



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Frances Barnes

Interview Date: November 29, 2003
Interviewer: Marilyn Saks-McMillion
Transcriber: Marilyn Saks-McMillion

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

MSM: All right. Just so that we can get started and get the basic information down. [Do] you want to just tell me your name and your address, and the date, and where we're recording?

BARNES: My name is Frances Barnes. I live at 221 F Street, N.E.

MSM: And we're recording...

BARNES: And we're recording at Marilyn's house at 3...

MSM: 223.

BARNES: 223.

MSM: F Street.

BARNES: F Street, N.E.

MSM: Great. And it's the Saturday after Thanksgiving, 2003.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: And you've just been talking about this wonderful mouthwatering meal that you served to your family yesterday. What I'd like to start with is just to get some interesting base information from you, in terms of where you were born, when you were born. You can just start by that.

BARNES: Yeah, I know that. [laughter]

MSM: Yeah. That might be easy...

BARNES: I was born in Washington, D.C.

MSM: And, you could tell us when?

BARNES: [laughter] April the 27th, 1928.

MSM: Wow. And where were you born?

BARNES: I was born at, I think it was Gallinger Hospital.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Over off Nineteenth Street.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Southeast.

MSM: And where did you, where did you live when you first were born? Do you remember your first house growing up?

BARNES: I don't know where it was I was living. I think I was living in , I think I was living in southeast.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. Around Fourth Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. I'm a Washington girl.

MSM: What's the first house that you remember living in?

BARNES: Marilyn, I don't know that. I don't know that, Marilyn.

MSM: Okay.

BARNES: Been so long ago!

MSM: [laughter] Well, let's, let's move along. Where did you go to elementary school?

BARNES: I went to Randall over on G Street, S.E. Then from Randall... Not Randall—I went to Giddings.

MSM: Giddings, okay.

BARNES: Giddings, uh-huh. Over on I think G Street, S.E. And then I left Giddings, and I went to Randall.

MSM: Okay. Randall was junior high?

BARNES: Junior high, uh-huh. Southwest, in southwest. And then I went to Cardozo to the tenth grade. Came out in the tenth grade. And I didn't go to college. I didn't go anywhere else.

MSM: Was it normal for kids your age to go on to college, or was high school...

BARNES: I imagine it was, you know. But we were a poor family, you know. Very poor.

MSM: What did your parents do?

BARNES: One worked in the government. Both of them worked in the government. And, [let's] see where they worked at... I think me [I] now forgot the name of that building down there in southwest where they worked at. You ain't getting too much out of me, Marilyn. I done forgot.

MSM: Do you remember...

BARNES: I don't... I done forgot.

MSM: Do you remember what kind of work they did?

BARNES: Uh-huh. They did, when they worked in the government building, they... I'm pretty sure my mother she cleaned offices. And my father, he did roofing business. He worked, you know, fixing up people's roofs.

MSM: Now, did he do that for the government?

BARNES: No, he didn't. No. This was a private concern. And I don't know the name of it.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. But he did roofing business.

MSM: So did he work for somebody else?

BARNES: Yeah, he worked for somebody else.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And I don't know the name of that, either.

MSM: Mm-hmm. What were your parents' names?

BARNES: My parents? My mother's name was Lillian.

MSM: L-I-L-L-I-A-N?

BARNES: A-N. Uh-huh. And my father's name was Frances.

MSM: F-R-A-N-C-I-S?

BARNES: I-S.

MSM: And you're F-R-A-N-C-E-S.

BARNES: E-S. And my middle name is Lillian.

MSM: Is that right? So you have your mother's name as your middle name.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: What was her family's name? Her maiden name? Do you remember?

BARNES: Holmes.

MSM: H-O-L-M-E-S?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And were they both born in Washington?

BARNES: Yeah, they were born in Washington. Uh-huh. Yes, they were born in Washington.

MSM: And their families, their—your grandparents, their parents—where were they born? Were they also Washingtonians?

BARNES: Washington.

MSM: So you're—how many generations back can you trace your roots here in Washington?

BARNES: A long ways back, 'cause all of us was, you know, born and raised in Washington.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: Do you remember anyone saying when the family first moved to Washington?

BARNES: Mm-mm. We never been nowhere but to Washington. [laughs]

MSM: Mm-hmm. So it's lost in history.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: Do you think they were here in the time of the Civil War?

BARNES: I imagine they was.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. 'cause I never heard nobody else say anything different, you know. We all been raised right here in Washington.

MSM: How many sisters and brothers do you have?

BARNES: Now or then?

MSM: Then.

BARNES: Then. I had two brothers and three sisters.

MSM: And their names? And when they were born? More or less; as best you can remember.

BARNES: I had one named Mary, and one named Bernice. You don't remember Bernice? Was you around here when Bernice...?

MSM: I don't think I remember Bernice.

BARNES: Uh-huh. Them was my two sisters.

MSM: And when were they born? Are they older than you?

BARNES: No, they weren't. They were younger than me.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. And I had two brothers: James and Joseph. I was the oldest.

MSM: Aha.

BARNES: And just like I told them children, that I may not remember their ages, but I remember my age.

MSM: [laughter] Were your brothers older than you? You were the...

BARNES: No.

MSM: ...oldest.

BARNES: I was the oldest. Uh-huh. And the brother was next. And my sister was next. And then Mary and James, they were twins.

MSM: Were they the youngest of the family?

BARNES: Yeah, they the youngest. And I think she's 73 now.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. She's 73.

MSM: And did you all go to the same elementary school, the same junior high, and all to Cardozo?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: How come you left high school after tenth grade?

BARNES: Well, I had to go to work. And I went to work to help take care of *my* family. And just like I said, we were a poor family.

MSM: Mm-hmm. What kind of work did you do?

BARNES: I cleaned offices.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. Cleaned offices.

MSM: Did you do that for the government?

BARNES: Yes. And then I worked at GSA [General Services Administration], still cleaning offices. Then I went to work for the post office, still cleaning. But it were pretty good money.

MSM: What do you remember in terms of growing up? Let's just focus on a few different things. In terms..., you had a family with lots of brothers and sisters, your folks were at home, both of them working...

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: Your father roofing and your mother working in offices.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: How did you celebrate birthdays, for example? [Did] you have other family nearby?

BARNES: We had, just about all of us was, you know, raised here in D.C. And now and then, we may have a birthday, and then we would... But we knew it was our birthdays, you know. Like the kids do now, have birthday parties? I don't think we had birthday parties. Didn't have no money.

MSM: Mm-hmm. What kinds of things did you do for fun after school?

BARNES: Oh, well, we played outside: skate and ride bicycles, and things like that. But otherwise, we didn't do nothing else.

MSM: Did you go to the movies once in a while?

BARNES: Oh, yeah, we went to the movies. When we lived on G Street, the movies was right around the corner, and we went to the movies.

MSM: Where was the movie theater near G Street? This was in southeast?

BARNES: No, this was in southwest.

MSM: In southwest.

BARNES: Uh-huh. And the movie was right around the corner on Fourth Street, I think. And there were... We went to the movies quite often. And we ate plenty of Chinese food!

MSM: Yeah?

BARNES: [The] Chinese place was right around the corner on Fourth Street, too.

MSM: What kind of movies do you remember? Any particular movies you remember growing up?

BARNES: [whispering to herself]

MSM: You'll have to refresh my memory. At that point when you were growing up, were they talking movies already?

BARNES: Yeah, they were talking movies. It was a movie round... Jewel Theater.

MSM: Jewel? J-E-W-E-L?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And that was on...?

BARNES: On Fourth Street, S.W. Uh-huh.

MSM: So how often would you or your brothers and sisters go to the movies?

BARNES: Well, some would have money and some wouldn't. And whenever we had money, like on a Saturday, we would go to the movies. And at that time, you could stay in the movie all day long. And we would stay, half the time we would stay there all day long.

MSM: Would you go with your friends, or with your parents?

BARNES: No, with my sisters.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. Yeah, with my sisters. Sometimes a friend would go. Marilyn, I don't remember too much of nothing.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Did you have a lot of friends from school? Were there a lot of children in the neighborhood?

BARNES: It was a lot of kids but it was... most like... We stayed mostly to ourselves, you know.

MSM: You mention if you had enough money, you would go to the movies. Some had money, and some didn't...

BARNES: Uh-huh. Some didn't.

MSM: How would you get your money as kids?

BARNES: Somebody would give us some money!

MSM: For a birthday, maybe, or...

BARNES: Yeah, maybe a birthday. Yeah, somebody would give us some money. Mother or Father, one of the two, if they had any money.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: We were, we didn't have too much... we didn't have too much of nothing.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Too much of nothing.

MSM: What was your house like? How many bedrooms did it have, and...?

BARNES: One time, the bedrooms was small. We had three bedrooms, and they were... My mother would have a room, and then the children would have the, you know, just get in the other bedrooms. But we would have, you know, place to sleep.

MSM: So, you would share a bedroom with your two sisters?

MSM: Mm-hmm. So the three of you would be in one bedroom?

