He went to Stevens?

Mrs. Link: Yeah, he went to Stevens for over a year, but then he moved to Florida, and went to Florida State, or... one of them down there. He's gone to so many. Then he moved back and he was living in East Brunswick and he went to...

Ms. Pape: Rutgers?

Mrs. Link: He graduated from Rutgers, but he also went to Pace in New York. That was his favorite school; he loved Pace; but he did graduate from Rutgers, in East Brunswick. But they're all in Hoboken now; the two of them are in Hoboken.

Ms. Pape: What's the best of Hoboken today, and what's the worst of Hoboken today?

Mrs. Link: Well, the first thing that comes to my mind. I don't have a car, but I feel so sorry for people looking for parking spaces in Hoboken. The rents – I cannot believe what kind of rents people are paying in Hoboken. And all these condominiums. I'm not a condominium person; I can't think of buying an apartment and not knowing who your neighbor is on one side, or above you and below you. Rent an apartment. Why would you want to buy a condominium? Or move out, God forbid. Hoboken isn't bad; there's a lot of good things. The beautiful parks we've got. The walkway. Yes, today. Well, we had beautiful parks, but not as many. And the walkway on the river, that's just beautiful. It's gorgeous. And the way they have improved Hudson Street, and downtown. When you used to talk about First Street going downtown, that was really not too good. Now that's all beautiful. And Shop-Rite. There

are a few spots... I don't like to walk down to Shop-Rite by myself, but the store itself is great. The A&P has improved since that's there. And my favorite store of all – Kings. I complained about that store when that first opened; I could not see the prices that they charged. But I'm there every day. And the prices are not that much more. It's convenient; it's two blocks away. I know everybody in there; they know me by name when I go in there. That's what you miss about the little stores in Hoboken; they know you.

Ms. Pape: With the little stores and the neighbors who lived in apartments, you knew everybody. Now there are so many people you don't know.

Mrs. Link: Oh, yeah. I mean, it used to take me a long time to walk the whole length of Hoboken. Because you stopped and you knew everybody. "How are you?" "How's the family? And everything." "What are you doing for this or that and the other thing." Now you walk down, and I know people, but not that well that you have a big conversation with them or anything. That's sad, that's sad. But like I say, there's so many new apartments and everything.

Ms. Pape: We're on the fourth floor; this is the fourth floor?

Mrs. Link: This is the fourth floor.

Ms. Pape: All these buildings that are 20 floors, Marineview.

Mrs. Link: Marineview is 20-something.

Ms. Pape: What was the reaction of the community when Hoboken started to have high-rises?

Mrs. Link: Well, they didn't think too much about it, because there were just one or two buildings down there, and that wasn't too bad. But now, you've got what they called the Shipyard over here, and now Maxwell is completely gone, and they're going to start building very soon. That's going to be at least 12 stories, if not more. I'm not too thrilled with that. It's taken away that little homey atmosphere. When you walk on Washington Street now, and they have the outdoor eating and everything, it

reminds you of the Village. Which isn't bad; I like the Village, so that isn't too bad,. But the high-rises, I'm not too thrilled with.

Ms. Pape: What... looking ahead to the future. You've had a long arc, seeing Hoboken go through a lot of stages. What do you think it's going to be like living in Hoboken in 20 years, in 10 years?

Mrs. Link: I think it's going to be very expensive. I think it's going to be all young people, very young people. It seems to me, I'm not sure about this, but it seems to me when people get married here in Hoboken and they start families, they stay until it's about time for the kids to go to kindergarten, first grade, and then they move. So you don't have that family atmosphere, and you're not going to have it in the future, either. I think that's going to be gone, and that's sad, too. But that's progress, I guess. I give a good deal of credit to the Hoboken Public Library and the Hoboken Museum for trying to find out, and keep all these things, the memories that people have.

Ms. Pape: Doris, just to swing back to the Y, since that has been such a significant portion of your life, and your connection to the changes in the community. We talked about some of the actresses and the famous people. Generally, what's been the variety of people who have come through in terms of age and in terms of walks of life, what they do. Have there been any unusual people who have been in the class? And how long do you know people? You've been teaching 35 years. Has there been anybody there with you all 35 years?

Mrs. Link: Actually, no I don't think for that length of time. But 2 women that I'd like to mention: Selma and Liz. Selma Strauss and Liz McGinnis. Selma came about, I guess not quite 10 years ago, but a long time, and she only left recently, she's had a few health problems. But she came and she could out-exercise any young girl in the place. When she left, Selma was 83 years old, and she could still do crunches, get her legs behind her head. She was fantastic, and a nicer woman you wouldn't want to meet. She was a school teacher, and when she retired, she traveled. Very interesting, all over the world she traveled, and she would come back and tell us all about it. And Liz was my age; she loved to say she was 2 months younger than me. That was her big thing.

