



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Margaret Wadsworth

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Transcriber: Susan Marshall

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[NOTE: Several times during this interview, Margaret Wadsworth refers to a printed memoir she wrote for her children and made available to the Overbeck Project.]

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

ECK: This is Beth Eck with the Capitol Hill History Project and I am interviewing Margaret Wadsworth. Today is April 2, 2005, and we are meeting at her home at 2001 North Adams Street in Arlington, just across the street from where I am.

Why don't you go ahead and tell me your name and a little bit about your family.

WADSWORTH: My name is Margaret Wadsworth; I was Margaret Fleming before I was married. Really, my life began on Eighth Street SE. I lived with my mother and father and grandparents; we all lived together. My grandfather worked at the Navy Yard, my father worked for the Coast—well, later it was the Coast and Geodetics, or no, I take it back. He was with the Columbia School of Drafting, he was an architectural engineer. My mother of course was a housewife.

We lived on Eighth Street until I was five years old, then we moved to Bay Street. But prior to that, when we lived on Eighth Street, Washington was a small community, really. Everybody knew everybody else, at least in the neighborhood. And when you went downtown, which was comparatively small at that time, you met neighbors and friends. My mother and father, on Sunday afternoon, and I, we would go up to the Capitol and we'd walk around the palisade. Then we would walk up Pennsylvania Avenue, and not quite where—no, it's the Navy Building right now, that was Chinatown. It was two blocks long.

ECK: Really? On Capitol Hill?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes, not too far up from the Capitol itself. So my mother and father were looking in the windows and suddenly I was gone. And then in a few moments, this huge Chinese gentleman came out with me by the hand, and I had a doll. I had wandered into the store, so he brought me back to my parents.

ECK: Do you know how old you were then?

WADSWORTH: I was five years old at that time.

And then we would go to the movies, to the Palace Theater, and after that we would go—I can't, it wasn't Velati's, but it was a restaurant on E Street. Just down the street from Woodard & Lothrop. And we would have—

ECK: So downtown in Northwest.

WADSWORTH: Yes. And then we'd dine there, get back on the streetcar, and come home. So that was usually a Sunday. If we didn't do that, we would go to the old Botanical Gardens, which were individual little buildings right there at the foot of Capitol Hill.

ECK: So the same area where the Botanical Garden is now?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes. They were very lovely. I rather liked them a little better than I do the new one. Or if we didn't do that, then we went out to the zoo in northwest Washington. It was a very lovely time, and as I said, very quiet. There was very little crime at that time. Let me see if there's anything else...

Here again, we didn't go outside of our neighborhoods very much. My mother and father did more than most people. And my uncle had a car, he had an automobile, and it was a five-seater. And my cousin—they lived next door to us, Aunt Jenny and Uncle Harry and Charlie.

ECK: When you were on Eighth Street they lived next door?

WADSWORTH: Yes. And we would take a ride out to Bladensburg Road, and it was country, absolutely nothing. Except there was a home for bad boys. So Charlie and I would be in the back seat, and we'd be tussling or fussing or something. And my aunt would say, "Now Harry, the next stop is, you know, it's the bad boys home, so we're going to have Margaret and Charlie go." It was only for boys, well, I got way down in the bottom so they wouldn't take me.

Really, unless you saw it for yourself, Washington was a little old town, actually. It really was. Very charming and so many nice people. And my great-grandfather was a member of the newly formed Knights of Pythias. And they were meeting in Odd Fellow's Hall, which is now—part of it is the Smithsonian Institution. [ed: in 2006, the building houses part of The Shakespeare Theatre, on east side of Eighth Street SE]. They were having a meeting and a gentleman came in and said, "Major, the president would like you to come to the White House and tell us what your organization is doing, or what the subject will be." Because it was just after the Civil War and they wanted to know if it was in any way to overthrow the government. So he went to the White House and met Abraham Lincoln.

ECK: Whether the organization was trying to overthrow the government?

WADSWORTH: That's right. Of course it wasn't. And now it's still flourishing.

ECK: Do you know what the purpose of the organization is?

WADSWORTH: No, I'm sorry, I don't unfortunately. I should know, my son wrote a book about it.

ECK: And that was your great-grandfather?

WADSWORTH: Yes. Sergeant Major Edward Dunn. We're all very proud of him.

ECK: So he met Abraham Lincoln and assured him that they weren't overthrowing the government? Wow.

WADSWORTH: Yes. My memories are mostly on Eighth Street. Because, as I said, unless we went downtown, and I was—my grandmother and my husband and I were in a Chinese restaurant on F Street between Ninth and Tenth, having dinner, and I heard the radio. And I listened for a moment and I thought, that must be wrong. It was announcing the attack on Pearl Harbor, and they were asking any of the officers in the place to come down to the Navy Yard right away.

So our family was—my father was in World War I, and my cousin Charlie was at Guadalcanal as a captain. But the older memories are the happier ones, really.

ECK: Now your great-great-grandfather was here and met Abraham Lincoln. Is that the first generation of your family that was in Washington?

WADSWORTH: No. There was, let me see, I don't know who it was before him.

ECK: But the family goes pretty far back.

WADSWORTH: It does, yes. It's Scotch and Irish.

ECK: What year were you born in?

WADSWORTH: 1920, December 25th. I'll be 85 Christmas Day.

ECK: Good for you, wow. That must be hard to share your birthday with Christmas.

WADSWORTH: Well, I send notes every Christmas, "I don't need anything, I don't need"... well, you know how that goes. They don't pay any attention to me. But I have a lovely family. I wish my grandmother was here, because she could really tell you some stories about the family earlier on, of course. But she was a beloved person, so was my grandfather. My mother passed away when I was 14, and of course my grandmother and grandfather, I grew up with them.

She taught me—many of the lovely manners that are absent today were certainly prevalent at that time. They really were. But she could, she had so many—for instance, if I was a little girl and I was in the other room, and you and I were chatting here, and I'd come in and I'd say—which I wouldn't have done, but—“what, what are you talking about?” And she would say “it's a reraw to wind the sun down” [sic]. It took me years to figure that out, it makes no sense. It means “little children should be seen but not heard.”

My daughter-in-law, she's a lovely girl. And I'm a bit outspoken, but I was having dinner with them one evening and we were watching a movie. The two guys were fighting, and involuntarily the good guy knocked the other guy out, and I said, “Wow, ass over tea cups.” Oh, she never used profanity or anything like that. She had—I catch myself saying things that she would have said. It's just involuntary.

ECK: Tell me about the house. You said it was your grandparents and you—I don't think we put the address on tape.

WADSWORTH: It's 510. Eighth Street. Well okay, in fact, there was 510 and 512 now being established by a real estate company.