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: And your brothers...?

BARNES: [Would] be in the other bedroom.

MSM: And your parents.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: Did anyone else live in the house with you?

BARNES: No.

MSM: No grandparents?

BARNES: No grandparents. Uh-huh.

MSM: Did the rest of your family live in walking distance to your house, or...?

BARNES: Well, we lived in walking distance. You know, we weren't far from each other.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Did your family... at what point did your family have a car?

BARNES: When I got my children, started having my children. Then my son bought a car. Otherwise, we didn't have no cars and things. Everywhere we worked, we rode the bus or we walked. We didn't have no cars in the family.

MSM: Mm-hmm. So buses were your primary mode of transportation?

BARNES: Mm-hmm. There wasn't anywhere I didn't know how to go on the bus then when I was young. I don't fool with them buses no more. No.

MSM: Where did you do most of your shopping? For your food shopping, for example?

BARNES: At the grocery store on the corner.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Do you remember the name of it?

BARNES: What's the name of that store on the corner? No, I don't remember the name.

MSM: But they were pretty common.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And do you remember the store owner?

BARNES: What was that man's name?

MSM: What was he like?

BARNES: They were nice. Nice folks. Used to give us candy and stuff like that, you know.

MSM: What kinds of things did you buy [at the store]? Was it a full scale supermarket, or a little corner...?

BARNES: They had everything. They had everything in that store. Something like the one down the street [on F Street at Third Street, N.E.], you know. They had everything. And they weren't high. At that time, they weren't high, you know. You could take a five cent, and you can get five cookies for twenty-five... I mean one, I mean five cents.

MSM: So you could get a cookie for a penny.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: Five for a nickel.

BARNES: Five for a nickel.

MSM: Did you do a lot of shopping for your family? You were the eldest child.

BARNES: No, I didn't.

MSM: So you'd go down to the store mostly for candy.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And cookies.

BARNES: Candy and cookies.

MSM: Where did you do most of your clothing shopping? Was there a district that you went to for shoes or for dresses?

BARNES: Well, we were on the relief. And my mother would go and get us some relief clothing. And you could tell everybody that was on the relief, because of they dressed alike. All the clothing would be alike, and you know just who was on relief and who wasn't on relief.

MSM: How did you, how did that work? I mean, that's something that I'm not that familiar with. How would you, well, tell me more about that.

BARNES: Well, I guess something like once a month she would go and get some clothing. And she would go pick out our sizes and things like that, and bring it back to us. And then the relief had everything. The relief had like, food and everything, you know. And we would get food, and clothing, and shoes, I guess. I guess we would get clothes, I mean shoes.

MSM: Do you remember what years that was, how old you were?

BARNES: Young, very young.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Very young, 'cause we weren't working, or nothing like that, you know. I was very young. I don't know what year.

MSM: Would that be when you were in elementary school?

BARNES: Yeah. Elementary school, uh-huh. And when you go to school, you could tell the kids that was on the relief; 'cause they dressed alike. Same clothes, same material, and all that stuff, you know.

MSM: Now, were these second-hand clothes, like at a Salvation Army, or this was government-issued?

BARNES: No, uh-uh. They would make these clothes, I imagine. They were making these clothes. They would be brand new when we got them. Uh-huh.

MSM: And where would your mother, do you know where the distribution center was where she'd go for the clothing?

BARNES: No, uh-uh. It wasn't too far.

MSM: So it would be on Capitol Hill?

BARNES: No, n ... Yeah, I guess that was Capitol Hill, uh-huh.

MSM: On the other side?

BARNES: Uh-huh. But it was so long ago.

MSM: Yeah. Tell me a little bit more about your neighborhood; about some of your neighbors that you remember.

BARNES: We used to play together, fight together. We had good times, you know.

MSM: Tell me about some of the good times. What kind of things you would do for fun in the neighborhood.

BARNES: We would, I guess, call ourselves dancing, you know, and everything, and playing; playing baseball. There used to be a big lot over on the corner. You could go over there and play baseball, you know. Beat the boys, sometimes, and the boys would beat us.

MSM: Oh, so you would play...

BARNES: Girls...

MSM: ...girls against the boys?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: What positions did you like to play, do you remember? Were you a pitcher, or a base, baseman?

BARNES: I think pitcher. [We'd] take different turns, you know. Until we hit a window; then we had to stop playing baseball.

MSM: [laughter] Did you do many of the, many broken windows?

BARNES: No. Used to be a church over on the corner with... You go in that church, then we had to leave it alone; stop playing ball on that corner, and maybe come back a couple of weeks later and start all over again.

MSM: Mm-hmm. How did you deal with the heat of summers in Washington, before there were air conditioners?

BARNES: We didn't. We just, we would sit out sometimes in the summertime late at night before we'd go in to go to bed. But it didn't seem to be as hot back there as it is now. [laughs]

MSM: Did you ever sleep outside?

BARNES: Sometimes, mm-hmm. Sometimes we would sleep outside. But the heat didn't seem to bother us too much back then as it do now, you know.

MSM: Did you use hand fans?

BARNES: Yes, hand fans. Paper. Anything to cool you off. Then we used to take showers outside, you know.

MSM: Where would you take showers outside?

BARNES: Over with the hose, with the hose.

MSM: Were there ever any fire hydrants that you'd unplug and let the water run?

BARNES: I don't think they did that back there in them days. Then again, they may have.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Do you remember July 4th celebrations?

BARNES: We used to have a nice time then, lighting fireworks and things. We did get a little money for some fireworks.

MSM: Were there any public July 4th celebrations like they have now down on the Capitol grounds?

BARNES: I don't know. If they did, we didn't go down there.

MSM: In the parks or...?

BARNES: Uh-uh.

MSM: So this was a family celebration [in the] backyard or...

BARNES: Yeah, in the backyard...

MSM: ... in the alley?

BARNES: .. or the front yard. Then, clean it up.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Any picnics or anything that you remember?

BARNES: Didn't go to too many of them.

MSM: How about the zoo? Did you ever go to the zoo as kids?

BARNES: One time. I think I remember going one time. And it smelled so bad then, we didn't go to the zoo too often.

MSM: Yeah, it certainly has an odor, doesn't it?

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: So the zoo was not a favorite...

BARNES: Yeah, I think I remember one time going to the zoo.

MSM: Not one of your favorite things?

BARNES: Mm-mm. Nah.

MSM: Not something that you would do to...

BARNES: Uh-uh.

MSM: Well, we've talked a little bit about where you would get your food and clothing. How long did that last before relief was no longer needed, or it ended? Do you remember how old you were? [slight dinging in background from dishwasher signalling cycle is over]

BARNES: I don't remember how old I was, but I think was in my teens. I think I was in my teens.

MSM: So that was maybe about the time that you left school?

BARNES: When I went to junior high, I think. I don't remember too much.

MSM: You don't remember going with your mother to pick up some of the clothes or some of the food?

BARNES: No, uh-uh. But I know it wasn't too far away from where we lived at in southwest, you know.

MSM: Mm-hmm. In addition to the buses—you mentioned you knew all the bus lines...

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: Were there trolleys that you used as well? They're still...

BARNES: Yeah, we lived in southwest, and we used to ride all around this way, you know, when them trolleys was around here. All up by Union Station and everything, Botanical Garden, and everything, you know.

MSM: Tell me about the Botanical Garden back then.

BARNES: Used to have some pretty flowers.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: [It] was real pretty. And we would, you know, take the—I think they—how much did it cost to get on them trolleys—ten cents, something like that, you know. When we weren't stealing on the doors, on the back doors.

MSM: {laughs} Mm-hmm.

BARNES: I think it was ten cents.

MSM: Could you transfer between the trolleys and the buses?

BARNES: Yeah, you could transfer. [You] ask for a transfer and they would give it to you.

MSM: So that was a pretty efficient means of getting around...

BARNES: Getting around, uh-huh.

MSM: How popular were cars in your neighborhood? Did many of your neighbors have cars? Any of your neighbors have a car?

BARNES: I don't remember none of them having cars.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: I don't remember a car until my son got a car in our family.

MSM: Well, that was fairly recent, then. Nineteen-when?

BARNES: He's... My oldest boy... You know how old he is?

MSM: How old is he?

BARNES: He's fifty-seven years old. Old as me! [laughs]

MSM: Not quite as old as you!

BARNES: Yeah. I tell him that now, you know. I say, you're older than me. Yeah.

MSM: How old was he when he got his first car, do you remember?

BARNES: Well, he was in his teens. He was in his teens.

MSM: And how did he earn the money to get a car?

BARNES: He was working. He was working. He worked for a, the Printing Office.

MSM: The GPO, the Government Printing Office?

BARNES: Uh-huh. He worked there a long time. He's still working there.

MSM: Is that right?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: So he would walk from here, from Second and F, N.E.? Is it still...

BARNES: No, uh-uh. He was in his own place by then.

MSM: Uh-huh.

BARNES: Uh-huh. And there were, him and wife been in the government a long time. And she just retired.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Well, let me backtrack a little bit more. We were talking about your childhood growing up and coming of age, so to speak. How old were you when you got married and how did you meet your husband?

