



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Mary Murray

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Interviewer: Elizabeth Eck

Transcriber: Elizabeth Eck

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

ECK: This is Beth Eck and I am interviewing Mary Donohoe Murray for the Overbeck Capitol Hill History Project. It is October 19, 2003 and we are meeting at Mrs. Murray's home, which is 3350 Stephenson Place NW, Washington. Along with us is Jan Donohoe McNamara, who is Mary's niece. And so she's along to listen to the interview as well. So, I think we'll get started because Mrs. Murray grew up on the Hill and we were talking an awful lot before we turned on this machine so we want to make sure we get it all collected. Why don't we start with when you were born and where you grew up and what you remember and we'll go from there.

MURRAY: All right. I was born at Providence Hospital in Southeast Washington, November 15, 1914. A long time ago. We lived at East Capitol Street, 629 East Capitol Street and lived there for 17 years.

ECK: And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

MURRAY: I had six brothers. And my father had renovated the house.

ECK: When did your parents move to that house?

MURRAY: 1914.

ECK: So they moved there right before you born? [Murray affirms.] And they had, you said, three brothers?

MURRAY: Well at that point, we only had, I had two older brothers.

ECK: And then you were born.

MURRAY: Yes, and then the four other brothers were born later. Younger than I.

ECK: So your father renovated the house. [Murray affirms.] And did you have your own room?

MURRAY: Yes I did.

ECK: Tell me what the house looked like.

MURRAY: It had a front porch. It was tan brick. We had a front porch, living room, paneled library, dining room, kitchen, and each floor had an enclosed glass porch. The first floor was a pantry, the second floor was a sleeping porch for the boys, and the third floor was a wonderful playroom. We had a full-sized slide, as big as a playground, and a swing that held four people.

ECK: Wow, that was on the third floor.



Mary Donohoe Murray with her mother and four of her brothers, 1919. Photo by Bachrach.



Donohoe Family, 1920s.

MURRAY: Third floor. And rainy days you would just play up there the whole time. And we had a big back yard, had a stable, had a pony in the stable, Beauty [?], a Shetland pony, brown and white. And would ride her constantly.

ECK: Where did you ride her?

MURRAY: Southeast, on the streets. And the alley was cobblestone and the streetcars were in the front of the house. So it wasn't easy but you just went all over Southeast and you took turns. And it was ridden from the time you got home from school until dinnertime everyday.

ECK: So you would take turns with your brothers.

MURRAY: Yes, and who went first yesterday and, you know, whose turn is it today and that sort of thing.

ECK: Now, was that unusual? I mean did people know it was you because you were riding the pony and other families didn't have that sort of thing?

MURRAY: That's true, yes. And finally, the next block over on A Street, Grayson Moore was a neighbor, and he got a pony. And he had a carriage with his. So we weren't the only pony on the block.

ECK: So that was A Street, heading over towards Eastern Market, Southeast.

MURRAY: Right, right.

ECK: So you weren't the only pony [laughs]

MURRAY: No. [laughs] And in the summertime, we would take the pony to the country with us. And one of the boys would ride the pony to Maine Avenue, put the pony on the Norfolk boat and the pony would come down to Rock Point, Maryland, and we would go there the next morning to church, and down to the wharf, pick up the pony and someone would ride her back to Banks O'Dee, eight miles away. And then in September we would reverse that procedure.

ECK: Where now, you said you were in Rock Point and someone would ride the horse to where?

MURRAY: Banks O'Dee which is the name of our summer place. And there are three Donohoe families on the 49 acres, all cousins.

ECK: Was everyone down at the same summer place?

MCNAMARA: There are three houses, one for each family.

ECK: So that's what you did during, so you lived down there all summer?

MURRAY: All summer from when school stopped until it started again.

ECK: So one of your brothers would take the horse to the ferry and be with the horse along on the ferry down to Norfolk? No, you just left the horse, entrust the horse to them.

MURRAY: Yes.

ECK: And how would the family get down? You would drive?

MURRAY: Drive down.

ECK: Do you remember what kind of a car you had?

MURRAY: Like a Model T Ford, uh-huh. It was about, over 50 miles.

ECK: And big enough for the whole family?

MURRAY: Yes.

ECK: Because you said, three brothers ahead of you and then you?

MURRAY: Two.

ECK: Two brothers ahead of you, then you and then...

MURRAY: Four younger. But Frank was born two years after, he was born in '25 and we got the house in the country in '23. So, they were small children, so we had plenty of room.

ECK: Just for clarification, Frank is Jan's father.

MURRAY: Right. And I think the house on East Capitol Street was sold in 1930 for \$25,000.

ECK: And tell me the number of the house again, the number?

MURRAY: 629 East Capitol Street.

ECK: So the house was sold in...

MURRAY: 1930 for \$25,000. And at one point it was a tourist home but now I think it's back to what it was.

ECK: Now why did your father, why did your family move?

MURRAY: Because the price was so good. That's what he said. [laughs] And he also did say that he would rather be a lamppost in Southeast than live in the finest house in Northwest. Was his quote.

ECK: So where did your family move after that house?

MURRAY: We went to 1743 Webster Street, Northwest. And he didn't have a house, but he found, he was on the board for National Mortgage and Investment so he called there and they had this house available. We'd been in it for about two weeks when something, there was a flaw in the title, so he told my mother there would be a red flag in the front, they would have to have an auction. And there'd be a red flag on the front lawn. And she was dying of humiliation. She was so embarrassed to have this red flag on her lawn, noting the house was to be auctioned off. But it was a formality, Daddy said. We didn't have to move. We just stayed there, I think until Mother was still there in 1950. She was still in the house.

ECK: And then, she didn't pass away in 1950?

MURRAY: No.

ECK: She was still there in 1950 and then.

MURRAY: And then she moved to Quesada Street. Still in the District. But the house was too big so she moved.

ECK: And is that where she stayed until she died? [Murray affirms] So you were on the Hill from 1914 until 1925.

MURRAY: No, 1930.

ECK: OK, so they sold the house in 1925 [1930], oh they sold it for \$25,000, I apologize.

MURRAY: That's alright.

ECK: So you said the streetcars were running out in front of your house. Is that how you mainly got around?

MURRAY: [Affirms] And I did go to St. Cecilia's Academy.

ECK: And that was just down the block.

MURRAY: That's right.

ECK: So you walked to school there?

MURRAY: Yes. I went there for eight years. Then I went to Visitation [Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School] and I went on the streetcar, one hour ride each way. And I rode the streetcar three years. Three and a half years.

ECK: Did you have to transfer?

MURRAY: No, it went right from East Capitol Street up to Dupont Circle and then all the way up to P Street. We just stayed on the same streetcar.

ECK: Well, that was convenient.

MURRAY: It was, very.

ECK: An hour!

MURRAY: An hour, it took one hour. And then I think when I was in junior year, I got a car. When we had moved to Webster Street, I got a car. So.

ECK: Do you know why you went to, why you were sent to Visitation rather than anywhere else?

MURRAY: Because my father's cousin, Molly Donohoe, was a nun there. And Sr. Mary Denise was her name. And he wanted me to go there because he and Molly were very close. So that's the reason I went, but I didn't know that at the time. I didn't know she was there, at that time.

MCNAMARA: Dad used to tell the story, you mentioned the streetcar. Dad used to tell the story of how your father would walk out to the corner and, you know, just raise his hand and they would stop for him. Is that right?

MURRAY: That's true. The streetcars on Pennsylvania Avenue would stop to let Daddy go across the street. I have a newspaper article on that.

ECK: Only for your father?

MURRAY: Yes, they said he was lord of Southeast. I don't know who said that.

ECK: Tell me what your father did. What was his business?

MURRAY: [Ed: Mary's father was Clarence F. Donohoe.] He was president of John F. Donohoe and Sons Real Estate at, first at 308 East Capitol Street and then at 314 Pennsylvania Avenue, Southeast. He was born in Washington at 415 New Jersey Avenue, Southeast. And he and his mother and father had a grocery store on New Jersey Avenue. I think the ten hundred block, but I don't remember. [Pause, refers

to notes] My mother was born in Piscataway, Maryland which is in Prince Georges County. She also attended St. Cecilia's Academy and graduated in 1904.



Interior, 308 East Capitol Street, when it served as the office for John F. Donohoe Real Estate.

ECK: And how did she meet your father?

MURRAY: He went to graduation at St. Cecilia's and when he saw her, he said, "That's the girl I'm going to marry."