ECK: Dale Denton? There's a real estate company that's moved into it?

WADSWORTH: Yes. Unfortunately, we long since had left there. But there were all houses—the best part of it is that there were four houses there and they're still there. The hall was very long, the living room to the right, the dining room to the back. And all the way back was the kitchen. It had one of these colossal iron stoves, you know, that you lifted up the top of. And we had a colored maid, she was a darling, she was a member of the—Carrie Clark.

ECK: Did she live with you?

WADSWORTH: No, she lived in what they called Alley Place, which was down by the Navy Yard. It was one long block, it was an alley. Most Negroes lived there, but they were maids, laundresses, that sort of thing. And then behind my house on Eighth Street, there were a few little houses which are no longer there, and Lily was just the sweetest woman and she worked for us at times. I would play with her little girl in the backyard.

So Joe [ed: her son] and I went over to Eighth Street about a month ago, and he took some pictures. If I ever get him to produce them I'll give them to you. We had two bedrooms upstairs and there was a basement. My great-grandfather, Major Dunn, when he retired from the Marine

Corps he lived next door. And he had—basements in those days were used as dining rooms, some of them, or breakfast rooms, if you will. He had a platform built so that he could look right out into the street. He was infirm at the time, I don't recall just what it was. But people would come by, "Hi Major," and every day he would be right there. He started the day for everyone on the block.

ECK: The basement was sort of an English basement where you had the windows you could see out?

WADSWORTH: Yes.

ECK: Two bedrooms—what were the sleeping arrangements?

WADSWORTH: Well, my mother and father were in the front bedroom and I had the one behind that. In the middle was a bathroom and in the back was what they used to call a trunk room, which was a catchall for everything you didn't have room for downstairs. I don't recall that people visited a lot, that is to say, we really had company at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and then people would come from New York and Philadelphia. Neighbors; I don't remember that we came back and forth very much. You met people on the street. Fortunately, this is all in the thing I wrote, there was the lamplighter. He would come by at night and light the gas lamps all up and down the street. There was the scissor man who came in his cart, and these were all pulled by horses, and he would come by and clang the bell because—see, the ladies made all the, what you didn't buy bought stuff at stores, mainly. Then the barbershop, everybody would come out and get their scissors, or whatever they had to have, ground up.

ECK: Scissors and knives?

WADSWORTH: Yes, yes. And the ice man, he would come in this huge truck, and across the street from 510 were two houses that had long stairs leading up to it. And that man would take the clippers and he would get huge pieces of ice, sling it over his shoulder, put on a rubber protector and sling the ice over his back and take them up all those steps to the people.

ECK: How often would people have ice delivered?

WADSWORTH: It's hard to say. Because we didn't have refrigeration, we had ice boxes. You had to be sure that if you were going to be away for the weekend that somebody would come in and empty the pan under the ice, because it would melt.

Then there was a cigar store and Mr. DiMarco owned it. He was a very jovial, wealthy Italian. He would help anybody and everybody that needed money. He smoked a big cigar and he used to play cards with my grandfather. Let's see, I'm trying to see it in my mind's eye... Oh, then just one door away from 510, there was a house with a broad front porch. A lady named—she's a very elderly lady—Mrs. Cecil would sit, the weather permitting, she would sit there. And we would all go by and wave, and she'd—barely managed to, poor thing.

Dr. Pickford lived, let's see. If you were coming down toward the Navy Yard it was on the left-hand side of the street. There was a Miller's furniture store.

ECK: Across from the Marine barracks?

WADSWORTH: No. I'm up near Pennsylvania Avenue now, I'm sorry. So then there was the Miller's store, then there was a little confection—

ECK: Is that the one on the corner?

WADSWORTH: Yes. It's a furniture store now, I think. Then there was a little confectionery store. Then there was the fire station, and the firemen would all sit outside, you know, in the cane back chairs. Next to that was Dr. Pickford, who delivered me into the world and my brothers. Then you went down a little bit, there was a store on the corner, and in the summertime my grandmother had a huge aluminum pitcher. My mother would send me down there and they'd give us scoops of ice cream for my mother, father, grandfather and me. And they'd make chocolate sodas for us. Believe me, these were treats!

Now I'm skipping around too much, but as I said, what I'm telling you is in this write-up that I do. On the other side of the street as you came down, there was Lerner's shoe store. Now, it's the black and white tile that says "Lerner," and it's still there as far as I know. Next to it now, then it was a Chinese laundry. They used to say that the Chinese tried to capture children and sell them as slaves. My mother would take my father's shirts there to be done. And I'd go in, but I'd stand right by the door because I didn't want to be captured. Have you ever heard anything so silly?!

Then on down the street there was Mrs. Applestein. She sold laces and frills for your dresses, or anything for the gentlemen's—spools of thread and needles. Then there was, it was called the Academy Theatre, in its day it was Meters Theatre. My mother was in there, my mother was probably eight or nine years old, and of course that was vaudeville in those days. So the emcee knew my mother, and he said "Is there anyone in the audience who would like to get up and perform?" And my mother jumps up and she gets up on the stage with a straw hat and a cane, and

she sings “Pony boy, pony boy, won’t you be my pony boy...” The neighbor was horrified, because theatrical people were not well received.

ECK: How old was she?

WADSWORTH: She was about, I would ascertain, seven or eight years old. So the neighbor runs and says, “Mrs. Burrows, do you know what Myrtle is doing? She’s up there prancing around!” Well my grandmother comes down and grabs my mother, and that was that.

ECK: So did your mom grow up at 510 Eighth Street?

WADSWORTH: Yes she did. Wait a minute... yes, she did. And as I said, I was born in Providence Hospital, which is now gone, because my mother had heart trouble. But most women had their babies at home. And then, just as an aside, in the summertime, to be cool, my mother and my grandmother—we had the brown shutters, the wooden shutters, you’d pull down the dark blue blind and then the shutters. After dinner, everybody sat out on the front porch, hoping for a breeze, which never came.

I can remember this so well, getting up in the morning and the sheets were just soaked because it was so warm. We had really hot summers. Then of course the streetcars clanged up and down the street, too, which I loved. I loved them. That was a real part of Eighth Street at that time. And I retired from the Navy Yard. I worked for the Naval Historical Center down there. My grandfather was—as a matter of fact, when World War I started, he tried, because he was in his 80s, he wanted to join up again. They just said, “Major, we appreciate it, but we ain’t going to get much for you.”

My dad was in World War I, he went to France. He was a lieutenant.

ECK: Do you know how your parents met?

WADSWORTH: Yes. My father went to France and he had a friend who knew my mother. The friend used to write back and forth to my mom. So he got to know my mother through the friend’s letters. So he started writing her, and he was very prolific; he can write so beautifully. So they fell in love that way and they met on Armistice Day at the Washington Monument. They had a big gala affair, you know, and that’s where they actually met.