BARNES: I met him in southwest. I think I was seventeen years old. And we got married when I was eighteen. Real young.

MSM: Mm-hmm. And did you stay at home then, or did you have your own place when you got married?

BARNES: We, no. We stayed with his mother.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. 'cause she didn't have but one child. I mean she had, at that time, she didn't have but one until she had his sister, uh-huh. We stayed with her. [It] was too many children at my house.

MSM: Mm-hmm. You had a fair sized family. So where did you live when you first got married?

BARNES: On H Street, S.W.

MSM: H?

BARNES: The three hundred block of H Street, S.W.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And how long did you live there?

BARNES: We lived there a long time. Mm-hmm. Until... We lived there a long time until the ... went a got a project. I think we got a project.

MSM: Mm-hmm. A housing.. public housing?

BARNES: Public housing, uh-huh.

MSM: Housing project.

BARNES: And then, you know, we moved out into our public housing. And that was Twelfth in northeast—Lincoln Heights in northeast. And we stayed over there a long time. A long time over there, too, until we moved over here. They put us out [of] the project.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Put us out...?

BARNES: Put us out [of] the projects.

MSM: Out of the projects, yeah.

BARNES: 'cause we [were] making too much money.

MSM: Oh, my goodness.

BARNES: Then we moved over here.

MSM: Uh-huh.

BARNES: That's where we been at ever since.

MSM: And for historical purposes here, what was your husband's name?

BARNES: His name was Marvin Barnes.

MSM: And when was he born? Do you remember when he was born?

BARNES: His birthday [is] today!

MSM: No kidding?

BARNES: If he'd still been here.

MSM: Is that right?

BARNES: Uh-huh

MSM: Well, wish...

BARNES: The twenty-ninth.

MSM: Well, wish Marvin a happy birthday!

BARNES: Yeah. Birthday today; the twenty-ninth.

MSM: So, was he...

BARNES: Of November.

MSM: ...older than you?

BARNES: Yes, he was older than me, uh-huh. Yeah, he was older than me.

MSM: So how old was he when you got married? You were eighteen, and he would have been...

BARNES: Eighteen, twenty... I think maybe he was twenty-one, something like that.

MSM: Okay. So he was just three years older than you?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And you were born in '23, so, is that right?

BARNES: No, I was born in '28.

MSM: '28, I'm sorry. So he would have been born in 1925.

BARNES: Uh-huh, yeah. He was born in 1925.

MSM: Uh-huh.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And, so were you both working after you got married?

BARNES: Yeah, and I worked in a laundry, I worked for GSA, and I worked for the post office.

MSM: And how about Marvin?

BARNES: He worked in the government. And, oh, where did he work at? I know he worked in the government. Mm-hmm. We was getting a little better, you know, with our funds.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And, me and him both were working. That's when they put us out [of] the projects. Been making too much money.

MSM: Yeah.

BARNES: So we found this house over here.

MSM: How did you find this house, and how did you decide to move, you know, the 200 block of F Street, N.,E.?

BARNES: Well, we'd go round, and looking, looking, looking, look for a place to live, you know. And we saw this house and we went and talked to the man about this house. And when we moved in that house, we were paying something like \$300 a month.

MSM: For the mortgage, or for the rent in...

BARNES: For the rent.

MSM: In Lincoln Heights.

BARNES: For the rent.

MSM: Oh, for the rent on this house.

BARNES: On this house.

MSM: Uh-huh.

BARNES: Uh-huh. At Lincoln Heights, they told us we just was making too much money. We had to move.

MSM: Uh-huh.

BARNES: So this one, we found this house over here, 221. And we stayed there; still there.

MSM: So when you first moved, you rented?

BARNES: Rented, uh-huh. And there were... Then after we'd been there a while, you know, and the man saw how we was keeping the house up, he asked us did I want to buy it, you know. But at that time I didn't know nothing no way, you know. And I said, "Maybe I ought to ask my brother; maybe he knows a little more about this thing than I do," you know. So I talked to him about it, and he said, he told me, he said, "What?" I said, "The man want to know do we want to buy this house." "What? Nah! You don't want to buy this raggedy house."

MSM: Buy this ratty house?

BARNES: Raggedy.

MSM: Raggedy.

BARNES: Uh-huh. But we used to do the best we could, you know. And, but I'm kind of glad I bought this house. And at that time, you know how much he wanted to sell the house for? Eighteen something.

MSM: Eighteen...?

BARNES: Thousand.

MSM: When did you buy the house?

BARNES: When did I buy that house? Well, anyway, Marvin and I went and bought that house. Didn't pay him no mind. Glad I did.

MSM: I'll bet you are.

BARNES: Glad I did.

MSM: Well when did you first move in to rent? When did you leave Lincoln Heights to move to this neighborhood?

BARNES: Marilyn, I have no idea.

MSM: You were married at eighteen...

BARNES: Yeah, I was... We were married.

MSM: [coughs] Did you have any children when you first moved in?

BARNES: I had all eight of them.

MSM: But when you first moved into the house, did you have any children?

BARNES: Uh-huh. I had all eight of them. And I had eight children: six girls and two boys.

MSM: When you moved in? Or afterwards?

BARNES: When I moved in.

MSM: My gosh!

BARNES: Because, my, I think Yvette, she was the baby. And I think she was born in '51. She was born in '51. Yeah, she was the baby. And

MSM: Yvette, Y-V-E-T-T-E?

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: And then, moving back up through the line. So Yvette was the youngest, born in '51.

BARNES: Yvette was the youngest. Lorraine was next.

MSM: And that's L-OR-R-R-A-I-N-E?

BARNES: Uh-huh. And when was she born?

BARNES: She's over there now.

MSM: We won't tell her.

BARNES: Okay. I don't...

MSM: She was born before...

BARNES: I don't know...no where. Though I got it in, I should have brought my book with me.

MSM: Well, maybe later on we can get the book.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: But, so... Yvette...

BARNES: Yvette, Lorraine, Patricia, Carolyn...,

MSM: Mm-hmm. Carolyn—does she spell her name C-A-R-O-L-Y-N?

BARNES: Uh-huh. And next to Carolyn, I think it's Maurice.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Sandra, Althea, and Junior—Marvin, Jr.

MSM: So, Marvin, Jr., is the eldest, and you say he's 57.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And then Althea.

BARNES: Althea.

MSM: A-L-T-H-E-A?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: I'm doing this so that whoever types this will know how to spell them properly. And then...

BARNES: And, Maurice.

MSM: M-A-U-R-I-C-E?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And Carolyn.

MSM: Carolyn, with a C and a Y. Okay. And

BARNES: Patricia, Lorraine and Yvette.

MSM: Okay. So you had all these children, and Marvin and yourself moved into the house next door.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And so you.. Again, I'm just trying to figure approximately when you moved into the house. So it was after, after the little one was born, in '51. So..

BARNES: Mm-hmm. Yeah, 'cause she was a year old when we moved in this house.

MSM: So that would make it 1952, then?

BARNES: '51 or '52.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And so you rented it for a while?

BARNES: Well, uh-huh. We rented it for a long time. And [the] man wanted to sell it.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Who was the owner when you moved in? Who was your landlord?

BARNES: Marilyn, don't start me now. Me and him used to fuss so much about this house, you know, 'cause he wouldn't fix it up, you know. So, that's why [we bought it].

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

MSM: You were just saying that because he didn't fix it up—you'd been renting it for a while when he offered to sell it to you, you finally ended up buying it.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

MSM: So you could take better care of it, I assume.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: Was he black? Was he...

BARNES: No, he was white.

MSM: Uh-huh.

BARNES: And we used to fuss all the time 'cause he wouldn't fix that house up.

MSM: And do you know what made him decide to finally offer you to buy the house?

BARNES: No, I don't know what made him do it.

MSM: So, it was the [19]60s when you bought the house? Sometime in the 1960s?

BARNES: It could have been in the '60s. Uh-huh. Could have been in the '60s.

MSM: Well, what was it like when you first moved in the early 1960s? What was the neighborhood like? What were your neighbors like?

BARNES: Oh, well, the neighbors, they were.... the whole b[lock]... both sides was black.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And the Freemans was here when I came.

MSM: And they live on the other side of the street [north side of F Street].

BARNES: No, they live right down here.

MSM: Oh, that's right.

BARNES: Down here.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And the, Doris and them, they lived on the other side. They were black.

MSM: And...

BARNES: And Danny, Danny and them lived at... they were black.

MSM: Do you want to give me some last names, too, so that the people that are going to be hearing this tape aren't going to know who they are. Do you remember Danny's or Doris' last name?

BARNES: Danny's last name...

MSM: That's all right. If you don't remember, that's all right.

BARNES: Uh-huh. And then Nancy's father and grandparents, they lived over there.

MSM: That's Nancy Lucas?

BARNES: Yeah, Nancy Lucas.

MSM: She still lives there.