ECK: Really?

MURRAY: But he really met her, he would take priests down to Piscataway to say Mass because there was no rectory there. So he met her there and that's where he courted her for seven years before he married her.

ECK: Wow, seven years?!

MCNAMARA: Because, I believe you've got the article when he drove the bishop down to, sort of, dedicate the church near-by.

MURRAY: Cardinal Gibbons.

MCNAMARA: And my grandfather was a Knight of Columbus so he drove the bishop down, he and some other gentleman, and then they had a party at the nearest house which was Dr. Hurtt's house where, Dr. Hurtt was my grandmother's father.

ECK: So your mother's last name was Hurtt?

MCNAMARA: And Aunt Mary has the article in, you know, from I guess the Washington area paper about the lovely party that was held to open this church, and that's the party where they met.

MURRAY: Dedication of the church and Confirmation. So he would go down in his letters, he stayed there for the weekend and he lived above the kitchen, there was a loft, no heat, and that's where he would spend the weekends. And he'd leave like five o'clock in the morning, horse and buggy, to come to work at Pennsylvania Avenue.

MCNAMARA: And you have to change horses at Oxen Hill?

MURRAY: At relatives'. The Kirbys were our relatives and he would change horses there.

ECK: Wow, that's quite a commute.

MURRAY: It was.

ECK: But your father grew up in Washington, though. The New Jersey Avenue grocery store.

MURRAY: [Affirms] And he went to St. Peter's [Catholic] Church. He taught catechism until he was thirty-two years old, until he got married.

ECK: So is that where your family went to church, at St. Peter's? [Murray affirms] And that's the church at Second and...

MURRAY: C Streets, Southeast. Right.

ECK: Who was the pastor there then? Do you remember?

MURRAY: Monsignor Connolly. Daddy and he were very good friends.

ECK: I know St. Peter's had a fire.

MURRAY: They did.

ECK: Do you remember that? [Murray affirms] Tell me about it.

MURRAY: I don't remember if the whole church was destroyed. It was just awful. But when Aunt Rena died, we had her funeral from there, and the church is beautiful, I think, now.

ECK: Now when, your Aunt Rena, when was that?

MURRAY: She died in '74.

ECK: OK. So that's when Father O'Sullivan, he's the pastor there now. I went to St. Peter's when I grew up.

MURRAY: Did you? I love the church. I do.

ECK: So do you remember what they did, what you did for Mass when the church burned?

MURRAY: We weren't there.

ECK: You weren't there by then, ok.

MURRAY: No, we had moved up to Sacred Heart.

ECK: And is that were you had your First Communion, or did you do that at St. Cecilia's?

MURRAY: I think St. Cecilia's, I don't remember. It wasn't St. Peter's, I don't think.

ECK: What do you remember about St. Cecilia's? I mean, do you remember going to classes there, how many people were in your class...

MURRAY: Very small class, and we had a big playground, of course it was only half a block away. And my best friend, Eileen Walsh, who became a nun, of course. We were together all day, and that at night we had to be on the telephone, which my father did not understand at all.

ECK: [laughs]

MCNAMARA: Fathers never understand that.

MURRAY: [laughs] And we still, we see each other occasionally. She's still out at St. Angela's Hall, I think. She's retired.

ECK: Now, what kind of a nun?

MURRAY: Holy Cross.

ECK: So your family had one telephone in the house? I mean, you think, now we have so many telephones in the house.

MURRAY: I think it was only, we had two. But we had an unlisted telephone number because my father said he was not going to sit down for dinner and have everybody call him with complaints about the real estate. So we never had it listed. Made it a little complicated when people asked for your number.

ECK: So you weren't supposed to give it out?

MURRAY: Yes, we could give it out, yes, but he just didn't want, didn't want business calls at home.

ECK: Makes sense. So you said it was a real estate company. What exactly was the company doing then? Were they rental, or were they building the homes?

MURRAY: He must have been building, because one letter said he had twenty-six salesmen and he was trying to instruct them. And they were open on Saturday and Sunday. [ed: Rentals too.]

ECK: That was pretty revolutionary then, to be open all...

MURRAY: It was!

ECK: ...seven days a week. They didn't close during the week?

MURRAY: No, later on he didn't work on Sundays and then they stopped work on Saturdays at one o'clock. Very different. At one point in the letters, he tells Mother that he thought Satan had taken over the office. Things must have been a little bad. [laughs]

ECK: Did she tell him it was because he was working on Sundays? [laughs]

MURRAY: Could have been! [laughs]

ECK: So did you visit him at his office? That was fairly close to your house. Did you walk by and say hello? No.

MURRAY: No.

ECK: There was a division there.

MURRAY: Yes. And Daddy, he did come home for lunch every day.

ECK: And did you go home for lunch too, because St. Cecilia's was close? [Murray affirms] Did your brothers go to St. Cecilia's too, for grade school?

MURRAY: No, they all went to St. Aloysius. I think they went to St. Cecilia's like for kindergarten. But then they gave up the boys, St. Cecilia's did. Then it was all girls.

ECK: So St. Cecilia's was all girls, and they went to St. Aloysius which is by Gonzaga on North Capitol Street.

MURRAY: Right. And that was all boys.

ECK: Did they come home for lunch too?

MURRAY: No. That was a long walk home after school.

ECK: So they walked to school?

MURRAY: No, they were taken by. Daddy took them before he went to work, but they walked home, all of them did.

ECK: That is a long walk!

MURRAY: Yes. I thought so too. They thought so too. [laughs]

ECK: Were there buses, I mean, could they have, was there another option?

MURRAY: I don't think so. We didn't have buses, we had just streetcars.

ECK: Just the streetcar. So there was the streetcar line that went down East, tell me, the route went down East Capitol Street and then headed up to Dupont Circle, how did it get there?

MURRAY: I don't remember.

ECK: OK, and from Dupont Circle it went to P Street. So there was that line. There were other lines that you took as well? Did you take the streetcar many different places, like on the weekends?

MURRAY: Like to go to Woodies downtown, you know, you would take the streetcar. East Capitol Street, and go right down, or you could go to Pennsylvania Avenue, they had streetcar lines too.

ECK: So you would walk over to Pennsylvania Avenue and..

MURRAY: Mm-hmm, for some things.

ECK: I guess that, the Pennsylvania Avenue car might have gone down to Woodies?

MURRAY: No, it went up Fourteenth Street, I remember, because I took music lessons at St. Paul's so I had to go to Pennsylvania Avenue to get that streetcar and go to St. Paul's because Sr. Eucharista, I think her name was, taught Mother at St. Cecilia's and she wanted me to be taught by her. At that point she was stationed at St. Paul's so I had to go.

ECK: Where was St. Paul's?

MURRAY: It is now St. Augustine's

ECK: Oh! OK. So St. Augustine's is, we'll look it up later but...

MURRAY: V Street, I think.

ECK: Fourteenth and V, around there. [ed: Fifteenth and V Streets NW]

MURRAY: Yes. I think so.

ECK: OK, so St. Paul became St. Augustine. What kind of music lessons?

MURRAY: Piano.

MCNAMARA: I didn't know that! [everyone laughs]

ECK: And how often did you go there?

MURRAY: Once a week, I think. That was a long trip.

ECK: That was after school?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm, after school.

ECK: And what else did you do after school? Did you have other activities?

MURRAY: We skated a lot, I remember.

ECK: Roller-skated?

MURRAY: Roller-skated.

ECK: Where did you roller skate?

MURRAY: East Capitol Street. [laughs]

ECK: Now, right in the middle of the street, or were you on the sidewalk?

MURRAY: No! On the sidewalk.

ECK: And were the sidewalks brick?

MURRAY: No, cement.

ECK: And so was that with your friend Eileen Walsh?

MURRAY: And she lived in Congress Heights, so she would wait, we would be together until they could pick her up on the way home.

ECK: Congress Heights, Maryland?

MURRAY: No, DC.

ECK: Where is it?

MURRAY: Good Hope Road, Anacostia. Congress Heights, before you get into Maryland.

ECK: So she came a long way.

MURRAY: She did.

ECK: Were most of the other students at St. Cecilia's local? [Murray affirms] So you would see people, you could play with people after school.

MURRAY: Yes.

ECK: And so school would let out around when?

MURRAY: Three.

ECK: At three. And so you could play and ride the pony until dinner.

MURRAY: True.

ECK: Did you get the pony before your brothers did, since they had a longer walk home?

