



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK  
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

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**Interview with Moy Family**

**Interview Date:** June 22, 2002  
**Interviewer:** Renee Braden  
**Transcriber:** Megan Rosenfeld

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[Note: Four interviewees participated in this interview: Ellen Moy and her daughters Ruby Moy, Judy Moy, and June Moy. The first name of each of the Moys is used in the transcript. Also in attendance during the interview was Alicia Moy, a granddaughter of Ellen Moy who was visiting the family for the weekend from New York.]

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

**BRADEN:** And how long have you lived on Capitol Hill?

**ELLEN:** Since 1941.

**BRADEN:** Where are you originally from?

**ELLEN:** Hong Kong.

**BRADEN:** And how old were you when you came here?

**ELLEN:** 17? I guess. 17. Now I'm—I born 1920. How old I am I don't know...

**BRADEN:** You came by boat?

**ELLEN:** Yes.

**BRADEN:** And the boat was called?

**ELLEN:** Empress of Russia.

**BRADEN:** And how many days did it take?

**ELLEN:** Oh, a long time, almost a month.

**BRADEN:** And you came to—the boat docked in Vancouver?

**ELLEN:** Vancouver.

**BRADEN:** And where did you go after that?

**ELLEN:** I take a train to Montreal—Montreal stay for awhile. Then take a boat—a little boat, to Boston. And then from Boston I take a boat to New York island. What's that island?

**BRADEN:** Ellis?

**ELLEN:** [yes] Ellis Island.

**BRADEN:** So you went through Ellis Island. Was that scary?

**ELLEN:** Oh, no, just two day and on and off. I stay there for two days.

**JUDY:** Ma said that when she came over from Hong Kong, you were seasick the whole time?

**ELLEN:** (laughs) Like this. (making waves with her hands)

**BRADEN:** Lots of waves? (making wavy gestures with hands)

**ELLEN:** And then I am going this way... (hands going sideways)

**BRADEN:** Were there lots of other young girls on the boat, coming here?

**ELLEN:** Oh yeah.

**BRADEN:** Moving to America too?

**ELLEN:** Oh yes. To family.

**BRADEN:** And when you were on Ellis Island did they ask you lots of questions?

**ELLEN:** [indicates no.] Just eat and sleep.

**BRADEN:** Did someone have to come and get you there?

**ELLEN:** I forgot now. A whole group of people—the whole boat—those people all go together. I am the first one to get out.

**RUBY:** Ma, where did you have to put your paper? Your documents. Was it in Boston or Ellis Island?

**ELLEN:** What documents?

**RUBY:** Your documents—your passport...

**ELLEN:** I can't remember now. When I—somebody took the thing—you know I don't know anything. I'm too young.

**BRADEN:** Was there somebody else on the boat that was supposed to be watching out for you and telling you what to do?

**ELLEN:** Oh, there was a whole lot of guards there. It looked like a jailhouse or something like that.

**JUNE:** On the boat or at Ellis?

**ELLEN:** At Ellis Island.

**RUBY:** So that must be where you came into the United States and your passport and documents...

**ELLEN:** Who knows?

**RUBY:** In those days a lot of people who came in from foreign countries, especially from Asia, they had another name. Because it's hard to locate—if she came in from Ellis Island and we know her maiden name we can check it easily. But if she didn't come in under her real name, if she came in under a paper name—a lot of people did at that time, it was more accessible. So that's what we have to figure out.

**BRADEN:** You didn't fill out papers when you were spending two days at Ellis Island. [No answer audible] But at the end of two days they told you you could go?

**ELLEN:** [Indicates yes].

**RUBY:** So documentation had to be somewhere. Was it with somebody who handled the group or did you have your passport? Well in those days they probably weren't called passports. They were probably called immigration papers.

**ELLEN:** I can't remember anything about that. I don't know anything about that.

**RUBY:** Did you have it or did you give it to someone to take care of it for you?

**ELLEN:** I can't remember that.

**RUBY:** We'll—she is a citizen now, for the record.

**ELLEN:** You know that Moy, one of the Moys, very old now, I think already passed away, in that Moy's book still has his name long long ago...

**BRADEN:** So how long did you spend in New York?

**ELLEN:** About one week.

**BRADEN:** Just one week. Do you remember anything in particular about it?

**ELLEN:** No.

**JUNE:** Was that the elevator incident?

**ELLEN:** No—that is not—that is in the Capitol.

**JUNE:** Oh, the Capitol.

**BRADEN:** Did you stay in a hotel in New York?

**ELLEN:** No, the Moy's meeting house.

**BRADEN:** So they were expecting you. You had known them in Hong Kong?

**ELLEN:** Oh, I never saw them. I know the name.

**BRADEN:** Friends of your family?

**ELLEN:** [indicates yes].

**BRADEN:** How many Moys were there? How many people were in the house you stayed in?

**ELLEN:** Oh, they have a big family.

**BRADEN:** Were you afraid?

**ELLEN:** No I am not afraid.

**BRADEN:** Nervous?

**ELLEN:** No. Why should I [be] afraid?

**JUDY:** You made the trip by yourself, right?

**ELLEN:** Yes, with Mary's family. [ed: Mary was the sister of Ellen's future husband]

**JUDY:** With our Aunt Mary's family.

**ELLEN:** We stayed in one room.

**JUDY:** Our father's sister.

**BRADEN:** Did you know you were going to marry one of their sons?

**ELLEN:** Only one son.

**JUDY:** Did you know you were going to get married?

**ELLEN:** It was a blind date...

**JUDY:** It was a blind date?

**ELLEN:** Hmmmhmmm. [yes]

**BRADEN:** So when you left Hong Kong and came to the United States, and stayed with the family, the Moys, it wasn't arranged that you would marry the son. You didn't know that.

**ELLEN:** No.

**BRADEN:** But it turned out that way.

**ELLEN:** HmmHmm. [yes]

**BRADEN:** Then you were married in New York or here in Washington?

**ELLEN:** Here.

**BRADEN:** Did the two of you move here together?

**ELLEN:** [unclear] . He already in the laundry.

**BRADEN:** He was already living here in Washington?

**ELLEN:** [Yes.]

**RUBY:** Let me preface something. My father's father was born on Second Street SE. We are third generation.

**JUDY:** I didn't know he was born here.

**RUBY:** Yeah. And the laundry that we had on Pennsylvania Avenue is now Thai Roma. But then grandfather opened another laundry on 12th Street and Pennsylvania?

**ELLEN:** Yes—12th Street and 6th Street.

**RUBY:** Yeah, that corner—right past the Naval Hospital, Soldier's Home, whatever it's called. So maybe you can finish your question.

