



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK  
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

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**Interview with Virginia Myers**

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**Interviewer:** Andrea Kerr

**Transcriber:** Rachel Mears

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TAPE 1/SIDE 1

**KERR:** ... full name?

**MYERS:** Alice Virginia Myers.

**KERR:** Okay, and just so that we can do a little background information, can you talk about where you were born? And if you want to, when you were born?

**MYERS:** Well, I don't care, I'm not shy. I was born in Manassas, Virginia on October the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1924. I don't know just how long I lived there and I moved to Washington not too long afterwards. I moved to Washington at five years old when I went to school at, I don't know if it was Stuart or Hilton.

**KERR:** Okay.

**MYERS:** ... on Capitol Hill.

**KERR:** Okay, all right good. I'm going to pause for a moment and adjust your microphone. So you arrived on Capitol Hill with your family and can you tell me something about your family?

**MYERS:** Yes, course I had a mother that stayed at home and a father that worked at Ford Packard Company—wait a minute, Ford Packard Company, Packard? Was it Ford Packard [laughs], well it was Packard at any rate, that I'm sure of [interviewer responds affirmatively]. Night watchman.

Then I had, I'm the youngest of nine. I had four brothers and four sisters and we all lived at Fourth and East Capitol Street up over that market there for many years. When we moved I can't remember that date, but that's where I went to school, walked to Peabody, I may have said the school wrong. Walked to Peabody, and enjoyed the walk. Because of course in the country we couldn't walk to school, I didn't remember my schooling in the country.

**KERR:** What grade were you in when you got to?

**MYERS:** I think I was in the first ...

**KERR:** In the first grade?

**MYERS:** Yeah, I think I had gone to the kindergarten before I came here.

**KERR:** And how old was the oldest of your siblings then?

**MYERS:** [laughs] I can't tell you that, but they were pretty well up there. I'm trying to think of the oldest one living and I can't even do that now. I'm going through some memory difficulties.

**KERR:** That's not a problem, not a problem. Were there other children in the neighborhood?

**MYERS:** Oh yes, two doors away was a barbershop and it was run by an Italian man and he had a son and a daughter. I'm trying to remember, it was two sons, I don't know if it was two sons or one son and a daughter and a vicious dog [both laugh]. And I was told not to go in the yard when nobody else was there and I did get to retrieve something and got bit badly [laughs].

**KERR:** Oh my.

**MYERS:** We had a doctor across the street, let's see that would have been Fourth Street. Doctor across the street and so he had to do some stitches and he watched it in case there would be infection, but I didn't have any trouble with it. But I was told never to go in the yard again [laughs]. I'd been told not to in the first place. Of course I didn't go in the yard alone, but I did play with the girl and her brother some. He often pushed us in the swing, he was very generous that way. So I did play with them in the yard, but I didn't go alone.

I don't remember how long we lived there, but it seemed to me a right good time and I'm no good at telling ... I went to Carbery, but whether I went right from Peabody to Carbery I don't know. And of course Hilton's in there some place [laughs] and I don't remember that.

**KERR:** What was the neighborhood like when you were a little girl? There was a barbershop, was the shop there?

**MYERS:** I lived over a grocery store, but there was a barbershop there. He was the barbershop, the Italian man, the father of these children that I played with. And he did a fairly good business. There was another shop that was quite interesting to me close to it, but that I can't remember too plainly other than I looked in the windows so it had some interesting ... [laughs]

**KERR:** And these shops were on East Capitol?

**MYERS:** Facing East Capitol, yes.

**KERR:** Yes.

**MYERS:** I lived in an apartment over the grocery store and the grocery store was right on the corner and the side of it was Third Street and the other part was C Street.

**KERR:** I see. And your family lived here? Did you ...

**MYERS:** Yes.

**KERR:** It must have been a good-sized apartment.

**MYERS:** It was a good size. It was a lovely shaped apartment, we had a big time at that apartment because it had, when you went up steps over the store and it was shaped so that it was a—I don't know bathroom first or bedroom and then it was the kitchen and then there was another bedroom and then a lovely living room and in that living room was like a stage so of course we were all actresses and actors.

**KERR:** Oh what fun.

**MYERS:** And then another big room and then in the middle was another bedroom. I can't remember just exactly how many. But it slept us all and then we had a cousin that came and stayed with us for a while. So with my four brothers and that cousin we were pretty full.

**KERR:** I think you must have been [both laugh].

**MYERS:** And it was a long flight of steps, but we kind of enjoyed living there. I don't remember why we left, but of course it seems to me like the reason we left: the one brother got involved in a bakery that was on Seventh Street and we lived over that bakery and I imagine rent free because I think he owned the building when he bought the bakery, but I don't know that for sure.

**KERR:** Were you in high school when you moved above the bakery? Do you remember when?

**MYERS:** I don't remember just where I was in school, but I definitely had to be close to high school. I was trying to remember when I started to Stuart where—I can't remember the building [laughs]. Because the walk to Stuart was long after the walk to Peabody. Stuart is not that far from Peabody, but it seemed ... I remember doing some complaining about how long that walk was. But now, well now I'd probably fuss more because I'm older. But it wasn't that bad.