BARNES: Yeah, she still lives there.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. But her grandfather and father lived there when I moved here.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And, was.... the children knew all of them names, you know.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Were there a lot of children their age, too?

BARNES: Yeah, a lot of ch[ildren] kids their age.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And they used to play together...

MSM: Uh-huh.

BARNES: ... and everything. And, some people, they been moved and... The Collins, they was living down there. But there was, you know, mostly, mostly black than it was white.

MSM: Mm-hmm. What kind of work did most of the people do?

BARNES: I couldn't tell you that. I don't know what kind of work they did, you know. 'cause I mostly stayed to myself, you know.

MSM: Mm-hmm. So what was it like in the '50s ['60s] in the neighborhood? Was it pretty quiet, pretty...

BARNES: It was nice until like on a Saturday, you know, then the folks would get out and have a good time. 'cause my sister, she used to come over every Saturday, and her and I would walk around to the liquor store, get us a cooler, and get us whatever we had to want to drink, [and we'd] sit in the front yard and stay there all day long.

MSM: Well, except for the drinking, now, you still do step out, sit out on the front porch.

BARNES: Yeah, I still sit out on the front porch, but I don't do that drinking like I used to drink. [laughter] Used to have a good time out there, me and her, you know.

MSM: Yeah.

BARNES: 'cause I just these two sisters, and me and her used to drink. And this other sister, she didn't do no drinking.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: The one I hang with now.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: She didn't do no drinking.

MSM: Now, who was the sister that sat on the porch with, on the front porch...

BARNES: Bernice.

MSM: Bernice.

BARNES: Her name was Bernice. Uh-huh. And me and her used to have a good time out there, drinking that liquor.

MSM: So what would happen as you would sit out on the porch, sit out on the front step?

BARNES: Most likely, someone would come up and bring a bottle and sit out there with us and drink, too, you know? And it got to the point where Bernice she got sick, she wasn't feeling good, you know half the time, so I continued to keep drinking, 'cause I would feel all right. And then Bernice [would] start stealing my drinks from me in front of me, you know. Then I said, "I'm going to fix her." I'm going to stop drinking. Let's see if she gets a drink, 'cause I knew she wasn't supposed to be drinking. So I stopped drinking. And Bernice couldn't get no more drinks, couldn't steal my drinks.

MSM: That taught her!

BARNES: Uh-huh, that taught her.

MSM: Did she stop?

BARNES: Yeah, she stopped. She couldn't get it, and I didn't walk around there to the liquor store no more.

MSM: [laughter]

BARNES: But we used to have a good time though, sitting out there.

MSM: A lot of people stop by and...

BARNES: Yeah, uh-huh.

MSM: ...talk, and ...

BARNES: Talk and...

MSM: ... joke.

BARNES: Joke, and everything. If they wanted a drink, we'd give them a drink.

MSM: So did you function as a kind of a social center, where people would come and gather and exchange neighborhood news, or this one and that one...?

BARNES: Nah, uh-uh. Most of them, you know, kept to their selves, like Danny and them. They always did keep to their selves, you know. The Freemans kept to their selves. Doris kept to herself. And a lot of more kept to their selves, you know. Didn't nobody bother one another. and they wouldn't let nobody bother nobody else, you know. Like somebody else come in the neighborhood?

MSM: How did that work?

BARNES: It worked pretty good. It was real nice. If they knew you and you lived in the neighborhood, you better not bother [them].

MSM: Mm-hmm. And if people from outside came in?

BARNES: You better not bother. They knew better than to bother. Used to have a good time, Marilyn.

MSM: Sounds like it. Sounds like it.

BARNES: Yes, sir. We used to have a good time.

MSM: Well, I know that on Second Street, before the Thurgood Marshall Judiciary Office Building was built, that used to be a parking lot, and then before that...

BARNES: Mm-hmm. Yeah, it was a park, a parking lot, go up there and have a good time up in the park, you know.

MSM: What kinds of things did you do in the park?

BARNES: Oh, well, we used to go up there and we used to light fireworks and things, you know? And just go up there sometime to sit.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: I know sometimes people would sleep in the park in the summertime when it was hot.

BARNES: Well, I imagine they did, you know, but when the time came to sleep, I slept in my bed.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. Yeah, it was a nice... It was a park on this side, and a park on that side up there where Thurgood Marshall Building was, is now? On that side, and one was on that side.

MSM: So, there was one on Massachusetts [Avenue] and Second [Street], and another park at F [Street] and Second?

BARNES: Yeah, uh-huh.

MSM: And what was Union Station like in the '50s [?'60s] and '60s?

BARNES: I didn't go up to the Union Station too much, because I often heard that the people would come through Union Station and take little kids and things with them out of town, with them, you know. So I told my children, "Stay away from that Union Station."

MSM: Hmm.

BARNES: But, otherwise it was all right. Long as I knew where my kids was, that was all right.

MSM: Mm-hmm. And was there a lot of community, a lot of people in the neighborhood looking after everybody's kids?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: So, if you knew where your kids were, you probably knew where the neighbors' kids were.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And vice-versa. Where did you go... did you go to church on Sundays, generally, or...

BARNES: Well, when I was back there, I didn't, you know. I just joined this church in [19]84, '84.

MSM: And where's that?

BARNES: Out in Maryland. It was Full Gospel then, but it's From the Heart now. Out on, I think it ... 4207... they have two churches. 4207 Seven, I knew where it ... right on the tip of my tongue. Then

there's one out there in Clinton, Maryland. North and South. South is way out. North is right there off Iverson Street.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Is that where your husband's funeral was?

BARNES: Yeah, that's where his funeral was. Uh-huh.

MSM: And how did you end up going to church out in Prince George's County, out in Maryland?

BARNES: Because my daughter-in-law went there. And this pastor preached my daughter-in-law's father's funeral. And I liked it. And there were, and I used to, I'd tell her, I said, "If I had some way of getting out [to] your church, I'd go." So they lived in Maryland at that time, which they still do now. They started coming to pick me up. And then I joined that church. And I've been there ever since.

MSM: So, it's almost 20 years, now.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And before then, was there a church that your family went to regularly?

BARNES: No. We didn't go to no church regularly.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: Where did you children go to school in this neighborhood as they were growing up?

BARNES: Round at Second and G [Streets], Logan. And...

MSM: That was the elementary school.

BARNES: Elementary school. Logan. They went to Stuart, yes, Stuart. And some of them went to college for a few years.

MSM: Was the high... What was the high school that they went to after junior high school? Would they have gone to Eastern?

BARNES: Yeah, Eastern. Yeah, Carolyn went to Eastern. And where did Althea go?

MSM: [Did] any of them go to Cardozo?

BARNES: I don't think any of them went to Cardozo. Dunbar.

MSM: Dunbar?

BARNES: Dunbar, and Joe went to Spingarn. Dunbar.

MSM: How was it decided which high school they would go to?

BARNES: They said the one's that's in your area.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. But that wasn't the case all the time. They, some of them would go where they want to go, you know.

MSM: Mm-hmm. And the schools back then, were still segregated? Or was this...

BARNES: No, it wasn't segregated. It was changing. I think it was changing over.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: What was that like?

BARNES: It was, it was all right, you know? You got to get to know the other folks, too, you know

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Yeah.

MSM: Did they ever come back from school saying that they had any problems or...

BARNES: Didn't have no problems with mine saying they had problems.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: But I imagine there was some problems, you know, in the school. And then they went, some of them went round there to Ludlow and Taylor, Seventh and G [Streets]. Mm-hmm.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. After Ludlow and Taylor, they went to Stuart. You didn't have no problem getting in Stuart then, you know.

MSM: Were you active at all in the Parent Teachers Association or with the school in any way?

BARNES: I went to some of the meetings, uh-huh, but I wasn't active in it, you know.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: I went to some of the meetings, like when they had parents-teacher meetings.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: But if I had my life to do over, I would make it different.

MSM: How would you do that?

BARNES: I would. I would go to these meetings and things, get out and get acquainted, you know. I wouldn't just sit back and do nothing. But... I would. I knew the teachers in there, everything, you know, but I just would make a difference.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: What did the kids do after school?

BARNES: Well, they played ball and stuff like kids would regular[ly] do, you know. Go up to the playground round here, Logan's playground; play in the park up there.

MSM: Any of them have any special talents in sports or school subjects or athletics or music, or...?

BARNES: No. I guess they was like their mother. They... But some of them grands [her grandchildren] of mine, now, they had some, like dancing, the band, and all that stuff, you know. Especially like Erica and Neechie, you know.

MSM: How do you spell Neechie?

BARNES: Her name is Denise.

MSM: Denise. And how does she spell her name?

BARNES: D-E-N-I-S-E.

MSM: Mm-hmm. And so, she's active in...?

BARNES: They used to be in the band.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. And they used to cheerleader, and dance in the band, you know?

MSM: So from your children, how many grandchildren do you now have?

BARNES: I have fifteen grand[children].

MSM: And how many great-grandchildren?

BARNES: Eleven great-grand[children].