**BRADEN:** I thought they were a New York family and just the two of you, your husband and yourself, moved to Washington, but they were already a Washington family.

**JUNE:** Was it a different Moy family in New York or the same family?

**ELLEN:** Same family. I think yeah, uncle. (unintelligible.)

**BRADEN:** So it was 1941 when you moved here. Where was the first place you lived here in Washington?

**ELLEN:** 315 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. I hate to sell it. Now it is a restaurant. Where is Berlin? [ed: refers to Dr. Marvin Berlin, an optometrist who practiced on Capitol Hill.]

**RUBY:** He probably retired on all the money he made buying all these buildings up and down the Avenue.

**ELLEN:** It costs a lot.

**BRADEN:** And you had a business on the ground floor and you lived above?

**ELLEN:** [indicates yes].

**RUBY:** In those days, all the people who lived on that particular block—most of them lived above their establishment. Our laundry was one laundry. There was a cleaning establishment next to us, but they had no access to the second floor, so we literally lived across the two buildings. Other people who also lived on that street was a restaurant owner which is now something else, it was Bob White's, that whole family lived on the second story of their building. And the cleaners towards the corner, which is now Cosi, they lived above their cleaners. In those days it was like a small community within the block and people just lived upstairs.

**JUNE:** You forgot the Smiths. Two doors down? Jack and Janet.

**RUBY:** How could I forget them! They had three stories. An electronic place below. And they rented one of the floors. And she eventually married Eddie Ball. And oh, Tony the shoemaker, and their family. They used to live above their shoe shop. Had the best figs—because they had a fig tree in the back and gave us figs.

**ELLEN:** [indicates assent] Oh, the fig tree!

**JUNE:** I didn't like it...

**ELLEN:** I like it.

**RUBY:** We used to sit out front and the matriarch of the shoe family used to just sit outside the store in a chair by the curb and watch the people walking back and forth. I mean you knew everybody on the street. No?

**JUDY:** She liked you.

**RUBY:** What's not to like?

**BRADEN:** Did she not like you, Judy?

**JUDY:** She (Ruby) always fixed her hair.

**JUNE:** She always fixed everybody's hair.

**RUBY:** Lila's... [ed: refers to Lila Lantz. She and her husband owned a cleaners at 3rd Street and Pennsylvania Avenue SE.]

**ELLEN:** So did Mary. Mary fixed everyone's hair.

**BRADEN:** So what was the name of your business?

**ELLEN:** Frank Moy Laundry.

**BRADEN:** And how long was it in business?

**ELLEN:** Oh long ago. I don't know.

**RUBY:** Over 20 years.

**ELLEN:** I am here they already have a laundry. I say 'what's that? what's that?' All the tables and the ironing board. The tables different. The iron's different.

[Sound of some machine]

**RUBY:** It was a flat surface, not like a regular ironing board, but flat from here to the wall, so you could lay out your clothing and sort your clothes, and they ironed that way too. She's talking about the old irons. You put the water in and you literally had to blow in it to spray the clothes.

**ELLEN:** Hard job.

**BRADEN:** Did you work in the business soon after you moved here? Or did you only help sometimes?

**ELLEN:** Sometimes.

**BRADEN:** How many employees were there?

**ELLEN:** I think three. Three employees.

**BRADEN:** And most of the other people on the block you became friends with?

**ELLEN:** Oh, yeah. They say I never saw a hardworking girl like you. At 2 a.m. and we still open the door, working.

**RUBY:** In those days you could keep your doors open. You could have people come and go. It wasn't all the problems you have today with robberies and burglaries.

**BRADEN:** Did people come in at 2 a.m. to pick up laundry?

**ELLEN:** Oh yeah.

**ELLEN:** Sometimes we too hot we open the door and nobody bothered [us].

**BRADEN:** Did you have senators and congressmen come through there?

**ELLEN:** Oh yeah.

**RUBY:** (talked over; discussion on various members of Congress who frequented the laundry)

**ELLEN:** Yeah. I think they already retired. They are so picky. Oh this straight line not straight. Then you do it all over again.

**BRADEN:** They were all picky or just some?

**ELLEN:** Some.

**RUBY:** I saw him (referring to U.S. Representative Adam Clayton Powell) through two wives. You could always expect being so close to the Hill a lot of the members, congressional members and senators and congressional people would come up to the cleaners. The Kennedys did that. So we saw them.

**JUNE:** Don't forget the hockey players.

**RUBY:** And the hockey players.

**JUNE:** They lived there in the apartment building.

**RUBY:** Right, every time they came here for the season. We know this because their face would be bashed in after a game, their teeth would be missing.

**JUNE:** And when the circus and other events came into town they would come by the laundry and they would give us a poster to put in the window and we always got tickets to go see the circus. Or whatever.

**RUBY:** Even today they still use the power plant to bring their animals back and forth when they perform downtown. That was the night I told you all I saw the elephants and you all thought I drank? Which I don't. For the record *I don't drink!*

**BRADEN:** But you did see elephants!

**RUBY:** Yeah, when the circus is in town they're holding on to each other's tails, with the zebras and the camels in the back. Traffic had to stop.

**BRADEN:** How much did it cost to wash one pound of laundry? When you started.

**ELLEN:** Not by pound, by piece.

**BRADEN:** By piece.

**ELLEN:** Before it's 9 cents a shirt. One piece. Later up to 15 cents. If rayon, it's 35 cents.

**BRADEN:** Did lots of people have rayon clothes in the 40s?

**ELLEN:** Ah, sometimes.

**BRADEN:** Why more to wash rayon?

**ELLEN:** Hard to do it. You have to wash separate. Cotton you have to separate the color.

**BRADEN:** Nine cents a piece when you first came here. Was that the standard?

**ELLEN:** I don't know. We charge—I don't know the other.

**BRADEN:** Did you always charge by the piece or did you later charge by the pound?

**ELLEN:** By piece.

**BRADEN:** How many rooms did you have above the store where you raised your family?

**ELLEN:** One, two, three...

**RUBY:** No. Two rooms on the other side over the cleaners and two rooms on our side where we had the bathroom.

**JUDY:** What room was that?

**JUNE:** The big hall...

**ELLEN:** The hall—nobody live there...

**RUBY:** I know, but we had to put our stuff somewhere...

**ELLEN:** When you are born you have no place to sleep—we put them in a drawer.

**BRADEN:** They slept in a drawer?

**ELLEN:** Uhhunh, just open a drawer...

**JUNE:** We were small.

**ELLEN:** Later buy another bed.

**BRADEN:** So did the three girls share one bedroom?

**ELLEN:** Yes. Later the uncle moved out and the three girls and their Aunt Mary all together in one room.  
[ed: the uncle was Ellen's younger brother]

