

AN ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

HELEN CLAXTON WALKER

Educator

Civic Leader

Member of Montgomery County Board  
of  
Education

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM  
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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON Helen Claxton Walker

PRESENT ADDRESS: 4713 Drummond Avenue PHONE 652-2947  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20015

BIRTHPLACE: Greensboro, North Carolina

RESIDENCE:

Childhood: Greensboro, North Carolina and Knoxville, Tennessee

Montgomery County, Maryland: 1922 to 1974

EDUCATION:

Western High School

University of North Carolina at Greensboro 2 years

George Washington University 1 year

American University special course in "Issues in World Relations"  
taught by Charles Malik

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES:

File clerk in Surgeon General's Office-War Department-WWI 1 year

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

PTA, 1928 to 1942

Chevy Chase Elementary School (1930's) President 1 year

Leland Junior High School President 1 year (about 1940)

Chevy Chase Elementary School member of Board of Trustees

Social Service League (Now Family Service) board member

Norwood Recreation Center Committee (1937 to 1940)

Mental Hygiene Society (now Mental Health Association) original board member  
(late 1920's)

B-CC Educational Foundation original board member (1946 to present)

president 1 year

Montgomery County Society for Crippled Children and Adults (1949 to present)

original board member

vice president, president, 2nd vice president

PUBLIC OFFICE:

Appointed member, Montgomery County Board of Education (June 1942 to Jan. 1949)  
vice president 1946 president 1947

Appointed member, Maryland State Board of Education (1949 to 1956)

SPECIAL HONORS AND AWARDS:

Medal from Montgomery College at its 25th anniversary for "Outstanding  
Services 1946".

## Outline of Oral History Interview

with

HELEN CLAXTON WALKER

- I. Service on Board of Education of Montgomery County
  - A. Organization of schools
  - B. Appointment to Board of Education
  - C. Other members of Board of Education
  - D. Preference for appointed school boards
  - E. Critical issues faced by Board during war and post-war years
  - F. Assessment of Dr. Broome's influence on education
    1. Contributions to education
    2. Philosophy of education
    3. Innovations begun
      - a. School lunch program
      - b. In-school nurses
      - c. Others
- II. Other civic activities
  - A. Norwood Recreation Association
  - B. Mental Hygiene Society
  - C. Easter Seal Society
  - D. B-CC Educational Foundation
- III. Comments on Montgomery Community College and education in general
- IV. Service on Maryland State Board of Education
  - A. Appointment
  - B. Other members of Board
  - C. Assessment of Dr. Pullen
    1. Personal characteristics
    2. Contributions to education
- V. Assessment of career

Oral History Interview

with

HELEN CLAXTON WALKER

October 22, 1971

By Blossom Holland

HOLLAND: This interview is with Mrs. Curtis Walker, Helen Claxton Walker, and is taking place in her attractive home at 4713 Drummond Avenue in Chevy Chase. She is being interviewed by Mrs. Edward Holland on October 22, 1971.

Mrs. Walker has been very active in several community organizations, and we want to talk to her about her experiences in these. Mrs. Walker, we know of your great interest in education. Where did this interest begin?

WALKER: My father was a dedicated, nationally prominent educator, so I grew up thinking that the school and the home and their relationships to each other was one of the most important influences in a child's life. Consequently, when my children started to school, I more or less went with them.

HOLLAND: And your sons, I believe, attended the public school here in Chevy Chase?

WALKER: Yes, elementary and junior high school and high school, and then one of them went away to military school, and the other two went to Landon.

HOLLAND: I'd just like to mention now that I believe that you were in the PTA from the time that they started school in 1928 until they left the Chevy Chase schools in 1942.

WALKER: That's right.

HOLLAND: You can tell us more about your experiences in the PTA as we go along. I also understand that the period covered by your service on the Montgomery County Board of Education was from 1942 to 1949. Could you tell me what the form of local government was at that time?

WALKER: It was the County Commissioners. They were elected. I don't know

just exactly what the difference between the County Commissioners and the County Council was or is. I think the County Commissioners were elected. [They] must have been.

HOLLAND: But it was before the charter.

WALKER: I was not interested in politics so I don't remember very much about it.

HOLLAND: But it was before the charter that was chosen for the county?

WALKER: Yes.

HOLLAND: Which political party was in power at this time?

WALKER: Well, like most southern states, it was the Democrats.

HOLLAND: Throughout your period on the local Board of Education, you would say?

WALKER: Well, I guess so.

HOLLAND: Yes. And . . . .

WALKER: However, I was never conscious of any political activities connected with the School Board.

HOLLAND: But I do remember that the local government and the state government both were Democratic. Does that include the Governor?

WALKER: Yes.

HOLLAND: What were the relationships? Well, you've already said that the party in power didn't seem to have any effect on the School Board. Is that what you said?

WALKER: Yes. I never had any feeling of politics on the School Board, either state or local.

HOLLAND: Well, could you tell us a little bit about the relationship between the School Board and the other governmental bodies; for instance, what about the School Board and the Park and Planning Commission?

WALKER: I don't remember. I don't know.

HOLLAND: As I remember, the Park and Planning Commission used to choose the sites for the schools.

WALKER: I don't think so.

HOLLAND: No?