But she was another one who could exercise and everything. And she owned a house right across the street from St. Matthew's church, and she had a beautiful garden there and everything. She traveled quite a bit, too. Another very interesting woman. But she eventually sold her house and moved back to Minnesota. And Selma is out in Montclair, I think, some place like that.

Another very interesting young... well, he's not so young anymore, but he was. He's been coming for over 10 years. Joe McLaughlin – he was a Marine. I don't get too many men in my class, but the first time Joe came in, he had to be in his early 50s, and he had on a white sweat suit, with the sleeves cut off, a leather band around his forehead, and hair down his back, and a big, long beard. My first impression was, "One of the apostles has just appeared in class." But he is fantastic; he has been coming for over 10 years. He is the life of the class when he's there. He has everybody laughing. He lives in Union City; he has a house up there. He is just one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet. He was great friends with Selma and with Liz; and I have to say about my exercise class: When it's somebody's birthday and we've known them a while, we all go out to lunch together to celebrate their birthday. Special occasions we go out. We go to different places just.... I had one girl who used to sing down in Scotland Yard, and we all went down there to cheer her on. She was great; she's made tapes and everything; Christine. It's just... the Y is just a wonderful place.

Ms. Pape: But it sounds as if your Y class is the best of Hoboken.

Mrs. Link: I think so. We all get along and like I say, just going out together. We've been to New York and different places, and it's just wonderful. I love the Y and I love the people that come up there. They're the best of Hoboken, I think, the people that come up to the Y. Speaking of you; speaking of Florence is a regular up the Y. You come, you and Joe hit it off great. It's really... The Y and just Hoboken in general, I love it, I love it. I like going around to the Hoboken Museum and seeing what they have. I remember "On the Waterfront," and they did it in different parks. Some of it was done over here in the Elysian Park, right here on Hudson St. Some of it was done down in Church Square Park, right across the street from Our Lady of

Doris Link, Tape 1

Grace. Some of it was done in the church there, and some of it was done in St Peter and Paul's. The alleyway, where Ted and Jo's is on 14<sup>th</sup> Street now, that was Dattises, it was a bar. And they did a lot of the scenes in there.

Ms. Pape: Did you watch the filming of...?

Mrs. Link: Some of it. I never got to really see Marlon Brando or anything, but down at the waterfront there where they did the fight scene and everything.

Ms. Pape: And there's not an interview without talking about Frankie...

Mrs. Link: Oh, please. Good old Frank Sinatra, right! He was becoming popular when I was in grammar school. At one time, he knew my father very well, or my father knew him... I like to put it that way. My father knew him very well. Everybody always says he was a sports editor on the Jersey Observer. He was a copy boy, but I guess he moved up from there. But my Mom and Dad knew him and his Mom and Dad. I was not impressed with him until I was very far into high school. And then I remember cutting school one day, going over to the Paramount, to watch, and to see him.

Ms. Pape: Do you remember ever seeing him in Hoboken?

Mrs. Link: No, I don't ever remember seeing him in Hoboken. I know he came down to... when Reagan was President, he brought Ronald Reagan down to the St. Ann's Feast, and that was the last I remember. There are tales of him coming to Hoboken to see his godfather and people that he knows. But he never...

Ms. Pape: But you knew his mother?

Mrs. Link: I didn't. My mother...

Ms. Pape: Your mother knew his ... right. Well, Ms. Link, this has been a very pleasant interview with you.

Mrs. Link: I've enjoyed it.

Doris Link, Tape 1

Ms. Pape: Would you like to add anything, or say anything to all those who will learn and share in some of your experiences.

Mrs. Link: I hope I gave them a little insight into Hoboken when I was younger. I know you're going to come up and interview my husband, and he's got better stories than me, because he went all through school here in Hoboken. It was just a great place to grow up, to get married and raise kids. And I wish the younger people of today would realize how good it is. Hoboken politics are not exactly what they used to be. I can remember rallies on street corners, for Mayor, and they would build a platform, and they would get up and talk. And they would have barrels, not barrels, trash cans filled with ice with sodas in them. And you could just go up and help yourself to a soda. But it's gotten a little heavier now. But I think we've had good mayors; I've liked them all. Even going back to McFeeley; he was good; he was all right. And I think they were... I mean, you find out things afterwards. They tried; that's all you can ask.

Ms. Pape: Doris, I love you.

Mrs. Link: I love you, Florence.