**JUDY:** The three of us and our aunt. Mary.

**BRADEN:** Did you have four beds?

**RUBY:** No—one. You slept that way, I slept that way. And I slept on the floor.

**JUNE:** You didn't.

**RUBY:** I did. I had the mattress that was on the floor.

**ELLEN:** And the chewing gum in her hair...

**JUNE:** That's why we had to have haircuts a lot.

**BRADEN:** Did you ever think about moving to another building and having the business at 315?

**ELLEN:** Because it's too crowded. We got to go somewhere, right?

**BRADEN:** And so you moved to?

**ELLEN:** To here.

**BRADEN:** To this house. And the address of this house...

**ELLEN:** [ed: deleted for privacy]

**BRADEN:** And what year was it you bought this house?

**ELLEN:** 1951.

**BRADEN:** Do you remember the people who lived here before you who you bought the house from?

**ELLEN:** No.

**BRADEN:** How much did you pay for this house?

**ELLEN:** \$18,000.

**BRADEN:** Did you think that was a lot of money then?

**ELLEN:** Oh, no.

**BRADEN:** No?

**RUBY:** No, in those days the houses were that much. I bought my house two blocks from here at \$22,000. Had I had more money I would have bought two more that were for sale down here, because the realtor that sold it to us, I used to work for on Saturdays doing his work, and he was about two blocks away. There's one interesting aspect of this house. When I was working over at the White House, the FBI and the Secret Service knew the address, because Seward Square consists of four blocks, this parking lot over here is where J. Edgar Hoover's mother used to live. And J. Edgar Hoover and his sidekick Tolson used to come here once a week for lunch with his Mom.

**BRADEN:** Which house was it where his mother lived?

**RUBY:** Where the empty parking lot is right by the church.

**BRADEN:** Was it a big house?

**RUBY:** I think it was two stories.

**BRADEN:** Did you know her, Mrs. Hoover?

**ELLEN:** Ummhmm. I always push them [the children] walk across there.

**BRADEN:** So you don't know if she was a nice lady?

**ELLEN:** I don't know.

**BRADEN:** Do you remember any other of your neighbors when you moved here in 1951?

**ELLEN:** The first house is the reverend—that house always belong to the reverend.

**BRADEN:** Which church?

**JUNE:** The Methodist Church here.

**JUDY:** Which is currently called Capitol Hill Methodist.

**ELLEN:** I think they already remodel.

**JUNE:** The only person I remember here was Pete, the caretaker.

**ELLEN:** Yeah—he don't want to move out...

**JUNE:** I know. You see we were still living at the laundry, and whenever we wanted flowers Ma would send me over here, knock on the door, and tell Pete, "Ma wants me to get some flowers," so we went

down and out the back and we cut roses and then we bought them back. That's the only thing I remember. Pete always let me in.

**JUDY:** How come I didn't go with you?

**JUNE:** You were not outgoing, Judy. You didn't want to.

**ELLEN:** When you [Judy] see stranger, you go hiding upstairs and then later yell "June, are they gone?" June say yes and she [Judy] come down.

**BRADEN:** Why did this house have a caretaker?

**JUNE:** It was rented. The rooms were rented out. And we did not live here when we bought it. We stayed at the laundry until we moved...

**ELLEN:** We move 1961 on your birthday...

**JUDY:** That's when I graduated from high school.

**BRADEN:** So you waited six years [actually ten] before you moved in here...

**ELLEN:** ... and pay off the mortgage.

**BRADEN:** You paid off the mortgage with the rent—before you moved in...

**ELLEN:** Ummhmm.

**BRADEN:** And then in 1961 the whole family moved into this house. And was there a rental unit in the basement?

**ELLEN:** No...

**BRADEN:** You took over the whole house—and everybody had their own room?

**ELLEN:** Yeah, everybody had own room...

**JUNE:** We [Ruby and June] shared the front room.

**JUNE:** And then our brother Bill had the middle room.

**JUDY:** Why couldn't we live upstairs?

**ELLEN:** I don't know!

**RUBY:** Too lazy to walk up another flight.

**ELLEN:** Because you work—you were all working at that time...

**JUNE:** I was working at that time, Ruby was working,

**ELLEN:** And then she's (Judy) going to work, after graduation. She don't have time to rest and then go to work—she work in the Department of State.

**JUDY:** Right after I graduated I was going to go on vacation to Ocean City, and I got a call from State Department on a Sunday night, can you please come to work? We need help. So I did.

**BRADEN:** So you started right after high school...

**JUDY:** Right after high school.

**BRADEN:** What were you doing there?

**JUDY:** I started out as a clerk/steno. Didn't know what I was doing. And I was scared.

**BRADEN:** So you all were almost grown by the time you lived here, by the time everybody moved into this house.

[assents]

**BRADEN:** Did you have to do a lot of work on the house because it had been cut up into apartments? Or were they just renting rooms? During World War II a lot of houses—people rented out rooms.

**JUNE:** I think we had it remodeled. The kitchen downstairs was put in. It was changed because we used to have a little cut out—some remodeling, painting. I think our father hired somebody to paint.

**RUBY:** Yes, a beautiful color of turquoise the whole inside.

**JUNE:** We got a good deal on that one.

**BRADEN:** The whole inside was turquoise? Was it pretty?

**RUBY:** Yes. If you like turquoise.

**BRADEN:** After you moved here in 1941, and started helping in the laundry, when did you start to have a family? Did you work for a few years?

**ELLEN:** [phrase deleted] Until the first baby was born. In the hospital.

**JUDY:** We were all born in the same hospital, Georgetown. They started a family right away.

**ELLEN:** Same doctor.

**JUDY:** That was the old Georgetown Hospital, not the hospital that is there now.

**ELLEN:** That hospital has changed. I can stay there for one whole week. I am too weak to walk. Then you can stay one more day. They charge not like now.

**BRADEN:** How many hours a day did you work in the shop?

**ELLEN:** It depends. If I am not tired, then I keep on working. I have to take care of them...

**BRADEN:** Did you have a grocery store on that block?

**ELLEN:** Safeway...

**BRADEN:** Safeway was on that block?

**JUNE:** And also Mike's.

**RUBY:** Mike Carillo's.

**ELLEN:** Oh yes, Mike's was convenience food right?

**JUNE:** And soda.

**RUBY:** He always let us go in and see the comics, and he had a back room full of puzzles that he did in his spare time and he put the puzzles on the wall and the ceiling.