WALKER: I don't think so. I think that they had to determine, to a certain extent, how the population was growing, where houses were being built, and where certain housing developments were going. Where they would need a school. But I don't remember the Park and Planning Commission being in any of our meetings. We employed at one time, a nationally known person who came down from New York, who was experienced in planning things of that kind, but I don't remember too much about it.

HOLLAND: Oh, that was interesting.

WALKER: I'll also say that, at one time, when we were building a school over near Westmoreland, that the man who was building Westmoreland resigned so he would not be considered influencing it in any way. He was on the School Board at the time.

HOLLAND: What was his name?

WALKER: Albert Walker.

HOLLAND: The County Commissioners were the local governing body who made the appropriations for the schools at this time.

WALKER: Yes. I guess they must have controlled how much of the local tax money we would get. Then we got, of course, some from the state.

HOLLAND: I think it would be interesting to ask you now--do you remember what percentage of the money came from the state?

WALKER: No. I don't.

HOLLAND: We're so interested in that right now.

Did the State Board of Education set the scholastic standards for the schools?

WALKER: Well, they must have, but I think that Montgomery County is always a little bit in advance.

- HOLLAND: And again the General Assembly would be involved with the schools because they pass legislation concerning them.
- WALKER: Yes, and, of course, some of our appropriations would come from them directly. I don't remember much. I'm not very much a financier, and I don't know about the money part of it.
- HOLLAND: Well, do you feel that the Governor had any direct relationship with the local school board? Except, of course, his appointments.
- WALKER: Not necessarily. No.
- HOLLAND: Well, how were School Board members selected? Who appointed you to the Montgomery County Board of Education?
- WALKER: I was appointed to the Montgomery County Board of Education by Governor Herbert O'Connor, and to the State Board later by Governor Preston Lane.
- HOLLAND: And what was the party of the two governors?
- WALKER: They were both Democrats.
- HOLLAND: Both Democrats. Did they ask the advice of the local citizens?
- WALKER: I'm sure they must have.
- HOLLAND: Probably, the PTAs, I suppose, would offer some advice.
- WALKER: Well, I think that if there was anybody that was being considered that was objectionable, he would have heard about it, but I don't know how he reacted.
- HOLLAND: Were you a member of the same political party as the Governor?
- WALKER: Yes.
- HOLLAND: Were you or your husband active in the party at this time?
- WALKER: I was not. I always belonged to the Women's Democratic Club, but I didn't do anything. My husband had some position, but I can't remember what it was. He never ran for anything. He never ran for any elective office.

HOLLAND: Perhaps he was on the precinct committee in his precinct or something?

What were the terms of office on each of the School Boards that you were on?

WALKER: Seven years, and one appointment each year, so that there was not a complete change at any time, which I think is far better for the professional staff of the schools.

HOLLAND: I think you said to me earlier that because then one particular School Board couldn't throw out or change the professional staff?

WALKER: Yes. I think that's really very hard on the professional.

HOLLAND: To have a completely--or a majority of the members new on the School Board.

WALKER: Yes.

HOLLAND: Did you receive any compensation when you were a member of the School Board?

WALKER: I don't remember any on the county Board. At one time, I remember we would get a check for about fifteen dollars every time there would be a state meeting, but I think that was to pay your expenses of getting back and forth.

HOLLAND: We'd like to know something about the members who served with you on the local School Board.

WALKER: The members of the county Board serving with me were Mrs. Daniel Walser from '34 to '45. She was the former president of the PTA at Chevy Chase Elementary. Mr. James T. Stadler from '35 to '45. I don't remember very much about him. Mr. J. Upton Leeman from '38 to '44. Mr. F. K. Metsger from '39 to '46. He was from Sandy Spring and he was a real estate appraiser. Mr. Albert W. Walker from '41 to '43. He was quite a prominent builder and real estate developer. He built Wood Acres and Westmoreland. Mr. Arthur B. Josephs from '43 to '50. He was from Takoma Park. He was the executive



assistant of the Bliss Electrical School. Mr. H. Stanley Stine from 1945 to '52. He was from Silver Spring, and he was an official of the D. C. Title Company. Mrs. Helen T. Mc Hauck [Her husband was a government officer]....

HOLLAND: How do you spell that?

WALKER: H A U C K.

. . . from '45 to '47. I think they moved away. Mr. James W. Gill from Silver Spring. He was a lawyer and a former member of the state Legislature. Mrs. Durwood Sandifer from '46 to '53. She was from Silver Spring, active in PTA, and wife of an official of the State Department dealing with United Nations affairs. Mrs. Herman Wilson from '47 to '51. She was from the up-county, active in PTA and other community affairs. She and her husband maintained and operated the Methodist Home in Gaithersburg.

HOLLAND: Would you feel that these people were Republicans or Democrats?

WALKER: I don't really know.

HOLLAND: Well, do you think that the political parties exerted any influence on the members of the School Board?

WALKER: Definitely not.

HOLLAND: When I talked to you before, I asked you if you knew about the Supervisor of School Property job. Did you have a chance to find out what his job was and who appointed him?

WALKER: I tried to find out. It was only for a very short [time] that we had anyone like that, and I think he was appointed by the County Commissioners, but I'm not sure.

