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**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



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Oral History Interview with Marie France Santiago

Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project

Interview conducted by Katie Burke on April 4, 2018

at the Community Art Center, Cambridge, MA

Katie Burke: My name is Katie Burke. I am here with Marie France Santiago as part of the Cambridge Historical Society's oral history project on Caribbean heritage. It is Wednesday, April 4th [2018] and we are at the Community Arts Center in Cambridge. So Marie France, can you just start by telling me a bit about where you're from?

Marie France Santiago: Sure! My ethnicity background -- I'm Haitian descent, so both of my parents are from Haiti and I was born here in Cambridge at Mount Auburn Hospital. Grew up in Cambridge, lived here for 18 years, went to the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School and graduated in '06.

KB: Where in Cambridge did you grow up?

MFS: Newtowne Court.

KB: Okay.

MFS: So the housing development right across the street.

KB: Nice, so you're still in the area

MFS: Yup, and I actually grew up in this program, the Community Arts Center, so I came here when I was five and kind of stayed here and now I'm the Program Director.

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**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



KB: That's great.

MFS: Yeah [laughter]

KB [01:14]: So how -- what was the immigration story of your parents? How did they decide to come here?

MFS: My mom and my dad actually met here. So my mom came over with her cousin, and her cousin now lives in Ohio, but she came to Boston and was staying with a friend. And my dad was already here in the United States and they met at a party. So yeah, long story short, they got together and had me and my sisters.

KB: How did they both end up in Cambridge?

MFS: Well, my mom and my dad, they -- my mom lived in a friend in Cambridge, on Cambridge Street, and my dad lived in Boston, so my dad kind of just moved in with my mom.

KB: Do you have any siblings?

MFS: I do. So, I have two older sisters that we have the same mom and dad, and then I have siblings that I just have the same dad with. I'm the youngest of eight.

KB: Wow [laughter]

MFS: Yeah.

KB: And you have brothers and sisters?

MFS: Yup, two brothers and three older sisters from my dad's side.

KB [02:27]: How did your family talk about Haiti when you were growing up?

MFS: Well, we learned the culture at home. My mom and dad speak Creole. My mom knows how to speak English, but my dad speaks it a little bit, but we learned the language at home. My mom cooks the food. We've always taken trips to Haiti, so vacation during the summer we were in Haiti, so it was a lot of going back to get to know the culture and make it present within the home.

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KB: Sorry, I'm just going to move this thing a little bit closer to you. So, what was it like going to school here?

MFS: I went to the Charles G. Harrington School, and it was fine. A lot of my friends are Haitian descent, but it was a really nice experience. I went to -- it was a Portuguese integration school, because it was in East Cambridge, so we had a lot of Portuguese families in the school, but it was a really nice school.

KB: And then you went to Rindge and Latin?

MFS: Yup. So I graduated in eighth grade from the Harrington School and went to Cambridge Rindge and Latin and was there for four years. And it was, you know, there were a lot of different kids from different schools from Cambridge, but we all knew each other because we lived in the same area. So, and Cambridge Rindge and Latin at that time was the only public high school, so once you got there, you know everybody. So growing up and being almost 30 now, I know a lot of the adults that work in the youth working field and just around the city. So just walking down the street I am able to say hi to everyone because I know them and all of their children who go to my program now.

KB [04:28]: Do you feel like a lot of the people that you grew up with here are still here in Cambridge or the Boston area?

MFS: Maybe 20, 30 percent. A lot of my friends moved out of the city due to, you know, gentrification, but I still keep in touch with them. Some of them don't live in the state anymore. They moved down south. But I do still have maybe a few friends that still live in Cambridge.

KB [05:05]: What other places did you spend time at as kid besides school, and here?