**ELLEN:** Yes, she always sit there and read read read.

**RUBY:** Every new magazine that came in, every single comic book.

**BRADEN:** But you never had to buy them?

**JUNE:** But you did buy some...

**RUBY:** Yeah, the ones I wanted to keep.

**ELLEN:** I think Superman.

**RUBY:** Tarzan. I had an old, old collection. I finally sold them to collectors. People always thought I was a pack rat. Well there's a reason.

**ELLEN:** I always wonder where those things go.

**RUBY:** Yeah, I sold them.

**BRADEN:** So when you moved to this house in 1961, the reverend of the church lived next door and who lived on the other side?

**ELLEN:** What other side? Oh they changed hands so many times.

**RUBY:** I think Millicent Chatel was there at one time.

**ELLEN:** One old lady retired and moved to Florida. The rest I don't know. They sell it really fast.

**BRADEN:** There were no families on this block?

**JUDY:** Both of those houses, 403 or 407, they change hands a lot. It's mostly the workers from the library or whatever, they walk to work.

**ELLEN:** Yup, yup, a few boarders—and then they sell it to somebody else. I think they sell it to what's his name—that white haired guy—Don—and then he bought it—Don? [Don Wychoski; he moved to Virginia. He still owns it.]

**BRADEN:** What is your fondest memory of the first few years you spent here on Capitol Hill?

**ELLEN:** I can't remember.

**JUNE:** I remember the parades...

**ELLEN:** Oh, the parades—

[**Editorial recreation of conversation at end of Side 1 and beginning of Side 2:** There were a number of parades that formed around 3rd Street and Pennsylvania Avenue SE—the Shriner's Parade, the circus's arrival, and the inaugural parades. These consisted of floats, military vehicles, soldiers, and lots of flag waving.]

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

...Ah, the inauguration.

**BRADEN:** Was the Fourth of July celebration big on Capitol Hill when you first came here?

**ELLEN:** Oh, yes. Then their uncle in the evening took them to—I think the Capitol. Every time we all go it is raining. I don't know why.

**BRADEN:** It rained on the Fourth of July every time?

**RUBY:** I don't remember that—do you remember that?

**JUNE:** I remember running home.

**BRADEN:** Not long after you came to the United States, the United States entered World War II. Did that make life different here? Once you were in Washington? Did the war change anything for you?

**ELLEN:** Not really. The same.

**BRADEN:** Were there a lot of soldiers nearby?

**ELLEN:** I just hear the radio say soldiers—lady soldiers is called WAC?

**JUNE:** I remember all the sailors and the Marines...

**RUBY:** The Marine Corps is right down the street...

**ELLEN:** Navy Yard, right?

**BRADEN:** But you didn't necessarily see people in uniform all over the neighborhood...

**RUBY:** When the ships came in, you would see the sailors because they would frequent the restaurants or the bars.

**ELLEN:** Oh, on the street...

**JUNE:** (unintelligible) They would come up I guess from the Navy Yard and head to the Capitol or whatever.

**JUDY:** They had parades. They had I guess the inauguration and they had all kinds of military troops set up and walk by with their weapons, machinery, equipment...

**JUNE:** I only saw the parades.

**BRADEN:** Do you remember any presidential inaugural parades the first few years you lived here?

**ELLEN:** Oh, yeah, whole lot of presidents. I remember, after Roosevelt. I think Johnson, Nixon, not in order—can't remember that...

**JUDY:** One year it was so cold, and we were living here [Seward Square]...

**ELLEN:** That was Kennedy...

**JUDY:** And there were school kids outside lining up and they were so cold, so our father invited them inside to get warm. And we ran around the house looking for styrofoam cups to give them hot chocolate. Right?

**ELLEN:** Right.

[exchange among sisters:] That group was from Hagerstown, they were so cold and shaking.

**BRADEN:** Did you ever go to see an inaugural parade?

**ELLEN:** Not really go over there. [to June] Did you?

**JUNE:** We just looked out the window! We didn't have to go anywhere!

**JUDY:** I remember one year there was this Indian princess on a horse, and she was so cold Aunt Mary went and got her some, what was it, tea or coffee? Or hot chocolate?

**RUBY:** ... and lipstick.

**JUNE:** Was she turning blue? I don't remember that one.

**RUBY:** She didn't have any lipstick.

**JUDY:** I remember it was right across the street from here....

**BRADEN:** Lipstick and hot chocolate. She was a princess. So what was everyday life like for you all growing up?

**JUNE:** Here? In this house?

**BRADEN:** Or at 315, and just being so close to the Capitol, did it surprise you, or did you just take it for granted...

**ELLEN:** No.

**JUNE:** I would say every once in a while Mom and I would walk around the Library and the Capitol and the gardens and look at everything...

**ELLEN:** And pick some...

**JUNE:** No we didn't pick flowers, we picked the seeds off of the flowers. And then Mom would bring it back and plant it. To see if it would grow. And it did grow. These were unusual things. So every evening we would walk, all around different areas, and then come back.

**ELLEN:** Buy ice cream—you know five cents for ice cream cone. Divide for them.

**BRADEN:** They had to share one ice cream?

**ELLEN:** The sales lady see me share and then would give us one more. Only five cents a cone but I couldn't afford it....

**BRADEN:** Well, how did you know they wanted the same kind of ice cream?

**ELLEN:** They had no choice.

**JUNE:** It was just one choice—vanilla.

**BRADEN:** Your main playmates when you were young were the other kids who lived above the shop? Or did you have friends elsewhere?

**RUBY:** It was mostly them, I think there were maybe 20 of us...

**JUDY:** We weren't allowed off the block...

**JUNE:** We had to play our baseball games on the corner.

**BRADEN:** Was that true for a lot of the kids, that everybody was supposed to stay on the block?

**ELLEN:** They know each other.

**JUNE:** And we'd ride our scooters, and skate—and everything else was right on the block. Everybody knew us and we knew them, and even people who came on that block... And we played around the corner on 3rd Street, because there weren't any houses. Because Morton's drug store was there and we wouldn't bother anybody. So we could play and do whatever back there. the thing I liked best was roller skating on bricks.

**RUBY:** That took talent.

**JUNE:** That was something else—I mean to vibrate your whole ears... So that was a highlight there. When it was a nice day we always got our skates. Today's a skate day or today's a bike day or scooters or whatever. And we'd all meet.