MURRAY: I don't think I did.

ECK: You were just fair.

MURRAY: [laughs] No. They took such good care of the pony.

ECK: So, did you have your own room?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm. Third floor. Wonderful.

ECK: How many bedrooms were there in the house? Tell me who had to share a room and who had their own.

MURRAY: One, other. Daddy [and Mother] had a room and next to their room, there was a small room, it usually had a baby in it, and then there were one, two, three bedrooms plus the porch and that's where

all the boys slept. And the third floor, I had a room and there were two other bedrooms and a bath up there.

ECK: So what did you have in your room? What did it look like?

MURRAY: A desk, and a bed. And it was paneled, awfully pretty, mostly wood, wood paneling, and it was pretty. I was up there by myself. It was a very small room. We had one room, and Mother had family visiting her a lot, would come from the country to help her with the children and everything. So she had a lot of company.

ECK: So tell me, what was a typical day like? Let's say, in third grade, what you remember waking up, going to school, what you did after school, did you eat all of your meals together as a family?

MURRAY: We did. Of course, living only half a block from school, it was very easy commuting. I do remember once, I didn't pick up the clothes in my room, and Mother sent the maid to St. Cecilia's to bring me home to clean my room. When I went back to school I was just a little embarrassed. [everyone laughs] I really didn't do that again.

ECK: So it made the desired impact?

MURRAY: Yes, and there were advantages and disadvantages, I think, to being on the same block as the school. [laughs]

ECK: So you had one maid in the house? [Murray affirms] And what was her role, what did she do?

MURRAY: Mainly I think cooking, and helping with the laundry. Mother didn't go out, she didn't drive a car, and so she was always home, but there was a lot to do.

ECK: Tell me what laundry was like, especially with a family with so many children.

MURRAY: We didn't have a washing machine, that I remember. It was, the girl who did the laundry in laundry tubs downstairs in the basement. But it was, I don't think we had a washing machine the whole time we were on East Capitol Street, I don't think so.

ECK: And then hung the clothes in the backyard? [Murray affirms] That would take a lot more time than it does today.

MURRAY: That's true!

ECK: How long would a load of laundry take?

MURRAY: I don't know, I really don't know. I guess it would take you all day!

ECK: But, so that would be the maid's responsibility? [Murray affirms] Now did she do the cooking as well, or was that something that she and your mom shared as responsibility?

MURRAY: She always got dinner, I think. Mother usually gave breakfast for us and lunch, those who were home.

ECK: Now, did she live with family, the maid?

MURRAY: No, she came every day.

ECK: Do you know where she came from?

MURRAY: I don't remember.

ECK: I was just curious if it was far away.

MURRAY: I don't think so. I don't think so.

ECK: So what do you, did your family ever go out to eat?

MURRAY: Never! Never. [laughs]

ECK: Was that a principle or?

MURRAY: No, I don't think so, but it was just so many of us, you know. And Daddy would come home for dinner, and then he would generally go out to a meeting or. He was on the bank board and the savings and loan, and so he generally had a meeting. So he would go out after dinner and come back later.

ECK: Where did you do your shopping? I'm curious, you know, what Pennsylvania Avenue looked like, or what you remember of the different stores and establishments in the neighborhood.

MURRAY: I didn't, we'd go grocery shopping on, it was a Safeway on A Street, and that was just through the alley. That was on the corner, I don't think it's there now.

ECK: Now, on A Street?

MURRAY: A was the street behind East Capitol Street.

ECK: Because there used to be a Safeway right across the street from Eastern Market, on Seventh Street.

MURRAY: Yes, I remember that.

ECK: There was another one on A Street, Southeast?

MURRAY: At Seventh and A, which was just through the alley and a half a block. And then, on Seventh Street, Northeast, just off East Capitol Street, there was a Piggly Wiggly.

ECK: There were Piggly Wigglys in this area? Now they're only further south.

MURRAY: Yes! But we had a Piggly Wiggly.

ECK: So you could go to either one.

MURRAY: Yes.

ECK: And which one?

MURRAY: Generally, the Safeway because it was a little bit closer.

ECK: Now did your family shop at the Market too? [Eastern Market]

MURRAY: Very seldom. My brother Clarence worked at the Market at Christmas. A cousin of ours in the country had Christmas trees and everything so Clarence worked there, oh yes.

ECK: Selling Christmas trees? [Murray affirms] And they still do that at the Market today.

MURRAY: Do they?

ECK: At Christmas they have the trees.

MURRAY: Smells so good, doesn't it?

ECK: It does. [everyone laughs] Now, you mentioned the crab cake sandwiches. Is that something you did when you were little too?

MURRAY: No! We used to go to the Eastern Market, and Daddy would love the cheeses so he would come home with cheese, lots of it, but we didn't go there very much to shop, as I remember.

ECK: Now you mentioned going downtown to Woodies, Woodward and, what was their proper name?

MURRAY: Woodward and Lothrop's [department store]. And then the Palais Royal was right across the street from Woodward and Lothrop's.

ECK: What's that?

MURRAY: That was a big department store, so you could just go out Woodies' door and go across the street to the Palais Royal and that was a huge department store!

ECK: Now, was Bloomingdale's there then?

MURRAY: No.

ECK: And Hecht's wasn't there either?

MURRAY: No, it was just Woodward and Lothrop's or the Palais Royal. But Jelleff's was there.

ECK: Jelleff's?

MURRAY: Jelleff's.

ECK: That was a department store too?

MURRAY: Just for women, women's things. And later on, of course, we had Garfinkel's which was a beautiful store.

ECK: Did you ever shop at the Lansburgh?

MURRAY: No. But you went to Kanns occasionally because they had nice materials. K-A-N-N-S. Kanns Department Store, that was down near Pennsylvania Avenue, Seventh Street, I think. We went there sometimes.

ECK: Do you remember, it's now the Pavilion, but that was the main post office? Did you ever go in that building?

MURRAY: [Affirms] Still, it's been restored, right? Yes.

ECK: So you did most of your clothes shopping downtown? [Murray affirms] Now you said that Kanns had good materials. Did you sew or did your mother or the maid?

MURRAY: No. Not that I know of, but you would go there for, like, materials for upholstery or do things like that. And Lansburgh's had good materials too.

ECK: So Lansburgh was also a department store. And that's the building now where the Shakespeare Theatre is and...

MURRAY: Right. That was a good department store. But we usually went to Woodward's and Palais Royal.

ECK: I remember shopping at Woodies all the time when I was little.

MURRAY: I know. I know.

MCNAMARA: She's got boxes, from Woodies.

ECK: Oh neat.

MURRAY: Oh yes.

ECK: We'll have to look at those later. [Murray laughs] So that was the shopping. And tell me, do you remember your neighbors? Did they have children as well?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm. We all had playmates on, next door, or two or three doors down.

ECK: Were people friendly, did you know everybody who lived on your block?

MURRAY: We did.

ECK: That's nice. It's a little bit different than today where people don't talk as much to...

MURRAY: Yeah, we did. And then a friend of Daddy's, Whittys, they lived across the street, and they were babysitters for us a lot. They went to Trinity [College] and he built a house exactly like ours, copied Daddy's. Across the street.

ECK: How did your father feel about that?

MURRAY: He liked it. [laughs]

MCNAMARA: And you mentioned your next-door neighbors, though, didn't have kids, so you couldn't make all the noise you wanted.

MURRAY: No. That's true.

ECK: What was the name of that family?

MURRAY: Pope. P-O-P-E. Mr. and Mrs. Pope.

ECK: And they were ok with you having a horse?

MURRAY: [Affirms] No objections at all. [laughs]

MCNAMARA: And you said earlier, when your mother and father would bring home another boy from the hospital, what would they tell you?

MURRAY: "You're still the princess." [laughs]

ECK: Tell me about dating.

MURRAY: Um, it wasn't too good with six brothers. [Eck laughs] No.

ECK: How did it go, because I know, it seems it's very different than what we have to do today.

MURRAY: Yes. And girls never went out alone, we never did. You might have people in to play bridge, but you didn't go out by yourself. And I did have a car, so they boys had to ask me permission to use the car. Well I always gave it to them, because I wasn't going to go out.

ECK: But you had your own car? [Murray affirms] What kind?

MURRAY: Yellow Chevy Victoria. It was beautiful.

MCNAMARA: Dad used to say your cars were always yellow, because they were the floor models from the dealership.