HOLLAND: And his job, evidently, was to oversee the school property?

WALKER: Yes, it must have been.

HOLLAND: We're interested in knowing if any of the School Board members were appointed as a result of the recommendations from the citizens nominating convention, which I believe was in 1948.

WALKER: I didn't know anything like that existed.

HOLLAND: Do you recall how the Governor reacted to the wish of the Montgomery County citizens to the suggested nominees for appointment to the Boards of Education? That's a complicated question.

WALKER: I don't quite understand the question.

HOLLAND: Evidently, Montgomery County citizens, some of them who formed this nominating convention, wanted to suggest nominees to the Governor for appointment to the Board. The question was--do you remember anything about his reaction?

WALKER: I don't remember anything about the [convention]. I thought that had developed later after the charter came in.

HOLLAND: It may be that our date was wrong.  
I understand that you have a definite preference for appointed boards over elected boards.

WALKER: Yes, because I feel that with an elected board, you don't know who you are going to get. Now, mostly on the appointed boards, you would get someone from different experiences, and I felt that the Board of Education should be an advisory board to work with the professional educators, not tell them how to teach and what books to use, and this, that and the other, but to help them make decisions with things that, maybe, they were not quite as familiar with as the members of the Board might be from their outside connections. [You would not expect a Hospital Board to tell the doctors how to treat their patients.]

As it is now, you could get all lawyers. You could get all doctors. You could get all PTAs. You could get all of one kind. You don't know what you are going to get, but in this other way, I felt that, at the time, there were people on there of such varied experiences that they could be more of a help than ones that might have been on if they had been elected.

HOLLAND: That's very interesting.

WALKER: For instance, you take Mr. Josephs, there. He was an executive assistant of the Bliss Electrical School. He knew about the running of a school [building]. Mr. Albert Walker was a builder, and in our building, he gave good advice. Mr. Stanley Stine, an official of the D. C. Title Company, knew what land was being bought, what was being paid for it, the value of land, where things were going to be built.

It seems to me that they had experiences like that, which you could get with an elected board, too, but you're not as sure that you're going to get it.

HOLLAND: I think that is quite so. Would you like to tell us a little bit about the critical issues that faced the local Board during your term of the war years and post-war years?

WALKER: First, we had the impact of the World War Two. There was a shortage of teachers. There was a large turnover of students. The need for defense programs related to war activities, mainly vocational for pupils and adults. The first large population increase in the county, changing Montgomery County from a rural, farming county to a suburban [county], calling for a change of curriculum.

We had to meet demands of dissident groups, reflecting national unrest following the war.

HOLLAND: That's interesting. We keep thinking, I think, that dissident groups only started in the last few years.

WALKER: Well, we are at war. That's right. The same thing.

HOLLAND: Was there a qualified staff during this period of great growth? Or was this one of the big problems--to find staff for the schools?

WALKER: There was a problem. So many of these teachers were sent to war and then. . . . Well, I don't know. It was quite a problem.

HOLLAND: And I assume that the building costs were terrific during this time.

WALKER: Yes, they were.

HOLLAND: Would you like to tell a little bit about one or more of the dissident groups you spoke about?

WALKER: Yes. I have a Xerox copy here of a Board meeting in July of 1948.

The Board received a communication from Mrs. Duncan H. Brooks, embodying the recommendations of a group of parents who are dissatisfied with the present school curriculum. In reply to Mrs. Brooks' request, the Board released its plans for the summer workshop, which will deal with a study of the county curriculum, and specifically invited all parents to attend and make contributions to this workshop.

The workshop was already planned, but we then opened it up to the public.

At this same meeting, the Board received communications in support of the Montgomery County School program from the Eastern Suburban Area PTA Study Group, the League of Women Voters, the AAUW of B-CC, that's the American Association of University Women, Child Study Group of Montgomery County, the Leland Junior High School PTA, a group of interested citizens, seventeen signers, and Mr. Milton R. Berlin of Silver Spring.

Mrs. Esther Brook Bloomer, chairman of the Education Committee of the Montgomery County League of Women Voters, and Mrs. Benjamin B. Baylor, Jr., president of the Leland Junior High School PTA, appeared before the Board, and on behalf of their respective organizations, expressed their earnest endorsement of the underlying principles of the Montgomery County School program.

HOLLAND: So the dissident group was of the parents of the school children.

WALKER: Yes, and I don't think many of them showed up at that summer workshop to make any suggestions.

HOLLAND: That's often the way, I think. Well, how well did you feel that the School Board met the critical issues of that time? Do you think that they. . . .

WALKER: I think this. It's very simple. The Board maintains the strength of the educational system by being flexible. We listened to people we discussed with, and I think that they did a very wonderful job.

HOLLAND: Very good.

Since coming here to Montgomery County, I've heard a great deal about Dr. Broome, who was school superintendent of Montgomery County. Would you talk to me about Dr. Broome, the man, and what he was like?

WALKER: Well, in my opinion, he was a dedicated, modest, much beloved, great man, completely selfless. I remember so well when we wanted to raise his salary, he would not accept it until the teachers' salaries had been raised also.

I would like to quote a paragraph from the exercises held on his retirement, which, I think, exemplifies the feelings that most everyone had for him. This is in quotations.