**JUDY:** I don't think I had skates.

**JUNE:** Well we all shared—you had one I had one. (Laughter).

**BRADEN:** No wonder it took so much talent.

**JUNE:** Don't you remember? We had a skate key...

**JUDY:** No.

**RUBY:** The same skate keys that you could use on the old radiators around here.

**BRADEN:** What school did you all go to?

**JUNE:** We went to Brent. That was the elementary school on 3rd Street.

**ELLEN:** This is a new one?

**JUDY:** This is a new one. I have a picture of the old one, mom.

**ELLEN:** I know that they paint it...

**RUBY:** No, they tore it down. It's in a different location too... where the playground was.

**ELLEN:** I know that it's different, but I forgot.

**JUDY:** The old Brent school was at the same location but slightly different.

**JUNE:** It was a red brick at that time.

**BRADEN:** How many kids went there in the 40s and 50s?

**RUBY:** I think in my class I had maybe anywhere between 25 and 30 kids. We always had a big class.

**BRADEN:** How many other schools were on the Hill? I mean all the kids would have been in that school?

**JUNE:** There was a Catholic school.

**BRADEN:** St. Peter's? Was there back then?

**RUBY:** Also Buchanan on G Street, Tyler—so if you lived near—the School Board drew the lines where you got to go and ours was here.

**JUNE:** So we would walk home at 12 o'clock for lunch. And then we'd go back.

**BRADEN:** Everybody went home for lunch?

**JUNE:** Everybody went home for lunch.

**ELLEN:** I wonder why now the school have a school bus take the children from somewhere else and then come over here. Everybody can walk home! Before every corner have a patrol, a patrol boy...

**BRADEN:** Safety patrol?

**ELLEN:** Yeah. Direct the car, and then let the people go. But no school bus.

**JUNE:** We used to take—not the Metro, but O. Roy Chalk’s transit thing—we either rode the street car, or take a bus when you got wherever and transferred. And you would have to buy your tickets from the school if you wanted to go somewhere, so you could ride cheaper.

**RUBY:** There was like a coupon book that you pulled off the stub and gave it to them.

**BRADEN:** What did people on the Hill do for fun? Were there more or less restaurants? What other areas of the city did they visit?

**JUNE:** The movie house.

**RUBY:** Yeah. The adults would go to the movie—or they’d take a ride out into the country—in those days they didn’t have all those structures out there. Open land, farm land. And, for us kids, we went to the movies, because it was like 25 cents, right? Five cents for a pickle.

**ELLEN:** 25 cents a ticket.

**JUNE:** And you could sit there and watch over and over. Not pay \$9 a ticket and watch it once.

**JUNE:** And we even got prizes in the candy machine. You could get a free ticket for next week.

**RUBY:** As to the other adults, I don’t know. We only knew what the kids did. Across the street from us was the Naval Lodge where they always had their monthly meetings with their Lodge members. And the bank, they had their set hours and set people. What, two banks and a title company across the street. Two title companies, and a real estate office. So when they finished their work they went home. There were no kids on that side.

**JUNE:** Yes there were—up in the Naval Lodge. My friend Diane. And her sister lived there. They were the only two across the street. everybody else lived on our block. Our side. But you know the other thing we did in the evenings, we would see when they came to balls or whatever, they would be all dressed up...

**RUBY:** Oh yes, to the Naval Lodge...

**JUNE:** And we’d watch from the windows and say “That one’s pretty, that one’s pretty. That one’s ugly.” They had a lot of balls or whatever and we would watch them it was nice. A little fashion show.

**BRADEN:** Do you remember any events like a really big snowstorm? What did people do here?

**ELLEN:** You had the great snowstorm, 1980 something.

**RUBY:** During the Inaugural thing you're talking about, when they had to clear off for Reagan?

**ELLEN:** I think the snow very high.

**JUNE:** I think that was for Kennedy. Because I couldn't get a bus home from work.

**RUBY:** That was for Kennedy. For Reagan it was just the coldest.

**JUNE:** I had to walk home from downtown. From work to here. And that's when I ended up with bursitis—I couldn't walk anymore. It was just awful. I couldn't catch a cab, couldn't get on the bus. So I just kept on going, walked from downtown all the way here.

**BRADEN:** That was the Kennedy inaugural?

**JUNE:** No, that was when we had that big snowstorm. Or you know how the city gets gridlock—it happened back then too. You know how you keep walking backwards to get to the front of the bus so you can get on the bus? Well you couldn't. So then I figured I would walk to the next transfer point, I figured OK, everybody gets off there and I can get on. But I couldn't get on. So I kept on going. I walked home.

**BRADEN:** Have you owned any other homes besides this one?

**ELLEN:** Just this one.

**BRADEN:** What year did you sell 315 Pennsylvania Avenue?

**ELLEN:** 1966...

**BRADEN:** Do you remember how much you sold it for?

**ELLEN:** My husband know but I don't know.

**BRADEN:** And you sold it because you were retired? You were finished?

**ELLEN:** Yes. Sold the laundry and I become the housewife.

**BRADEN:** Did your husband have to work after that?

**ELLEN:** The laundry already sold. And he already up there... [ed: meaning "up" in Heaven]

**RUBY:** He was ill the past few years and passed away.

**BRADEN:** So after he passed away you sold the business...

**ELLEN:** No, he sold the business and then he...

**BRADEN:** Did he ever live here?

**RUBY:** Yes.

**BRADEN:** So you haven't worked since then.

**ELLEN:** Well, I tried to. Finally I get one in 1972...

**BRADEN:** You got a job in 1972?

**ELLEN:** I am walking and an old friend said what are you doing? And I said I am looking for a job. And they say no problem, I know a Congressman and he tell me to interview. They find me a job in the Congressional restaurant.

**RUBY:** She was sponsored by a member of Congress to work in the Congressional dining room of the Capitol.

**BRADEN:** And how many years did you do that?

**ELLEN:** I worked 15 years.

**BRADEN:** Did you like that?

**ELLEN:** Oh, yes. If they want me I like to go back and be a bus girl, because so lonesome here. Because now everybody they live far away—if I find a job I go back there. Bus girl is ok.

**BRADEN:** What hours did you work?

**ELLEN:** It depends. Sometimes they busy and they tell me to stay. Before they tell me four hours.

**RUBY:** If Congress was still in session then she would have to stay there. Cause they always kept that Member's Dining Room open.

**JUDY:** You worked a lot of long hours.

**ELLEN:** One time the Pope came, I worked until 3 a.m.

**BRADEN:** Right before the Pope's visit?

**ELLEN:** I think so. But the boss was very nice. Everybody take turn, take a rest.

**BRADEN:** What was your boss's name in the restaurant?

**ELLEN:** Oh, two bosses. One already passed away, the other one is Mr. Watson.

**BRADEN:** Did he live on the Hill?

**ELLEN:** No, I think Gaithersburg.

**BRADEN:** And they served breakfast, lunch and dinner? And were open as long as there were members there...

**ELLEN:** Yes.

**JUDY:** I remember one time you were out at 6 o'clock in the morning and came home close to midnight. It was safe to walk the streets then.