MURRAY: That's about it, yes. And during the war, people thought I was a cab, you know, always hailing me for a cab. But my brothers had names for everybody that I went with, and some of them weren't the best. We'd go out to play as a family, the children, and they'd say, one would say, "Don't let *her* come." Meaning me. And my brother John would say, "You let her come." And he would look after me.

ECK: Your brother John was your older brother?

MURRAY: Yes, and he was big. [laughs] So they didn't argue with him at all.

ECK: So you were able to go.

MURRAY: I was always.

ECK: Did you go play in the park?

MURRAY: Mostly in the alley. It was a big alley on the side and a big alley in the back. You could play.

ECK: What kind of games?

MURRAY: Play ball, and I wasn't very good. I know why they didn't want me, I really do. [laughs] I was, no, I can understand that. And I remember once I had a date on East Capitol Street, and I think, we had a baby grand piano, and Mother had a paisley shawl over it. And there was a little snickering going on, later on, I was sitting there talking to this poor man, and it was Frank Donohoe, under the piano, laughing! And I didn't know he was there.

ECK: How mean! Aren't little brothers just great?

MURRAY: Wonderful! [everyone laughs] But they had names and they'd make up these awful things about these poor people.

ECK: So now when you say you had a date, that person, the man would just come over to your house and you'd sit and talk, was that a date?

MURRAY: Yeah, that would be it. And then, we did go to the dance at Gonzaga, Gonzaga dances. And my father was president of the Gonzaga Alumni at one point, and he bought me a season pass to the Gonzaga games and nobody else had that. And sometimes I would go and sometimes I'd be too embarrassed to go because I'd be there by myself, you know, with my pass. [laughs]

ECK: So you were allowed to go by yourself to that, you didn't have to have a friend along?

MURRAY: No, not to a game, because my brothers played. You know, they'd always play on the football team.

ECK: So did you meet boys then?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm. Went with people in his class. And most of them, George Gingras, I went with and he became a priest. And I went with another boy from Catholic University, and he became a priest. And of course, my brothers said, "They all go out with her and they go to be a priest. They know." [everyone laughs]

ECK: That's not nice.

MURRAY: Oh, that was mild! [everyone laughs] It's a wonderful education, having six brothers, though, I can tell you. It really is.

ECK: So did most of the boys that you dated, were they from the Hill, or did the schools attract people from all over?

MURRAY: No, they were from the Hill. George Gingras lived on South Carolina Avenue, I think. I did become friends with his sister. And Paul Repetti, he became a priest, he went with Frances Jordan. He lived in Southeast, well, you sort of knew. They all lived around.

ECK: Now what about the girls at Visitation? Where did they come from? Were there lots of other girls from the Hill or were you unusual?

MURRAY: No. Very unusual. There was one girl who lived on Sixth Street. We were very friendly. Josephine Ridgley. And her father worked at National Capitol Bank. We were friends, and we would go on the streetcar together every morning. Not come home, because we were on different schedules. Went

every morning. And we got on the streetcar one morning and this conductor said, when we got one, “just like a Victrola record,” we talked from there until Georgetown.

ECK: So you were just like a Victrola?

MURRAY: [everyone laughs] Just like a Victrola record.

ECK: So where did your friends from St. Cecilia’s go, if they weren’t going to Visitation?

MURRAY: It was high school too, St. Cecilia’s.

ECK: So they stayed on?

MURRAY: They stayed on, and didn’t understand why I had to get the streetcar and go an hour’s ride to Visitation.

ECK: Now, what did you think about that? Were you...

MURRAY: I had never been there before, I hadn’t a clue of what it was like. But I did love it.

ECK: Was it sad to leave your friends at St. Cecilia’s?

MURRAY: No, because I made lots of friends at Visitation, and I did like, I loved the school, still do.
[laughs]

MCNAMARA: We do too.

ECK: Both Jan and I graduated from Visitation too, so...[everyone laughs] So when did you meet your husband?

MURRAY: I met him over the phone, the telephone. Friends of my fathers, maiden ladies, the Misses Porters, lived at 308 East Capitol Street in an apartment there, and they had, that was where the office used to be, so there was a separate entrance in their apartment, and there was a bedroom there. So Frank Murray was a revenue agent in New York and he was sent down here, and he got the room, at the Misses Porters. So they called me once and they said, “We have a nice young man here and we would love to have you meet.” So, I said, well, I can’t come by myself, so I asked Jean Donohoe who was at the office, Dick’s sister, and she said she’d come with me, but then at the last minute she didn’t. So I didn’t go.

ECK: Because you couldn’t go by yourself.

MURRAY: Right. So Frank Murray called me once and he said, he would like to come to see me, and could he come that Saturday, and I said no, because I always go to the country on Saturday. So that was out. So then, I think we started going out every Wednesday and every Saturday and Sunday.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

ECK: OK, we were cut off mid-story there, but you were telling us about how often you dated Frank Murray.

MURRAY: Wednesday evening and Saturday and Sunday. Wednesday night we would always go to dinner at the Carleton or the Shorham. Dinner.

ECK: Downtown?

MURRAY: Downtown. And dancing. And Saturday, sometimes a movie. Sunday, we would walk from Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Webster Streets, Northwest, to Fourteenth and Colorado Avenue, which was a long walk, and get a Coca-Cola, and walk back. *That* was that date. So that went on for four years.

ECK: Now why did you walk all the way over there to get a Coke?

MURRAY: I don't know, I guess it was something to do. [everyone laughs] Better than sitting there looking at each other, I guess.

ECK: What kind of a shop would you get it, was it just a soda, just a counter or?

MURRAY: A counter. Drug store. And then we'd walk all the way home. And then sometimes Sunday night he would come for supper.

ECK: Now did you go to the movies when you lived on the Hill? [Murray affirms] Where would you go?

MURRAY: The Avenue Grand.

ECK: OK, I know where the Penn was.

MURRAY: And that was across the street. The Avenue Grand was beautiful.

ECK: OK, I think that's the building that turned into Market Square. It's now shops.

MURRAY: Oh!

ECK: I think, I'm trying to place this and someone else will have to look, the historians will have to look, but I think that's the building.

MURRAY: Avenue Grand was beautiful. Went there.

ECK: What was it like to go, the movies are so different now. What was it like to go, did you dress up or...?

MURRAY: Oh yes, yes you did. And then Saturdays, as a family, my father would take us downtown and maybe Keith Theater, because that was...

ECK: The Key Theater?

MURRAY: The Keith. K-E-I-T-H-S.

ECK: Where was that?

MURRAY: That was on Fifteenth Street. I think it's a bank now. That was a beautiful place. And then we would go to, I don't know what the name of it is now, where the Press Building is, the National Press Building.

ECK: The National Theatre?

MURRAY: No. There was a theater there, and they would have a stage show and a movie and that was wonderful too. And the Earle did too. They had stage shows plus the movie.

ECK: Where was the Earle?

MURRAY: Thirteenth Street, in the middle of the block.

ECK: Downtown?

MURRAY: That's downtown. That's still there.

ECK: So, close to Woodies?

MURRAY: Yes, not far from that.

ECK: Did you ever go to the National Theatre?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm, we did, lots of times. And used to go to the Kennedy Center too, but more the National.

ECK: So the, you said, the movie theater that was across the street from the Penn was the Grand.

MURRAY: Avenue Grand.

ECK: The Avenue Grand. And, now would you go there only with your parents, or when you were little, would you go with your brothers? [Murray affirms] Do you remember how much the movies were?

MURRAY: It couldn't have been very much. Maybe like a quarter.

ECK: Would you go all day, or would you just go for one film?

MURRAY: Just one film, like Saturday afternoon, maybe. But mostly we would be taken downtown on a Saturday afternoon.

ECK: Take the streetcar or...go as a family in the car?

MURRAY: No, Father would take us.

ECK: I'm guessing parking wasn't as much of a problem then as it is now?

MURRAY: Oh no, he wouldn't leave, he wouldn't stay there, he would just drop us off and I guess we would come home on the streetcar. Get rid of us, I think. [McNamara and Murray laugh]

ECK: And so then every Sunday, you would go as a family to church? [Murray affirms] And you went to St. Peter's when you were on the Hill. [Murray affirms] And then when you moved to Webster Street...?

MURRAY: We went to Sacred Heart. And every Sunday, we went to St. Peter's, we'd walk a half a block away, we'd stop by the grandparents, every Sunday, all of us as a family.

ECK: Where were your grandparents?

MURRAY: 220 Second Street, Southeast.