MSM: And how old are they? What's the youngest great-grandchild, and what's the oldest grandchild, more or less?

BARNES: The oldest grandchild is... Erica is thirty-seven [under her breath: thirty-eight]... the oldest grandchild is thirty-seven. No he ain't, no he ain't. The oldest [laughter]... The oldest grandchild is thirty-nine.

MSM: My gosh. And who's that? Is that Erica?

BARNES: No, that's Ronnie.

MSM: Ronnie. Okay.

BARNES: Ronnie, the one that's still over there...

MSM: Uh-huh.

BARNES: He's thirty-nine. And his brother is thirty-eight, and then Erica is thirty-seven. Now those [are] the oldest grand[s].

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And the great-grand[s], the oldest is twelve, because I think I have but three of them that's twelve years old.

MSM: My gosh, that was a busy year!

BARNES: [laughter] And there were...

MSM: And the littlest?

BARNES: The littlest, Jason, Jason [has] got to be the littlest. He will be three years old soon.

MSM: That's an important birthday.

BARNES: Mm-hmm, three years old soon. And I think his birthday is in January; I think his birthday [is] in January.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: Well, tell me a bit about your house, in terms of what rooms you have on the first floor, on the second floor, what you've done with the basement, what the backyard is like, and the front yard is like.

BARNES: Well, we always had these little yards round here. And I have my kitchen, brand-new kitchen, my daughter paid for it for me, and you know, we, her and I mostly, we got the house fixed up, you know. And she still wants to fix some more, but ain't got no money! [laughs]

MSM: Well, the kitchen is in the back...

BARNES: Back. Yeah, the kitchen's in the back. And the dining room is in the middle. Then we have a den and the front room.

MSM: Mm-hmm. And upstairs?

BARNES: Upstairs, the bedrooms. Four bedrooms.

MSM: And bathrooms?

BARNES: Bathroom, uh-huh.

MSM: The one bathroom upstairs?

BARNES: One bathroom upstairs. And in the basement, is... the basement is fixed up. Bathroom in the basement. And, now I'm trying to get, one of the bedrooms upstairs turned into a... where you put your clothes at?

MSM: Like a laundry room? No.

BARNES: No, no, not no laundry room. A room where...

MSM: A walk-in closet?

BARNES: Yeah, something like that, you know.

MSM: So who lives with you in the house now?

BARNES: Ronnie, Carolyn, Althea, and Gerald—that's Althea's friend.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And if I'm not mistaken, I think Ronnie say, told me yesterday that next Thanksgiving, we would be over his house. That would be nice! Long as we don't have to cook no food and bring it over

there, Ronnie! That's what he told us yesterday. Althea say, "Yeah, we going to have to bring the food over there, I guess you know that."

MSM: [laughs]

BARNES: So, I guess he's planning on buying a house. I don't know.

MSM: That would be great.

BARNES: He's not married to nobody.

MSM: But he's got his ideas set on...

BARNES: Yeah, he's got his ideas, mm-hmm.

MSM: Well, tell me what it was like... H Street is just two blocks from here, and I know that in [19]68, after the assassination of [the Reverend] Martin Luther King [Jr.], that there were a lot of disturbances throughout the city...

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: ... and H Street, being the commercial corridor was really badly hit. What was that like, from your perspective living here in the neighborhood?

BARNES: I didn't like that. You know, they was just doing—tearing up H Street. Just, you know, tearing it up. I didn't like that. You don't tear up where you live at. They was just break out, breaking out windows, and things, and tearing down H Street. Yeah, I didn't even come out of the house that day.

MSM: Hmm.

BARNES: Yeah, 'cause I don't like too much violence.

MSM: What do you remember from the days of the riots?

BARNES: Oh, not really; only the ones they was tearing up.

MSM: Did you watch it on TV? Was there coverage?

BARNES: Yeah, I looked at it on TV a little.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. Just like now, I don't look at too much violence on TV.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: I don't like that. I don't like violence.

MSM: Did you use to shop on H Street?

BARNES: Yeah, shop[ped] on H Street all the time. I would love to go round on H Street and shop. But I don't like [to] go round there now.

MSM: Yeah.

BARNES: Yeah.

MSM: Where did you use to shop there? Do you remember where...?

BARNES: Them different stores round there on H Street, you know. On H Street and shop.

MSM: What kinds of ... What would... Tell me about H Street before the riots, what it was like?

BARNES: It was nice. It was really nice. They had nice things around there and everything. And I didn't mind going round there then spending my money, you know. But, you all can have H Street now. I don't want no parts of H Street now. I'm ... They do so much round there now, you know, that I almost scared to go round on H Street.

MSM: Mm-hmm. You're talking about some of the drug dealers?

BARNES: Yeah, drug dealers.

MSM: Yeah.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: So where do you do most of your shopping now for food and for clothes?

BARNES: I go out at, out, they take me out at Shoppers [Food Warehouse] and Sam's [Club, part of the Wal-Mart chain of discount stores], you know. And I see a lot of things. I used to go, like to go and try on my clothes, you know. But I done lost some weight, and I know what size I wear, [and] if I see something in the book if I like it, then I send away for it.

MSM: Mm-hmm. So you do some catalogue shopping?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Have most of your kids, as they've grown up and moved on and bought places of their own, are they still in Washington? Or are they in Prince George's County [Maryland] or elsewhere?

BARNES: Well, they [are] in Maryland, but they [are] close in Maryland, you know. They[re] close in Maryland. They[re] not way out.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: 'cause once they get way out, they [I'm not] going way out there, not unless somebody take me.

MSM: Mm-hmm. 'cause you don't drive.

BARNES: No, I don't drive. And I ... Something else, if I could go back again, I'd learn how to drive.

MSM: Get yourself a big fancy car.

BARNES: Yeah. Like my sister.

MSM: So she comes and picks you up sometimes?

BARNES: Yeah, she comes picks me up and we go to church together, you know. Then my daughter-in-law, my son, and some of the kids go out there to this church.

MSM: And it's in Clinton?

BARNES: Yeah, From the Heart Church with Pastor Cherry.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: He goes out to there to church.

MSM: Pastor...?

BARNES: Cherry.

MSM: Cherry, just like the fruit.

BARNES: Uh-huh. John Cherry. Uh-huh.

MSM: And he's a good preacher?

BARNES: He's a good preacher. Mm-hmm.

MSM: Are there church activities that the family is involved with, other than just the services on Sundays?

BARNES: Uh-huh. Yes, it's plenty of it. Uh-huh. But just like I said, if I could drive, you know, I wouldn't have to wait for nobody come and get me. I would go.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Do you ever think you'll take up driving? Learn how to drive?

BARNES: Noooo, not now. I just can't see. [laughs] I goes to the doctors for my eyes and anything else that bothers me, you know. I keep in touch with them doctors. But driving is out for Frances.

MSM: Okay. Tell me a little bit about local Washington politics. As you remember, the city in the time, certainly in your lifetime, has undergone a lot of changes. And certainly in your parents' lifetime, you know, with home rule, and getting a mayor and so forth. What do you remember about some of the changes in the city, in terms of city government? Do you remember when you were old enough to vote for the first time?

BARNES: I think I do. [beeps from dishwasher in the background]

MSM: What can you tell me about that?

BARNES: Well, I always went and vote. Still do, whether I vote for the right person or what, but I still go and vote.

MSM: Do you ever talk much politics in your family?

BARNES: No. Mm-mm. I don't too much about politics. But I vote for the one I like.

MSM: That's what you're supposed to do. Well, I know that you have a lot of your family over at your house, 'cause it's grown so big with all these children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. How do you entertain them, or how do they entertain themselves when they're at your house?

BARNES: Well, they play some games and look at TV and sit and talk. They don't talk about nothing too much.

MSM: What kinds of things do the young ones talk about?

BARNES: They don't talk about nothing. They mostly look at TV or get out here with a ball and play ball. And [I] just stop them from playing ball 'cause the ball don't stay in my yard. It goes in the other folks' yard.

MSM: I don't think it's ever come in our yard.

BARNES: Yes, it has.

MSM: [laughs] Not in a long time.

BARNES: Yeah, it's been a long time. It's been a long time. And they all got places of their own and the places... the yards are bigger than my yard. And then they all grown up, so they go to a playground and play ball.

MSM: Well I noticed a lot of times that you've got some accomplished cooks in the family, 'cause there are a lot of family meals together over there.

BARNES: Uh-huh. We have a lot of meals together. And it better, got a different thing, you know.

MSM: Tell me about Thanksgiving on Thursday. You were telling me earlier before we started recording, some of the foods you had.

BARNES: We had ham, we had turkey, we had sweet potatoes, we had potato salad, we had greens, macaroni and cheese. You name it, we had it. Fried chicken. I always buy my greens ahead of time so I could wash them and clean them. Then I cut them up and put them in the freezer. Then when I get ready to cook it, all I have to do is cook the meat, and then let the greens, hot water run over the greens [to] unthaw it, [and] throw it in the pot.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Where did you learn your cooking skills from?