**BRADEN:** And your job in the restaurant was...

**ELLEN:** Before I was the bus girl and then they tell me to be a waitress.

**BRADEN:** Did you like being a waitress?

**ELLEN:** Oh, yes.

**BRADEN:** Do the members tip in that restaurant?

(laughter)

**ELLEN:** Yes. They tip sometimes. They write on the paper and sometimes they leave cash.

**JUDY:** Sometimes they leave an autograph if you really want their autograph.

**BRADEN:** Were they fairly generous?

**ELLEN:** Yes—except those page boy and page girls. They bad. They just sit down there and grab all the crackers. And then eat without paying.

**BRADEN:** Who was your favorite customer?

**ELLEN:** Oh, Mr. Montgomery. [Congressman Sonny Montgomery of Mississippi]

**BRADEN:** Where was he from?

**ELLEN:** Mississippi. Now he's in Virginia.

**RUBY:** Congressman Sonny Montgomery. He sat on the Veteran's Committee.

**ELLEN:** Every year he still have a card for me.

**BRADEN:** Why was he your favorite customer?

**ELLEN:** He always used my table. And then always he have his own phone, tell me what time he is coming and put the phone back.

**BRADEN:** Which others were nice?

**ELLEN:** Frank Horton from upstate [Rochester] New York.

**BRADEN:** Was he nice to her because he knew she was your mother? Were you working there then?

**RUBY:** I was working there...

**ELLEN:** She never come to my table...

**RUBY:** Poor tipper.

**ELLEN:** My boss come to my table.

**BRADEN:** Is the food good in there?

**ELLEN:** To me I like Chinese food, right? The food is good. Oh, the bean soup. They have every day the bean soup. Nothing! Just bean soup. Have you tried it before? So flat. I don't like it. Some of the congressmen start it so everybody everyday have the bean soup, must have the bean soup.

**BRADEN:** You walked to work everyday?

**ELLEN:** Not far from here.

**BRADEN:** How many people worked in that restaurant with you.

**ELLEN:** Oh, a whole lot.

**JUDY:** She made it in the snow also.

**ELLEN:** Yeah. You know the heavy snow—I stepped in all the snow I go back there. [Sic] But nobody show up! Up the hill. And Mr. Montgomery say are you still working? Yes. But the next day, the boss say Congressman Montgomery say all the people who worked that day give them one more day's pay.

**BRADEN:** That's very generous... When we spoke before in the winter, Judy, you spoke about different events along Pennsylvania Avenue like the circus. Do you have any other events like that?

**JUDY:** I remember when we were growing up all the different stores and just watching these stores change. We were trying to remember what was on Second Street, you know where the new Library of Congress is—what stores were there.

**ELLEN:** Yeah, the doughnut store.

**JUDY:** There were streetcars out front, and not too many cars.

**RUBY:** I used to sneak over to roller skate in that chocolate candy area because they only had the black and white tile on the front, and you could skate right in and do your famous turns...

**JUNE:** That's where the clothes store was...

**RUBY:** It was also Velatis Candy. Right where the Madison Library is. Also on Second Street at Independence, at the first corner you come to. Trust me, I fell a lot. I know you weren't allowed, but I snuck over.

**ELLEN:** I don't know that!

**RUBY:** Or are you talking about Second Street side or Independence?

**JUDY:** Second Street and Independence.

**RUBY:** You're talking about Martini's hair cut, barbershop?

**ELLEN:** At the Third Street corner, right?

**JUDY:** Joe's barbershop and the Trover Shop and Sherrill's Bakery. But the next block there were a number of stores there.

**RUBY:** ...and Velatis and the clothes shop she saw...

**ELLEN:** There's a Ford car too, in the middle, right?

**JUDY:** What is it, Frank Small?

**ELLEN:** Yeah, Frank Small. Always bring his laundry...

**RUBY:** Ford car company—it's now Hunan Dynasty on the second floor, but you could drive up. And right where the Dynasty is that was all parking area up there and then there was a car showroom.

**JUDY:** Where Roland's is now used to be the Safeway. I remember at Easter time we would all get dressed up and go up to the Capitol and roll our Easter eggs there. Remember?

**ELLEN:** Yeah, roll the egg, or throw the egg. Roll the egg and then this one throw the egg. (laughter)

**JUDY:** Mom made our Easter outfits. I remember falling into the pond...

**RUBY:** It wasn't a pond, it was that Neptune fountain.

**JUDY:** Whatever. I call it a pond. But somebody dared me to get a penny and I reached over in my Easter outfit and I fell right in. I think it was June who dared me to bend over and get the penny.

**JUNE:** I wasn't that bad...

**BRADEN:** Did you get the penny?

**JUDY:** I got the penny but everybody was laughing at me as I walked home in squeaky shoes and my coat and Ma took one look at me...

**JUNE:** I don't remember that, Judy. I wouldn't do that to you...

**ELLEN:** I made three coat, the same, the same material, same style, for Easter.

**BRADEN:** Did you sew a lot for your girls?

**ELLEN:** Yeah, we don't have much money.

**BRADEN:** But you had a sewing machine?

**ELLEN:** Yeah, the old sewing machine.

**JUDY:** And we wore hand-me-downs. I wore hand, hand-me-downs.

**ELLEN:** I don't like the hand-me-down shoes.

**JUNE:** The sewing machine I remember was Singer, where you had to pump with your foot. Remember that? I think we still have it don't we?

**ELLEN:** No.

**BRADEN:** Did you keep the sewing machine?

**JUDY:** I think we don't have it.

**JUDY:** We didn't have that much money. Mom always cut our hair. And June and I looked alike...

**ELLEN:** Your grandfather hold all the money. If I have to do shopping, buy some clothes, or material, I have to ask him. Get some money.

**BRADEN:** Did he always give it to you?

**ELLEN:** Of course, they need something to wear, right?

**BRADEN:** But he held your money.

**ELLEN:** Right. The Grandfather.

**JUDY:** But who cut our hair?

**ELLEN:** If not me then Mary.

**JUDY:** They put a bowl over our head and cut it the Chinese style look.

**ELLEN:** Maybe your father.

**RUBY:** I always got the back of my head cut by Sam's, the barber next to the shoe store. So I didn't have the bowl.

**JUNE:** Whenever Grandfather came over to visit, I would say "Would you like a soda? Would you like something to drink?" And he would say "Yes," and I'd go (extending palms upward) "What would you like?" And then I went up to the store and got one for everybody.