"He has devoted his life to the children of this county, working for them with love and understanding, planning to provide for them the essentials for good schools, the buildings, the books, and special services. He has inspired their teachers with a sense of their influence and responsibility. By the quiet strength of his personality, he has imbued them with his philosophy of the worthiness of all people. He has encouraged the discouraged, challenged the indifferent and stimulated the gifted. He has given of himself unsparingly to further any movement for community betterment, particularly if it would help young people."

HOLLAND: How very glowing. He sounds like a great leader.

WALKER: Well, I think that's the way that most people who knew him felt about him.

HOLLAND: What would you say was his philosophy of education?

WALKER: His philosophy of education was, basically, not to be so committed to any one process that you could not change when change was needed.

Learning by doing. Our reactions to it. Teachers and children working together. Whatever was taught had to be real. He believed that, in the degree that people could understand each other, they could work together to resolve problems.

His relationship to his Board and other public bodies was good because he had the ability to see things objectively and help others to see them. His scientific approach to human growth and development, as it relates to needs of children, spread to the whole state. He cooperated and often led in all social welfare agencies.

HOLLAND: So that you would say then that his influence was not only on the Montgomery County Schools, but also throughout the state?

WALKER: Definitely. He took the lead in state salary improvement. He fathered the teachers' retirement system, which was accepted as a model by many states and highly recommended by the National Education Association.

He established a work experience program for students in school for a half day and on the job a half day. The teachers would help place them in a job, and they would receive full credit for work.

He established high school counselor service with no state aid. These started in the Blair and B-CC High Schools.

HOLLAND: What you are saying is that the county with its local taxes then paid for the counselors.

WALKER: Yes.

HOLLAND: That's very interesting. I gather that there was a group called the Three R Dissidents.

WALKER: Yes.

HOLLAND: And those were the ones that you spoke about, the parents that came and had the problem.

WALKER: Yes.

- HOLLAND: I was going to ask you how he met them, but he evidently met them by having this course open to them.
- WALKER: Well, this course had already been planned, a teachers' workshop. But we invited the public to come and listen to them and make suggestions, but I don't think many of them showed up, many dissidents, that is.
- HOLLAND: Was their demand that there be greater emphasis on the Three R's?
- WALKER: Well, I think there always has been.
- HOLLAND: Well, let me hear some more about what Dr. Broome did in the public schools.
- WALKER: Well, some of his innovations. He standardized the one room schools and consolidated them. At that time, we had a few little schools scattered all around, but he consolidated them, and made larger schools.
- HOLLAND: I see.
- WALKER: He established kindergartens.
- HOLLAND: Were these public, free kindergartens?
- WALKER: Yes. Junior high schools. The school lunch program. The in-school nurse.
- HOLLAND: Now are you going to tell me some more about the school lunch program and the nursing program?
- WALKER: Yes. The school lunch program started in the Chevy Chase Elementary School. The PTA financed it and operated it. They used PTA dues and the money, of course, that was paid for the lunches, and they did employ a professional dietician who did the shopping and the planning. But the parents went over and prepared the things and washed dishes until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Then eventually, it was taken over by the Board of Education.
- I'd like to say, also, about the in-school nurse. That first in-school nurse was due to the principal of Leland Junior High School. [Helen Bready.]

I remember when I was president of the PTA over there, we asked what she wanted us to do. We didn't try to tell her what to do, and she said, "What this school needs more than anything else is a school nurse." The PTA raised the money and employed and paid the salary of a half-day school nurse. We did it, of course, with the approval of Dr. Broome and the County Health Officer.

Then also the school doctor was established over there, but I don't think the PTA had anything to do with that.

The children brought newspapers once a week. They brought newspapers, and they were piled almost ceiling high in the front part of the school where the people came to pick them up. That was one of the ways we raised the money for this in-school nurse.

HOLLAND: Fine. And then when you spoke about the doctor for the schools, that probably was county-wide not just Leland?

WALKER: I think Leland had the first one, but I think that was county-wide.

Then another one of his innovations [Dr. Broome's]. He established the school doctor and the school psychologist, the school library, vocational and physical education, the summer workshop program for teachers to assist in planning.

Now these people who objected so to the Three R's, they felt that we didn't concentrate enough on that, should realize that the school has to teach more than reading and writing. The time has come when they need vocational and physical education, and they are very, very much in demand now. That doesn't retard them from having reading, writing and arithmetic, too, but they've got to have other things, and there are [only] so many hours a day.

He [Dr. Broome] encouraged the work. . . . His rapport with the PTA was wonderful. He encouraged the work of the PTAs. Some of the new innovations were helped to get started by PTA groups, which I just told you about.



Dr. Broome also established special education for the physically and mentally retarded. The SSI, over in the SSI School, that's Silver Spring Intermediate, helped parents form the Suburban Area Study Group, PTA parents for cerebral palsy.

HOLLAND: I realize that at the time you were most active in community affairs that taxes that people paid in the county didn't pay for many of the services and the equipment that we expect taxes to pay for now, and I gather that these community organizations were very valuable to the community because they provided services that otherwise wouldn't be. I was interested that you were a member of the Norwood Recreation Committee, and I have never heard of that. I wonder if you would tell us its purpose?