ECK: So he was from Washington too?

WADSWORTH: Yes.

ECK: Do you know where he grew up?

WADSWORTH: Let me think, where was he... I don't know. I think he was living with a family that lived over near Lincoln Park. Their last name was Meehan, he was living with a Meehan family, which were relatives of ours. Then of course they got married and they moved in—my mother was already living with my grandmother and grandfather, so my dad came along with her from that time on.

Then when I was five years old we moved over to Bay Street SE.

ECK: Where was Bay Street? Over near the jail?

WADSWORTH: Yes it is, it's not far. The street beyond Bay Street didn't exist, there was nothing there, it was just empty. So I would wait for the lamplighter to light the gas at night; in the daytime, I would stand on the corner of that street and yell down at the jail because I could get the echo back. Isn't that dumb?!

All my family is buried over at Congressional, we have a plot over there. And when my great-grandfather Major Dunn died he had the full honors for a Marine. So it was a wonderful family and I wish they were all back. I think it was very mean of everybody to leave me all by myself!

ECK: So your parents were living with your grandparents, then they moved over to Bay Street, is that when your brothers were born?

WADSWORTH: They moved from 510 over to what we call Louis Rosenberg, which is right across the street, there's an apartment building on that corner. It's still there and there are condos in there now. Eighth and G.

Then across from there was a drugstore. It was Dr. Roach's drugstore, and he was a pharmacist, but we all looked at him like he was a doctor because he could give us very good advice. Then across the street from that is a bank, and that bank is still there, although not operating as such, I don't believe.

ECK: That's the bank on the other corner of Eighth and G?

WADSWORTH: Yes, that's right. They moved there, and then when I was five then, then we moved to Bay Street and we stayed there. Then my brothers were born there too, I had two brothers, one of them passed away, but he's still living out in Greenbelt.

ECK: Then your family stayed there until 1968?

WADSWORTH: Let's see, wait a minute... no, my father went into a military hospital because he became very ill. And my mother and my grandmother and grandfather and aunt, we moved to 1334 Pennsylvania Avenue, you know where that is probably. And Mr. Maguire had a restaurant right on the corner, a restaurant-bar, and we lived—I was living there when my mother passed away. Then I met my husband and we got married, and in later years we moved right behind there on G Street. What was the address... well, that's where we were living when the riots came, and we moved over here to Arlington. But I loved that street and I loved that house, I really did.

ECK: So your father was in the hospital when your mother got ill as well?

WADSWORTH: Yes, he was. If memory serves me correctly, there was something wrong with his lungs' inhalation of the gas in World War I. Now that's only part of it, I don't really—as a matter of fact, I truly do not know, I've never known the medical records. Because he was down at Perry Point for awhile and then he was at Kecoughtan, Virginia. And that's where he died.

ECK: How old were you then?

WADSWORTH: When my father died I was... 18.

ECK: And your mother passed away when you were 14. So after your mother passed away, you went back and lived with your grandparents? So you went back to Eighth Street after being on Pennsylvania?

WADSWORTH: No, let's see, when my mother died, I stayed living with my grandparents and my grandmother's sister. Then from there, I met my husband and we got married. Then we moved—let me see, oh, then the riots came when we were living on G Street and then we came over here. That was '68.

ECK: Was your husband from Capitol Hill too?

WADSWORTH: No, he lived in Southwest. And we did live in Southwest, the boys, my sons and my husband and I. We moved in to take care of my mother-in-law because she had developed Alzheimer's quite badly. At the time we didn't know it was Alzheimer's.

And we enjoyed living down there. I was working at the Smithsonian in the Natural History building, so they had the run of the place. They knew all the curators, so they'd pop in to see them. And just as an aside you might be interested in, there were so many funny little that happened there.

I worked in the Registrar's office, and when we got the big elephant that's there now—I call him Mr. Fenykovic because that's who shot him—and the bones came and they sent the hide out, of course, to be tanned. Well it shrunk a bit and they almost had a fit, so they did something to it and finally got it all together. Well it used to be in the hall where the whale was, it was put together there. Every morning when I came to work, because we lived in Southwest then, I'd have to go and see if everything was all right. And then went they went to put the tusks on, the real tusks, it began to slightly topple over. So they couldn't use them, they had to...

ECK: I remember that as a child... "these aren't the real tusks."

WADSWORTH: Then when they put the whale up, Dr. Remington Kellogg was our Director of the Natural History building, he was a mammalogist, and there was a little platform beside the whale while the workmen were still working. When it was all completed, they asked him to come down and see if it was okay. This thing was massive, you know. He looked at it and said, "Well, you did a good job, but it's the wrong color." Can you imagine? Then, they did it all over, he came back again, "Well, what do you think, doctor?" He said, "Got the wrong eyes, you'll have to put..."

I think the funniest thing was—you know, they dim the lights at night when the museum is closed. And they hired this colored gentlemen. But during the day the curators they used to have—at that time, there were more of these glass cabinets, and they had an Indian mannequin in full headdress and everything. So they took him out, they wanted to clean him up. Well it got to be the end of the day, the place closed, so they decided to just leave him standing outside the case. So the new guard came on duty and he was at the far end of the hall there and he saw the figure. Of course he said "Halt, stop, or I'll shoot." Well it didn't do a thing, it stood there, but he shot it. It fell down, and he ran out of the building and never came back.

When the curators came in they got hysterical, but they were able to patch him up right. Then when my brother worked at the Library of Congress, a lot of kids would ride their bikes around outside. Invariably somebody would leave their bicycle. So they brought this little tricycle in—and they loved to play jokes on each other, so they hired a new guard and didn't tell him any of these things. And one night he was on duty and he heard this "woooo, wooo," and he looks down into the rotunda and here is this thing that's riding around going "wooo..." Well all it was was another guard with a sheet over him. He too ran out and never came back.

ECK: I want to go back. Tell me about where you went to school.

WADSWORTH: I went to Holy Comforter there at 14th and East Capitol Street, across the street from the car barn. I went there and graduated from there and I went to Eastern High School. I graduated from Eastern High School and I went to work. I went to work for the telephone company.

ECK: What was the telephone company, was that C&P?

WADSWORTH: Yes. If you were born and raised in Washington, you couldn't vote. Well I wanted to work for the government. I liked being an operator, I liked the work, but I realized that it would take years before you could ever get a real promotion.

ECK: So you were connecting people?

WADSWORTH: Yes. You know, the old type. I loved it.