MFS: In high school, the workforce program and Upward Bound. So, Upward Bound is an academic program, so during the summer we would go to a Cambridge college campus in Wellesley and stay there throughout the week and we would learn academic things for the year that we're going to go into, and then we'd get to come home on the weekend. And then the Workforce Program helps teens with school, home, and work, so prepare us for the workforce, help us with any homework or school preparation for college, and they had mentors to help us if we wanted to talk about things that were going on at home and things like that. So, those are only two programs that I did. Over the summer I did Mayor's Program, which is a job search so they place you somewhere

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and you get paid as a teenager. So, getting to try out the workfield during the summer, and I now get to get teens coming from the Mayor's Program or the Workforce Program, and really get to tell them my story of being in those programs.

KB: What places did you work when you were in the program?

MFS: When I was in the Workforce Program I worked at the Harvard Press, more so entering data from the books. Pretty boring, but [laughter]. So, and then I worked at MIT doing a lot of filing and administrative work. So, a lot of my administrative skills come from the workforce program putting me in different job placements getting that, you know, learning those skills. So, I'm really good at admin [laughter].

KB: Yeah. that stuff is important. I have a lot of that stuff too.

MFS: So, a lot of people find it of boring, but I'm like, "I'm really good at it."

KB: Yeah, it keeps you organized [laughter].

MFS: So, and then the last place I was placed, I was put -- it was here. But I was coming here so it was kind of like a win-win situation. And then I ended up volunteering here after I was too old to be part of the programs. And then stayed on to work.

KB [07:31]: Nice. What did you do after high school?

MFS: After high school, I went to Bunker Hill for two years and then transferred to Mass College of Art to learn fashion. So I graduated there with my Bachelor's in fashion certificate.

KB: That's so cool.

MFS [07:57]: Yeah [laughter] And I also met my husband at Massachusetts College of Art so it was really nice, we kind of intertwined there, and he actually came and worked here and we got to know each other, and fell in love [laughter].

KB: Did you meet here or at school?

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**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



MFS: So, I met him -- I saw him at school, and then when he came here and he was hired and I realized it was him I was like, "Oh, wow!" So, we became really close friends and then we started dating and we moved in with each other and got married, had two kids, yeah, and plan to grow the family some more [laughter]. But, yeah.

KB: Where do you guys live?

MFS: In Malden.

KB: Okay. And so do you take the train into work?

MFS: It depends, so sometimes I take the train, sometimes I drive. I take my oldest daughter to preschool, so I'll drive on those days. Other days I take the train.

KB [08:59]: Can you tell me a little bit more about the Community Arts Center, and what programs are like and what you do here?

MFS: Sure. So we're an art based non-profit program. We serve ages five to nineteen for kids that are coming from low income families in Cambridge but, you know, a lot of our families have moved out of Cambridge so we keep -- they still come. So we can't just say Cambridge, we can say the greater Boston area. But the kids get to learn dance, theater, music, digital arts, visual arts. They get to do murals that go around the city, or murals that get to go up on stores, like Whole Foods. We've done murals with them. And the kids come here and they get the experience of art, but we also try to incorporate active games and things that they like to do on a daily basis. We also do academic work, so they have homework so we help them with their homework. But it's not our main focus, our main focus is art. We also do our "Do it your Damn Self" film festival annually, so we have a junior rail(?) for the school age program, which is the five to twelve year olds, and the teens do the national Do it Your Damn Self film festival. That just happened this past weekend. And with that, people around the country send in their films and they get curated by the teens and they select their top ten and we showcase it to all the teens who come out to watch it for three days.

KB: That's so cool.

This transcript is made available for research purposes only.

**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



MFS: Yeah, it's a really great opportunity to be a part of that and, you know, I got to do it when I was a teen, and to see the teens still doing it and understand the importance of getting people's voices out there who really can't do it by themselves, it's an amazing thing.

KB: Yeah. What was the festival like this year?

MFS: So this year we have six teens. So, now they do a junior crew. Back in my time the whole teen program would focus on this, but they have a junior crew who watches the films and curates the films. They go on retreats and they pick their top twelve. They do everything from the logo that's going on the t shirt, advertising, outreach to different stores so they can get money to bring the filmmakers over to Boston and they host it at the MIT Media Lab this year, and at the ICA, and then at the Cambridge Community Center, and they invite schools from all over Boston to come and watch the films that were selected and it was amazing.