BARNES: I haven't the slightest idea, 'cause my mother couldn't cook. My mother could not cook.

MSM: Well, who did the cooking?:

BARNES: Well, she did, but we had to eat! [laughs] We had to eat it. But it were, I guess I learned along the way.

MSM: What are some of your favorite dishes?

BARNES: It used to be potato salad. But it's not potato salad anymore. It don't take much for me now, like it used to. And since I have some little illness, you know, I had to cut down on all that food. Had to leave that food alone.

MSM: Well let's transport yourself back, or when you could eat all these wonderful things. What are some of the kinds of favorite meals that you would remember, either for your family or big family get-togethers?

BARNES: Potato salad. Chitlins. Pig feet. That used to be good. But every now and then, I'll cook a pig's feet. Every now and then. I don't eat it like I used to. And the kids don't eat it like they used to. And

the chitlins, we used to love chitlins. Sit down and clean them chitlins, you know? It wasn't nothing to it, but it just ain't like it used to be no more.

MSM: You miss some of the old foods?

BARNES: Especially them chitlins. I went over to my sister's the other day, and she said, "You want some chitlins?" I say, "No, I don't want no chitlins." I just didn't want it like I used to.

MSM: Any of the foods you used to eat that you don't eat very much anymore, or that changes in eating...?

BARNES: Yeah, we been changing our eating habits a lot. Just like I said, chitlins, pig feet. We don't eat that too often. Mm-mm.

MSM: But greens are still part of...

BARNES: Yeah, greens is going always be a part of mine. Yeah, greens... I can just eat the greens and nothing else. And with my turkey, I fixed some corn bread dressing. Good! Ronnie say, "You're going to fix some of that dressing, ain't you?" I say, "Yeah."

MSM: What are some of their other favorites that you've made?

BARNES: Uh...

MSM: When they ask you for special dishes, what do they ask you for?

BARNES: They don't ask for too much special. But Ronnie, he just makes me sick with this fried chicken. I say, "I ain't frying no chicken. You can't eat no baked chicken?" "I don't want no baked chicken." I say, "Well, I ain't frying no chicken."

MSM: But you used to?

BARNES: I used to, all the time. Fried chicken, potato salad, and greens.

MSM: You're making my mouth water.

BARNES: Well, I just saw him... you know. Well, he should realize that when you get older, you ain't supposed to eat all that fried food. And he just loves himself some fried chicken.

MSM: Does he ever cook?

BARNES: No, he don't cook. He cooks breakfast for himself. But otherwise, he don't cook nothing. But he'll have me some breakfast sometimes ready when I come home from church.

MSM: Some what?

BARNES: Some breakfast ready when I come home from church on Sunday morning.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Otherwise, he don't do no cooking.

MSM: And he's going to move out and get a place of his own, and ...

BARNES: That's what he said.

MSM: And going to cook for himself?

BARNES: That's what he said! That, he better cook for himself.

MSM: Well, you might want to start looking at some recipe books to give to him.

BARNES: That's a good idea. . .

MSM: [chuckling]

BARNES: Good idea. Yes, sir. I don't believe he's going nowhere. I don't know, though, Ronnie.

MSM: Well, where do they all work now, your kids?

BARNES: Over... Ronnie works at a law firm. Now I don't know the name of the law firm, but he works somewhere uptown at a law firm. And...

MSM: I think I ran into him down near Connecticut [Avenue] and K Street [N.W.].

BARNES: Yeah, down that way somewhere. He's been there for a good little while now. And Althea, she's a nurse, L.M., or something. What's that, like a L.P.N. She's a L.P.N.

MSM: Licensed practical nurse.

BARNES: Uh-huh. And Patricia, she's a, she works at HUD down in southwest.

MSM: What does she do at HUD? That's the [U.S. Department of] Housing and Urban Development.

BARNES: Uh-huh. I guess she helps people with their houses and things. I don't know. And Lorraine, she's with the little kids at the... where the kids go after school?

MSM: Like a daycare center?

BARNES: Daycare, uh-huh.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: At one time, Carolyn was at the daycare, too, you know. But now she's disabled.

MSM: With her back?

BARNES: With everything. Head, too. I say her head, too.

MSM: Yeah?

BARNES: Uh-huh. So, Yvette, she works for the post office.

MSM: Which one does she work for?

BARNES: Somewhere out in Maryland somewhere, uh-huh. And then...

MSM: She works the front counter, or...?

BARNES: No, she's a letter carrier.

MSM: Oh, so she's out on the street a lot.

BARNES: Uh-huh. She's a....

MSM: She has a little mail truck?

BARNES: Yeah, she got a mail truck. Uh-huh. And my son, Maurice, he works for the post office, too.

MSM: Is he also a mail carrier?

BARNES: He's on the inside.

MSM: Uh-huh.

BARNES: And my oldest son, he works for the [Government] Printing Office. He done been there something like thirty-seven years!

MSM: That's a long time.

BARNES: A long time.

MSM: So pretty much after he got out of school?

BARNES: Uh-huh. And ...

MSM: Do you know what he does?

BARNES: He drives a truck, delivering stuff to the government buildings.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. And Sandra, she works at Home Depot [chain of home improvement stores] up there off of Brentwood Road [N.E.]

MSM: Mm-hmm. That's a nice one.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: What does she do there?

BARNES: She works on the money thing...

MSM: The cash register?

BARNES: Cash register. [beeping from dishwasher in background] Uh-huh.

MSM: How long has she been there?

BARNES: How long has Sandra been there? She's been there a good little while. Then she mostly can do what she wants to do. Mm-hmm. Well, after all them children I got, Marilyn, I think they're pretty good children.

MSM: I think they're pretty good kids, too.

BARNES: They're not bad.

MSM: And they brought you all these grand[kid]s and great-grand[kid]s.

BARNES: Grands, and great-grands, too. [inaudible whisper to herself]

MSM: That's the wind that we're hearing in the background.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: That's another question I wanted to ask you.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

MSM: We were just saying on the other tape that there's a lot of wind in the background. It's a pretty windy day, and I was starting to ask you about your memories about really bad weather here, and floods,

or strong wind, if there's ever... You know, how you've dealt with lots of rain coming down the backyard, since we're on the downward slope of Capitol Hill. Have you had to deal with any flooding in the basement, or in the streets, or...?

BARNES: Well, you still had to deal with flooding in the basement. But it don't flood anymore.

MSM: 'cause we had some pretty bad storms here in just this past September, where there was a big hurricane [Isabel] that came through.

BARNES: Yeah.

MSM: Did you have any problems with that?

BARNES: Uh-uh. Well, it really wasn't here, was it?

MSM: Well, we were gone, so we weren't here. So we heard....

BARNES: Oh, yeah. No, uh-uh. It's not like it used to be, you know. Since, like we getting the house tightened up, some, you know? We got all brand new windows, you know, and there was one time, you'd sit by the window, you had to put on a coat. It's not like that anymore.

MSM: What kinds of changes have you made to the house since you've been there? You've been there now fifty [forty] years.

BARNES: Oh, well, I got the kitchen fixed up, and the basement fixed up. Brand new windows, and one time you could really hear the wind coming through the windows, but you—things have gotten tightened up a little bit. It's not cold over there like it used to be.

MSM: What kind of heat do you have now?

BARNES: Gas heat.

MSM: Do you still have your radiators?

BARNES: Uh-huh. Still got my radiators.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. And where at one time where I had to put the heat up to 80 [degrees] to get it warm, I can put it down to 70. But I just seem like I stay cold all the time.

MSM: Do you have a hot water heater in the basement?

BARNES: Yeah.

MSM: Has that been... Have your ever...Do you remember replacing that since you first moved?

BARNES: Yes. Uh-huh. I had that replaced, and I had my heating, heater, heating replaced. Uh-huh. But otherwise...

MSM: How about the roof?

BARNES: The roof—I had my roof fixed. And every time this man comes around, he goes up there and puts something... like some silver stuff on it the roof up there. I let him do that because I know it's tightening up that roof up there. But I have had a brand new roof.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: How do you keep cool? What kind of cooling do you have in the hosue?

BARNES: From air condition[er]s in the window.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. And for me, I don't have to turn it on no time, 'cause I don't be hot like I used to be [giggles].

MSM: Cooling down, huh?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: And you had the house painted, not long ago.

BARNES: Painted, yeah. Painted on the outside.

MSM: When you bought the house, what color was it?

BARNES: It was... I think it was pink.

MSM: Pink!

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: On the outside?

BARNES: On the outside. I think it was pink.

MSM: And then?

BARNES: It stayed pink for the longest, until we got it painted.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: 'cause when we moved in, we moved in in [19]87. I remember the house was kind of a green color.

BARNES: Yeah, uh-huh.

MSM: So from pink it went to green,...

BARNES: Green, uh-huh.

MSM: And then....

BARNES: And then now, it's white. Mm-hmm.

MSM: And the trim now is...

BARNES: Is blue. I call it blue. It looks like blue to me.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. And how about the colors inside the house?

BARNES: It's, kitchen is green; and the dining room has wallpaper on it.