WALKER: Well, the Norwood area there had belonged to the United States Government. I think they had a farm or something there, and they discontinued what they were using it for, and they gave it to the county. . . .It was through the leadership [of Emory Bogley, head of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission] that they got a group together over here locally, and we went in, and we started tennis courts, and some of the parents went in and made curtains. We fixed the [building] up, so that the young people could have their parties over there. We would go and chaperone when it was necessary. We really just started that recreation center.

[The old house and part of the present land was given to Montgomery County by the U. S. Department of Agriculture on September 8th, 1937. A larger amount of about 30 acres was deeded over in 1951. The total amount of the park now is about forty-five acres.]

HOLLAND: Who paid for things like tennis courts?

WALKER: I guess, the [county] must have. We insisted on having a recreational director. That was the first one in the county that I know of.

HOLLAND: Well, how were the members of this recreation committee chosen?

WALKER: I've never known how any of them were chosen. I never knew how I got on any of these boards except as somebody said, "If you were on

one board, you probably were on all of them." I never requested it.

I don't know how.

HOLLAND: I also know that you were a member of the Mental Hygiene Society. How did you happen to get interested in that?

WALKER: Well, I think Lavinia Engle and Mr. Fred Lutz were two of the most prominent ones in starting that, and I think she was the one that called me and asked me to come to a meeting, she and Dr. Bullard, who has the psychological home up there. . . .

She [Lavinia Engle] and Dr. Bullard [Oli] and Fred Lutz. There . . . money that had been raised . . . at a horse show. . . . But we employed. . . . Well, we didn't employ him, but a man from the state Mental Hygiene Society, a psychiatrist, and an assistant came over here one day a month. They would interview children who the teachers in the schools felt needed help. This thing grew. I don't know where they got their money. I was treasurer of it for a short time, and I think we only spent five dollars a month to get the [two] people. . . . Their travelling expenses over here, this couple.

But I was only on that committee for a short time, and they went on, and they finally became. . . . They were Mental Hygiene Society. Then they became Mental Health. They got in under the Community Chest funds. . . .

HOLLAND: Well, you also were associated with the Easter Seal organization, only I believe it was called the Organization for Crippled Children.

WALKER: The Montgomery County Society for Crippled Children and Adults. It was started in about 1949 [by] a committee of five. Mr. Robert Shaw; Mr. Henry Gregory, principal of SSI--a Silver Spring school; Dr. Mitchell, head of Montgomery County Health Department; the chairman of the Community Chest; Dr. Austin R. Rohrbaugh, an orthopedic doctor. The presidents were: 1. Robert Shaw, 2. Henry Gregory, 3. Dr. Rohrbaugh, 4. Mrs. Dorland Davis

(her husband was with NIH), 5. Mrs. Curtis Walker, 6. Mrs. Melvin Reese (her husband was County Manager), 7. Dr. Rohrbaugh.]

[Dr. Rohrbaugh] is a very noted orthopedic doctor. He and Dr. Harold Mitchell [and others] who was the school doctor, realizing that all the money that was collected in Montgomery County by Community Chest was going either to . . . was going either to the District of Columbia or to Baltimore. So they decided that we'd better have our own organization, and they got a group of people together, and . . . formed a committee. Do you want to know how we really started?

The first year we only had about four thousand dollars. We employed a speech therapist who was finishing his course at the University of Maryland, and for a short time, he had the children come to him in the Community Chest office. Then a church on the Colesville Pike gave us two rooms in their basement, and the children were sent to him either by doctors or by the schools.

In the fall when school started again, there were not enough patients to make it worthwhile for him, so we loaned him, paid his salary and loaned him to the Board of Education, to the public schools, and paid the half salary of another [therapist]. So there were two therapists then, and they would go to the different schools in the county, so many hours a week. Maybe, they would go to one school for a couple of hours or another, and they would work with, in speech therapy, the children who the teachers felt needed the help.

Then this grew. I don't know. It's grown so now that it's kind of hard to tell you all that happened in between time. The next step was. . . . Just speech therapy lasted for, I think, a couple of years, and then the American Legion Post 105 gave us their building on Rockville Pike. It was, I think, the corner of Montrose and Rockville Pike. They gave us the whole building, the

downstairs. They had a family living upstairs that took care of the place, and there we started the physical therapy and vocational therapy.

The people in Montgomery County have been a wonderful support for this project. Our Easter Seal drive has expanded and increased every year, and the community organizations and women's clubs and men's clubs have donated equipment so that we can give this physical and occupational therapy.

We stayed in this building for quite a few years, and we outgrew it. Then we had a bonanza. A Mr. Joe Gerhart, who built Twinbrook, gave us a large piece of property for free. His architect drew the plans for our building for free. The builders built it at cost. They would pay their laborers but took no profit. Gude Brothers landscaped it, and we have really been doing a marvelous job out there in rehabilitation, both speech and physical. The children are brought out there.

HOLLAND: Where is this now?

WALKER: 2000 Twinbrook Parkway. It's right across from a public school and near a church. We have a very fine group of therapists; I think we have about fifteen speech therapists who will deal with all ages needing it. We also have a preschool for normal intelligence but defects of speech, language and hearing. We have five teachers for that in this nursery school.