And then of course we stayed in the neighborhood—I don't remember every place we lived—but we stayed in the neighborhood even through ... The last place that I remember well is 516 D Street NE and that was where I went to Eastern. I did walk to school and I've always been so proud of that [laughs]. Of course, I have one very bad memory. We were coming down the street one day really talking and laughing, several of us, and someone meeting us must have misinterpreted that we were laughing at them and they pushed one of the other people and I got pushed into the street so I had a real nasty face there for awhile. But I don't even think it was meant for me, I think it was accidental, but it was kind of a bad memory. But we didn't stop walking. In fact, later when I moved into D Street I walked to Eastern too. And I enjoyed that.

**KERR:** And what was Eastern High School like in those days?

**MYERS:** It was a very big school and my teacher seemed like such a shy little thing—I couldn't imagine her as a teacher—but several of the men were more aggressive [laughs]. I wish I could remember the principal's name—I liked him quite well—it was the assistant principal that I didn't care too much for. One time we were making some noise in the hall, but I was the only one who got fussed at, but I wasn't the only one that was making noise so I didn't like him after that [both laugh].

**KERR:** And such are teenage memories made I think [laughing].

**MYERS:** Right [laughing].

**KERR:** Tell me what it was like in school in those days? People tended to be orderly, obedient, what?

**MYERS:** Well, a good mixture I would think. I never heard, I cannot remember ever hearing of people sassing a teacher. But I do know there were some words sometimes where they were threatened with punishment, but what they ever did beside stand in a corner I don't remember and I don't think it was anything serious to that. And of course I remember a lot of "I'll tell my Mom on you." I don't think I ever remember hearing "I'll tell my Daddy on you." One of my teachers, course I can't remember what grade that [unintelligible]. Her name was Birch something and we always called her Birch Tree ... [both laugh]

**KERR:** Now one of your brothers had the bakery?

**MYERS:** Yes he ran his bakery on Seventh or Eighth Street, we lived above it and oh we loved that. [laughs]

**KERR:** Oh I imagine that smelled good.

**MYERS:** Yes and we had all the pastries. I don't know how well he did in the business. I'm not sure it was up quite that far. It was up on Sixth Street [unintelligible], I know. I don't know how well he did in the business; I don't know how long we stayed there. But I guess he got married and of course the rest of the family didn't want to run the bakery. But I didn't think we lived there when he got married, but I can't be sure of that. But he worked pretty hard at it, and of course I think my father and other brother that was at home ... I didn't mention that one of my brothers lived in the mountains of Virginia [unintelligible]. Then the one brother had gone to Tennessee so we didn't have but two brothers at home. The youngest brother, he worked in the Government Printing Office after he got older, but I think he spent a lot of his time driving a cab to begin with. And I don't know what happened to make us move from there. And we moved on D Street NE and that's when I was saying we walked to and from Sibley. And then from D Street I think we lived on C Street and D Street and then we moved to Virginia.

**KERR:** Oh your family moved to Virginia?

**MYERS:** Yeah, and we finally moved over to Arlington.

**KERR:** When you were how old?

**MYERS:** I think I was in—I walked to high school. It had to be pretty well late in high school because I walked to Stuart for high school.

**KERR:** And then you graduated from high school?

**MYERS:** That's what I'm trying to remember? Did I graduate from Stuart or I'm saying Stuart, but Eastern was the high school. Did I graduate from that? I think I graduated from Eastern. The principal's name was Reynolds. I remember that at Eastern [laughs]. Just when we moved to Virginia I can't remember. I guess we moved—well, see I had a sister at home and she'd married and they did so much to help us after the brothers left. And I guess that's when we moved to Virginia. She worked at the bookshop up town, Purcell's Bookshop and I loved that because she'd bring me books on the weekend to read. I was a Nancy Drew fan [laughs].

**KERR:** Of course, of course.

**MYERS:** And she'd bring those books over the weekend. And of course, I was able to walk there some too because if things were going on uptown sometimes I walked on Saturdays or after work to things uptown because it was close enough to walk. I would not do that now [laughs].

**KERR:** Tell me what things went on uptown like what did you go to do?

**MYERS:** Parades. We had a lot of parades in those days. I can't just remember all the subjects of them or themes as you said, but...

**KERR:** [unintelligible]

**MYERS:** Oh the sports too. I don't want to forget those. I don't think any of the teams I was too interested did very good, but we had them and as I said we walked to and from ... That was one reason when my sister married, she married a man that was so helpful to us getting to and from these sports affairs. We liked to go up around the Washington Monument and ride the bicycle around the monument. I don't know if they do that much nowadays, but that was really a big part of our lives.

**KERR:** You would ride your bicycles from Capitol Hill down to ...

**MYERS:** No, my brother-in-law took us up, but we had to walk back and then we were tired and [unintelligible]. Or maybe it was the other way, that we walked up and then he brought us home after he got off from work [interviewer responds affirmatively]. And it was a good walk.