When we had relatives come in, I'd say "Aren't you thirsty, it's so hot."

**RUBY:** Father was also involved in our shenanigans...

**JUNE:** But I always remember, I was the one "Go ask go ask." And I'd go up to whoever the relative was if they were thirsty. And then "We don't have anything here, but I'd be glad to go to the store." So I did. You had to really think then.

**JUDY:** We were the only Chinese family on the block, so everyone knew us. And since we lived in a laundry we were the cleanest kids on the block. We all worked in the laundry also as we grew up. I think everyone had a special assignment. I think mine was pinning the socks together, pinning the dirty socks together. Yours was cashier, June?

**JUNE:** There was this little register, under the counter, and every morning I'd go to my father and say "what's the combination today?" And he would go like this (manipulating fingers up and down) and that means—we had some strings underneath, it was like a little code thing, and you pulled the drawer open. And if you did the wrong combination it wouldn't open... I hung around and wait for a customer to come in and make the correct change.

**ELLEN:** Mary knew how to do it, open it and she go to buy something, but you can't.

**JUNE:** I only made the change, took in the money. And we had to climb up to get down the laundry packages, because they were all wrapped up, and they had little codes on them for different people—if they didn't have a ticket they had a code. We'd pull it down, whatever it was, take the ticket, and put it on that spindle. That's how they knew how much they took in that day.

**RUBY:** We all had to sort laundry as it came in from the outside, They were in a tangled mess. So we all sorted. My duty was to turn collars and cuffs.

**JUNE:** You did? Can you still do it?

**RUBY:** Yep. Well, like Mom's cuff...

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

[Tape begins with discussion about Hine Junior High School and about awards received at Hine. All the children and the children's father attended Hine and were outstanding students winning scholastic letters and earning stars. Each was the recipient of the Daughters of the American Revolution Award for achievement of good conduct, grades, and citizenship and community service.]

....your citizenship and something else...

**BRADEN:** And everyone at Hine got one?

**JUNE:** Everyone of us.

**ELLEN:** My children,

**BRADEN:** That's terrific. Do you still have it?

**JUNE:** Somewhere.

**RUBY:** I still have mine.

**ELLEN:** You keep yours?

**JUDY:** Of course I have mine!

**ELLEN:** I keep your father's.

**RUBY:** It's like winning a medal. With your suit or something.

**JUNE:** And we all earned these letters at Hine, where we got so many points for grades and all these different activities. And you earn stars after that. I went through mine—I had a lot of them! I was almost close to you [Ruby] or maybe tied you, cause you had the highest at that time. The teachers kept telling me, you need a few more stars or points to catch your sister [Ruby].

**JUDY:** It was hard following them.

**RUBY:** Suppose if it were the reverse—if I was lousy and you all were the overachievers, then how would I feel? So I had to keep on going.

**JUDY:** Integration hadn't happened, well it happened during—I think when I was going from elementary school into junior high school.

**RUBY:** But in those days there was no category for Asian, or “Y” for yellow. We were all known as white. So if anyone checks my records for history, they will see “W” for white. Then they'll look at the picture and say, “well she doesn't look white.”

**BRADEN:** Were you listed that way too?

**JUDY:** I never looked...

**RUBY:** I asked the question. That's why I know.

**JUNE:** I didn't really care. I just wanted to finish school. I didn't want to go to any more schools.

**JUDY:** Our father had said at the beginning of integration, if there's any problem at school just come on home. But he didn't really explain what was happening. At least when he talked to me. And I really lived in a fog during those days. I didn't know what was going on most of the time. I was a follower. [overlapping].

**RUBY:** We got along with everybody. The kids on the block were white. And the workers at the laundry were black.. So we knew people were just people. We didn't segregate them, we didn't categorize them. So when this happened at our school, we got along. At least in my class we got along with blacks.

**JUNE:** Some of my best friends were black.

**JUDY:** I don't know if we knew. We were different in a way. We were different in a way, but we were like everyone else. But I remember when Mom made us take time out in the afternoon to learn Chinese we spent an hour trying to read and study but then we'd go back outside and play again. So much for the Chinese lessons.

**ELLEN:** They are sorry that they didn't learn better.

**BRADEN:** Do any of you speak fluent Chinese?

[no answer]

**BRADEN:** You just know some words.

**JUDY:** Were we good students, Mom?

**ELLEN:** Well, you can study all over again.

**JUNE:** I can read the mahjong set [a Chinese game using blocks with Chinese lettering and numbers].

**JUDY:** And I know how to write my name and count to ten [in Chinese].

**ELLEN:** I think you know.

**JUNE:** I don't know how to write my name.

**ELLEN:** She write much better now. Few more words. You know how? I will teach you.

**BRADEN:** You all were the only Chinese family on the block. But were there other—I think someone said an Italian family—other ethnic groups on your block on Pennsylvania Avenue?

**JUNE:** Oh? There was Jeannie Lee and her kids, Dick and Carol. They were on Second Street.

**ELLEN:** The laundry...

**JUNE:** They had another. And then the Leong's way down there, they would come up to our block.

**JUDY:** I wasn't allowed off the block...

[overlapping conversation]

**JUNE:** We'd say Ma, we're going out. Who? We'd say "all of us." And so we would all go. Or "We're all going to the movies today."

**ELLEN:** 25 cents.

**JUNE:** 25 cents, thanks Mom. And can I have a soda, Mom. We'd go to one of those little grocery stores and get a pickle to take to the movies. Schokett's—your friend Shirley, her parents had a grocery store.

**RUBY:** The best kosher dill pickles.

**RUBY:** Only two or three cents for a pickle, And we'd go [slurp] through the movies.

**ELLEN:** Now you can't buy anything for a penny.

**JUNE:** But there were penny candy stores. We used to have like, when we'd get a few pennies—we'd find it on the street...

**RUBY:** Or in the laundry...

**JUNE:** I found mine on the street—I would go to the store and see what I could buy with my two pennies or whatever and get some Mary Jane candy or Tootsie Roll...

[overlapping]

**JUDY:** You never told me.

**RUBY:** My friend Shirley's mother had a store that was right across from the school, until the freeway or something was coming through and they had to move it—and a couple of your friends had stores... That was down Duddington Place.