KB: Yeah.

MFS: Yeah, the ICA was really packed up.

KB: That's awesome [laughter].

KB: Is it a relief to have it over, or?

MFS: Oh yeah [laughter].

KB: Sounds like a lot of work. Yeah, that sounds like a great event. I'll have to look into that next year.

MFS: Definitely, yeah [laughter]

KB [12:28]: So, how did you start coming here when you were a kid?

MFS: So I -- in Newtowne Court, our center was located actually in the housing complex, in the basement, around the corner from my house, so my older sisters were going and my mom decided to put me in the program as well as a convenience, and I kind of just stayed in the program as it moved around. It went to One Kendall, next to the cinema, and then we eventually landed here because they were rebuilding the building at

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Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



the time, so we came here and we've been here and we've done -- this is our second renovation that we're doing right now. But yeah, stayed on, graduated to the teen program at twelve, was in the teen program until I was eighteen and then volunteered in the school age program and became a teacher's assistant, and then became a teacher, became lead teacher, and now I'm program director.

KB: Wow.

MFS: Yeah. And we just expanded a couple years ago in 2015 where the Boys and Girls Club had -- were down the hall in the gym and unfortunately, they were closed down and we were able to take on that space and take on a few of their children that didn't have a program anymore. So we expanded from 52 to 78, so now we're able to take in 78 children in our program because of the expansion. So it's been a really good experience here. I've been working here for 12 years now.

KB: Wow! Really [laughter]?

MFS: Yes, so it's been some seeing people come in, seeing people go, and every time the kids come back to see the space or people come back to see the space they're like, "Wow, Marie France, you're still here," I'm like, "Yeah" [laughter].

KB [14:33]: What are your memories of being here as a kid?

MFS: Definitely making artwork, I remember one year we did a double dutch competition and I got to be in it that one time and it was really a great experience. Going to the beach and playing with my friends, doing dance class, and we did, like, one theater piece by my theater teacher that she wrote herself and I got the part as the teacher and it was really an amazing experience because we didn't do it in house, we went and rented a theater and we sold tickets and everything and showcased it to everyone and it was amazing because we were really into it and we got our scripts, we learned our lines, and that was a really great moment because I got to be on stage, which I'm really scared to do, and kind of at out this role.

KB: Did you spend time in other neighborhoods in Cambridge or was it mostly around here?

MFS: Mostly around here. Yeah, my parents were really strict so I wasn't allowed to, like, leave Newtowne Court. I would go into Washington Elms, I had a couple of friends over there but this area. It wasn't until maybe

This transcript is made available for research purposes only.

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Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



high school when I was able to kind of venture out going into North Cambridge. My sister lives over there so being able to go to her house and hanging out over there.

KB [16:15]: What did your parents do for work?

MFS: My dad is retired. He's 74 now so he's a retired cab driver and my mom, she does hospitality at the Veterans Affairs in Hyde Park

KB: Okay

MFS: So the hospital over there, she does that.

KB: Okay, I've seen that. And does your family still live in Cambridge?

MFS: My uncle and my cousin live in Cambridge. So, my uncle lives in Washington Elms, which is the housing complex right next to Newtowne Court, and his son, my cousin, lives in Newtowne Court still, so I think those are the only two that live here that's close. My sister still lives in North Cambridge and I have a cousin that lives in, like, next to Central Square, Putnam Ave area, those complexes over there.

KB [17:19]: Yeah. That's where I live actually, on Putnam Ave so I know exactly where you're talking about [laughter]. Cool, so how does it feel to come back here now after -- does it feel different when you come back?

MFS: Um. I mean, walking through the neighborhood does feel different. There's a lot of, you know, buildings going up, really high, tall buildings going up, so it's different. It's -- walking through Kendall Square or walking down Binney Street or even walking through Central Square you can see all the changes that are happening to the community. Yeah, it's different [laughter].