ECK: Now, before we went on tape, you were talking a little bit about your grandparents. Why don't you tell me about them.

MURRAY: I remember my grandfather, very tall and thin, very stately. And every Sunday, each child got a nickel. So that was tempting too. That was wonderful.

ECK: So you liked to visit them?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm. Yes. [laughs] Very happy to do that.

ECK: Now was he from Capitol Hill? Was he from Washington?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm, New Jersey Avenue is where he was born. And Grandmother, tiny, and she had a big leather chair, at a window, and she would sit in it sideways, you know? And she had, she wore a wig, and she also had a trumpet, a big trumpet. I'm not so sure it was necessary, but she did always have that.

And they had a beautiful home, and one side of it was a formal living room. The other side was, I guess like a library, it had a fireplace. And there was a card, it had a big round table, and that was for playing cards. And there was almost always someone there playing cards, whenever you went there, in the evening, the priest came from St. Peter's and there was a card game every night.

ECK: What kind of cards?

MURRAY: I'm not sure, Five Hundred they played a lot. You ever play? We played Five Hundred. Not bridge. Later on it was bridge. Aunt Rena was a good bridge player.

ECK: And so you played bridge with your friends too?

MURRAY: Used to.

ECK: Not anymore?

MURRAY: No. [laughs] Can't keep track of all of that.

ECK: So what did your grandfather do for business when he was there?

MURRAY: Well...

ECK: Retired?

MURRAY: Retired. Well, he had the grocery store, and then he went into the real estate business.

ECK: Now, the grocery store was on New Jersey Avenue.

MURRAY: Mm-hmm, I think the ten hundred block. And then he went into the real estate business and he was head of the company when it started, and my father came along. My father and Uncle Milburn started...

ECK: And how did he get the money to start a company?

MURRAY: I think, it was Emily, his wife.

ECK: Did she come from money?

MURRAY: No, she didn't. But she was very thrifty.

ECK: Now, was she from Washington?

MURRAY: No, she was from Prince George[s] County.



Mary Murray's grandmother, Emily Jenkins Donohoe [undated photo]

MCNAMARA: The story that *I* heard was that Emily and her parish priest were speculating in a small way in the real estate market and she was able to build up enough money to have sort of a nest egg, and then said to John F., you know, groceries are well and good, but we really think this real estate thing could...

MURRAY: Doesn't surprise me at all.

MCNAMARA: That's what Dad said.

MURRAY: I would think that would be true.

ECK: So, it was Emily that started Donohoe...

MCNAMARA: It was her idea and her money but, sorry, but John F. started the company, because Emily wasn't going to do that, of course, but it was her idea. [laughs]

ECK: So when the company first started, it was called John F. Donohoe.

MURRAY: And Sons.

ECK: And Sons. So it was always “and Sons?” [Murray affirms] So there was never any push for you to get involved?

MURRAY: No. [everyone laughs]

MCNAMARA: But you did work there.

MURRAY: I did, for seven years.

ECK: Now when was that?

MURRAY: Graduated from Trinity College in '40, and I went to work for Monsignor Grady who was my professor there, at the National Conference of Catholic Charities. I was there five years, when my brother John asked me, could I come to work at the real estate office, because it was during the war and help was a little difficult to get. So I did. And I was there for seven years. I was there after I was married, I worked like two days a week but until that time, I was there every day. By streetcar from Webster Street to Pennsylvania Avenue. It was during the war, gas was rationed, didn't have enough gas, so I'd get the streetcar.

ECK: Did Capitol Hill change a lot during the war, compared to when you were growing up there?

MURRAY: I wasn't there during the war, I was on Webster Street.

ECK: Right, but you would commute over for seven years?

MURRAY: Yes, there was a lot of restrictions, I mean we had coupons for meat, for butter, for...you couldn't get, silk stockings were hard to get. But gas was the hardest. At that point, Mother and I were the only ones home. All the boys were in the service.

ECK: So, no dating during the war?

MURRAY: Very little, very little. [laughs] Everybody was away.

MCNAMARA: There's that old song, “you're either too young or too old.” Talks about how there were no men to date. They're either in the service, or too old or young to be there.

MURRAY: That's true. [pause]

ECK: Tell me a little bit. Capitol Hill and Washington, DC now, well, it is changing, but at least, when we were growing up, it's been predominantly African-American. And I know that the city's gone through a lot of changes. Do you remember what the racial makeup of the neighborhood was like growing up?

MURRAY: East Capitol Street was predominantly white. But right behind us, on A Street, was black. But, you know, we all got along fine, and we used to go to Mass every morning, we'd get up for six-thirty Mass, and I would walk through the alley. East Capitol Street, I would walk all the way over to St. Peter's Church at six-thirty in the morning with never a fear.

ECK: So crime wasn't a problem?

MURRAY: Oh no! No, never. [pause] The boys were in trouble sometimes, not serious trouble, but they would just do tricks and someone would say, "It's those Donohoe boys," and they were generally right. [everyone laughs] Because there were so many of them. [laughs]

ECK: So they were known?

MURRAY: Uh-huh. Just tricks things. Bucket of water over the front door and you ring the bell and little things like that. And old trash cans down the alley, anybody's trashcan, you couldn't find your own, unless you were careful. You know, little things.

ECK: Now, St. Peter's, you said A Street was mostly inhabited by black families? [Murray affirms] And, were there certain neighborhoods that you were told you weren't supposed to go to?

MURRAY: Never.

ECK: No? So you wandered all around? [Murray affirms] And what about St. Peter's? Were there both black parishioners and white parishioners?

MURRAY: I don't remember many blacks. We had a, Grandmother and Grandfather had the front pew at St. Peter's that you would have to walk up there, and we went to daily Mass during Lent, the whole family. My father would wake us up, going through the house singing, "I can't get 'em up, I can't get 'em up, I can't get 'em up in the morning." But we *all* had to be there. And by the time all of us walked up to that front pew, it was a long walk.

ECK: Halfway through Mass? [laughs]

MURRAY: Half dressed.

MCNAMARA: Is it true that your father would walk out if the sermon took too long?

MURRAY: [laughs] That wouldn't surprise me.

MCNAMARA: Dad used to talk about that.

MURRAY: But he really was, very religious man, very religious. He helped, he started or founded the Manresa Retreat House near Annapolis and he was very active in that. Very active in the Knights of Columbus.

ECK: Now how often did your family go out to your country house?

MURRAY: We'd go all summer, from June, we'd leave the day after school closed and we'd come back the day school opened. And once I came home with the Whitty girls, they were coming to town, and asked if I'd like to come. And that was a big treat, so I said yes, I would like to. So, they dropped me off at the office, and I went in to see my father and he said, "What the H. are you doing here?" So I didn't come back again. He didn't have time [laughs]

ECK: So he didn't go out to the summer, he didn't go out to the summer...he stayed in town.

MURRAY: No. Yes, he came down on weekends, and he did all the marketing and brought that with him. And they would come back on Monday morning, drive back. And one person down there would have breakfast on Monday morning, Aunt Kitty, Mother, or Aunt Mary, so you'd just go to, one house had to get up early. Give the men the breakfast. And my father would give us a list, and he kept a carbon copy of things he wanted done while he was away that week. And when he got back, he would check the list. And one list we had was to get so many soft shell crabs, and so many hard shell crabs. So we had to crab every day to get this, fill this list for his friends.

ECK: Because he would have a party on the weekend?

MURRAY: Oh no, he would save all these and take them back to his friends.

ECK: The crabs?

MURRAY: The crabs, mm-hmm. So half of the ice box he had crabs with all the seaweed on them.

MCNAMARA: So he'd drive back up to town with a car full of smelly crabs and no cooler? I mean, how would you transport crabs in a Model T? [Eck and McNamara laugh]

MURRAY: Well, he had all these trays and he'd put the crabs, and he had ice and seaweed all packed.

MCNAMARA: What was the seaweed for?

MURRAY: Keep them, I guess, as a covering for the crabs.

ECK: Keep them moist?

MURRAY: Yes, I would think so.

ECK: So, do you remember ice deliveries?

MURRAY: Oh yes.

ECK: How often would the iceman come?

MURRAY: In the country, it was just once a week, so you would, we had big chests. And, you'd get blocks, fifty-pound blocks, hundred pound blocks.

ECK: Now, what about on East Capitol Street?

MURRAY: I don't remember. But there must have been an iceman. We had milk delivered.

ECK: Every morning?

