

# *The Peace Drum Project*

## *Elder's Stories - 2007*

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## Introduction

Each year we look forward to our meetings and activities with the elders who share their stories, thoughts, humor, wisdom, understanding, and encouragement with the *Peace Drum Project's* teen participants. The experience of getting to know these wonderful elders and hearing their stories has been truly rewarding. We know that we have only scratched the surface of their stories in this process, but we hope that introducing them to you will enrich your lives as it has ours. These stories are filled with wisdom and life experience that young people today can learn from and honor. In spite of the differences between eras, the teens learn that many hopes, dreams, *and* obstacles remain constant across generations. Learning first hand that others have faced similar challenges — and have overcome them — gives power to their own hopes and dreams.

We are delighted with the respectful way in which the teens conducted their interviews, and by how the elders were willing to share their very personal experiences and knowledge with our young people. This bridge across the generations reduces isolation and builds new connections between youth, families, and elders that strengthen our whole community. We look forward to continuing this process for many more years.

This year we offer special thanks to Lucia Rodriguez-Sweeney for transcribing and translating the stories of the Spanish-speaking elders. We also thank Cynthia Jimenez, Resident Services Coordinator at Julia Martin House, Nancy Escoto, Resident Services Coordinator at Nate Smith House, and Julia Martin of Bromley Heath, Community Activist and grandmother, for their help in locating elders who wanted to take part in the project this year.

We dedicate these stories to the memory of Charles M. Holley (1937-2006,) CAI co-founder, and inspiration behind The Peace Drum Project. He is greatly missed by all the teens and graduates, elders, artists, and others who knew and worked with him over the years

Susan E. Porter, Director  
Cooperative Artists Institute  
[www.tribal-rhythms.org](http://www.tribal-rhythms.org)

## **Mary Carroll**

### ***Interview by Aboubakar Sherif and Alex Menjivar***

My name is Mary Elizabeth Carroll. That's my full name. My father gave it to me. I was born on January 16, 1930 in Arlington, Massachusetts. I grew up in a lot of places! I lived at 18 Vine Street in Lexington, and I lived on 23 Heard Road in Waltham...I mean Waverly.

I grew up in a large family. I lived with both my mother and my father, and there were seven girls and two boys. My two brothers were Franklin and Johnny. My sisters were Helen, Edith, Jenny, Dorothy, Anna and Patty. Anna was the oldest, Patty was the youngest. Then there was me in the middle of the bunch. My mother's name was Catherine, and my father's was Franklin. My father worked on the railroad, and my mother cleaned houses.

I went to the Monroe School in Lexington, MA. It was a large school. I went up as far as fourth grade. I didn't go to high school, I didn't like school, but I used to like arithmetic. Ms. Kennedy was my favorite teacher.

I learned a lot of stuff when I was growing up from taking care of pets. I loved animals, and, I loved to crochet. Crocheting was one of my favorite things to do at that age. My favorite music now is Polka music, but I used to play the violin when I was young. My favorite song to sing was *Mary Had a Little Lamb*.

I didn't have any friends when I was young. I played with my brothers and sisters. The only friend I had was Julia. We like to play Hide and Seek, and basketball. We also played hopscotch and jump rope — double dutch. Sometimes kids would scare me when we played Hide and Seek, then I used to scare them by jumping out from behind a tree. That was fun! And, I used to go up to the fire station and visit my uncle.

No, my parents didn't have any rules about when I had to be in. I did get in trouble once in a while. When we got in trouble the punishment was to get sent to bed.

The only dream I had was that I wanted to be a nurse. But the best job I ever had was a clothes press operator. I used to press clothes.

In Lexington we lived on a hill, and there was railroad station down at the bottom. We used to walk on the train tracks, and play down in the train tracks. My grandfather lived up in town. Sometimes we would play hooky from Sunday school and go up and visit him

When I was young I used to play with my doll. I was in the Girl Scouts  
When I was a teenager, I did chores, chores around the house. I used to make all the beds. No, I didn't have any dates. We weren't allow to go out on dates, and we had to come right home from school.

There a lot that I don't remember from when I was young, but I did have the measles. We all were sick. I had to stay in the hospital when I had my tonsils out.

No, I never drove a car. We walked everywhere when we were young. We walked to school, and to the movies. School was only about a block, and the movies were just up the street.

What adventures do I remember? Well, I was in a fashion show once, to show off clothes. And, of course, when I got married. My husband William was a maintenance man. He worked at the Washingtonian Hospital in Jamaica Plain.

Scary memories? One night, my brother locked me in the closet while we were playing. That was scary! My happiest moments were when my husband was alive, and with my cats. I don't have my husband anymore, I don't have my cats. Those were my happiest moments. I had to give my cats away. I had two cats. They said I was too old to take care of them anymore.

What do I look forward to when I get up in the morning ? Eating breakfast! I never had any children, but my best friend is Julia Martin. My favorite season is Spring. I like it when the flowers came out. And my favorite color is purple. I just like it.