KB: Are there any things -- like, any stores or things like that that you miss?

MFS: Oh yeah. Newtowne Court Variety, that used to be right there on the corner of Windsor and School Street. They were there for a really long time. That was our go to place to get our favorite candies, chips, our subs, if we were going on a field trip we would all go there to get a sandwich. And not having them there, it's a weird feeling because there were always there, that was our go to place, and families go there to just grab groceries

This transcript is made available for research purposes only.

**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



and they don't have that anymore. Or even, like, Star Market was down the street and they're no longer there and so it's different, yeah.

KB [19:04]: Yeah. Where are your parents now?

MFS: My parents are in Malden with me.

KB: Oh!

MFS: So, yeah, my parents and my two sisters also live in Malden and I have a sibling -- my oldest sister, her kids live in Malden as well. My oldest sister passed away not too long ago.

KB: I'm sorry.

MFS: But her mom takes care of her kids and they live in Malden. And I have another sister that lives in Medford and my brother who lives in Medford and then a brother that lives in Florida. Yeah [laughter]. So, kind of scattered but a lot of are in Malden. So we stay close and in touch. We're always together doing something.

KB: Is much of your extended family here?

MFS: In the United States?

KB: Yeah.

MFS: On my dad's side, his brother, his family is in Massachusetts. I have family in Canada and then all my mother's side is in Haiti still, so she's kind of out here by herself, and she mentions that a lot, that she's kind of out here by herself. She doesn't have her sisters out here or her brothers. They're all back in Haiti, so she talks to them all the time and yeah. She doesn't go back to Haiti a lot but she talks to them.

KB: When you were growing up, did your family and you spend time with other Haitians? Like, was there a community?

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**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



MFS: Oh yeah. Definitely a big community of Haitians in Newtowne Court and Washington Elms. A lot of my friends are Haitian descent, so growing up with them and my family knowing their family. We also -- my parents have friends in Boston who are Haitian descent as well, so going over their houses when they had parties and things like that [laughs]. So it was always, like, going to a party in Boston at one of my dad and my mom's friends' house.

KB [21:13]: What are some traditions that there would be at parties like that?

MFS: Fourth of July was a really big thing growing up where they came over to our house and we would make a ton of food and just kind of hang out, but communions, they always had parties, New Year's we always went to a party. Um, let's see, birthday parties, that was a big thing. But communions because, you know, Haitians grew up in a Catholic home, so it was a big thing to go to Sunday school and have your communion [laughs]. And they would get like, the big three-tiered cakes with the stairs that went down to the two cakes [laughter].

KB: Really? I've never seen that [laughter]!

MFS: Yeah, It was a lot of over exaggerated [laughter]. And you had this, like, big white dress.

KB: How old were you?

MFS: When I had my communion I was about seven, eight, and it was me and my sister that's, like, right above me. She's two years older than me so my mom used to dress us up alike because we were the two youngest ones. Oh, I hated that [laughter]. But now I do it to my daughters and I'm like, I see why she did it [laughter].

KB: Where did you go to church?

MFS: Growing up I went to St. Mary's down the street on Harvard Street, but now I go to Pentecostal Tabernacle. That's on Columbia Street.

KB: Oh, okay. I actually just emailed them to --

MFS: Oh, really?

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**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



KB: I think -- do you know Marian Darlington Hope?

MFS: Yes.

KB: Okay, yeah. She had done an interview too so she's going to show me some of their old pictures and stuff like that which is really exciting [laughter]. Did you interact much with other Caribbean immigrants from different countries when you were a kid?

MFS: Yeah! I mean, I would say Cambridge -- the population of Caribbean descent is about, maybe at eight percent? So, there was always someone that you bumped into that came from one of the islands and then also have -- being able to go to the Caribbean festival that happened -- it was in August, but now they do it in September -- but being able to go to that with your friends and see everybody's flag and the country that they're -- you know, they come from was a really good experience as well. And then you got a taste of their food when you went to their houses, or, you know, just hanging out with them and hearing where they're from.