**KERR:** When you talk about going to sporting events, did you mean professional sporting events or school?

**MYERS:** No, school. I was much older. Now at junior high I went to a lot of basketball and I played some basketball. I played a little bit of basketball with a fellow who was very good, went on to get a little bit of notice, but never a big star. Natale Kapernicki [sp?]<sup>2</sup>—that's a hard name to remember, but I really enjoyed watching him play.

But then when I went to Eastern, we went to a lot of basketball and there were a lot of games. Again, we'd just come after school was over and then and then just walk home after. And I think we'd go to the games and get home before it got dark. The games are mostly in warm weather. [unintelligible]. So we did a lot of sports going in and of course having brothers in my family and the one nephew that was growing up then was so interested in sports. We went to lots of Senators game.

**KERR:** Oh did you?

**MYERS:** I loved those, I tell you. Buddy Lewis and Cecil Travis [laughs].

**KERR:** You got to see all the great old baseball ...

**MYERS:** Players, yes. Let's see, of course the prices went down to, well, of course that was a long time after some of this ... The price went down to, I think it was a quarter on Friday.

**KERR:** Oh my.

**MYERS:** So of course I could afford to go and take some of the nephews and we just had a ball.

**KERR:** And you could walk there? [both talking at same time]

**MYERS:** Now we were living not at East Capitol when we started going to the baseball games. Well we had lived on C Street and then we moved to D Street and we walked from D Street to the old Griffith [uncertain word] Stadium. I don't know if it's very visible now or not, but it's still there. You can tell it's still there. And we used to enjoy that too.

**KERR:** Is that the one that's the RFK Stadium?

**MYERS:** No, no. RFK is completely new. Griffith Stadium was on Seventh and Florida Avenue [NW].

**KERR:** Ah.

**MYERS:** Griffith was the owner of it and we really enjoyed it. We could walk, we did as we got older we got lazier and could bum some money to ride at least one way. And of course we did pretty good

bumming rides. Course some of the neighborhood parents were glad to give us the ride home, then I took them—they'd have me go with them, so that the young boys could go. But some of them were nephews too. Imagine that—it was a quarter. [laughs] that was the day that Buddy Lewis and Cecil Travis—oh he was my favorite—I don't remember many more that was playing then, but I really enjoyed that.

**KERR:** You had your growing up in some very hard times, didn't you?

**MYERS:** Yes, Yes. We were very short on money. My sister worked at this bookstore as I said and after she got married they took the apartment in the house we were in—she and her husband. They gave us a little extra money. But we lived on Social Security for a long time. One time I lost it. And ...

**KERR:** [unintelligible] you lost it?

**MYERS:** No it was stolen [unintelligible]. I thought I brought it home and put it in the top drawer, but ...

**KERR:** Oh my.

**MYERS:** ... it disappeared. So I don't know if it was stolen or lost, but it was hard those days. Of course my mother was unable to work and my father, as I said, he worked for Packard. I keep wanting to [say] Packard Ford Company, were they one company at that time, I wonder? I don't know [unintelligible]. But anyway he worked long hours and was home at night times, but it was no great salary. We lived on Social Security. And of course some people look down on that so much, but we were glad we had it [laughs].

**KERR:** Well, this was the time of the Depression, right?

**MYERS:** Yes, yes, yes. My brother drove a cab, besides he worked at the Government Printing Office. Besides working there he drove a cab to make extra money for us. And we had a big house, but we had a big family so, but we did rent out some of the house to help us with paying for the house. Of course houses and apartments were much cheaper in those days. It was a little rough going, but we did it pretty well and I had a fairly decent schooling. I went to regular school at Stuart, at Carbery, and Hilton and then I went to Stuart [uncertain] and then to Eastern.

**KERR:** [responds affirmatively]

**MYERS:** Of course I enjoyed Eastern very much. We had a good band at Eastern too.

**KERR:** So, and were you part of it?

**MYERS:** No, I never had any talent [laughs].

**KERR:** Never played an instrument?

**MYERS:** No, and I never did any good with singing. I like to sing [laughs] I didn't [unintelligible].

**KERR:** So your friends were mostly from the neighborhood or did they come from ...

**MYERS:** Yes, my friends were mostly from the neighborhood. And we walked together, I think there were four to six of us going to and from. In fact, one day coming home we were coming home and we met up with some girls and I don't know exactly how we were walking, but anyway the girls in front were making sarcastic remarks to the girls coming towards us. So then we got even they pushed us and girls they pushed missed it, but I went right into a tree and did I have a messed up face for awhile [laughs].

**KERR:** Oh my, oh my.

**MYERS:** And I always thought you know this wasn't my fault at all, but I got it. Because I wasn't even in the conversation.

**KERR:** No.

**MYERS:** But that was just part of the, you know we had nice things happen too. A lot of the neighbors were so good to us. A lot of good neighbors. We were across the street, we lived on D Street then and we was across the street from, I want to say, Stuart Junior High, but it wasn't. It was a development house like boys and girls came there and played and there was more to it than just the sports, but I can't remember what the name was right now.