We also have a branch down at St. John's Church of thirty-six children. We didn't have room for them out there. We've got to enlarge again. We have an average of a hundred patients for various therapists.

HOLLAND: This would be each month or . . . ?

WALKER: All the time. And about a third of them are adults.

We have very fine equipment. As I said, it's been donated. Our Easter Seal drive has increased enormously. Did I give the present budget?

HOLLAND: No.

WALKER: Our present budget for this year is \$400,000. We are also doing a project. . . .

HOLLAND: May I interrupt before you get into the project? Is there public tax money used in any of this?

WALKER: No.

HOLLAND: It's all contributed?

WALKER: We . . . get some from the state [and county] for some of these children.

HOLLAND: When an adult needs help, for instance, does he have to pay for the help he gets from you?

WALKER: There is a normal price, but they are consulted and they pay what they can, and then the rest comes [from our budget]. I don't know. I don't understand finances anyway, so that's kind of hard for me to tell you about it. I know we are doing all right.

HOLLAND: So what is this project now?

WALKER: It's being done for HEW, and there are eight children of normal intelligence that are set into a working group. They set up a working model for these children, using these children, and there are over eighty teachers in this program. I suppose they come and watch. I don't know just how they go about it, so that they deal with these children within the schools, so that they don't have to come out. [This was three years ago. Please consult the official head. I do not feel competent to go on from here.]

HOLLAND: That's very interesting, and I assume that the money for this program is provided by HEW.

WALKER: Yes. We get some money from outside. We get our Easter Seal drive. We must get it from somewhere, but I don't know just where.

While this is still the official name, the Montgomery County Society for Crippled Children and Adults, and we are affiliated with the state society and the national Society for Crippled Children, but I think we are beginning to be known better in the county as the Easter Seal Treatment Center because that is where they come for help. [And is the name of our drive.]

We have all sorts of ways of getting money. We have the Easter Seal drive. We have a Women's Guild for Crippled Children, who just gave a cocktail buffet this fall where they made several thousands dollars. They give a big spring luncheon [and] fashion show in April at which they make several thousand dollars for us. McDonald's lunchroom recently this spring gave us tickets--we sold for fifty cents. We set up different groups around in different shopping centers, and we sold these tickets. They were good for a double cheeseburger, and every cent of the fifty cents went to Crippled Children, and then you took your ticket--you buy your ticket--and you took it into McDonald's, and you got your cheeseburger. We took in between four and five thousand dollars that way. So there are many ways of raising money. I don't know where it all comes from. I know it doesn't all come from the Easter Seal drive, but it comes in from different ways.

HOLLAND: I understand there is an organization or something called the B-CC Educational Foundation. Could you tell me about that?

WALKER: Yes. Back many years ago, someone gave a thousand dollars anonymously to the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School to Mr. Pyle to help towards the arts and crafts, to help the improvement and working with that. Then contributions were made by individuals. The B-CC graduating classes all gave it each year [for a few years]. Usually they would give something. Memorial to Dorothy Young. Memorial to Thomas W. Pyle. When they died, [money] was sent in.

HOLLAND: Was Dorothy Young a teacher?

WALKER: Yes. She was head of guidance at B-CC.

Then the Longfellow School, who sold out to Friends, when they went out of the existence, their PTA turned over the money that they had.

We worked for many years. We did numerous things that would promote the arts and crafts, and we loaned money and scholarships to [students and] teachers who wanted to take a special course in it. We founded the Men's Camera Club [and Men's Garden Club].

We held art exhibits of B-CC students. When I say B-CC, I mean the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. That includes Walt Whitman. . . . You see, this started before either Walt Whitman or Walter Johnson were built. But these projects were for the students of these three schools. We gave an art exhibit down at Woodward and Lothrop's, and exhibited works of art of graduates, or pupils of those three high schools. They had to sell them. They had a price on them. We had some sent in even from California, from some of the students who were living out there.

Then we sponsored the Tri Tilt Basketball games, and we also, I think, donated band uniforms to the B-CC school. I think that's right. . . .

But our main objective is to finance scholarship loans to young people at four percent interest which could be liquidated gradually after completing the study.

HOLLAND: Mrs. Walker, are you still serving on the board of this foundation?

WALKER: Yes. I think most of the people that are on there have been on for many years. Mrs. Val Sherman. Mr. Ed Stock. Judge Moorman used to be on it. I think he used it when he was running for office. I think he used that as one of his. . . .

HOLLAND: Credentials?

WALKER: Credentials, yes. Mr. Anthony Gould is an old member.

HOLLAND: Well, I think it is interesting that in a public school system, there is something of this sort to help the students go on.

Would you like to say something about the Montgomery County Community College, which, I believe, you say was started while you were on the Board?

WALKER: Yes. The Montgomery County Community College was started about twenty-five years ago. They recently had their twenty-fifth anniversary. They had a very fine affair over at the Washington Cathedral, and a great many of the original people were there. Dr. Pullen came over to it, and several of the Board members, who were Board members at the time. Mrs. Durwood Sandifer, and I, I believe, were the only Board members that were present at the opening of it that were there. But they presented medals to some of those who had helped to get it started.

It's very interesting to know that when it first started, it was in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. They had a little temporary building, and they set some classes at night. It grew. The first year we had a hundred and eighty-six. . . .