KB [24:11]: Do you feel like there's unity in the Caribbean community here?

MFS: I believe so.

KB: Yeah.

MFS: I definitely believe that. Because I don't think it's where you're from, it's who you are as an individual. And, yeah [laughter].

KB: Do you feel like it's changed, like as you're seeing kids come here, that there aren't as many people from the Caribbean that come in, or --?

MFS: Actually, here at the Arts Center -- yeah, there's a lot. We get, you know, maybe 50 percent Caribbean descent and then, you know, well not even just 50, maybe like 75 because even the Hispanic, like Puerto Rico is part of Caribbean as well. And so it the Dominican Republic and we get a lot of Hispanics from those countries, so yeah.

KB: Cool [laughter].

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**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



MFS: I'm, like, thinking about all the kids that I have.

KB: It must be hard.

MFS: I'm like, yeah.

KB: How many kids do you have come in here every day?

MFS: Between 60 and 70, and that's including the teens as well. And we're getting a lot of, you know, emails and phone calls from parents who want to bring their kids to the program, which is amazing, to be able to see the program grow.

KB: What is your husband's background?

MFS: He's Puerto Rican.

KB: Okay.

MFS: Yeah. He -- both his parents are Puerto Rican but his parents were born in Brooklyn and his grandparents were -- came from Puerto Rico and he also has a great grandma so they -- it's, in my culture it's weird to see that, you know, if somebody have a great grandparent. I only knew my grandmother, but it's good to have that experience with him, for him to be able to be like, "Yeah, my great grandmother is around," and I'm like, "Woah!" [laughter]

KB: Yeah, and for your kids too, that must be cool.

MFS: And right now he works at the Conservatory Lab Charter School in Boston as an art teacher. And he also, you know, he went to Mass Art and got his degree in graphic design.

KB: Cool.

MFS: Yeah.

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**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



KB [26:47]: What has it been like to kind of meld two cultures in the family?

MFS: Um. It's interesting because now we have to, you know, try to teach our kids Spanish and Haitian Creole and my parents speak it at home and his parents speak it at their home so they're going to take in both worlds. So it's interesting and his mom still cooks hispanic foods and my mom still cooks Haitian food and so they're getting best of both worlds [laughter].

KB [27:31]: Yeah. What is Haitian food like? I don't think I've ever had it.

MFS: So the rice -- rice is a really big thing in the Haitian culture. We have different meats from fried pork to chicken in a sauce or fried fish or fish and sauce. Those are like -- there's always a sauce. And then there's -- they do, like, a bean sauce but the beans are kind of blended and they call that sos pwa and you put that on your rice and you have your meat and your meat sauce and your rice, so there's barely any vegetables.

KB: Okay [laughter].

MFS: That's the only flaw is, like, there's barely vegetables and with his family, because they're Americanized you get a lot of the -- you get the mixture of American food and Hispanic food together so sometimes she's not cooking Hispanic food, so she'll make, like, spaghetti and meatballs and, you know, I'm just like, "Uhhh?" [laughter]. So, yeah.

KB: Do you cook Haitian food at home?

MFS: I'm learning. I know how to make Haitian macaroni and cheese.

KB: What is that like?

MFS: So the difference is you use condensed milk and there's a hint of mayonnaise in there. So my mom has taught me how to cook it so I know how to do that. I haven't mastered the rice yet. I'm still trying to figure out how to do it [laughter]. I do know how to make white rice, so yeah [laughter]. In the white rice there's a hint of coconut in there.

This transcript is made available for research purposes only.

**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



KB: Mmm, that sounds good.

MFS: Yeah [laughter].

KB: Does your mom still cook a lot?

MFS: Oh yeah. She doesn't cook the variety of things that she used to cook. I told her that the other day. I was like, "You don't make the different things you used to make," but she still cooks for my dad, you know, because he's very -- he's in tune with his Haitian culture and he wants that at home.

KB: What was your favorite thing to eat?