**KERR:** Something like a Girls and Boys club?

**MYERS:** A Boys Club, yes. I want to say Stuart Boys Club, but I know that's not right. Metro—no it's not Metropolitan Boys Club because that was Metropolitan Police Boys Club, but anyway it was that type of thing and we saw a lot of them playing. [ed: most likely she is describing Merrick Boys Club.]

**KERR:** The people all went there? Did your brothers go there and play. Or were they too old?

**MYERS:** Well, now my brothers were working by that time.

**KERR:** Oh they were?

**MYERS:** [responds affirmatively]

**KERR:** And did you go there?

**MYERS:** I went some. But I don't think I was good enough [laughs] if you wanted to play [uncertain] with the sports [laughs]. I think my brothers played with me alright, but as far as the other kids in that

neighborhood. But I don't know, we went in groups and so on and so forth so I don't know just how many of us ended up playing and everything.

**KERR:** And did you go out at night in high school? What did you do for social life?

**MYERS:** Well, we had a lot of school entertainment. We had, some of us—I was trying to remember what grade, if whether it was as high as the sixth grade—had kind of a group that went from house to house for parties. My father was very good about walking us to and from the house. I think there was another father that did a lot of that. And you know, they were just all in the house, there wasn't [unintelligible]. And later we did play more outside a little bit later. You know as the days got longer, but I don't think we did too much sports then. We did a lot of visiting, parties, and that was before drinking became a big thing.

**KERR:** And you'd say your house parties were—what did you do?

**MYERS:** Well, games, I was trying to think of what that game was we used to play so much. Well, hide and go seek for one, but there were some others, hiding things, and guessing things. Like you'd hold something up behind your back, "What am I holding?" and you'd guess all these things. And you'd give a few little descriptions of it and there were a few other little more action games, but I don't remember. Oh! We played [unintelligible], jump rope, hopscotch, and of course we'd play—now one of the friends lived across from Stuart, which was a pretty wide sidewalk at that time and we did play some baseball then, but I don't know how many boys and girls there were, but they were not very large. But we were out quite a bit. We did have some dances. I was never any good at dancing so I didn't get interested in that. I was just too clumsy [laughs].

**KERR:** In high school?

**MYERS:** Uh, huh. Well, in Junior High School even. I don't know if I went to much in the high school—yeah, I guess I did go to some high school dances, but I was not a very attractive girl so I wasn't popular with the boys.

**KERR:** O, I don't believe that for a minute, [interviewee laughs] I don't believe that. Were there streetcars? How did you travel?

**MYERS:** Oh yes, we traveled on streetcars and we traveled on those that you know the sides were out. What did you call them, summer ones. We loved those. We had some buses, but of course that was way before the subway. And we really enjoyed that, but we did a lot of walking in those days too because we didn't have an overabundance of money. Now summertime we did more riding, I think, because we were worked at summer jobs. A lot of the neighborhood stores were good about giving us jobs. Delivery jobs.

[interviewer responds affirmatively] But it was certainly not very lucrative, but for our needs at that time it was a help.

**KERR:** Where did your family do its shopping?

**MYERS:** Well, now we lived over the one grocery store. Now wait a minute—when we got to D Street I think we went to a Safeway up on Third Street. I think we went to Safeways most of the time. But I'm sure we went to some other stores from time to time. There was a little bit of bickering in the family, which was best, Safeway or A&P. So somebody went to the A&P some. And of course, one person didn't do all the shopping. Sometime my mother did it, but sometime my sister did it and she was the one who worked the hardest. I don't know about the boys, well the brothers would get spells. The one brother drove a cab so he was often seeing things he wanted to visit. The other brother, as I've said, worked in Ford.

**KERR:** Did the family go to Eastern Market to shop?

**MYERS:** Not much. At the early stages, we did later on after I got older and I think one of my older sisters we went to Eastern Market and we liked it very much. I don't know why we didn't go there more than we did. But we did like it. And there was a Safeway there by Eastern Market that we liked. I was trying to think of what else was there, there was a small A&P, but wasn't it called Tea Company then? A&P Tea Company. And there was something else, but of course see that was right there close to, I want to say Stuart Junior High School, but it wasn't. It was Hines ...

**KERR:** Okay.

**MYERS:** ... was in that block. But I don't know why we missed going to Hines, why we went to Stuart. I don't understand that. Whether we weren't living quite there at that time or what.

**KERR:** That's interesting, yeah. Maybe you'd moved at some point [Interviewee responds affirmatively]. What did you do after you graduated from high school?

**MYERS:** Well, after I graduated from high school. Well, I worked in summers in Nedick's. So that's gone from Washington now. And then I awhile for that afterwards and then you know it was pretty soon that I went in a bank to work and worked. I worked 40 some years in a bank ...