MURRAY: Every morning. Milk, and then he would have, like, eggs or, and orange juice. You could get that, put your list out. Generally it was like, a dozen quarts of milk every day.

ECK: Wow. Well, with that many children in the house.

MURRAY: And my father did all the marketing in Washington too. At the Fifth and Florida Avenue Market. He would buy, you know, a stalk of bananas, a bushel of cantaloupes, everything, wholesale, big quantities of cookies, stick candy that you put in an orange. That was delicious. So he'd do all that, he would do all that.

ECK: So he would buy things at the market and then bring it out to the country house?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm. And then.

ECK: And he would go to the market during the week on East Capitol Street too?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm, every week he would. And sometimes I would drive him and then he'd say, now go by Aunt Kitty's and go by Aunt Rena's to see if they want anything. So I was really like a huckster, you know.

ECK: So where were Aunt Rena?

MURRAY: Aunt Rena was at, well first she was on Second Street, family home. And then she moved to 308 East Capitol Street in an apartment. Aunt Kitty lived at 159 Kentucky Avenue. She had a beautiful home, so I'd go by there to see if she needed anything, or wanted anything.

ECK: Now you said that you still own property on the Hill? [Murray affirms] Where's that?

MURRAY: Next door to Friendship House, 635 D. And it's lovely. It's two-story, two apartments, completely, you know, two kitchens, two baths. And it has, each story has a porch, a back porch.

ECK: When did you buy that?

MURRAY: '63, and I think the rents then were \$35 a month. And in the wintertime, it was a little bit more, I think \$40.

ECK: For the heating?

MURRAY: Yes, yes. But then it changed in the summertime, and I think it was \$35 and I'd hate to tell you what they get now. [Eck and McNamara laugh] I'd hate to tell you.

ECK: Were you going to move there? Is that why you bought it?

MURRAY: Well my brother said, it would be great for me. He said, you could move there and walk to St. Peter's Church and he thought it would be ideal. And I guess it would have been, but I never got to that.

ECK: So your husband had passed away?

MURRAY: He died in 1970. But I bought it before he had died.

ECK: So your brother was trying to get you guys to move back to Capitol Hill?

MURRAY: I guess so. But he thought it was so, he said, this is really a good buy for you. This would really be good for you.

ECK: But so you bought it and then rented it out immediately.

MURRAY: It was rented then and it has never been vacant, never. And I do, I have had, one little slight problem. There was graffiti on the back fence, I finally put up a fence in the back, and I went by there once and I was not happy. So I called my brother and he came over and took care of it for me.

MCNAMARA: Which brother?

MURRAY: Jerry. I mean, my son, Jerry. And he spray-painted it. So that took care of that. But, outside of that I have had no trouble at all.

MCNAMARA: It was your brother Clarence who told you to buy the house.

MURRAY: Right, yes. Called me up and said, “Do you have any money?” I said, well. “Do you have enough for a down payment on a house?” And I said, oh yes, I think I would. [laughs] “I’ve got the house for you.”

ECK: So, do you go back to the Hill very often?

MURRAY: Not very often. Sometimes when I go to the country, I’ll go that way, go Pennsylvania Avenue and Branch. And then sometimes I’ll go by and look at East Capitol Street house, because I love that. And I go by 308 East Capitol Street which [is] where Aunt Rena lived, and the office owned that and they also did over the next one called the Milburn apartments and I’d go and, St. Cecilia’s is gone. Depository, isn’t it, for the Library of Congress?

ECK: Is that what they’re using it for now?

MURRAY: I think so. Book storage, that’s what someone told me.

ECK: Huh.

MURRAY: That’s who bought it. It was a nice school. All nuns. We had French the whole eight grades we were there.

ECK: Really?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm, you had to take it. No choice. It was a good school.

ECK: Do you want to take a look at your paper and see if we didn’t cover anything, or, can you think of any other questions? And I think we’ve got quite a lot of information.

MURRAY: I think we ought to name the brothers, don’t you?

ECK: Yeah, that would be helpful, to clarify the family.

MURRAY: Yes.

ECK: So why don’t you start from the oldest.

MURRAY: Yes. Edgar, John, Clarence, Joseph, Harry, Frank.

ECK: And you were number three.

MURRAY: I was number three.

ECK: And what was your mother’s name?

MURRAY: Clara Hurtt. H-U-R-T-T.

MCNAMARA: If you want a little more day-to-day, you know, what life was like, Dad certainly had some zippy stories, I'm sure you did, about the boys running around and up and down, you haven't mentioned Goona either. Did you know? He was on Capitol Hill, right?

MURRAY: Oh, absolutely. He was a Chesapeake Bay retriever. And his name was Goona. And my brother...

MCNAMARA: What was his full name?

MURRAY: Goona Goona, the Love Drug. My brother, Edgar, named him, and you know, in the paper, the ads, for little adult films, you know, only. And this was called, it was in the papers, an advertisement, "Goona Goona the Love Drug." And so, Edgar says, we're going to call him Goona Goona. [everyone laughs] So we did. And there were several, there were three Goonas after that. Everybody, all the retrievers were named Goona, had to carry on the tradition.

ECK: So, Goona the First, Goona the Second?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm.

MCNAMARA: And Goona would walk to the door, this is what Dad would say. Goona would walk to the door, whenever the doorbell rang, when Grandmother would go to answer the door, and Goona would go with her, always and would sit at the front door and, you know, check out who was at the door, and everyone was fine, that was fine. But he had been trained, I believe by Joe, that if you stepped back and said, "Get 'em" that he would.

ECK: Really?

MURRAY: Yes. And he'd always carry a newspaper up to my father's room. He was just a wonderful dog. They *all* were. And Daddy loved to show people. They have webbed feet, you know, like a duck. And he would be sure everybody understood that. [laughs]

ECK: Now you had more than just the dog, right? I mean, you had the pony, but you had other animals in the house?

MURRAY: Well, we always had one dog, sometimes two, always retrievers. And then, they all had different animals.

MCNAMARA: Joe was particularly, Joe and Buck were particularly good with animals, Dad used to say.

MURRAY: Harry had, I think, a falcon.

MCNAMARA: Sorry. Harry and Buck are the same.

MURRAY: Yeah, the same ones. And I think Clarence had pigeons. Somebody had rabbits.

ECK: Wow. Did you have a big back yard?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm. Yes, we did.

MCNAMARA: And Harry would have, was it Harry or Joe? Harry would sort of run around with, like, whatever animal he was taking care of in his shirt.

MURRAY: And then also in their pockets. And Mother said, you know, you'd have to go through their pockets. There'd be frogs in there. There could be anything in there. Anything!

ECK: But now you said you played mostly in the alley when you played games. Did you go, you know, there's Garfield Park down...

MURRAY: We never went to a park.

ECK: So you didn't go over to Lincoln Park?

MURRAY: No, we didn't. Or Stanton Park. One of the children went to kindergarten, I think it's Stanton. You know.

ECK: OK, mm-hmm.

MURRAY: That's a pretty park. And Lincoln Park's a pretty park.

ECK: But you didn't go to play in the parks.

MURRAY: Never did, just, my father said he wanted to see us. "Stay in your own backyard! I want to know where you are." And that's the reason we had the playroom, I think. "I want to know where you are."

ECK: Now let's connect you to a couple other things. Because *my* mother, Barbara Eck, recently conducted an interview with Ray Donohoe [Murray affirms] that's also going to be posted on the Overbeck History website. Now, how is he related to you?

MURRAY: He's a cousin. His father and my father were brothers.

ECK: So who's his father?

MURRAY: Milburn. Milburn. They were eight in that family. There were seven in ours. And then the third house. They were next door to us in the country. And the third house, they were four. So, we had a lot of playmates in the country too.

ECK: So there were three houses right next to each other? [Murray affirms]

MCNAMARA: Still are.

ECK: So in the summer you could just go down and play with everybody.

MURRAY: It's true. And we all swam together and we all had big clubs and we built boats. Oh! Made your own fun, really, you know.

ECK: Now let's connect you to Archibald Donohoe. Because we were talking before the tape went on about Archibald Walk that was named by Barbara Held and her company because Archie Donohoe was the one person who could identify that people lived in the houses there. And they weren't allowed to remodel those houses and sell them unless they could prove that they had been inhabited. So now how does he fit in to your family?

MURRAY: His mother and my grandmother were sisters. His mother was Jenkins, Eugenia Jenkins, and Grandmother was a Jenkins, Emily Jenkins. And they were sisters [ed: who both married Donohoe brothers, as did a third sister].