MFS: Ohh, it was white rice with this thing called legume which is, like, a whole bunch of vegetables mixed together, and my mom would also put crab inside of it so she would always give me big scoops and with a big thing of crab and, I'm like, "Yes!" [laughter]. Yeah, so that was my favorite thing to eat.

KB [30:31]: How does your family stay in touch with family in Haiti?

MFS: So there is -- so my dad goes to this Haitian store where they're able to kind of put money on his phone to be able to make phone calls over there. Also there's an app called WhatsApp and my mom is able to video chat with people and send pictures and everything because they do have -- now they have technology and things like that, but when I was younger it was more so, you kind of put a cassette in the radio and you talk to the radio, and you mail out the cassette and then they'll get it and then they'll mail back a cassette and you just listen to it. And that's how it was when I was younger, but now it's evolved to being able to reach them with cell phones so, and that's amazing.

KB: Yeah. That's so cool [laughter]. Did they mail you stuff, like when you were a kid would you get packages from them?

MFS: Oh yeah. This kind of packages of, you know, some foods that we don't get out here like peanut butter, like Haitian peanut butter that has a little bit spicier than regular peanut butter, and just different delicacies from there. And then, of course, the tapes [laughs]. Yeah, people, everybody talking to you. So yeah.

This transcript is made available for research purposes only.

**Santiago, Marie France oral history interview conducted by Katie Burke, April 4, 2018;
Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



KB [32:07]: How often do you go back there?

MFS: The last time I went unfortunately was for a sad occasion. My grandma had passed away. I want to say that was in 2013 or 2012. But before then I used to, when I was younger we would go there for family vacations. When I turned thirteen I spent a whole month out there with my dad. And my sisters would mail me things and I was the only one that spoke English it was really -- it was kind of boring, but I had fun. I was with my dad, so I got to spend some one on one time with my dad which was amazing. So, I haven't been back in a long time. I'm not sure when I would go back. I kind of have mixed feelings since my sister was killed out there and feeling like it's not safe to go back. So I'm not sure. My dad went back maybe a couple years ago and, you know, he's getting older and unfortunately because of his age he's unable to, like, be out there. He fell and we had to rush him back, so he just stays here in the United States so we can make sure he's good.

KB [33:33]: Yeah. What is the town or city like that they're from?

MFS: My dad is from a place called Okai. It's a village. Very poor country. My mom is from a village called Grand-Goave. Same, you know similarity of things, but my aunt now lives in Port au Prince, which is right in the city so that's where we go to visit. We'll go there and then we'll drive up to where my mom's family is and spend one night or kind of just visit and then go back to my aunt's house, so.

KB: What did you do when you were there for that one month?

MFS: We went to a wedding and we just kind of spent time with family. So I got to spend time with my aunts from my mom's side and then spend time -- my aunt kind of went down from Canada and she was there so I was able to spend time with her. She came down with two of my cousins who didn't know how to speak English, they only spoke French, so there was no way that I could communicate with them [laughter]. But now that they're older they speak English and I'm like, "Why didn't you speak English then?" But yeah, just spending time with my dad and family and having a great time. Went to the beach, saw my dad go in the water for the first time, I was like, "Woah!" [laughs]. But yeah, just spent time with family.

KB: Was it -- how does it feel to go back there after being here?

MFS: Oh, I mean, it's a really beautiful country. When I went back a couple years ago as an adult it was a sense of relaxation when you get off the plane. But it's a really beautiful country that, you know, you just go to relax, and enjoy its beauty and eat some really good food [laughter].

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Caribbean Heritage in Cambridge Oral History Project, Cambridge Historical Society**



KB: Do you think any of your family there is interested in coming here?

MFS: I know my mom talked about my cousin coming to the United States but I haven't heard he talk about it, but I'm not sure, not that I know of. Yeah. they're all adults now, you know, finding their spouses and things like that [laughter].

KB: So, I think we're almost done. I have a few last questions.

MFS: Sure.

KB: What are your connections to other people with Caribbean backgrounds now?