**KERR:** [unintelligible]

**MYERS:** ... when I quit. And, of course, it was hard work at times, but I think it was a [unintelligible]. You meet a lot of people [laughs] and so on and so forth. I had some nice girl friends and so on and so forth. We walked a lot of places together; we didn't have to have a lot of money for our entertainment.

We were a sightseeing people too. We really enjoyed being Washingtonians. One of our biggest thrills was riding on bicycles up around, I may have mentioned, the Haines Point. My brother-in-law was so good about giving us rides one way or the other. He couldn't put all the bicycles in the car, but we'd take turns getting some of the bicycles in the car so that we could ... But I think that we went on the bicycles most of the time. I can't remember all my jobs, but I think most of my jobs, I worked pretty much in—well I worked in a grocery store. I worked in the library for a short time.

**KERR:** Which library?

**MYERS:** Eastern, no, no, no, no, no.

**KERR:** Southeastern?

**MYERS:** Southeastern. No, it was another one over there.

**KERR:** There's a Northeast branch too.

**MYERS:** Northeast branch. But I don't think I worked there very long, but I did and I liked it. But I don't know why I didn't work very long because I was a big reader. Maybe I was too sloppy.

**KERR:** Oh I doubt that.

**MYERS:** I doubt that.

**KERR:** Now you worked in a bank in Washington. Where did you live, when you were ...

**MYERS:** When I started working in the bank, I lived on D Street NE. But then of course by the time I retired I had lived all over the city and in Virginia awhile. I got quite a few different areas. I lived in the Auburn Towers, it's really gotten fancy. [ed: maybe Alban Towers, 3700 Massachusetts Avenue NW.] It wasn't that fancy, that was after I started supporting myself. But I did live in quite a few different areas.

**KERR:** When did your family leave Capitol Hill?

**MYERS:** Well, I don't know if you can say they actually left. My sisters married and moved away, but my father died—I can't tell you the years—and then one brother moved to Roanoke and one brother moved to Southwest where he worked with newspapers. My parents lived at Fourth and East Capitol Street for a long time. I was trying to think of the last place we lived ... Oh my father was still living when we lived on D Street NE. My mother was still living then. I guess my father was still working at the Packard Company. But then what was your other question?

**KERR:** Were they in the house on East Capitol until they died?

**MYERS:** No, no.

**KERR:** I meant on Capitol Hill.

**MYERS:** From East Capitol we moved to C Street and then D Street.

**KERR:** D Street, right. Were they were on D Street.

**MYERS:** They were on D Street when he died and she died, yes. And then, you know, I lived there a long time after they both died.

**KERR:** You did?

**MYERS:** I rented the house, the apartment up above me and stayed there for a long time. Had some lovely people living there. And nice kids in the neighborhood to play with.

**KERR:** Did you go to church on Capitol Hill?

**MYERS:** I did some, but actually I went to church in Northwest. We had grown up in this Marvin, I'm trying to think of the word, Memorial was in there at that time. Marvin Methodist Church at 11<sup>th</sup> and, well it was across from where the Airplane Museum is.

**KERR:** Okay.

**MYERS:** 11<sup>th</sup> Street and what is that big street? That's not Independence Avenue, but anyway it was up in that area. And we walked for a long time, the kids of us walked. My mother went as long as we could get rides. And went there until we moved, well actually the church was torn down, and I went to Wall [?] Church, it's at Third and Eighth [H?] Street Northeast. So we kind of got around.

**KERR:** And so even though you had a church a block away, your family continued to go to one that was in Northwest.

**MYERS:** No, no. I'm trying to get the time element in my mind. No, I don't think there was a church any closer. There was a Baptist Church close, but I think the Methodist Church was the only, the one was Northwest.

**KERR:** So that was quite a trek for...

**MYERS:** Yeah, and we walked most of the time. Except night meetings we took the streetcars. We didn't have the subways then.

**KERR:** And where would the streetcar take you? Where would you catch it and where would you go?

**MYERS:** Well we caught it right on D Street and then we'd get off there by the Airplane Museum. So it was real close to the church and of course we'd get rides home a lot of the times so it wasn't always that bad. People were very good about giving rides. Of course, I still think they are.

**KERR:** That must have been ... The streetcar went on D Street, doesn't seem to be a wide enough street to let two street cars come pass each other.

**MYERS:** No, it wasn't. The streetcar on D Street went down to 13<sup>th</sup> and turned and came back on C Street and then it went up to Mount Pleasant and came back.

**KERR:** Okay.

**MYERS:** So it was just one line.

**KERR:** Did you travel to the zoo?

**MYERS:** Oh yes, on the streetcar. We loved the zoo, we loved the museums. Of course some of those, especially like the Airplane Museum, I liked the ones with ... oh, one of the funniest things was I went in—well we called it the New Museum at that time—where they had a lot of stuffed animals. [unintelligible] [interviewee laughs]. I was the only one who wasn't scared. So we had a good time in there. They had a good Indian collection and one of us was studying Indians in school and boy they really got a nice grade on the paper that they wrote after that. It was very interesting.