ECK: So he was related to the Emily that saved away the money for the company. [Murray affirms]

MURRAY: That was his aunt.

ECK: OK. And so he worked for the real estate company?

MURRAY: As a salesman. He was really, he was delightful, he was a bachelor, he never married.

MCNAMARA: Really?

MURRAY: He was so nice. He really was.

ECK: Well, I think that this has been quite a lot of good information. I'm sure we could go on for much much longer.

MURRAY: I don't know. I hope so.

ECK: But if you can think of anything else that you'd like to...

MURRAY: I don't think so.

ECK: Well, I'll certainly take a look at all the pictures that you have and make some notes on them and perhaps borrow a few, and that'd be ok to make copies of and then bring back.

MURRAY: You can keep this one.

MCNAMARA: One thing you might, you might want to talk about this, the South, the Southeast Businessmen Association while the tape's still on. Because it seemed to be a big part of Clarence's life.

MURRAY: It was, and there's a picture downstairs about this long, but I couldn't bring it up, it was too heavy. But that is a picture of the Southeast Businessmen at an oyster roast down the country. And how they got down there for an oyster roast and back in one day, they were all driving Model T Fords in those days.

MCNAMARA: And they're all in suits, they're at a clam bake, you know, and it's summer and they're dressed as they are in this picture which is all formal suits, high collars, ties, the whole nine yards.

MURRAY: But this one, not as much, some of them. Because they have cooks there. But this is...

ECK: So what do you know about this organization?

MURRAY: This is the Southeast Businessmen. And Daddy, where is he? He was president of it. And then later on, John was, after Daddy died, my brother, John, was president of it. But that's a big group for a businessmen association.

ECK: It is. There's got to be at least forty people in this picture.

MURRAY: Easily! You can have this one, because, that was in the newspaper. This is when the Sunday edition had a yellow section with the pictures.

ECK: What newspaper did you read?

MURRAY: We had the *Evening Star*. We had two papers. We had the *Herald*, which was Eleanor Patterson's paper, Hearst paper. And then we had, the *Evening Star* was an afternoon paper. And there's was one called *The News*, it came out at noontime. But we didn't get that delivered. I don't think it delivered, you had to buy it at the store. But the post, the morning paper and the evening paper was delivered to your home.

ECK: Was it the *Evening Star* that became the *Washington Post*?

MURRAY: No, the *Evening Star* went out of business.

ECK: OK, so the *Washington Post* came on much later.

MURRAY: Right. But that, you can have that one. This one.

ECK: Oh yeah, you talked about. Talk about the picture.

MURRAY: This is the Donohoe Motor Company. [ed: The Overbeck Project did *not* copy the photo being discussed here.]

ECK: So now, when did that fit into, you know. [everyone laughs]

MURRAY: I don't remember, but I know we would go.

ECK: Now, where was that located?

MURRAY: 215 Pennsylvania Avenue, across the street from the Library of Congress. That, the hundred block. And I remember I got Fords from there and then, they gave up that agency and went up Northwest and sold Chevrolets.

ECK: Now when you say across from the Library of Congress, do you mean the main Jefferson Building with the dome?

MURRAY: Yes, but at the side of that building. This was across, on the side, not the front of the Library, but the side.

ECK: So, on Pennsylvania Avenue?

MURRAY: Yes.

ECK: But, see, now that building would be gone now then. Because there's the second, I can't remember the name. There's that new building, for the Library of Congress, the one that's just up from St. Peter's, the white one. So maybe that building's gone now.

MURRAY: No, this is right on the avenue.

ECK: That's still there?

MURRAY: And I know it's a bank. And Grandmother, Emily and John, Grandmother and Grandfather. They had built this building. But they could go from the backyard of their house into this building. They were on Second Street. And those people went from here, Dolan and Uncle Al, they went to Grandmother's for lunch. We went, everybody went someplace for lunch. But this is...

ECK: So they sold cars there, and then they moved off of the Hill. But the cars that you got still were from that...

MURRAY: Mm-hmm, they were here and then often I'd, we switched to Chevrolets when they went into that business, then I went to the Chevrolet. And my father would say, on Saturday afternoon, he'd say, "Let's go get a new car." And he didn't drive, because he had lost a leg, so somebody had to drive. So, I was, I was fine. I said, "Sure!" And come home, my brother Clarence said, "Do you have any idea in the world how much we resented you?" I said, no, I thought life was wonderful! [everyone laughs] I really did! I just thought it was the greatest. Had my own car, my own boat. Father had a boat.

MCNAMARA: There's a picture of her in the other room of her and the boat.

MURRAY: Not that boat, no. This was a rowboat. I mean, it was about as big as this table, and it had "Mary T." on it. And I was in heaven. And they had to ask to use that. And I'd go down and clean that boat and polish it and everything.

ECK: So were you spoiled because you were the only girl?

MURRAY: Rotten. [everyone laughs] But I didn't know that they resented me, but Clarence explained it all to me. [Eck laughs] Yes, he did. [laughs] I can understand.

ECK: Now what about the picture, you said this is on the Hill as well?

MURRAY: It is.

ECK: Why don't you describe what this one is.

MURRAY: This is the [Southwest] corner of Third and Pennsylvania Avenue [SE]. It, it used to be a drug store. It used to be O'Donnell's Drugstore, on the corner, across the street from this. Then it was Morton's Drugstore. And this is, Kenny's, this was a coffeehouse, coffee and tea, and then this was Weber's jewelry place, a friend of Daddy's, and then this was a barbershop. Then, when I was there, the whole thing was a barbershop, but I don't think, I don't think there's a barbershop there now.

ECK: Now, this is Third and Pennsylvania.

MURRAY: Mm-hmm. Remember like Sherrill's Bakery?

ECK: Yeah!

MURRAY: OK, well that was right up here.

ECK: OK.

MURRAY: This would be Third Street, and this would be Pennsylvania Avenue, and it was right, like, next door to Sherrill's.



ECK: Did you ever go to Sherrill's?

MURRAY: Yes, I did. Wasn't that wonderful?

ECK: It was. Sad to see that go, that just closed a couple years ago.

MURRAY: Oh I know, it broke my heart. Oh my.

ECK: Now was the Trover Shop there when you were?

MURRAY: Mm-hmm. The card shop? Yes, I remember that.

ECK: Because Trover has been around for a long time, I'm trying to think what other businesses...

MURRAY: The men's store. No? Oh, I remember that. I forget the name.

MCNAMARA: Raleigh's?

MURRAY: No.

ECK: Now, I remember a Morton's Pharmacy.

MURRAY: That's it!

ECK: But did they move somewhere else on the Hill?

MURRAY: I don't know. Did they?

ECK: They might have.

MURRAY: Because it used to be across the street. Used to be on the other corner of Third and Pennsylvania Avenue. Jean Donohoe owned all those stores.

MCNAMARA: Really? Did he?

MURRAY: Jean. Sister. There were about four. There was a cleaners, and there was a little fruit stand, fruit store. She owned all four.

MCNAMARA: I didn't know she was such an entrepreneur.

MURRAY: Her father got it all for her.

MCNAMARA: Oh.

[Statements deleted at request of interviewee.]

ECK: Do you remember Kresge's?

MURRAY: Oh! Seventh and the Avenue? Oh, that was a good store!

ECK: What did you get there?

MURRAY: Oh, a lot of things. You could find things there you couldn't find anyplace else. We used to also go to a Chinese restaurant.

ECK: Up from Kresge's? [Murray affirms] Because there's still a Chinese restaurant there.

MURRAY: I forget the name of it. And there was a good delicatessen. Not a delicatessen, a cafeteria across the street, near the Avenue Grand. And that was good. We occasionally would go down there.

ECK: I'm trying to think of the other shops that...

MURRAY: There was a florist. My brother, John, opened an office at, where were we? Sixth and the Avenue. And then he bought, he moved across the street, they were where Kresge's was, up a little bit. And he had a real estate office there, and I went to work for him.

MCNAMARA: What was John doing?

MURRAY: Real estate.

MCNAMARA: But was he part of Donohoe or?

MURRAY: No, he left there.

MCNAMARA: I did not know that.

MURRAY: And I went with him there.

MCNAMARA: Really. How long?

MURRAY: Not very long. I had Mary Gerard and I farmed her out to my mother. And then I was working, and I was pregnant with Jerry, so I worked, I guess we closed up that office before he was born.