MFS: Um.

KB: I know your husband.

MFS: Yeah, just, like, a lot of my friends and just people that I encounter at church or just around the neighborhood, they're all of Caribbean descent. I feel like in Cambridge, you're bound to kind of bump into someone who has Caribbean descent.

KB [37:03]: What are the ways you feel you incorporate Haitian culture into your life?

MFS: I still speak the language, so a lot of our families here in the program are of Haitian descent so they feel comfortable coming to me because they know that I speak Creole, but because I was born here my Creole isn't as perfect and they know that and I tell them, I'm like, "You know, I'm not that perfect speaking but I'll try." And they know that but they still have conversations with me and so I'm able to kind of speak to a lot of the people around the neighborhood and just kind of keep up my culture [laughs].

KB: Do you spend much time here still, in Cambridge, other than at work?

MFS: I mean, I have, like, two friends that live out here, so sometimes I'll come out here to hang out with my friends but not necessarily. Yeah, no.

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KB: Do you feel - is there a Caribbean community in Malden?

MFS: I think so. I know -- I feel like a lot of my Cambridge -- the people that I know and grew up with in Cambridge are moving to Malden. I've seen a lot of, you know, Haitian descent -- that community kind of growing in Malden. When I first moved out there not so much, but now I feel like it has grown. There's a lot of, you know, Haitian convenience stores or barber shops and that community is growing there. Yeah.

KB [38:51]: Do you feel like you're from Cambridge?

MFS: Oh yeah. Definitely. I'm a Cambridge Falcon for life [laughter]. But yeah, definitely. Cambridge is always going to be my home.

KB: Is there anything else you want to add?

MFS: Not so much, yeah.

KB: Okay.

MFS: It's an amazing place to be in. I'm glad that I was able to grow up here in this community.

KB: We're really interested if you have any recommendations of just, like, finding some resources about the Caribbean so if you have any recommendations for, like, music or books or art, anything like we'd love to know.

MFS: I mean, I can send you the email -- the woman that actually runs the Cambridge festival.

KB: Oh is it -- um, what is her name?

MFS: I can't remember [laughter].

KB: I think I saw --like, I came across it at some point.

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MFS: We're actually trying to team up with her to do some steel pan workshops within the Cambridge community.

KB: Oh, cool.

MFS: So that's really nice. Definitely Pentecostal Tabernacle is a good resource. They're of Bajan -- so they're from Barbados, but they have so many people that come into the church of Caribbean descent. They're a really good resource. So is St. Paul's AME church. Let me see. I think that's probably -- yeah, I think that would be it.

KB [40:47]: Okay [laughter]. Just, like, a quick question since you said that -- do you do any Caribbean related projects here? Like you mentioned the steel drums. Do you do other things too?

MFS: We do -- we are teamed up with Jean Appolon. He's a Haitian folklore dancer and he's helping us out with our play, our spring performance.

KB: Cool! That's awesome.

MFS: He's doing a dance workshop every Friday with a group of our kids and we've been doing that with him for the past maybe three, four years now, just teaming up with him and having him kind of do a piece with our young people, so then they're able to kind of get that experience of Haitian folklore dance. Yeah.

KB: Cool.

MFS: And he actually had one of his dancers be one of our dance teachers in program for a year and then she moved back to Haiti so that was a really good experience for the kids to have that a part of our program. So, I know he does workshops at the Dance Complex sometimes. He might be a really good resource too.

KB: Yeah, actually I think someone had talked to him before.

MFS: Okay, yeah [laughs].

KB: Yeah, but I didn't know he did stuff here. That's really interesting.

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MFS: Yeah.

KB: Very cool.

MFS: He comes every Friday [laughter].

KB: Yeah, nice.

MFS: And he also does a team intensive workshop during April break that we've had some of our teams do, and they're like, "Oh my gosh, Marie France! [laughter] It was so hard!" And I'm like, "Yeah." [laughter]

KB: Okay, great. Well, thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

MFS: No problem. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

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