**KERR:** Was the family involved at all in politics?

**MYERS:** No, one of them started to run for something, but they didn't get very far. We were active in church. My mother attended school activities pretty well. I don't think my father, of course, well of course working where he did, he worked night work. There weren't school activities at night. I think the brother worked at Packard, I don't know where anybody else worked so I don't remember too much of all the activities. We went to a lot of school meetings, we had a lot of school meetings at that time.

[interruption when someone knocks on door and speaks briefly]

**KERR:** Okay, we had left off, and we talking a little bit about the streetcars, and getting to and from, and what you did for pleasure.

**MYERS:** Oh, one thing about the streetcars, can I go back to them?

**KERR:** Sure, of course.

**MYERS:** They had kind of like the sides were open. What did we call ... open air streetcars. They were fun. One of the biggest thrills was going to Glen Echo in that open-air streetcar.

**KERR:** Oh. Tell me how you did that?

**MYERS:** Well, we just got on the streetcar and went to Glen Echo. That was an amusement park, and it was a good little distance, but it was a fun drive on those ... I'm sure some parents were nervous about it, but I was old enough to not get too careless so that my mother didn't worry. As I said, that was fun.

**KERR:** And it probably cost at most a dime.

**MYERS:** A dime?

**KERR:** To get there.

**MYERS:** It seems like some things were fifteen cents.

**KERR:** On the streetcar I meant.

**MYERS:** Yeah.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

**KERR:** Okay, let's resume. So when you would go to Glen Echo you would leave early in the morning, would you plan to spend all day?

**MYERS:** Well, sometimes. Because sometimes we'd go on you know a little later. Yeah, we liked to go to spend all day. We loved the hotdogs out there [interviewee laughs]. There was something else we liked to eat out there so much. So of course it was the big part of the day. I remember that I enjoyed the rides so well because it was the way—do you know Northwest Washington, up around—the way that it was it seemed like you were in the country. It was wooden, fenced yards and some of the fences would have holes in them and so on and so forth. And we just used to love look at those fences. So it was a fun ride up there and I don't remember how many of us went at a time. I'm sure there were different numbers all the time. I liked to take some of the younger kids, but I don't know how many I took now. But that was one of our museums. And then we'd walk to some of the swimming places. I can't remember, I think Stuart had a swimming place, but I'm not sure. There was another place, it was just a swimming pool and I can't think of the name of it. It wasn't too bad as far distance was concerned, so we liked that quite a bit.

**KERR:** And did you do any dancing ever out at Glen Echo?

**MYERS:** I did never dance at Glen Echo because I was always too clumsy, but some of the others did. I don't think it was quite as hyped [?]. I don't remember too much about it, but I know some of the others did. Both girls and boys. Well, of course I think the boys were more crazy about the dancing than even than the girls were. I don't know why that is, because usually what the boys like, girls like.

**KERR:** This is true.

**MYERS:** But at any rate, we did some but I didn't do much because I was always so terrible, clumsy.

**KERR:** You would ride on the rides out at Glen Echo?

**MYERS:** Oh yes. I loved the airplanes. We had a big contest about one thing just with my friends and I. We had to do that but right this minute that won't come to me.

**KERR:** Now were there also open-air concerts?

**MYERS:** Oh yes. You know there were concerts at the Capitol. We loved those. And we were walking distance to those. Now I think there were some at the Monument, but that was far. So we really enjoyed those. It was always a big fun because everybody would get down there and we didn't know who was going and you'd meet half the people you knew and so on and so forth. And later, you know as we were getting older they had more fancy entertainment. Stars and things that we entertained more. I don't think when I was little there were too many real big stars.

**KERR:** Do you remember any of the stars that you heard as you got older?

**MYERS:** Well, I think Frank Sinatra was one of them. And who was that other fellow that was so popular around that time? I don't think I liked him as much, but of course Frank ... Somebody I liked even better. Cornell, was there a Cornell in his name? There was a movie star, Cornell Woolridge or something.

**KERR:** Cornell Wilde maybe?

**MYERS:** Maybe so, yeah. But I don't think that's the singer. I don't remember who ... We saw several plays at these parks and at the monument grounds too.

**KERR:** Well, they had outdoor theater.

**MYERS:** Yeah, outdoor theaters. We had several of those. And of course that was our big amusement. We liked those very much.

**KERR:** Were there any outdoor theaters on Capitol Hill?

**MYERS:** Well, some of the schools tried to do some of them, but there weren't overly successful. They had some things at the Capitol we called outdoor theaters, but I don't know if they were considered official outdoor theaters, but we used to love to go to the Capitol grounds and watch things. And that was before things got dangerous too. My memories of it. Now I think later ...

And of course we loved the fireworks at the Capitol grounds. That was really a treat. Or was it the Capitol Monument? I think it was the Capitol. And it seemed like they stopped and then when they started up again they never got quite as good.

**KERR:** Did they have them at the Capitol or were they always at the Washington Monument?

**MYERS:** Well, I think my memory of the best ones was at the Capitol because you could get just get a little closer to see them. But they had some at the Monument grounds, but I don't think. See I lived too close to the Capitol to walk all the way to the Monument when I could see them.