HOLLAND: Students.

WALKER: Students, and now in '69 we had seven thousand, three hundred and nineteen. So you see, we grew.

It was there for several years, and then we bought the Bliss Electrical School. They were closing up, and we bought them, and we had it over there in Silver Spring for many years. Then we outgrew that building so we also had a second group out in Rockville. So now it has grown, and it's a very fine community college.

HOLLAND: And I think you told me. . . .



WALKER: The first in the state. It was the first in the state, and it started here under Dr. Broome.

HOLLAND: And you said the first year it started with a faculty of eight or something like that?

WALKER: Yes. Let me see. I don't know how many we have now. We have two hundred and sixty-four full-time, and two hundred and thirty-three part-time faculty. A total of four hundred and ninety-seven.

HOLLAND: And I believe the college has really outgrown the two campuses that it now has.

WALKER: Well, I think they are taking care of things pretty well. I haven't heard any comments.

HOLLAND: Well, there have been articles in the local papers about wanting to expand in Takoma Park. That's all I know.

WALKER: Well, that might be, then.

I am very proud of the fact that it was started while my term on the Board, in fact, I think, the year that I was president, and they have given [me] a medal of honor at this twenty-fifth anniversary, along with six other people.

HOLLAND: I think that's very fine, Mrs. Walker. Mrs. Walker, what do you think about education in general today?

WALKER: Well, I think that I was supposed to say as an educator and as a grandmother. I'll say that I am very much perturbed about all the young people today. I don't know what the cause is, but I want to say that I don't think it is a matter of poor schools. I want to say that in Montgomery County, in the last three years, that ninety-eight point two percent (98.2%) of all the students who finished ninth grade went on to graduate from high school in three years. That's the highest average in the state. And also that seventy percent (70%) in Montgomery County who graduate from high school go on to college, and I think that is very fine. I'm very proud of Montgomery County Schools.

I don't know. I don't think anybody can say. It's a feeling of a time of unrest. I think the war has a lot to do with it. I feel that just as much of the blame is due to the home and the family as it is to the school.

HOLLAND: Mrs. Walker, can we talk now about your service on the Maryland State Board of Education? When did you serve?

WALKER: From 1949 to 1956, or rather into '57. I think a little past the time that my term would have expired, before I was replaced.

HOLLAND: And who appointed you to this?

WALKER: Governor William Preston Lane.

HOLLAND: I don't know that it matters, but was he a Republican or a Democrat?

WALKER: Well, he was a Democrat, but as far as I can remember, I've only known of two Republican Governors of Maryland since I've lived here for over fifty years.

HOLLAND: Could you tell us something about the members who served with you?

WALKER: Tasker G. Lowndes of Cumberland was president. Now, I don't know who he was appointed by, but he was the son of a former Republican Governor of Maryland for many years back. He was a banker of Cumberland and a very fine man, and was elected president of the State Board for several different years.

Nicholas Orem of Hyattsville was the vice president.

HOLLAND: How do you spell his last name?

WALKER: O R E M.

Horace M. Morgan from the Eastern Shore, Queen Anne on the Eastern Shore and Wendell D. Allen of Baltimore. He was a lawyer. His brother was the architect for the Bay Bridge. Mrs. Alvin Thalheimer of Baltimore. Oscar B. Coblentz of Catonsville and myself from Chevy Chase.

Then in 1950, some of these go off, you see, and a new one comes on. I don't remember which ones went off, but the newly appointed one was Jerone Frampton from Federalsburg on the Eastern Shore, and Richard W. Case of Baltimore.

In 1952, Dwight O. W. Holmes of Baltimore. He was a Negro who had been president of Morgan State College, and a very, very fine man.

In 1953, Mrs. Garvin Tankersley of Bethesda. In 1954, Richard Marcus of Pikesville and William A. Gunther of Cumberland. Mr. Marcus died, and his wife was appointed in his place.

HOLLAND: So that there were two or three women on the Board at different times?

WALKER: Well, I think Mrs. Thalheimer, at that time, had gone off, and Mrs. Tankersley only stayed on a short time. Now, she resigned.

HOLLAND: You were appointed for a seven year term?

WALKER: I think that was it, yes.

HOLLAND: And then one or two went off each year?

WALKER: Sometimes they wouldn't appoint someone in your place for maybe a year or so. But Mr. Frampton, I think, is still on. He's been on since 1950 and has been president for a number of years.

HOLLAND: I wonder if there is any particular reason why he is reappointed over and over.

WALKER: No, I don't know.

Now they asked me about their political affiliations, and I have no idea. The people that I have known interested in good education for the children put that interest in first place, and I'm not at all conscious of any political affiliation in any of them. The only reason I mentioned it in Tasker G. Lowndes --he may have been a Democrat by then, but I did just happen to know that he was the son of a former Republican Governor [and was elected president many times by Democrats].

HOLLAND: What important issues came before the State Board while you were on the Board?

WALKER: First, and very important, was the historic 1954 Supreme Court decision, Brown vs. the School Board, relating to integration. A single system was declared. Two equal systems were declared unconstitutional. I received a telephone call about 11 o'clock one night after that decision was given, that we would have a meeting the next morning at 9. We ruled that the state should follow the Supreme Court decision.