So my brother was seventeen and he wanted to go in the Navy. He had my aunt's permission, and of course our dad was dead at that time, and I had to go to see Mr. Fitzgerald at the Veteran's Administration who had the papers and everything that had been my father's. And he said, "Margaret, what are you doing now in the way of work?" And I said, "Oh, I'm with the telephone company. I like it, but I'd love to work for the government." He said, "Is that what you want?" I said, "Oh yeah, but I was born in Washington and I can't work for the government." And he said, "Okay." And he gets on the telephone—this was Friday, just to show you what it means to have friends—anyway he got off the phone and said, "Okay, you start with these." The personnel office for the Navy, which was then the old Navy Building, down on 17th and Constitution Avenue. So I started there and I worked several years, then I got the idea of going to work at the Smithsonian, which I adored.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

ECK: So after the telephone company you got the job working for the Navy, and how long did you...?

WADSWORTH: I don't know how many years I worked for the Navy.

ECK: Because you started working right after high school. Do you remember what year you graduated?

WADSWORTH: '39, from Eastern. About two days later I was working. Because my grandfather, when he died working at the Navy Yard, the widows didn't get a pension, so my grandmother had no money at all. So I had to go to work and supported her. And fortunately at that time families did live together. So there was my grandmother and myself and my aunt, and her daughter came to live with us. So that's how we really helped one another.

ECK: So you worked for the Navy during World War II?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes. It was great. I hate to say that, but it was. It was a fascinating time, and very sad. One day I had left the office, and there was a young man who had been in the war, and he had a desk right by the door. He was nice, but he was sort of a recluse. Anyhow, I came through the door in my usual fashion and I accidentally let the door slam. He jumped up and got under the desk. I felt so sorry—I must have apologized every day from that day on.

ECK: So you were commuting from Eighth Street down to Constitution, how did you commute?

WADSWORTH: Streetcar.

ECK: Was that one straight line?

WADSWORTH: No, yeah. From the Navy Yard, let's see, it would go all the way up to Tenleytown, Wisconsin Avenue. That's how far the streetcar went. In fact, they talked about putting them back on again, I wish they would. Again, I'm not bragging, but it had a peculiar scent. I've mentioned many of these things because smell was prevalent at that time.

ECK: What did it smell like?

WADSWORTH: Metallic. And when you got to Georgetown, they had to—my Aunt Dell, my father's sister, she lived up at 3413 Wisconsin Avenue—they had to put up some kind of gadget that helped the streetcar get on further up to Wisconsin Avenue. But in earlier times, the conductor—

ECK: When you say gadget, you mean extra electricity? More wires?

WADSWORTH: Yes. They were so cold in the wintertime. There were windows, you know, and there was very little heat in those things. And before my time—that was 1864—the conductor operated the streetcar. And he was outside, so oftentimes when they brought those streetcars back, he'd be frozen at the wheel. But in my time that didn't happen. Then in the summertime it was such fun, you could let the window down, and I've described how they do that, and then of

course all the flies came in and it was hot as the devil, but you did get a breeze. And it was great fun too.

I used to go down to Chesapeake Beach in Maryland. It's still flourishing, I don't know how much, but it's still there. It had a marvelous boardwalk. It was the only great one we had except for Atlantic City. But you get the train at Union Station—I can remember those seats. They were horsehair seats so they'd stick in you. That was the old-fashioned train, the engine. That was wonderful. I hated to see those go out. When I go to the Museum of History and Technology, that's what I call it, I love to blow the whistle on that train. You never grow up.

ECK: Were they smelly?

WADSWORTH: Yes. It had a metallic smell about it. Then of course the people would bring—you'd bring lunch baskets with you even when you went to Atlantic City. We'd spend the day, and even at that time my grandmother would take me—she had friends, Uncle Ed and Aunt Maude, they lived up in New Rochelle, New York. We'd get on the train and go up for the day or we'd stay overnight and come back the next day. They'd have just day trips, I'm sure they don't have that anymore.

ECK: Do you remember how long it would take you to get there?

WADSWORTH: A couple hours, maybe two or three hours, I'm not sure. But that was a real treat. Then of course when you went to Atlantic City then—I went about seven or eight years ago, I could have cried. It's kind of sleazy. Then, the boardwalk was everything. My grandmother and aunt loved to sit on the boardwalk and watch people go by, which was very entertaining. They called each other "sister," they never said Hattie or Jenny. They'd say, "Sister, will you just look what's coming up here now." It was just a scream. God bless them, I miss them terribly.

ECK: What else did you do to keep cool in the summer? Did you go swimming?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes. We had—I hated them—they were the one-piece suit but they were wool. Oh, they itch, and then you wore rubber sandals and you had a rubber cap. Even though the water didn't come up to about there.

ECK: But you were covered. Where did you swim?

WADSWORTH: Chesapeake Beach.

ECK: Was there anywhere to swim in the city, public pools?

WADSWORTH: If there were I wasn't acquainted with it. Where I learned to hate water and be fearful of it was called Rosedale. When I lived over on Bay Street, I must have been seven or eight, and unknowingly I went to the pool and jumped in at the wrong end, the deep end, but the guy got me out. Then again, we didn't go a lot swimming in those days.

As you asked, for relief from the heat, believe or not but people would—we didn't do it, but a lot of people would go down on Haines Point and spend the night down there.

ECK: So you didn't do that but knew people who did?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes. No, we never did. But a lot of people would do that. Or if you had a nice outside porch, you'd sit. But there was no breeze, believe me. Then when my aunt lived up at 3413 Wisconsin Avenue, and that looked over—it still does—the McLean Estate, and her grandchildren, we could see them from my aunt's bedroom, they'd ride around on their ponies all decked out in the hats, the red coats and the white pants. Oh, it was a scream. [ed: reference is to the grandchildren of Evalyn Walsh McLean.]

ECK: So did you ride bikes? I interviewed somebody who had a pony and rode it up and down East Capitol Street. When you were little, what kinds of things did you do?

WADSWORTH: Mainly played with the neighbor kids, really we did. Or just stay home and crayon or something like that.

ECK: You didn't have a backyard to keep cool?

WADSWORTH: Oh we had a backyard, but it was small. In fact, when I went over there not too long ago, I thought, my God, it's even smaller. But we had a grape arbor back there. But I was absolutely—I cried. The cobblestones are still there in the back alley, but the houses, like I say, that Lily lived in, they're gone. I really, except on the weekends, we would always, my mother and father and I would do something on Sunday especially. So we looked forward to that.

ECK: What did Lily do for your family? You mentioned Lily and you mentioned Carrie. What were their roles?

WADSWORTH: Carrie Clark was really what we call a maid, but she was part of the family. She did everything, she cooked and she would come in in the morning, and she would sometimes get breakfast, usually my grandmother got it. She would clean house or she'd wash the laundry—then of course it was the old this and then hanging it outside. At the end of the day she'd go home. Her house was furnished with our castoffs, which were not really—they were in

very good condition. She had two children, and when they got sick, my aunt and grandmother would go there and nurse them or call in the doctor to take care of them.

I do remember as a child, next to the bank on Eighth and G there is a store, it's a barber shop now. At that time it was owned by Gene Brinkley, it was a butcher shop. You know, when you'd go in, they had big barrels of crackers at the door and sawdust on the floor and the cases along here, like special pieces of meat were on beds of ice. Then the other, like if you want beef or something, it all hung from hooks.

Then down the street from there was Mrs. Green's Oyster House. That's still there but it's a veterinarian.

ECK: That was heading toward the Marine Barracks? Or back towards Pennsylvania Avenue?

WADSWORTH: Yes. Excuse me. So we kids would be, on a hot summer night, we'd all go outside and run around, play tag and hopscotch and all the things they don't do anymore. And she always—you walked in the door, and as far as I can recall, she didn't have sawdust, she had wooden floor. And on the side were three or four metal tables that you could eat there if you wished. Most people took the produce, fish and stuff, out. She was noted for her oysters. Then on this side was a counter that you could sit there if you wished. And she had little dishes of oyster crackers, and then she had this big blue and white jar, china, filled with water.

So we'd be playing and then we would sneak into the store and we'd grab the crackers and we'd all have a drink of water. Of course she could see us from the kitchen, but she'd wait till we got to the door, she'd come out—she was a big lady—and she'd say, “All right, I'm going to tell your parents.” Of course she never did. She loved it, she loved it. And you know, when you got off the streetcar or came down Eighth Street you could smell those oysters or whatever fish she was—it was just a wonderful fragrance, it really was.

Then Gene who owned the butcher shop bought the store across the street and turned it into a very lovely restaurant. It had the most beautiful dance floor, and at that time when he first opened it, I thought, oh I'd love to dance on this floor. Well in later years I did. But it was during the Depression and my grandfather went into business with him. He would say, if Gene went off duty, he'd say to my grandfather, “Now Joe”—well, we called them Bonus Marchers, the poor guys from the war—“I don't care how many come in here today, if they want something to eat, you give it to them.” I don't know how many people he fed like that. He was very generous.

ECK: What do you remember about the Bonus Marchers?

WADSWORTH: Well, the only thing that I remember—during that time my father never lost his job, he worked for the Commerce Department at that time—is two things, very sad. The mall was, they would camp out there, they had tents and whatnot. Then you would see them, wherever there was jobs available, there'd be streams of men just waiting to try to get a job. And most of them were very well educated. But we were very lucky that my dad never lost his job.

ECK: So your family didn't feel the Depression in the same way.

WADSWORTH: No, we really did not. And there would be a lot of people come to the door for something, and we always gave them whatever we could.

ECK: Did people come in and actually have a meal with you?

WADSWORTH: No, we would hand them at the door. A lot of them wanted it that way. But it was a sad, sad time because there were a lot of people that had families and children, and jobs were just as scarce as hen's teeth. They really were. It was a depressing time.

ECK: Your family did the shopping mostly in the shops along Eighth Street?

WADSWORTH: There again, as I said, all this I'm happy to say I've described very nicely for you. Eastern Market, it was so picturesque. You see, especially in the summertime you had to shop every day because your milk and meat you had to put it in right with a piece of ice because it wouldn't keep. But Eastern Market had sawdust on the floor, then they had lamps coming down, the green light, and there again were special cases where they had lamb chops, pork chops on beds of ice. Of course these things were quite expensive, some of them. And then the butchers had the shanks of meat hanging down and they'd slice it off for you. And they had homemade bread and they had—which I loved—potato chips. The price, the principle was if I behaved myself—which I always did—but if I behaved myself, they used to make little pink and white disks of sugar and coconut. They were so good, I thought they were wonderful.

I forgot to mention, my mother played the piano beautifully. Do you remember Kate Smith? Well she was a very famous singer at one time. Then there was the theater right across from Eastern Market and it was called the Avenue Grand. Of course I couldn't wait to get there on Saturday. In those days, before the movie started, someone played the piano. And my mother did that and she played for Kate Smith. I just couldn't wait to get to them. I loved the movies. I still do—no, I take that back, I don't like the movies today because they stink.

In my heyday, Bernie Harrison was with the *Times Herald* newspaper before it became the Washington Post. I was in high school and he thought I had a very good voice, so he was going to try to help me to get started in a theatrical career, which of course would have been impossible. I was too young and I couldn't read music. Anyhow, he said, "Come on down, let's go down to the"—Bob Crosby was appearing, Bing Crosby's brother, had a big band. So he was appearing at, let's see, the Capitol Theatre was then The Fox. It's between 14th and 15th on F Street downtown.

So I went down and I went in this room and Bob Crosby was sitting there. I sang for him and he said, "Margaret, you have a very nice voice. How old are you?" I said 17. He said, "Can you read music?" I said "No, sir." He said, "Does your mother know you're here?" I said "No, sir." He said, "Well, I'm sorry. First of all, you're too young. I'm really looking for a quartet of girls to sing with the band." But he was so nice, because after the interview, he said, "Come on down." And I stood in the wings of the theater and he'd come off the stage and he'd say, "How do you think it sounds?" And he'd be serious. There was a piece of music called the Big Noise of Winnetka.

Do you know who I'm talking about, Arthur Godfrey? Well, he broadcast from—it was called the Peoples then, CVS now, I guess it's still there—13th and G [Streets] NW. That's where he started, really. So he was in a little booth, so I went in and I sang on the radio for a little while. Then the Hotel 2400, way up on 16th Street, he made arrangements that I would sing for the lady and gentleman had the bar up there. So I sang for the whole summer, for nothing. So I said to them, "I'm going to graduate this June, are you going to hire me?" Well, no, they couldn't do that because I wasn't really "known." I said—well this was my first introduction to, excuse me, how you get screwed by these people. I said, "Well I sang for nothing all year long and all summer and everybody liked me." "I know, but we really have to have someone that's well known." So that was that.

ECK: Did your grandparents know...?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes, my grandmother knew, my grandfather had died. Oh, I wanted so badly to sing for a living. But it was tough then, you really had to be good. I entered all of the contests, and one that struck me the funniest, I competed against a band. Against a band! They didn't play for me, I just sang, did my stuff, then they came in. Well guess who won?

ECK: In high school, did you go with your friends down to dance halls and listen to bands?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes. All around town there were in high school auditoriums, Friday night, Saturday night, just about every—in the summertime especially, not so much in the winter... Then there was the boat that went down, like the one that's now, what is it. It was an old-fashioned big, big boat, and it had a band. All the big time bands would come and play on that in the summertime.

ECK: Is that the barge they had down by where the Watergate is now?

WADSWORTH: By the wharf, yes. But oh, that was great. Swing dancing was very popular, it really was. I mean, these kids today, the latest thing, they look to me like they're hopping up and down, but they're not really, you know, there's no intricate moves. But it was a wonderful time, we really had fun. My husband was a great dancer. I used to like all the Italian boys because they were really good dancers.

ECK: So where did you meet your husband?

WADSWORTH: At the drugstore.

ECK: The drugstore across from the apartment building?

WADSWORTH: No, where Arthur Godfrey was on G Street. It was kind of a meeting place—if you were downtown, you dropped in there, or you were going to meet your girlfriend or somebody, you'd go there to meet them. Or just to have lunch. Well I had seen him there; he was tall, had black hair, he was a good-looking man. Finally somebody introduced us. And he lived in Southwest and of course I lived in Southeast. So he asked me for a date and that's when it all started.

ECK: What would you do for a date?

WADSWORTH: Go dancing. Or to the movies. Go to the movies first, then go some place and dance. But dancing was the real thing that we did mostly. We really did. And the music was—I mean, you'd go to the theater, let's see it was the Fox, then the Warner was the Earl, that's what it was. And they had vaudeville people performing. Well when they had the big bands, a lot of the kids would get out and try to dance in the aisle. We had ushers then, and the ushers would say, "Sit down or we'll usher you out."

But I've seen a lot of the... and a lot of the stars. In fact I saw the lady who was a stand-in for Jean Harlow, she was making, I think it was *Saratoga* that she made... well whatever. I was sitting in about the second row, and she looked so much like that movie star, she really did,

because the original had died. And they had to finish the picture, so she was a stand-in. But she really was a beautiful woman, she certainly was.

ECK: And you saw her at the Warner?

WADSWORTH: Yes. And then it was the Earl, that was the name then. But like I said, everything I'm telling you I've pretty much covered. If your memory fails you here...

ECK: I'm going back to high school and grade school. You said the Depression didn't really hit your family. Tell me what your meals were like, what did you normally eat?

WADSWORTH: Okay. We ate well, we really did. In those days, interestingly enough, everything was fried. I loved it. If you went out—about 5 o'clock would usually be the hour for people to eat—the aroma was all over the street because people were cooking at the same time. It was usually potatoes—baked, mashed, sweet. The women made all their own desserts and things like that. At Eastern Market, when you—in the summertime was the only time you could really get fresh vegetables. Other than that, you got canned vegetables, mainly.

Interesting too is that we didn't eat a lot of salads as they do today. We never did do that. Now we had sliced tomatoes, but I mean, as a salad per se. But it was usually just meat and potatoes and a vegetable, and dessert and coffee. Because we children were not allowed coffee, I would sneak a little bit now and again. But that was basically what our foods were like.

ECK: Even when your family was on Bay Street they did their shopping over towards Eastern Market?

WADSWORTH: Oh no. From Bay Street up to, let's see, 15th and East Capitol... not quite East Capitol... oh, Massachusetts Avenue right in Southeast. It was called the Sanitary then instead of the Safeway. But that's where we did our basic shopping.

Then there were little stores in and around places like that that sold, maybe, dry goods for the women. Then of course you could go to the store. Downtown at Seventh and Pennsylvania Avenue, it's a condo now, but that's was Kann's department store. That was very famous and we did a lot of shopping there.

ECK: And Kann's eventually moved to Arlington?

WADSWORTH: Kann's? Oh no. It went out a long time ago. Hecht's moved—Hecht's opened up at Seventh and F. When it first opened up there was an article about it in the paper. I was

hopeful that Woodard & Lothrop, when it closed down, it would come over to Ballston, but unfortunately... But Hecht's is there. It's okay, they have beautiful clothes. But that's the only one other than Tyson's Corner, and if they keep on enlarging Tyson's Corner there'll be another country!

ECK: You said everybody made their own clothes...

WADSWORTH: Early on. In my grandmother's day and my mother's day too. Then little by little, Kann's and Woodard & Lothrop, then you could buy dresses and things right off the...

ECK: So you went downtown to do your shopping?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes. My Aunt Dell, my father's sister, she always bought me, for the May procession in Holy Comforter, that was a Catholic school, so of course you have to have a special dress and shoes and things like that. Aunt Dell always insisted on buying my outfit. But the trouble was, she believed in getting it a little larger than your size so you could grow into it. This would give my grandmother absolute fits, because she'd say, "I can make this and it'll fit you!"

ECK: Now did your family go to Holy Comforter for church as well?

WADSWORTH: Yes, they did. Well, let me put it this way, I did and my father did. My mother was not Catholic, she was Episcopalian. Of course, she didn't live very long...

ECK: So your grandparents who you lived with were Episcopalian?

WADSWORTH: Yes, they were. As a matter of fact, although I was brought up Catholic, I want to be buried from Christ Church, which is down there on G Street, and be buried at our plot in Congressional. So I told my brother the other day, I said, you know, when I take out my hearing aid I can't—my hearing's terrible, it's gone. So I said, "If you hear Gabriel blow the horn, just give me a call, will you." He said, "Why, you want to get your hair done?"

ECK: So you and your dad would go to Holy Comforter for church?

WADSWORTH: Yes, we would go to Mass on Sunday.

ECK: And would your mom go to the Episcopal church?

WADSWORTH: No, oftentimes she accompanied us. She was so pretty. She had very, very dark hair and blue eyes. And played piano beautifully, she really did. You know, it's so sad, when you have parents—now, I got to know my father very well. He was a very, very educated man, and so

interesting—we'd go for a walk at night and he'd tell me about the stars, he'd tell me about ships. So he gave me a wide interest in a lot of things, especially ancient history, I loved that.

But she was just as interested as I was in anything that he would say—and he loved to recite Edgar Allan Poe, so after dinner we would sit on the couch—not every night, of course—and then he'd recite. And he had a beautiful speaking voice. He really was an extremely well—in fact, when he came over here from Ireland, he wanted to go to college but he didn't have the money. So he met this retired professor and they worked up a program. And he said, "John, when you finish this program, you will know as much as a person with a college degree."

So then my dad went to work for the Columbia School of Drafting. That building is still there. When you're standing in the door of it, you can see Union Station. And my father worked on the building of Union Station and the Lincoln Memorial.

ECK: So everything he learned to be an engineer he learned as an apprentice in the program?

WADSWORTH: Yes, he did.

ECK: And how old was he when he came over from Ireland?

WADSWORTH: 15 years old. He used to always say that—he was a messenger boy for Western Union, and sleet, snow, rain, whatever, you took them. And he said he would go across the 14th Street bridge, and it would be snowing or sleeting, cold as—he said when he came back to the station or when he got to where he was, if it was icy, they'd have to slush it off and get him warmed up for him to go back. That's what he did at first.

ECK: So he did that and then he entered the engineering program and worked on the Lincoln Memorial?

WADSWORTH: Yes. Interspersed. I don't know how he did that, when exactly he did that, but I know he worked on both of those buildings. Last night—have you ever heard Barbara Cook sing? Well I hadn't either. I went to Kennedy Center last night. And I'm telling you, I cried the whole time. The songs that she selected were full of pathos and meaning. They weren't classical but they were extremely meaningful. She has a beautiful voice and she's in her sixties.

She was accompanied by the National Symphony Orchestra, which I had never heard before. There were guests of the gentleman who took me, and they were from Denmark. They just thought, oh, this was so great. But they'd already had a tour of the main places in Washington. But they were so nice, they really were, so friendly.

I go out with my son Bill a good bit, but I don't go out with a lot of people. So at that orchestra, it was just absolutely marvelous, it really was. She selected songs that, I thought, I've got to get up and get out of here because I'm going to burst into tears! But she has a marvelous voice, especially for—she's been singing since, I think, the 1950's. And she exudes charm, and you just love her to death, you just really would like to meet her.

ECK: Now wasn't the symphony that played on the barges downtown—because that happened where the Kennedy Center is now, right?

WADSWORTH: It's off to the side, it's right off the river, but it's really nearer the Lincoln Memorial, where the steps are. But they had to stop it because when airplanes came over you couldn't hear a thing. Gosh, I haven't been to the Kennedy Center in years. I think I saw Shogun there, but I'm not sure.

ECK: So do you remember the airport being built?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes, I do. Yes indeed. That was a big thing when we were going to have an airport, oh yes. And my father was down at Perry Point, at a military hospital down there. And my aunt said, "How would you like to go, we'll fly down?" So we started off, and it was all just great, but I was sitting and I thought, I've got to go to the bathroom, but I was afraid to get up. I was afraid to go this way, or you talk about...

So we got there fine, and after we had the visit with my dad, Aunt Dell said, "Do you want to fly back?" And I said, "No, let's go back by bus." By bus, on the Greyhound, it took eight hours.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

ECK: I was curious, how long did you and your husband court before you got married? You mentioned you went down for dances.

WADSWORTH: About two years we went together.

ECK: How old were you when you got married.

WADSWORTH: I was 21, he was 25. Richard and Bob, my sons, and Joe, were born on Bay Street. It was an apartment. And then we moved down to Southwest to take care of my mother-in-law. Then from Southwest, my father's sister died, and she left a house up on Wisconsin Avenue, the one I told you, you could see McLean. We moved there, we lived there, I think it was three

years we lived there. Then they've got to sell the house, it was in the will. Anyway, we couldn't buy it. So we moved to G Street. By that time, all the boys were in their teens.

ECK: You had five sons? So when were the other three born? You mentioned that two were born on Bay Street and then you moved to Wisconsin Avenue.

WADSWORTH: They were all born on Bay Street and then we all went together. Eddie was born on G Street, because my grandmother was still living at that time. We were there about five or six years. It was a nice house, it really was. It got to be very dangerous; the National Guard had to come out and parade up and down Pennsylvania Avenue. And it was not funny, but I came downstairs one morning and there was this little colored boy just standing in the kitchen, looking around. All I said was, "Hey." We had a backyard and it had a gate, and honestly, the gate was quite high. And that little boy scaled it and ran!

ECK: What was the neighborhood like? Were there blocks where mostly white people lived and then there was a block where blacks lived?

WADSWORTH: Yes. There wasn't an awful lot of black people there at that time. A lot of them were still in Southwest. In our particular neighborhood it was all white. It began to be interspersed with black families down near Congressional Cemetery. They bought houses in there. But that was slow getting started, for them doing that.

ECK: So that was after World War II?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes. But it was a nice neighborhood, everybody knew everybody. Of course the other boys were in high school, and Richard, my oldest, he went down—he was still in high school, what am I talking about. He went down to Galt's, it was the most famous jewelry store in Washington, it's across the street from the Treasury Department. The building is empty now, but that's where he got his first job, and he worked there until he died.

My husband worked for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. He died when he was 52. He had cerebral hemorrhaging. He died when we lived over here, because we left Washington when the riots came. We moved to Fort Strong over here, just off Lee Highway.

So then my son Bill lived with me, and Eddie, of course. Bob got married, Joe got married, and Richard lived in LA for awhile. He liked that very much until he came back here.

ECK: How did your husband commute from G Street? Did he take the streetcar?

WADSWORTH: Oh yes, sure. Dear old streetcars! It ran from Sousa Bridge all the way up to—I still think it went up to Georgetown. Yeah it did, and then it came back.

ECK: Now Eastern High School, when you were there, that was an all white school. Was there a high school close by that black children...

WADSWORTH: Yes, there was. I can't think of the name of it now. But yes, you're right, there was.

ECK: And Holy Comforter was all white?

WADSWORTH: All white, oh yeah. Now it's everybody.

ECK: Because St. Cyprian, I think, was —

WADSWORTH: That's it. That was a church, that was the same church—

ECK: That was the black church by Holy Comforter?

WADSWORTH: Yes it was, that's right.

But you know, in my day, when I went to work for the Smithsonian, there were two—a lady and gentleman, colored people, that worked for me. And we were really good friends. I visited her, Margaret, in her home. And... what was his name, bless his heart. His mother had brought him to the Smithsonian when he was 15 years old. Now, at that time, adjacent to the castle there was a little zoo-like. There were a couple animals there in cages, and then there was a little station, a wooden station. What was his name...

Anyway, his mother got him a job there and it was his duty to just stay on guard there, if anybody came and wanted to look at the animals, they weren't supposed to do that. But he said, when the lion roared, it would... So he told his mother the first night, "I'm not going back there!" And she said, "Yes you are." And from that time on he worked for the Smithsonian, from the time he was 15 years old. Oh and he was a sweetheart. They were a little leery of me, so I did my best to—

ECK: Because you were white?

WADSWORTH: Yes. This was just the beginning of the integrating like that. We were just beginning to hire, and of course some of the curators—the girls were applying to be secretaries. And the curators were, well—it wasn't because of their skin, they didn't think they were educated enough to do it, which they were.

One day our office door opened and this young colored girl walked in and she knew my employee Margaret. So they went out to lunch together, and Margaret said to me later—Margaret was very, she really wanted to blossom out. And she was smart. She shook her head, and I said, “Did you enjoy your lunch?” She said, “Yeah... I’m from Georgia, and she’s from Georgia. And she acts like Georgia. She said to me, ‘How long have you known that woman?’” And Margaret said, “What woman?” She said, “You know, that Mrs. Wadsworth.” She said, “She’s my boss. I’ve been here two years.” And she said, “Better be careful of her, she’s too friendly.”