MSM: What's the wallpaper like?

BARNES: It's nice. Nice and blue and white. And the front room has wallpaper. I call it pink with some flowers in it. And the den, the walls is white. And upstairs, I have all the bedrooms panelled.

MSM: Panelled?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: Mm-hmm. And did you make any of those changes since you moved in? Panelling, or painting or wallpapering?

BARNES: Yes.

MSM: All of that?

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: Do you remember what the house looked like? You said it was pretty raggedy when you were...

BARNES: It was raggedy. The walls and things needed to be fixed, and everything. And it's not like that anymore.

MSM: What do you remember from the house when you, early on when you moved in, after you moved in with your family?

BARNES: It was a nice big house, but it just was raggedy.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. The water used to come in the basement when it rained. Don't do that no more.

MSM: How did you deal with flooding in the basement?

BARNES: It just had to go down by itself. And the, got a couple of the pipes placed back in the back. And I think that's when the water stopped coming in the basement. And I go and make sure my drains is—when it gets windy and they say it's going to rain—I make sure my drains is unclogged.

MSM: Mm-hmm. What about gutters? Did it have gutters when you first moved in? On the back and in the front?

BARNES: On the roof?

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Yeah, but on the back, I got a, on the back, I got where no leaves or nothing can go down in my gutters on top of the roof, you know?

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: If anything go down there, there won't be nothing but some water. No leaves would stop up this, stop it up.

MSM: Mm-hmm. If you—I'm thinking back over the last fifty [forty] years—how would you describe some of the changes to the neighborhood?

BARNES: Well, I think it's, the neighborhood has changed a whole lot, you know. The neighborhood has really changed.

MSM: How would you characterize that? How would you describe some of the changes?

BARNES: Some of them are good. Uh-huh. 'cause we have more white folks now than we did do black folks, you know.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: But I think it's nice.

MSM: What about some of the changes that have not been for the better? You say some of the changes have been nice. Have there been any changes that have been less good for you?

BARNES: No.

MSM: Other than growing older.

BARNES: No, I think it's nice. I think it's nice around here.

MSM: What is it that you like most about the neighborhood?

BARNES: I like the people. I really like the people, because I sit down on my front; they come past, they speak to me, and they ask me my name. And I ask some of them their names, but I don't remember names like I used to. But they're nice folks. Young folks and old folks. I remember faces, but I don't remember names like I used to.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: And you get up plenty early in the morning.

BARNES: In the... mostly, I sit out there in the warm weather, not this kind of weather.

MSM: Yeah, it's a little too cold to go out.

BARNES: Uh-huh. Yeah, but I think they're nice, Marilyn. They're really nice. And they ask me to come in my yard, to shake my hand. "What's your name?" I say, "Frances." And they say, "What's your LAST name?" I say, "You just call me Frances."

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Yeah, I think they're real nice. Real nice. They treat me nice. Treat an old lady nice. They really do.

MSM: Well, what are some of other changes that you've noticed in the neighborhood? Obviously, the racial composition has changed a bit. When did that start happening?

BARNES: I don't know, when they... When did the white folks move around here, you know? They seem like they just changed. Yeah. They really changed.

MSM: But there are still some families who've been here for a long time.

BARNES: Long time. Longer than me. Mm-hmm.

MSM: You talk about the Freemans.

BARNES: The Freemans, uh-huh.

MSM: And their names are... ?

BARNES: I don't even know the kids' first names. But they were here when I moved here. And the mother and the father—the father is passed. And the mother, she's sickly.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. You mentioned she can't walk because she had her legs amputated.

MSM: She had diabetes?

BARNES: She must have diabetes, because I'm a diabetic myself. And they were, they've been there a long time.

MSM: And the Lucas family across the street?

BARNES: The Lucases, uh-huh. But when I moved here, I don't remember Nancy [Lucas]. She said, "I was here." I said, "You weren't over there when I moved here, Nancy." I don't remember her, you know, until later on after the kids started like growing up, you know. And then I don't know where Nancy comes from. She says she was there, but she was not there when I moved here.

MSM: Mm-hmm. 'cause she says she was born there, and she's probably in her mid-fifties.

BARNES: Uh-huh. She says she was...

MSM: About the same age as your kids.

BARNES: Uh-huh. Well, I know, you know, she is the same age as my kids, you know. But I think she's a nice person.

MSM: She is.

BARNES: Very nice person. Well, all of them [are] nice to me. If I find out you ain't nice to me then I won't be bothered. You know how I stay in the house and leave you alone. But all, all these folks around here are nice to me.

MSM: Who else has been here for such a long time that you remember?

BARNES: The little boy across the street, his parents, Doris. Doris. She's lived there a long time. Danny's been here a long time.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And they had mostly kept to their selves anyway, you know. Because I remember his father, a long time ago. He used to drive a cab. And they were... he just kept to his self. He was just like running in and out of their house, out of people's houses, you know? I never was the type to do that, you know.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And you stay in your house, I'll stay in mine; get along better. And over there, Danny and them, always dickering with their kids anyway, you know.

MSM: Which meant you just kind of put your hands over your mouth, so that's kind of how he talks.

BARNES: Yes sir.

MSM: So he's not much of a communicator?

BARNES: No, but he's a nice person once you get to know him, you know.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: Where does he work? Do you know?

BARNES: Metro. Uh-huh. Metro.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Yeah.

MSM: Now, he's—Doris and Danny, they're brother and sister?

BARNES: Brother and sister—you mean Ruth?

MSM: Ruth.

BARNES: Uh-huh. Yeah, they're brother and sister. And they, I think they got two more brothers, yeah. Two more brothers.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. And Ruth, I think Ruth [is] the only girl.

MSM: Mm-hmm. So, if you had to make a prediction in fifty years, what do you think the neighborhood would look like in the future?

BARNES: I don't know. I really don't know.

MSM: What do you think about this new building that's going up at the end of the corner, at the end of the street? There's a new Securities and Exchange Commission building. What's your candid opinion of that kind of place?

BARNES: I don't know too much about that building over there. I know we have a hard time parking now.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And just won't have no place to park. But they ought to fix it so that them folks cannot park on F Street.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And then, you know what I see? I see some cars round here with six, number...

MSM: zone six? [Note: This is the political subdivision of this part of the city. It also is the same number for residential parking in this area, that requires a zone six sticker on the car windshield to be able to park for more than two hours. Without the sticker, cars must move every two hours or risk getting a parking ticket.]

BARNES: Zone six, uh-huh, tags on their cars, and they got Maryland tags on them!

MSM: Is that right?

BARNES: Uh-huh. How [did] they get that?

MSM: I don't know.

BARNES: Yeah.

MSM: So they've got Washington, D.C. zone six...

BARNES: ...six...

MSM: parking stickers...

BARNES: ...stickers...

MSM: ...on a car with Maryland state...

BARNES: ...Maryland tags!

MSM: Hmm. We'll have to look into that.

BARNES: I don't understand that. And then the ticket people come around and give your car a ticket if you're in the wrong spot. And this here Maryland car, sitting here, with zone six sticker in their window.

MSM: Life can sometimes present puzzles.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: Well, the zone six parking stickers are supposed to be for residents.

BARNES: Residents! I thought they were, too. The residents pay for it.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Althea, she works at night. She gets home about 12:30. And she says she has to look and look and look and look for a parking spot.

MSM: But she has D.C. tags.

BARNES: D.C. tags.

MSM: And a zone six.

BARNES: And a zone six sticker.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And then if she parks in a wrong place, they're going to give her a ticket. With this here man or woman, whoever, then they [park] just for the all day and almost all night.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And they don't give them a sticker. I mean ticket.

MSM: So that's one of the changes in the neighborhood that's less good.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

MSM: The increased competition for parking. But if you could put yourself twenty-five, fifty years down the road, what kind... Do you think that the neighborhood is going to be more built up, or..?

BARNES: Most likely will be more built up. More cars and everything else. We used to have garages in the back of our houses.

MSM: Well, when you first moved here, what was in the interior of the alley? Because right now, there's an office building that was built just about the time we moved in the late [19]80s. [Note: The interior of the alley, or mews, is now called Capitol Court, and is the location of a 21-unit three-story brick office condominium with parking surrounding it which belongs to the office tenants.]

BARNES: Uh-huh. It was nothing but garages.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Nothing but garages. Until they built that building out there.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And then they took it all.

MSM: Did you have one of those garages?

BARNES: No, I didn't have any of those garages. And this house [223 F Street] didn't, neither. 'cause the [inaudible] anyway.[inaudible]. 'cause if I'd have had one of them garages, I'd have still been having my garage.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Alley was full of garages.

MSM: So, full of garages and not a whole lot of people with cars.

BARNES: Mm-mm.

MSM: In the [19]60s, maybe?

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: So, there's fewer children in the neighborhood now? Young ones?

BARNES: Yes, it's fewer children now than when it was back there.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: Uh-huh. But I see that they're going to have plenty of children in the neighborhood now. Everbody's got babies around here.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: I'm so glad I'm not one of them! [laughs]

MSM: Been there, done that, right?