Also, number two, the transition of teachers' colleges to state liberal arts colleges and the question of control. The decision for a separate board for each college, no, for, I guess, the combined colleges, was apart from the Board of Education or the University of Maryland. Before that, the teachers' colleges had been under the State Board of Education. Now they would be independent colleges, and not under the University of Maryland.

Number three--the important growth of vocational education and vocational rehabilitation.

Number four--expansion of the system to twelve grades of high schools, counting the complete course, with a developing interest in and the growth of kindergartens. We had had them for some time in Montgomery County, but not all over the state.

Number five--the development of community colleges. The first community college, of course, was in Montgomery County, but they have been developed in different parts of the state now.

HOLLAND: As I understand it, Dr. Pullen was State Superintendent all during your term.

WALKER: Yes.

HOLLAND: Would you tell us about him?

WALKER: He was the State Superintendent for twenty-two years all together. I don't know what date he came in on. As a man, he was raised in a Methodist parsonage by parents who recognized the dangers of ignorance and narrowness. They taught him the importance of intellectual and moral achievement, and a conscientious concern for all mankind. So when he became a teacher, this concern centered on the youth in the school system.

His relationship to his Board and the local school boards was one of mutual respect and understanding with a desire for progress in education throughout the whole state. To the General Assembly, he was a diplomat. I'm using the word "diplomat" instead of "politician" because the word "politician", I find, is not a complimentary phrase to some people. I've never felt that way about it.

He knew how to get appropriations and laws relating to education through the Legislature with dignity and promptness. He really could handle them.

HOLLAND: Well, that's great. Would you tell us something about his contributions to the Maryland public schools?

WALKER: Well, of course, some of those issues that came up were part of his contribution, to the solving of them. One thing, he brought Dr.

Prescott, a noted educator from the University of Chicago to Maryland. He was stationed at the University of Maryland to make individual study of children and set up meetings with groups of about twenty teachers to study the program of training human development. That was quite a fine thing to do, and he was used greatly in Montgomery County.

HOLLAND: In other words, he set up these courses in all the different counties in different. . . .

WALKER: Yes, and in groups of about twenty, and they would study, maybe, one child to get their ideas for the program of training human development.

Number two, he [Dr. Pullen] helped get appropriations from the Legislature to raise teachers' salaries. He worked with the State Teachers' Association very well. They got along beautifully with him.

Number three, he got the state aid for building construction throughout the state. He asked for \$250,000. He had a meeting with the state legislators and Governor O'Connor opposed it because he did not want to raise his budget, but he [Dr. Pullen] was backed by E. Brooke Lee of Montgomery County, who was then Speaker of the House, who turned to him and said, "Well, I agree with you. We will raise it to a half million."

HOLLAND: Do you have any idea when this was?

WALKER: I don't know the exact date, no.

HOLLAND: But up until that time, the counties had paid, completely, for their schools?

WALKER: That's right, and now, recently, quite recently, the state has taken over the complete expense of buildings, and I think [is] in charge of the construction. But that's just lately, and I don't know too much about it.

Then, number four, he /Dr. Pullen/ got aid to the handicapped children, which was raised from \$200 to \$400 in 1949 and to \$600 in 1950, mainly as a result of his efforts.

HOLLAND: Now, this is the amount of money per student that is used for educating those students in special classes?

WALKER: Yes, the handicapped children. We have some of them in our Easter Seal Treatment Center, and I think maybe a few may be in the schools. I don't know.

HOLLAND: Would you also tell us if he [Dr. Pullen] made any contribution to the private schools of Maryland?

WALKER: Yes, he did. He saw that the aid to handicapped children was extended to children in private schools. Then when the compulsory education act was passed, it permitted children to attend private schools, as well as public schools, although it was compulsory, you see, for the child to attend until. . . . I don't remember the exact age. Sixteen, I think. Something like that.

HOLLAND: It's sixteen now.

WALKER: I think that was a national law, but they did permit them to go to private schools. So he set up a board to establish standards and inspection of the private schools to assure that the children would get a proper education. Some of the private schools objected to it, but they all came around eventually, and some of them had to be put out of business because they did not have the proper standards.

Those are the only things that I can think of that he did with the private schools.

HOLLAND: Well, how did you feel about working with Dr. Pullen?

WALKER: Oh, I think that Dr. Broome and Dr. Pullen were two of the greatest men I've ever known, next to my father, and my husband.

HOLLAND: Mrs. Walker, looking back over your years of very active community service, what do you think has given you the most satisfaction?

WALKER: Well, I think my PTA work, the close contact with my children and their teachers in the schools as they went through, and then the Board of Education, both the county and the state. Then I believe the Easter Seal Treatment Center--I would say the real name of that is the Society for Crippled Children and Adults. I worked very hard on that. Two of the [Easter Seal] campaigns were done from my recreation room downstairs. My husband came in and said, "Please get those people out of here because my secretary

can't work." But I really have enjoyed being those contacts very, very much.

HOLLAND: Well, I thank you very much for letting [me] come and interview you. I've learned a lot more about education particularly, in the county.

WALKER: Well, I think you probably knew it, maybe not in the county, but I am sure you. . . . I can tell from the way you talk that you have the background.

HOLLAND: Well, thank you very much.