**KERR:** You were a fairly young woman or teenager, really when World War II broke out.

**MYERS:** [answers affirmatively]

**KERR:** How did that change life for people?

**MYERS:** Well, it changed it for a lot of people, but I don't know how much it changed for us because my family, my brothers were older so they didn't go to the war [uncertain]. My father was older, he was working still at this Packard place he'd worked all his life. So I don't know how that really changed our lives too much except we didn't have things. A pair of shoes had to last us forever and a day, things like that. My family never had the extravagance. When my sister married, she and her husband were very generous to me. That was the one that worked in the bookshop. I had another sister, I forgot where—oh well, she didn't stay on jobs long as my—well, I don't remember where she worked, so I don't remember how, I don't think she was that prosperous. I was the youngest in the family. It was a little hard, but I will say they were good to me.

**KERR:** Can you remember any other—you said when things got more dangerous on Capitol Hill?

**MYERS:** Robberies, people being hit, I don't think my memory goes back too much to the rapes and things. I think that's in these later years, but not ... All these people hitting each other and so on and so forth. Well, not all the time, but from time to time there were people being in fistfights. That's what we called them then. I couldn't think of that word. But that would be over some silly thing. It never got too big. I don't think we had too many real big crimes. We had some fires that we loved to watch out of amusement.

**KERR:** Do you remember any of them in particular?

**MYERS:** No, I really don't. I was young.

**KERR:** Was the firehouse where it is now on Seventh Street?

**MYERS:** On Seventh Street? It seems to me like there was one closer than that at the time, but I can't think of where it was. It seems like there was one on Fourth Street [unintelligible]. No Fourth and East Capitol is where I'm thinking of where we lived. But, now I can't think of it. Any others.

**KERR:** So the family doctor was across the street on East Capitol when you lived there?

**MYERS:** Well, we actually—yeah, we were on the corner of East Capitol and he was actually on Third. And I just walked across to the doctor.

**KERR:** What year is this?

**MYERS:** He was just in a house. In a private residence.

**KERR:** Do you by any chance have any pictures or any documents or anything left from your time? Did you ever keep a little diary or is there anything that you ...

**MYERS:** Well, I'm sure I do and I'm sure I have some pictures, but you know with the move I haven't gotten things straightened out. So, if that would be something I could maybe look for you as I try to clean things up I will. Because I was always the big picture takers and I don't know how up to date you would want them because I'll admit I've probably taken more in the last ten years than I did—well maybe longer than that—as the family married and the children started coming that was when I took a lot of pictures.

I have some pictures, you know, took them around that Airplane Museum and up on the Capitol Grounds. Course we believed whenever we went places to take what we could of pictures of places.

**KERR:** I don't know about you, but I had a little Brownie box camera that I got for Christmas and I don't know what became of the wonderful little pictures that it took.

**MYERS:** See that's it, I don't know. I had photograph albums, but see I don't even know where the photograph albums. See some of my stuff, because of my condition—my late condition—I had too much help and they put things, some of my stuff is in a locker and that may be where the photograph albums are.

**KERR:** Oh.

**MYERS:** I'm sure I could find some for you.

**KERR:** But you still have family in and around the area?

**MYERS:** Well, not too much around me. Well, I have a niece over here in Maryland and I have a nephew and his wife in Virginia and that's all I have of close members of the family. But most of the others are in North Carolina and Tennessee. I was always so close to them, but now I'm pretty much alone up here.

**KERR:** It's amazing how big families can disperse so completely isn't it?

**MYERS:** Right.

**KERR:** How did you deal with summers in Washington?

**MYERS:** We did a lot of swimming, I think. Did Stuart have a swimming pool? Rumsdale had a swimming pool at 13<sup>th</sup> and something. That would be Southeast. We used to walk up there and go swimming real often. As often as we could. I can't remember if there was a charge or whether it was just such a little bit that we could scrape it up. But I know that it wasn't much, I don't think it wasn't even 50 cents. So we used to enjoy that a lot.

**KERR:** Did you ever sleep outdoors in the summer?

**MYERS:** I think we tried it a couple of times [unintelligible] for me that we went in. I don't know, it might be the nephew over there in Virginia that we tried it once or twice and [unintelligible] and went in. I think one time though it was the burning that took us in. I don't know if we ever tried it more than that or not. We lived in house that had huge windows and I would open that pretty wide and feel like I was outside.

**KERR:** So it wasn't too hot? It just seems that if Washington summers are very hot and I always wonder ...

**MYERS:** Yeah, but there always a little breeze when you had the windows open. And of course, I don't know how long the windows stayed open or how long we were there, but I feel like there was some of that.

**KERR:** And where did you live when you moved here? Where did you move here from?

**MYERS:** I lived on D Street Northeast between Fifth and Sixth. I lived in a big apartment. It was a co-op. I liked it very much and made a good profit on selling my apartment. I was very happy there. That was a pretty good location for things, we were close to Stanton Park. Not too far from Lincoln Park and there was the movies were a big part of my life across from Stanton Park.

**KERR:** Was there?

**MYERS:** [answers affirmatively] It was called the Stanton Theater.

**KERR:** Really?

**MYERS:** On East Capitol was the Holmes [Home?] Theater and then on the, I don't know why I'm [unintelligible] like this. And then on H Street Northeast were two theaters, the Apollo and I forgot the other one. So we had theaters fairly close that we could walk to.

**KERR:** Did you have live entertainment at the theaters or was it movies?

**MYERS:** Not much, every now and then there would be something, at one of them, but not all of them had it.

**KERR:** So there were movies all around, I didn't realize there was a movie theater near Stanton Park.

**MYERS:** There were two fairly close. On the other side of Stanton Park, on one side was the Stanton Theater and then up C Street was the Home Theater. That was walking distance from where I lived.

**KERR:** What happened to them?

**MYERS:** The Stanton Park closed a long time ago, I guess people just didn't want you know some of the people didn't like the neighborhood. But the Home Theater, I don't know when it closed. Now the Penn Theater was down on Pennsylvania Avenue and it hasn't been closed too awful long.

**KERR:** No, they turned into a medical building now I think or something.

**MYERS:** Yeah.

**KERR:** Did you do a lot of shopping in the H Street?

**MYERS:** Oh yes. That's where we bought Christmas presents and things on sale and school supplies. That's where we walked. You see we walked every place in those days that we possibly could. We had—my brothers would sometimes pick us up and my father—but we just walked as much as we possibly could.

**KERR:** And what stores were there up on H Street? Was there one that you loved to go and just browse?

**MYERS:** Well I think Kresge's was one, now I'm not sure. There was a 5 & 10, but whether it was Kresge's. Now the ones uptown, there was a Woolworth's and a Murphy's, but I can't remember what the other one was. There were two of them right there together on what that street was ...

**KERR:** H.

**MYERS:** H Street. I can't remember what the other one was, but there were two close together. One was Kresge's I'm pretty sure.

**KERR:** So there were two five and dimes, two movie theaters, and it must have been such a busy and active and wonderful place to grow up.

**MYERS:** Yeah, and well we loved to go shopping. And you know the 5 & 10s, at that time were really 5 & 10s. They were cheap. Oh there were a lot of things that were expensive and see there was Kresge's, Woolworth's, Murphy's, and there was another one that came in, but Neisner's [?] was up on G Street, but that wasn't close in that area. We had good shopping.

**KERR:** And clothing stores?

**MYERS:** Yeah, but I can't remember the names of those. A big one, that's still up there, that's Hugh's son, but I can't remember the name of that.

**KERR:** Did you have a favorite Christmas time shopping memories?

**MYERS:** Oh of course, the big stores uptown where the Santa Clauses were and I'm trying to think of this one store that I loved so much, in fact it hasn't been closed that awful long.

**KERR:** Is it Woodie's, Woodward's?

**MYERS:** No, Woodie's hadn't been gone too long. But Woodie's was nice. We liked that, that always had the big Santa Claus and a lot of things to look at, dream of. But there was a Pelly Royal [?] up there too and I don't know if there was anything else or not. Kann's too.

**KERR:** That's right.

**MYERS:** ... and Hecht's. So we had quite a few.

**KERR:** Garfinkel's?

**MYERS:** See they weren't. Yeah Garfinkel's. They weren't all walking distance. We did it some, but under protest of course that's when we could get the money [interviewee laughs].

**KERR:** It's a long walk.

**MYERS:** The H Street wasn't quite as far to walk. And of course, we shopped a lot there after we started working where we where we had to go up in that area anyway.

**KERR:** And shoemaker and all of those they were all ...

**MYERS:** We had a very good shoemaker. He was just off of Stanton Park, I'm trying to think if that was Sixth or Seventh. I can't, I don't think it was C Street, but it was right around in there just off of Stanton Park on the southeast side, but it was actually in Northeast. And there was a wonderful shoemaker there. I think it might have been more than in that area, but we had just always gone to him and in fact you know they may still be open. Let me get that corner straight. There's Stanton Park and there's Sixth Street. I don't know if it's still there or not, it was there for not too awful long ago.

**KERR:** You stayed there until very recently and you lived through lots of neighborhood change.

**MYERS:** Yes, I haven't been gone from there for too awful long. I moved, I've been on D Street now. I haven't been away from D Street, but for about three or four months.

**KERR:** No.

**MYERS:** I came here. And as you can see, I'm far from settled. [interviewee laughs]

**KERR:** Well, there's no hurry.

**MYERS:** Well, I hope not, but I'd like to find something. There's things you spend a lot of time looking for.

**KERR:** It's hard I know. Well, I don't want to keep you much longer. I will get back to you when and ask if you've been able to find some photographs. Or I will give you my phone number.

**MYERS:** Yeah, why don't you do that. Now let's see, what I did I do with your letter. I think I was sitting over here.

**KERR:** And I do have something, I'll stop the tape now.

END OF INTERVIEW