ECK: Do you remember they built another building for the Library of Congress on the opposite side of Pennsylvania Avenue from Trover Shop and Sherrill's.

MURRAY: Oh, they did?

ECK: That's a Library of Congress building there now, but I heard that that was all houses.

MURRAY: Not in my day. It was a beautiful building. And I was there when they built the Folger Library.

ECK: Right next to. Folger Library, well, that's right on East Capitol Street. [Murray affirms] You had a picture of a funeral home on that block, right?

MURRAY: Right. Yes. Across from that.

ECK: That's the picture with everybody in the car. [ed: Photo being discussed is the same as the one in the Ray Donohoe transcript.]

MURRAY: Yes, that's right. This is the funeral home. And then this is one block and then, the Folger Library would be across the street from this.

ECK: Now, tell us who's in the car.

MURRAY: Clarence Donohoe, Milburn Donohoe, Mr. Zurhorst, Charlie Zurhorst, and his son. And they owned and ran a funeral home which was in this building.

ECK: Now that car, it's a right handle car, isn't it?

MURRAY: I know! I don't know what it is.

ECK: Huh. I wonder how that happened. [everyone laughs]

MURRAY: I don't know. I don't know.

ECK: Well, thank you so much for all this. I think we, oh, actually, yeah, do you remember about voting?

MURRAY: Yes, sure. I registered and I voted down here at Lafayette School. And I do remember the first mayor, I remember Walter Washington who was awfully good, I thought. But before that, we had commissioners, you know, three commissioners. And...

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

ECK: We were talking about politics and you said you remember Walter Washington, the first mayor of DC, but you also remembered some of the commissioners.

MURRAY: I did. My father was very active in the Democratic Party and my husband too. And I have medals and I have ribbons and it all says, I haven't a clue what year it is, but, from my father. But, there was one Inaugural Ball, and I think it was Woodrow Wilson's that he had an invitation for that.

MCNAMARA: You have a program.

MURRAY: Yes, I do have a program.

ECK: For the inauguration?

MURRAY: The other day, I found in the den, we were cleaning that out, a roll of papers my father's notary. A notary is, a license is good for five years. I have one for every president, Taft, you name any president and I have it. And I didn't know they were there.

ECK: Wow.

MURRAY: A big roll of them. But, every president, like Woodrow Wilson, Taft, ones I never heard of, but there's all there.

ECK: And when you say it was a notary?

MURRAY: Daddy was a notary.

ECK: A Notary Public?

MURRAY: Yes, a Notary Public. And these, and it's this big! You could frame a whole room!

ECK: So his notary, his certificate of being a notary would be signed by the president?

MURRAY: Each president. Which I didn't know. And they were huge. And I thought, well, I'll frame these. And then I thought, I mean, fifteen of them, no! [laughs] No way!

ECK: So did you talk about politics a lot in your house when you were growing up?

MURRAY: No, we really didn't. We really didn't.

ECK: Do you remember when the city desegregated in the sixties, when things changed around?

MURRAY: Yes.

ECK: I mean, you were up here in Northwest by then.

MURRAY: Yes, and you really, it was scary, but, you know.

ECK: The riots?

MURRAY: Yes. Destruction of property, you know, people's homes being hurt. That was scary, but we didn't see any of it, we weren't involved in any of it.

ECK: Did it affect your father's company?

MURRAY: No. His idea of a good time was to go down to the Monument lot and watch, we'd watch polo games, and we would watch baseball games. Sunday afternoon. I think it was the cheapest form of entertainment that he could find for the whole, and he would pile us all in the car. We'd go down, and he was in seventh heaven.

ECK: Now that was where?

MURRAY: It was down, like, where that big field down there, that had polo games every Sunday.

ECK: By the Washington Monument?

MURRAY: [affirms] And then they would have baseball games.

ECK: And they still have a polo game.

MURRAY: Yes, they do. They do. And they still have the games. Well that's where we were on Sunday. Sunday afternoons.

MCNAMARA: You talk about going back. Now, Dad used to talk about people coming, during the Depression, people coming by the house, and be given food and such, and that was just something that you did.

MURRAY: [affirms] And then my father wouldn't give him money but he would [unclear], and John would do the same thing, over on the Avenue. They'd give a card, and, their own [business] card. And you could take that anyplace on the Avenue like to, that nice Italian place, Joe's. And he said, "You just take this over, they'll give you dinner. They'll give you food." They wouldn't give them money. Daddy said no, because they might just not buy food with it. So he would do that and John would too.

MCNAMARA: So then they'd stop by later and pay.

MURRAY: Yes.

ECK: Wow. And that was during the Depression.

MURRAY: [affirms] But my father was, he'd say, "You know, I'm trying to tell you all, we're sitting on a keg of dynamite and I can't impress you all about that. There are going to be breadlines."

ECK: When did he say this?

MURRAY: He was very depressed. Before the Depression, really.

MCNAMARA: How long before?

MURRAY: Oh, I guess a couple years, really. But he said, "Mark my words, we're going to have this." And, we really did. I mean you had breadlines. You had people selling apples.

ECK: Do you remember that?

MURRAY: I do. On F Street, you'd see people on every corner selling, you know, with cups, trying to sell fruit or trying to sell something. Begging, begging, actually begging.

ECK: Did it affect your family at all? I mean, you guys were ok?

MURRAY: No. Mm-hmm.

MCNAMARA: Well Dad used to say that DC wasn't so bad. I mean, people who lived here, it wasn't so bad because the federal government was here so not so many people were thrown out of work. But what you did have were people traveling through, on their way to wherever they were going and those were the ones that tended to stop by the house asking for a meal or things like that. But it wasn't so much people that you saw here so much.

MURRAY: Daddy would say the same thing. He'd say, "You were so fortunate this is a federal city. And you will not feel a depression as other cities will feel it." Which was true.

ECK: So I guess it wasn't so bad that you didn't have a vote. [everyone laughs]

MURRAY: No, that's true, that *is* true.

ECK: There are advantages to have the government here.

MURRAY: That's true.

MCNAMARA: But people actually would stop by the house?

MURRAY: I don't remember them stopping by but they would stop them over on the Avenue, near the office.

ECK: Because they knew they were from your family?

MURRAY: I don't think so.

ECK: It was just stopping anybody?

MURRAY: Yes.

MCNAMARA: You would just stop at houses and well, Dad would say, maybe since he was younger he was home during this time. That you would get a reputation, you know, as being generous. "There's a nice lady at this house in DC on this street," you know, that would get communicated around the folks who needed that kind of information. So they would stop by the house for a meal and stuff, and they would get it. Or a card.

MURRAY: And Daddy would, at the office, we had banks on either side of us. National Capitol Bank and East Washington Savings Bank. And they had, policemen would stop like every hour or every half-hour and go in and sign in. But they would check those banks and we had Eastern Savings and Loan on one corner and Metropolis, American Metropolis [unclear] next block.

ECK: All on East Capitol?

MURRAY: On Pennsylvania Avenue. And they would stop and check. And Daddy said, we're so lucky, we're in the middle. And we've got two banks, and the police come every half hour. So he said, I don't worry. I'm not worried about us. And it was really true, we were fortunate. I don't remember any hold-ups or the banks or our place. None, in all that time. But everybody knew everybody then, you know?

MCNAMARA: Dad used to talk about how DC was really just a southern town, like a small southern town where the government just happened to be. Sort of, that really changed in the seventies, because before that, it was really, that's why the streetcars would stop for my grandfather because everybody

knew him. I mean, it wasn't hard to be well known in the whole town because the whole town wasn't that large.

MURRAY: That's true. And you knew everybody on the Avenue, everybody.

MCNAMARA: When Mom and Anna Martha and Aunt Mary get together they spend a lot of time just talking about people that they've known forever. I mean, everyone really did know everyone. For years.

MURRAY: I used to say you couldn't talk about anybody because you were related to them.

ECK: Because it would get back.

MURRAY: That was the truth. Yes. You had to be careful. When you had big families, you know.

ECK: Well, thank you for taking the time to talk. I think that, I hope that this will be helpful for people in the future. *I* thoroughly enjoyed hearing your stories.

MURRAY: That's Mother's picture when she graduated from St. Cecilia's when she graduated.

MCNAMARA: I have that.

MURRAY: Do you? She was pretty.

MCNAMARA: She would iron her hair, wouldn't she?

MURRAY: Oh yes. And I have a lot of those irons.

ECK: OK, I'm going to shut this off. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW