



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Walter D. Graham Jr.

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TAPE 1/SIDE 1

PROSKY: Where did you live when you grew up on Capitol Hill?

GRAHAM: I lived at 1206 G St. SE. Which is 12 blocks from the Capitol. And I enjoyed walking up 12th Street to Pennsylvania Avenue in the evening. I would see the light in the Capitol would be on to show that Congress was in session.

PROSKY: And that still is true today, isn't it?

GRAHAM: That still is true, yes ma'am.

PROSKY: Do you have brothers and sisters?

GRAHAM: No, Ma'am. I have 3 sisters, 2 older and one younger. Two of them have passed away. I think it would nice to be known that Ellen is the oldest, Dorothy, then I am next, and my sister Katherine. Dorothy and Katherine passed away. My oldest sister Ellen and I are still alive.

PROSKY: How long did you live on Capitol Hill?

GRAHAM: 20, 24 years I think. Didn't we get—how many. Twenty-two. Twenty-five. I am trying to figure out what my wife is signaling to me.

PROSKY: Where did you go to school?

GRAHAM: I went to Cranch and Tyler. Then I went to Hine which was old Eastern, then I went to Eastern High School.

PROSKY: You said that Hine was old Eastern? What did you mean by that?

GRAHAM: Well, the original Hine School was old Eastern prior to the building of Eastern High School at 17th and East Capitol Street.

PROSKY: And they didn't call it Hine, they called it Eastern, huh?

GRAHAM: They called it, well I'm not sure about that. I can remember that it was referred to as old Eastern.

PROSKY: How many were in your classes generally, in junior high school and high school, do you remember?

GRAHAM: I think between 25 and 30. I'm not sure but I'm thinking it was between 25 and 30. And I would like to inject this into it too. I went to Tyler School, and my father also went to Tyler. The

elementary school that was on 11th and G Street SE. And my grandmother—his mother—owned a store at 11th and G Street SE. And he used to jump out the window and go get some goodies and bring it back to everybody in the class. That was Daddy for you. I can remember him telling me that. I remember growing up I was tickled that I went to the same school. [gets choked up.]

PROSKY: Yeah. That's wonderful—not many of us can say that. What was the neighborhood like? Were there blacks and whites living together, were there...

GRAHAM: It was a mostly white neighborhood when I was growing up, and on the south side of G Street in the 1200 block behind the alley were some of the colored people, residents, lived in the alley. I can remember we would go back there and we would have ball games together, we'd play football together and baseball together. I can remember—it stands out—someone owned a tomato factory in the big building behind G Street on the 12th Street side and we used to watch 'em, not can the tomatoes, but put 'em in boxes and wrap paper around them and then send them off to the stores and different places.

PROSKY: Did you ever work in that factory?

GRAHAM: No ma'am, no.

PROSKY: What did you do for a living?

GRAHAM: I went to work for the government. I first worked in the Department of Justice, then I went to General Services Administration and then to the Post Office. And I retired from the Post Office Department, which was 19 years this September. Sept. the 3, isn't it? I'm saying this to my wife so she can verify.

PROSKY: When you lived on Capitol Hill, where did your family shop? Your grandmother had a shop?

GRAHAM: Well, I grew up and she had moved away by the time I had got old enough to, you know. She had moved to 819 Webster Street NW. But we would shop at the Safeway at 12th and Pennsylvania Avenue SE, and at the corner of 12th and G on the north side the groceryman was Harry Abelman. And he had a grocery store on one side of the street for a long time, and my grandparents and my parents shopped there. And then he moved across the street on the even side of the street—on the corner and we would shop there and I can remember I used to go in and he would have me shuck the lima beans and put them in a little box and he would sell them, and he would give me a couple pieces of candy, which I was really happy with.

PROSKY: How old were you when you did that?

GRAHAM: Oh, I guess I was in my early teens. Maybe I was even younger, I can't rightly remember the exact age. But I always had a good time. I thought I was having a good time, which I did. And I enjoyed doing it.

PROSKY: Do you remember the movie houses on Capitol Hill?

GRAHAM: Oh, yes, yes. It used to be one on Eighth Street, the Academy. And the one on Pennsylvania Avenue, near Eastern Market, was the Avenue Grand. And then they built the Penn Theatre across the street.

PROSKY: There are still vestiges of both of those.

GRAHAM: Yeah, they're still there. And I don't think they have movies in them, but they have a lot of offices and...

PROSKY: ...stores. How did you get around on Capitol Hill, did you take the trolleys, the bus, did you walk? Did you walk to school for example?

GRAHAM: Well we walked most of the time, all the family, we walked to the movies on Saturday and watch the cowboy pictures, and we would walk to church and walk home. During the winter we would take our sleds and I can remember either Daddy or somebody pulling me on the sled around to church to Wilson Memorial Church at 756 11th Street SE. And—which we never missed a Sunday. We all enjoyed it, my three sisters and I and my mother and father. And like a lot of other families we all sat in one pew all together.

PROSKY: Every Sunday?

GRAHAM: Practically every Sunday, yes ma'am.

PROSKY: Did a lot of your social life revolve around the church?

GRAHAM: Yes, more or less. Those days we used to have lawn parties and different things and the congregation would make all kinds of goodies and cakes and potato salad and slaw and they used to have these, I forget the name of them, more or less a picnic style, and we would donate the food and stuff and then we'd buy it back for the church!

PROSKY: That's a great way to raise money.

GRAHAM: But we all enjoyed it, and that went on for years and years until I guess the late 40s or early 50s.

PROSKY: Do you remember how long school lasted in those days? How long did it stop and start? How long was your summer vacation?

GRAHAM: I think it always stopped on the 16th of June. It seemed like it was always the 16th of June. I wasn't sure about the actual date in September. May I tell you some of the incidents we had in school? My mother would play the piano for the kids to march in and also to march out at the close of school at 3 o'clock.

PROSKY: This was every day?

GRAHAM: Every day, yes, ma'am.

PROSKY: Oh my goodness.

GRAHAM: One day I asked my teacher if I could ring the bell to bring the children into school. So I rang the bell like I was going to break it pieces—but I got everybody in, and my mother was playing a march or some kind of march, and every now and then—you have to excuse me because I'm kind of emotional—every now and then we would all march in and—may I stop for a minute...

PROSKY: Well that's interesting. I hadn't heard of that custom of playing the piano to begin school and to end school.

GRAHAM: I would like to mention I don't know if it has any bearing on what this project is, but I would also to say that I remember when the gas man would come along light the gas lights. He had a long stick with a hook on it and he would light the lights at night on the corner. And also remember mostly along Pennsylvania Avenue up to the Capitol that I remember was horse troughs at the end of each corner for the horses to drink water of course.

PROSKY: Do you remember horse trolleys?

GRAHAM: I don't remember horse trolleys but I do remember when the streetcars would go along the track and then all of a sudden they'd stop. And the electricity wasn't underground but it was above ground and they had to stop and put up the poles to reach the wires, and that would go out Georgia Avenue and Northwest...

PROSKY: There was one in Georgetown...

GRAHAM: Yes, ma'am, and also remember some of the streets with the cobblestones, and there are a few left here in southeast on the other side of the Anacostia River.

PROSKY: Oh there are? I didn't realize that. Do you remember delivery services on Capitol Hill then, what got delivered to your house?

GRAHAM: Well, yes. The first thing that stood out was milk. I can remember the milk man brought this little metal box and he would put two quarts or three quarts in there, and there was always cream at the top and we always had to shake it up to make it—and I can remember the horse drawn carts and the fish man would come around and sell fish, and also the ice, iceman, and he seemed to know exactly what size ice that each person wanted. I don't know how he did that. So every time that we wanted—I can remember my mother would say—she would call him out by his first name—and she would say 'We need a piece of ice.' And he would chop the ice from a big chunk of ice and bring it in and put it in the ice box. I also remember a man, I can't think of his name, but he sold bananas. And he had a banana cart.

PROSKY: Just bananas?

GRAHAM: Just bananas. And he put his children through college on pushing that banana cart around. He was an Italian man. And we always liked to see him come around too. Mama would buy a bunch of bananas.

PROSKY: How did you know he was on the street, did he call out?

GRAHAM: No, we just knew that he was comin' around, or it was time that he would—it was the day of the week that he was coming.

PROSKY: How about bread, was bread delivered?

GRAHAM: No, we would buy the bread from Mr. Abelman on the corner store.

PROSKY: When you were very young on Capitol Hill, you did have electricity in the house, did you?

GRAHAM: When I was very young, when I was 3 or 4 or 5, no. We had gas in our house, and why I say that is I was susceptible to pneumonia all the time, I think I had pneumonia four or five times when I was young. And they used to put mustard plasters and onion plasters on my chest, and I can remember my grandmother putting the rag I guess it was called around the lamp to get it warm, and then put the mustard and onions and stuff then put it on my chest and I'd say to her, "burn, Mama Turner, burn Mama Turner." My grandmother was Ella Turner, and she lived two or three houses from where we lived at 1206 G Street. But I can remember, I don't know was it 40s—I can't remember exactly if it was 30s or 40s that we got electricity in the house. And I can remember I would sit in front of the radio—one of these big box radios, you know with the speaker in the front—and I would sit there and listen to Annie Rooney was it?

PROSKY: Little Orphan Annie?

GRAHAM: Yeah, that's it, Little Orphan Annie. And I can't remember now all the different things. I can remember "The Shadow" would come on during the evening.

PROSKY: We used to listen to Jack Armstrong.

GRAHAM: Oh yes, Jack Armstrong. I can't remember all those names right now. Thank you for helping me...

PROSKY: That's one that comes to me.

GRAHAM: I can remember before having the radio and the electricity my father had four tall batteries about 8 to 12 inches high and he had a radio—maybe it was a crystal radio, I'm not sure—anyway he had four batteries and he would connect it to the radio and he had a speaker like a cone? And I could hear the voices coming through that. And I could hear the singing and the talking you know.

PROSKY: Like one of those big horns, those morning glory horns...

GRAHAM: Yes—and I can remember he would call me, and he said—my name is of course Walter, but he always called me Walla. And he'd say "Walla, come listen to this, it's coming from Chicago, Illinois"—and of course I was tickled to death. All the way from Chicago! In those days it was wonderful—I guess it still is wonderful.

PROSKY: Did you ever make a crystal set?

GRAHAM: No ma'am, never did.

PROSKY: I just ask because my brother did that. Made a crystal set with his friends. Never really worked very well, but they made one.

What did you do on Saturdays and in the summer when you didn't go to school?

GRAHAM: Well I always—well, not always, but I used to save every bit of anything I could find. Like pieces of iron, glass, and old rags and stuff like that because I knew on Saturdays the man would come up the alley and buy these pieces. Junk they're called today. But—and I was tickled to death when I could get a quarter or thirty five cents, I thought I owned the world. But—I would play games—and ride my bicycle or ride my wagon—up and down the sidewalk and down the corner to the grocery store and come back.

PROSKY: Did you stay in the city in the summer time?

GRAHAM: Yes, ma'am. We would—one of my mother's cousins or some relation to us—would take us to North Beach.

PROSKY: Where's that?

GRAHAM: It's called Chesapeake Beach. It was North Beach. And when she didn't take us in her car we would go to 15th and H Street NE and ride to North Beach or to Chesapeake. Our church in the summer we would go to the Beaches up and down the Chesapeake Bay—I can't remember. 'Cause I want to remember, why is that?

MRS. KATHERINE GRAHAM: Triton and Mayo?

PROSKY: I remember those Beaches too. There was a lot of mud. You had to wade out a long way. Before you got to the water.

GRAHAM: But didn't you have fun?

PROSKY: Yeah! It was great . Nobody complained.

GRAHAM: And the kids of today don't know what they've missed.

PROSKY: Yeah.

GRAHAM: Yeah, the enjoyment and the fun, and the closeness of the family. Not just our family but all the families that went. That made it so nice.

PROSKY: I was at a history workshop one time with some older people on Capitol Hill and one of the women there said everybody's momma knew everybody and everybody's momma spanked everybody—so you had to get on the other side of the town to get in trouble, where people didn't know you.

Did you ever go out to Glen Echo?

GRAHAM: Oh yes, oh yes. We used to go out there. Ride the streetcars, the open air streetcars and have a ball.

PROSKY: That was a wonderful streetcar...

GRAHAM: Wasn't it though? [tears up again.] I can't help it.

PROSKY: Oh, don't worry about it.

[pause]

You belong to the Masonic Lodge?

GRAHAM: Yes ma'am. I belong to Naval Lodge #4, and I am a past master of Naval Lodge #4, I am now the marshall of Naval Lodge #4. And I've been in the fraternity for 55 years. And I am also past

master of Anacostia #21, and I am now serving as the junior warden for my last year I hope. I was master, and they asked me—I wasn't at this meeting, but they said that Walter would be the junior warden so I'm the junior warden. After I came out of the East. Anacostia 21 is my mother lodge and Naval Lodge is—I am a dual member there. And why I wanted to be a dual member is my father was there for 50 years and I have my youngest son and my second son belong to Naval Lodge. The oldest one is David and my younger son is Daniel. They both belong there. And Daniel is also a past master. And David is the junior warden at naval Lodge #4 this year.

PROSKY: Can you talk about your activities and duties in those lodges?

GRAHAM: Well, the first thing you have to learn your ritual and it more or less teaches men to be better men though learning and you learn by passing the ritual on to one another. We have a cipher you can learn through also, but you can also get it from another person telling you and then you tell them. And you learn your ritual work. And it teaches prudence and it teaches—I can't think of the word—but anyway to do things in moderation. To drink in moderation and different things. And it teaches to respect one another and to have fellowship with one another.

PROSKY: That's a beautiful building that one on Pennsylvania, that Lodge.

GRAHAM: Oh, Yes. That was built in 1805 I think, well that's when our lodge was formed in 1805. The cornerstone for the 100th or 125—I think our 200th anniversary is coming up in a couple of years.

PROSKY: Can I ask you where you met your wife?

(they laugh)

GRAHAM: Well, I was playing horseshoes. On the sidewalk on 12th Street, right opposite the corner grocery store. The boys in the neighborhood, we set up a horseshoe pit between two trees, and we were pitching horseshoes, and this pretty girl walked down the street. And I looked at her and I whistled or said something to her. And she kept going down the street, didn't pay any attention to me. And so I threw another horseshoe. And I told them I'm going to walk down the street see where she goes. So she walked down the next block and went into her house. And I knew where she was, it was below G Street, 12th below G Street SE. So from then on that was it. I went down there, talked to her. And well, here we are now. After four boys. A wonderful life that we've had and are still having.

PROSKY: how old were you when you first saw her?

GRAHAM: I guess—either 23 or 24.

PROSKY: Were you married on Capitol Hill?

GRAHAM: No. We were married in Virginia.

PROSKY: Were you in the service?

GRAHAM: No ma'am. I was, well, I was sent to Baltimore to be examined during the draft. And they took me in, and they assigned me to the Marine Corps and I was there for two days. And after two days the sergeant came up to me and says, Mr. Graham, we have to let you go because they said I had high blood pressure. And during the battle I would turn my machine gun around on my own men. So that's why they said you have to go. We couldn't take a chance that the high blood pressure would do something to you. So I never was in the service.

PROSKY: That was lucky.

GRAHAM: I guess it was.

PROSKY: Were you still living on Capitol Hill when the Second World War was on?

GRAHAM: Yes, ma'am. I lived with my parents.

PROSKY: Can you talk a little bit about that? What it was like, living in the middle of Washington during that? Was the city very different?

GRAHAM: Oh, yeah. You don't hear about the murders and the different things going on today—it seemed like in those days people were more together, and they shared a lot of things. Now today everybody is out for theirself and they don't care about anything. So I think that's about all I can say about that.

PROSKY: Okay. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you are interested in talking about? Somebody told me you knew some of the relatives of the Carroll family, who owned a lot of property on Capitol Hill.

GRAHAM: Oh, yeah. I don't know about that part, but anyway my grandmother, was Ella O. Carroll of the Carrolls in Maryland. And the Carrolls came over on the Mayflower, and—in fact my uncle, my mother's younger brother, is Richard Carroll Turner, a family name. Gee, I don't know what else to say.

PROSKY: How about sports on Capitol Hill? Did you play any particular sports?

GRAHAM: I didn't play any—I loved baseball and I used to go to the old Griffith Stadium and watch the Washington Senators play, and I can remember some of the ballplayers, like Sig Vanure, and Yant played third base and Buddy Meyers played I think second base. Gee that was a long time ago. Like I say we used to play baseball and football in the alley behind G Street. I guess that's about all. And of course

during the winter we would have snowball fights and make snowmen. Just like any other—can I say “normal” people? Like all children? What?

MRS. GRAHAM (in background): Uncle Carroll grew up on Capitol Hill.

[TAPE 1/SIDE 2]

PROSKY: Was Daniel Carroll a relative?

GRAHAM: Yes. To my mother’s mother.

PROSKY: So he was married to your mother’s mother.

GRAHAM: No, no. He was related, that’s all. That’s why I said she should be here...

MRS. GRAHAM (in background): I only know little bits and pieces. I do know that his uncle, who is 84, and served in World War II, and lived on Capitol Hill for many years...

PROSKY: Do you know where he served?

GRAHAM: It was the 4th Division, and he was in the invasion of Normandy.

PROSKY: Oh he was.

GRAHAM (and wife, overlapping): There’s only a few of those soldiers and officers that are alive today. In fact the last time they met. Wasn’t it on Capitol Hill?

MRS. GRAHAM: No, I think it was Myrtle Beach.

GRAHAM: Oh yeah, they went to Myrtle Beach for a reunion of some sort. But he would be a wonderful person to interview. He could tell you a lot about the area. A lot more than I have...

PROSKY: Oh, I think you’re fine. Can you say his name for me again?

GRAHAM: Richard Carroll Turner. And he lives on Carpenter Street Southeast. Right at Pennsylvania Avenue.

PROSKY: Thank you that’s a good resource... There was a question at the back of my mind and now it’s gone...

MRS. GRAHAM: Join the club...

GRAHAM: Isn’t that the truth? And it’s not that it’s catching, it’s just that it just happens when you reach our age. I mean, my age...

PROSKY: Oh, mine too. You must have sent your children to school on Capitol Hill too, did you?

GRAHAM: No, ma'am. They all went to Ketchum, Kramer, and Anacostia. They all four went to those schools, elementary, junior high and high school.

PROSKY: Was that a good experience?

GRAHAM: Yes. We—they were boys, but they were good boys, So I guess that's what counts.

PROSKY: Do you remember playing basketball at all when you growing up on Capitol Hill? Was that a big game?

GRAHAM: It was—I didn't play much basketball. I played more baseball. When I was in high school I played ball and also was a runner. I ran the 100 yard dash and in the 440. But other than that I didn't. As far as I'm concerned, when I was growing up basketball wasn't like it is today. It wasn't the main thing. I think it was more baseball and football. Same like soccer has taken over today. And my grandchildren it seems like that's all they play is soccer. They live in Bowie, Maryland and 16, and 10—they play soccer. They love it for some reason. And their father, our third son, was a baseball player. He played in Pittsburgh for the Pirates. But he has been out of baseball for years. I should also tell you that my oldest son is a Methodist minister. And I'm proud of all four of them. Like I said before they are good children. I should also tell you I have 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren and three step grandchildren. And I'm proud of all of them.

PROSKY: I have just one grandchild, and my other son, his wife is pregnant. So I have one and a half.

GRAHAM: Well you know when you get up to my age you seem to have more children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. Like my wife says all the time, you're an old man. (Laughs). I should add to that I'm an emotional old man, which I can't help it. My mother said that her father, Papa Turner, was emotional and I think it was born in me. As you have heard and seen I still cry, at 79. And I still blush.

PROSKY: Those are good things. They mean your feelings aren't worn out yet...

Thank you very much. This has been very nice of you.

GRAHAM: Is it Ruth Overbeck? I would like to tell you I knew her for a long time. And I'd like to tell you she used to play the organ a couple times when we had special nights at our Lodge, and we would sing, and she also was a harpist. She could play the harp beautifully. I'd just like to tell you that. And of course I know her husband Robert. I've known him for a long time. And he also is a past master of Naval Lodge #4.

PROSKY: Oh he is?

GRAHAM: Yes, uh huh.

PROSKY: Well, I think that Lodge has been very generous in letting the Overbeck Project have lectures there—you know, lending the hall for historical lectures. That's been a real treat to see the inside of that hall.

GRAHAM: Oh, what do you think of that...?

PROSKY: Oh, it's beautiful. Just beautiful.

GRAHAM: I understand there's one almost like that down in Tyler, TX, and one somewhere around Philadelphia. Another lodge that's painted like that, with the Egyptian—what do you call it?

PROSKY: Decoration...

MRS. GRAHAM: I would say that like some 20 some years ago that Ruth Ann—and his mother was still living—Ruth Ann interviewed her many times about, you know, Washington, DC, because she could tell you anything you wanted to know.

GRAHAM: My mother knew...

MRS. GRAHAM: ...she was the historian of everything...

GRAHAM: And Congressional Cemetery. I can remember one time at the house, after I was married. Ruth Ann came to my mother's house and I happened to be there at the time, and we were talking about Congressional Cemetery and my mother was telling her all about it. I just sat there and wondered how did she know this and know that. It just seemed like she knew it.

(Shows picture of mother and sister at Cemetery.)

PROSKY: A wonderful picture! So do you have relatives buried there?

GRAHAM: Do we? I have half of the family—well not half but part of the family. Maybe it is half. My mother and father, and my two sisters are buried there. And there's a plaque there for Katherine and I. My grandmother and grandfather are buried there, my great grandmother, and great grandfather. He was the first policeman to ride a horse, and also a bicycle in the Police Department here in the District of Columbia. His name was John Dailey. And that's my middle name, Dailey. (Spells it) Which of course was my grandmother's maiden name.

And on my mother's side—that was my father's side—I have another grandmother and grandfather and aunts and uncle, and my grandfather's two sisters. One was named Ada Hunt and the other one was Viola Turner. They are buried there. And I also have a couple of aunts and uncles on my father's side, and one of them is Lawrence Wheatfield, and Harry Mackabee. I guess on both sides of my immediate family—mother and father's family, and my family—we have at least 50, don't we? Buried in the cemetery.

Of course you know John Philip Sousa's buried there, and two Indian chiefs, I can't remember their names, but they're buried there. J. Edgar Hoover is buried out there. And nothing else, I can't remember anything else right now. Here comes that 79 creeping up on me again.

PROSKY: So that's how old you are, 79?

GRAHAM: I will be the 9th of August. But that's only 18 days away. So I call it 79.

PROSKY: Do you remember visiting any of the monuments around Washington?

GRAHAM: Oh, yes, we used to go to the Monument, to the Capitol. Those days we walked a lot or rode the streetcars. Also—I don't know if this is a monument—but we used to go to Congressional Cemetery on the 30th of May. They used to have a band concert out there. That's something else—I've been talking to some people in a group or a committee trying to get some of those things restored again in Congressional Cemetery. Now I'm lost.

We used to go to Hains Point and had picnics down there.

PROSKY: Do you remember when the Jefferson Memorial was being built?

GRAHAM: I can't say I do. No I can't.

PROSKY: I just ask you because I was living in Arlington and I can remember watching that. We would drive from Arlington into Washington and take that bridge and sort of watch the progress of that being built.

GRAHAM: I can remember my uncle Carroll Turner used to—he had a job that he would drive a truck full of dirt to fill in where the airport is now. National Airport. I can remember that, when they were making the airport. I remember old Bolling Field and I remember one day one of those airplanes from Bolling Field—it was a small military airplane, and it crashed in the Anacostia, not so many blocks from here. It was either S Street or T Street it crashed on. Don't look at me like that, it's the truth. I wasn't married to you then.

PROSKY: Did you ever do any fishing in the river?

GRAHAM: Yes, and one day I took my—I can't remember which son it was. Do you remember, honey which one it was? Anyway, we walked down here—before the freeway was there, there used to be a farm where the freeway is, and we would walk on down through there over to the water. And he threw a line in and he caught a fish. And he says, oh Daddy, I can't keep this fish. It will die. So I took it off the hook and gave it to him and he threw it in the water. I remember that, yes.

Oh goodness.

PROSKY: Anything else you think of that you might like to say.

GRAHAM: I don't know. I wished a lot of people had as much fun and enjoyed everything like I have. And still have. It's been wonderful. (chokes up again).

END OF INTERVIEW

Additional Notes

[The following notes were taken by Ida Prosky during a conversation following the interview with Walter Graham.]

Mr. Graham's father's family came from England. He tells me they brought the boards with them that they used to build their house at 1211-13 G Street. They also brought doorknobs from England which they used in that house.

Mr. Graham was born at home at 1211 G Street SE, in his grandparents home. As a child of six, he remembers they had no electricity and used gas for light. He had pneumonia several times as a child and always thought the gas made it harder for him to breathe. The house was heated by one pot-bellied stove downstairs which glowed bright red when it got hot. He remembers taking baths in a galvanized tub filled with water next to the stove. One side of him froze while the other roasted. And, of course, he said, they had outdoor plumbing.

Fifty of Mr. Graham's relatives are buried in Congressional Cemetery. One of these is his grandmother, whose name was Ella Ophelia Carroll (1878-1939); she married Samuel Turner. This is his connection to the Carroll family who owned much of the land on Capitol Hill. His uncle, Richard Carroll Turner, was an officer in WW II and fought in the Normandy invasion. He is one of the dwindling number of Normandy veterans still alive and the Grahams are very proud of him.

One of Mr. Graham's grandsons just graduated from the Citadel Military Institute, with a commission as an ensign in the Navy. He is also a source of great pride.

Another uncle, Reilly Hunt, raised homing pigeons behind his house on Sixth Street SE, where the freeway comes through now. He kept 400 birds, several of which were used as messengers in the First World War. Mr. Graham and his wife remember that house as big and beautiful with a side porch that ran the length of the house from front to back.

Mr. Graham wanted to say that he had known Ruth Ann Overbeck for many years. She played the organ at the Masonic Lodge where he sang. He also said she played the harp very well.

A [four part series about Washington families who have lived in their respective neighborhoods for generations](#) was published in The Washington Star from May 25-28, 1980; Walter Graham's family is among those featured.