Margaret wanted to help other black people working for the Smithsonian, so we had—Gant! That was his name, his name was Gant, the other gentleman. Then there was the guy—I’ve forgotten his name, the mailman. He would carry huge packs back and forth to the castle and back to our building and deliver the mail. And she decided that he’d been there a long time, many years, and he should have a promotion and he should be given something else to do. So she went ahead and made the proposal. Well they couldn’t give him a promotion because he was the only one there. They could give him more money, which they did. But he was furious with her. “You leave me alone! I’m okay, I’m happy.” She said to me later, “Margaret, for my people, you can open the door as wide as Alaska and they won’t walk through.”

But it was an interesting time. In fact I stood at the window and watched the marchers go down to hear Martin Luther King speak.

ECK: Tell me about the conversations that you and your husband had when you decided to move.

WADSWORTH: Well, when we decided, it was at the riots. As I said, we knew his mother was ailing very badly, so we just up and discussed it and we moved down there to the Southwest. And then when my aunt’s house became available for a brief time on Wisconsin Avenue, then we moved up there.

No, everything was very agreeable. In fact, when were still at 1334 Pennsylvania Avenue, one night—he worked night work at the Bureau of Engraving—he was attacked. That sort of made our decision, I think it’s time we go. But as I said, I always regretted that we had to leave there, because I sure liked that house. I don’t care if I didn’t own a house, I always wanted to live in a house for a prolonged period of time. My son Eddie asked me, “Mom, think about it. Tell me how many times you have moved in your lifetime.” 28!

So I think when I leave here, I may go to—hopefully I’ll go to Congressional!

ECK: Did your family shop up on H Street? Because I know that area was really hit by the riots.

WADSWORTH: No. That was kind of—there again, we were sort of compartmentalized, if you will. We shopped downtown on F Street, that was the mecca for anything you wanted to buy. There was a Lerner's dress shop and Woodard & Lothrop, Hecht's, Raleigh's, Garfinkel—well, we didn't go to Garfinkel because it was too expensive. And then they opened up Murphy's Five & Ten. Well, we thought we had arrived, honey, because it had a counter—but at that time, there were restrooms for white and colored. But nobody took offense, I mean, I don't recall that—if they did, it was never evident in their faces or their demeanor.

But I miss that store to this day, because I could find anything in there that you can't at CVS.

ECK: Where was Murphy's?

WADSWORTH: Between 13th and 14th on F. They had the counter and they sold everything you needed; little trinkets and yarn and stuff like that, you could get that there. But we just loved Murphy's. If Aunt Jenny would come home and my grandmother would say, "Did you see anybody you knew?" Well you always saw somebody that you knew!

ECK: It really was a small town.

WADSWORTH: It was, it really was. It's interesting here, I mean, many ladies live here; widows like myself, or spinsters, if you will. And they love—they really seek you out when they see you in the hall or down in the foyer. But I've asked them, "Come in and have coffee or tea." They don't want to do that. Isn't that strange?

I was so surprised, recently—well, in October—I had a ruptured intestine operation, and I was amazed by the cards I got from people here in the building. Because you can go for a month or two months and not see anybody, even the man next door. And the funny thing—I haven't lost my allure, Beth—this gentleman next to Mr. Maguire, he's very much a recluse, but a nice guy, smart, retired from the State Department. Anyway, I come to find out, he had come up—I went to Arlington Hospital—he had come up there to see me; well, I had been transferred to the rehab center. But for Mr. Maguire to visit anybody in this building...! So I wrote him a note of thanks. He thought that was great that I had acknowledged it. You certainly make an impression on people you don't know!

ECK: You visited with your neighbors all the time?

WADSWORTH: Occasionally, yes, yeah. A lot of it—especially when I was in high school, I had a lot of our neighbors, students, and I would go visit with them. And we'd have parties, you know, every Friday night somebody would have a party, and we'd dance in the basement. But I don't recall that there was an awful lot of mingling or visiting—with your family, yes. But not—it was great for chatting on the street or at the grocery store—seeking people out to visit with, unless you were really close to them, there wasn't a lot of that.

ECK: Well you had a lot of family.

WADSWORTH: Oh yeah I did, and I've been adding to it ever since!

ECK: Why don't you give me, just for the record, the names of everyone in the family. Tell me your grandparents' names.

WADSWORTH: Hattie and Joe Burrows. And my grandmother's sister's name was Jenny and Harry Buell. Aunt Dell, my father's sister, and her husband—Della Donahue and Tim Donahue was her husband. And then I had an Aunt Margaret Richards who lived out by the monastery. She was an aunt of mine. The Franciscan monastery.

Who else would you want...

ECK: Tell your parents' names.

WADSWORTH: John and Myrtle Fleming.

ECK: Then your father's mother came over...

WADSWORTH: Oh no, by the time he got here, they were all—

ECK: That was your husband's mother that you went and took care of.

WADSWORTH: Yes. Her name was Julia and her husband had died many years ago. Then he had a sister, Cindy, that's all I know. I knew her, and she married—I think the guy's name, he was in the Navy, Johnson I think it was. Then she had a daughter, I can't think of her name and I haven't seen her since she was a little girl.

Then I have two brothers, Jack Fleming, John Fleming, and Donald Fleming; Donald is dead. And Jack is living out in Greenbelt. He has a son Sean Jr. and three grandchildren. I have eight grandchildren. There's Kimberly, Chris, Justin—I'm like old Mother Hubbard!—I can't

remember now. Jessica, Mark, and David, that's Joe's children. Eddie's not married and neither was Richard. And Richard's name was John Richard Wadsworth.

ECK: It's good to have family around.

WADSWORTH: I'll say it is. And really, all of them being men, they're very attentive and caring. Like Thursday, my oldest boy was dead six years, and they called me during the day to commiserate with me. And I have to remember not to say, "Oh, I've got to get such and such," because they go and buy it. My son Bill, we were out one day, and I saw a couch similar to this. I said, "Oh, I love those camel back couches." Next thing I know, there it was, right at the door!

And their wives are very, very kind to me. After I recuperated, or was recuperating after this operation, I stayed with Bill and his wife, they live up on Greenbriar Street. She was simply a marvelous nurse, she was there at every turn. She was so kind.

ECK: Hopefully once the weather gets better we can take a trip down to Congressional Cemetery and meet the rest of them.

WADSWORTH: Oh, sure. Yes indeed, I'd love to.

END OF INTERVIEW