BARNES: Oh, yeah.

MSM: Well, what advice do you have for new folks moving into the neighborhood? 'cause there have been quite a few people that have moved in...

BARNES: Yeah,.

MSM: ...in the last ten years, five years.

BARNES: I mean, if they moved in and act like you've got good sense, you'll be all right. [If] you're going to think you're better than anybody else, you ain't going to be all right. Yeah, 'cause I remember Mr. [Robert] Thomas [who lives at 211 F Street, and also conducts his business there, Friday Financial Advisors Group], when he moved in, me and him used to fuss all the time. You know, putting his trash [in] the wrong place, and all that jive, you know?

MSM: This is Mr. Thomas?

BARNES: Mr. Thomas, yeah. But he's pretty nice now. Pretty nice man, now.

MSM: You've taught him a few things?

BARNES: Uh-huh. [laughs] Yeah, he's very nice. I know he used to get tired of me telling him where to put his trash at. Then they keep the alley better now than what they used to keep it.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Do you think the streets are cleaner, or the sidewalks are cleaner or less clean?

BARNES: The people that come and they clean the leaves out there, you know? I wonder why they half-doing the job? They don't do the job right. I can get out there and do better than that!

MSM: You're talking about keeping the leaves off the sidewalk?

BARNES: Yeah. I mean I know the leaves [are] going to get on the sidewalk, but they come around telling me they're cleaning the leaves. And they be in the street sweeping, and half-cleaning it and everything. Then when you look, there the leaves is again.

MSM: What about in the winter time with ice and snow on the sidewalks?

BARNES: Well, we always did clean the snow off in the front, you know, of the house. I was younger then; I didn't mind being out there cleaning the snow off. I don't know what to say, but this snow business and stuff now. I guess the best I do is better take care of that over there, where I live at. I know one thing. When Charles [McMillion, at 223] cleans his, he cleans mine. And I think that's nice. That's nice. And then the man next door [at 219], he's out there smelling things and everything: "Something dead underneath your steps." I say, "Nothing dead underneath my steps." I know ain't nothing dead underneath my steps. I put the stuff for rats and everything else up underneath my steps. And then he tells me, don't throw none over in his yard, 'cause his dog may get it. But yet he lets his dog go out there [and] do what they want to do. He pee and s*** , too.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: And he says something's smelling in MY yard!

MSM: Well, yeah. Having animals requires some responsibilities. And what can I say? You've got to work with the neighbors and ...

BARNES: That's what I'm talking about.

MSM: So, that's a little a bit of friction, sometimes. People with animals that may not properly clean up after them.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. And then later on, I see him picking up stuff in their yard, and I be sitting in my front room all the time looking out the window.

MSM: Yeah, you've got pretty good sense of what goes on in the neighborhood on F Street.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: So, parking and trash and keeping your front yard and sidewalk clean...

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: Those are some of the things that could be better.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: And getting around, is that still fairly easy for you to do, now that you're not working, now that you're not using buses?

BARNES: Well, there ain't too many places that I want to go now. When the stores and everything was downtown, I used to get on the bus in the ... I used to take the kids all downtown, you know, when they were smaller, you know? But, anywhere I want to go, I can somebody, get one of them, to take me.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Do you use the Metro at all?

BARNES: I haven't used that in a long time.

MSM: Why is that?

BARNES: I don't know. I guess, I don't know why I haven't used it. But I haven't used it in a long time.

MSM: Something about going underground?

BARNES: Ain't going under. I haven't been underneath that thing, not since... I went down there one time, over at Union Station. And everything started coming towards me, you know? I went back up the escalator, and I haven't been back down in there since.

MSM: Is that right?

BARNES: Uh-huh. Yeah, I'm not going down there now. If I don't get where I'm going where one of them not going to take me, I'm not going. That's why I do a lot of catalogue ordering, you know.

MSM: Mm-hmm. And using the buses is just...

BARNES: No, no. I can't use them buses 'cause people don't know how to act on them buses. Definitely don't know how to act. You ain't supposed to get on the bus and children cussing and carrying on, you know. They ought to have some respect for somebody.

MSM: So, it's no longer enjoyable to get around on the...

BARNES: No, uh-uh. It used to be nice. Because when we were living in southwest, we used to get on the bus and ride from one end to the other end, and get off, and go back home. It was nice then. It ain't like it used to be.

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: It ain't like it used to be.

MSM: Hmm. Are there any other special memories about the last fifty years, growing up here in Washington, as a native Washingtonian, that you'd like to share?

BARNES: No, Marilyn, because I've never been nowhere and this is the only place I ever been. All my folks are here, not outside of Washington. But it would be nice if the day... one, I won't say that because, I have been on a plane, twice. I've been on a boat but twice. And don't intend on going on a plane no more.

MSM: Why is that?

BARNES: I'm just scared of the planes now. It's not like it used to be. Nothing like it used to be.

MSM: If you could bring some of the things back from the way that they used to, what kinds of things would you most like to see come back?

BARNES: I don't know. But I would like to go on a trip or something like that. A safe trip.

MSM: What would you like to see? Where would you like to go?

BARNES: I would like to go to Paris.

MSM: That you have to do either by a ship or by a plane.

BARNES: With a ship I know it takes you just about the whole month, don't it?

MSM: A little less than that.

BARNES: A little less than that?

MSM: Yeah.

BARNES: I never been nowhere. And I guess the only place I'm going now is up there with The Man. But, it's been a nice 75 years. And I kind of liked it. Don't regret it.

MSM: Mm-hmm. Other things that you would like to see brought back, though? You talked a bit about, you know, the parking, and about young kids not really having the respect that they used to...

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: ...and you know, getting around town is more dangerous, or less comfortable than it used to. Other kinds of things that you miss from the past?

BARNES: [long pause] Mmmmm. I used to, would take and just get up and walk around on H Street, you know?

MSM: Mm-hmm.

BARNES: But so much going on around there. I don't go around there like I used to. When I go around there and get my hair fixed, Althea takes me round there and get it fixed. I don't walk round on no H Street. Them people out there looking like thugs and things like that, you know. I'm scared of them folks.

MSM: So you get around mostly with family, just driving you.

BARNES: Uh-huh, with driving. Then hoping nobody don't shoot in our cars, and things that they do that too, you know.

MSM: Uh-huh. So you just take it easy, and be as safe as you can.

BARNES: Mm-hmm.

MSM: So that's something different, too.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. People look like they want to hurt each other nowadays. I don't know why.

MSM: What hope do you see in your kids and grandkids to make it better? You say they're pretty good kids.

BARNES: Yeah, they're pretty good kids. And I hope things get better before they grow up and get like some of these folks, you know.

MSM: What words of advice do you have for your kids and grandkids and great-grandkids?

BARNES: I try to teach them right from wrong, and treat people like you want to be treated. And if they do that, they'll be okay. That's like yesterday, when my son came in, you know, and Sandra and Lorraine was over there. And he came in, and they say, "You want us [to] fix you a plate?"

MSM: "You want us ...?"

BARNES: "You want us fix you a plate?" she said. "No," he said, "No, no. I don't want anything." I said, "Fix him a plate so he can take [it] home with him," 'cause he was on his job, you know. I said, "Fix him up a plate." He left out there with a big bag full of stuff. I said, "Y'all take care of him." The other one, he's in Florida; he won't be back until tomorrow. He went to Florida, the youngest boy. He went to Florida to see his mother-in-law, him and his wife.

MSM: So they spent Thanksgiving down in Florida?

BARNES: In Florida, uh-huh.

MSM: So, he'll have some tales to tell when he comes back.

BARNES: Mm-hmm. He tells them, anyway! [laughs]

MSM: So the neighborhood has been a good neighborhood for you.

BARNES: Yes, it's been a neighborhood. Been a good neighborhood. And I talk to everybody going up and down the street, you know? And half the time, like in the warm weather, you know, they be rushing to work. And I'll be out there running my mouth. "We're going to see you this evening, hear?" And when they come though this evening, I'll be upstairs looking at TV. [laughs]

MSM: And you go to bed kind of early?

BARNES: I goes upstairs early, but I don't go to bed. Uh-huh. I go to bed, round about maybe nine o'clock.

MSM: Oh.

BARNES: Uh-huh. . Otherwise, I be upstairs. But there's a lot of times if like a person knocks on the door, you know? I don't hear them, and then I be in my jammies anyway. I don't even now come downstairs. But I be in there.

MSM: Well,. It's been an interesting more than fifty years, sounds like. Just, you know, doing what needs to be done to move on and get ahead, start a family, raise a family, get them going on their own. Any last thoughts you want to leave on the tape for people to listen, in terms of your experience here in the nation's capital?

BARNES: Just be good. Treat people like you want to be treated. You want to be treated nice, treat them nice. Everything going [to] be all right.

MSM: Sounds like good words of wisdom.

BARNES: [giggles]

MSM: Well, thank you very much. I'm going to end the tape here and stop the recording.

END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 1

END OF INTERVIEW