**BRADEN:** There were stores on Duddington?

**RUBY:** Yes, there was a grocery store, they were all around.

**JUNE:** Mom would always send me down to Safeway to buy whatever she needed...

**ELLEN:** Yeah. Just a few doors down.

**JUNE:** Or, on Saturdays, our father would take us to the Market. I loved to go to the Market.

**RUBY:** But you had to get up crack of dawn...

**JUNE:** You had to get up early. So you'd get in the cab or whatever and go over to the 5th and K Northwest district to Beasley's and we'd pick the chicken.

**RUBY:** In those days—you have what you call free-range? It was a huge garage. And they had a huge garage with roaming chickens, Thanksgiving time there'd be all these turkeys—you could walk in a room full of turkeys. Now with all the health stuff they've clamped down on all that. So you can't do those things. But we would do that.

**JUNE:** We'd go to the market and get the stuff—the chicken would be ready for us when we finished the rest of the shopping—we went and bought Utz—we always had to have Utz...

**RUBY:** Potato chips...

**JUNE:** And then we would get the lunch meat and the meat and the fruits and vegetables. That's how I learned how to do all this Mom. See I buy all the groceries for Mom and bring it in.

(to Judy) You wanted to go but you wouldn't get up early enough! I'd wake you and say Judy you want to go today? There's two of us can go. And you'd say no, I want to sleep. It was either Bill [their brother, who died in 1994], or occasionally Ruby. But I always wanted to go.

**RUBY:** It was twice as big as the Eastern Market. And filled with a lot of vendors and people.

**BRADEN:** 5th and K Northwest?

**JUNE:** Yes—it's no longer there. I think it's a parking lot—or is that the House of Wax?

**BRADEN:** Did you ever go to the Eastern Market?

**JUNE:** Hmmhmm. There wasn't that much. There was stuff, but not as much stuff as at the other place. So that's why father always wanted to go there. Because if we wanted to go there, we could just walk. And occasionally we did walk. Mom and I or whoever, we'd just walk up there and pick up what we needed because we couldn't go to the other place.

**ELLEN:** Now is only Judy who go to the Eastern Market. Every Saturday.

**JUDY:** I do get up early.

**JUNE:** You've changed now.

**BRADEN:** Did you all have a car?

**RUBY:** Eventually.

**ELLEN:** Mary got a car first and then learn, and then your father learn to drive. And then I tried to learn and then I fail. I did drive but I give up.

**RUBY:** Every Sunday we'd close the laundry and go to Haines Point for a picnic—and fishing. That was the only day we had as a family to relax. I don't know, did we meet anyone else down there? No, it was just us.

**JUNE:** Until we met boys.

**RUBY:** We did roller skate up and down Haines Point.

**JUNE:** And rode bikes too.

**BRADEN:** There were lots of families who went there. But you were open Sunday morning? Did you say you closed early?

**ELLEN:** Open a little. And then evening start again after I made the dinner.

**JUDY:** When we closed on Sunday—it was a storefront window and we had these curtains that we would pull so you couldn't see what we were doing behind. That was our play area then.

We only had a radio and we'd listen to The Shadow—and sometimes we'd use those curtains to pretend we were stars and sing—remember? We would do our acting in the laundry. And people would knock on the door—I guess they wanted to pick up their laundry—and we would be still until they left. And once they left we'd start singing and pretending we were on a stage. I remember those times in the laundry.

**JUNE:** Our other fun thing was collecting acorns—remember that? And then we'd take a safety pin that you pin socks with, and we would sit there with the acorns and hull them out, clean them all out, and then we would drill holes through them, stick toothpicks through them, and we all had our little Popeye's pipes.

**JUDY:** Took us all afternoon but that was our toys...

**ELLEN:** They didn't have toys.

**RUBY:** We were all very creative.

**ELLEN:** You know the price tag? The spool—tie it next to the bedpost. You don't have money to buy so many things.

**BRADEN:** Your parents never came here to visit. Have you ever been back to Hong Kong?

**ELLEN:** Yes.

**BRADEN:** How many times?

**ELLEN:** I think two times.

**BRADEN:** Were you homesick for Washington when you were there?

**ELLEN:** No.

**BRADEN:** Did you go alone?

**ELLEN:** No, one time with my husband, and one time with Ruby.

**RUBY:** Me?

**ELLEN:** You know my father's birthday, 80 birthday. You remember?

**RUBY:** I don't remember...

**BRADEN:** What do you think is the biggest change on Capitol Hill since you've lived here?

**ELLEN:** Well, whole lot of change. Change is I am afraid to go out.

**BRADEN:** You are afraid now. And you were never afraid before?

**ELLEN:** [indicates no]

**BRADEN:** But there are still lots of families here.

**ELLEN:** Yes.

**JUDY:** I think we've seen a lot of changes of the stores over where the laundry used to be. A lot of stores have changed.

**ELLEN:** Oh, yeah.

**JUDY:** They used to have the streetcars out front, and they don't anymore.

**RUBY:** Right next to our laundry there used to be a funeral home, and when that changed it went to Roy Rogers and then it became Kinko's. I remember when we didn't have air conditioning and it was really really hot we'd stand over the grate to get cool. But I never had the nerve to go inside.

**JUNE:** Our air conditioning was a big pan with a big block of ice. And a fan. And it was on the counter, and it was faced toward the workers. Because you know, ironing in the hot summer was really—and then I'd come up and stand in front of it too. It worked.

**RUBY:** In those days they delivered milk in bottles, and also ice in blocks off of a truck.

**BRADEN:** What was the dairy that delivered milk on the Hill, do you remember?

**JUNE:** Embassy. [overlapping conversation]

**JUDY:** There was a livery stable down the street from the school—in front of the American Legion hall.

**RUBY:** In front of Colonel Bradley's home, isn't there still that stanchion with a face of a horse and a loop through it that you can still loop your horse's rein? Right on the corner of Third and C Street SE.

[ed: Army Colonel Bradley lived in the corner house at Third and C Street SE and patronized the Moy laundry.]

**BRADEN:** Ruby, what did you enjoy the most about growing up here on the Hill?

**RUBY:** I really can't answer that. Hadn't thought about it. Maybe if I were to answer that now is to realize how close the attractions are, and how many people call you up and say "I'm coming to Washington, can you show me this, go there, do this, get tickets for this." Because it is less than a mile's walking distance to all these—the Capitol, Library of Congress, Supreme Court. The museums. No time to walk to them, it's just down hill.

**BRADEN:** Did you all go to the museums a lot when you were young?

**RUBY:** It took 21 years before I saw the Washington monument, or decide to go. Cause it was here.

**ELLEN:** I never go to the monument.

**JUNE:** Until your Dad, going back and forth with your Dad. I was going to the museums, cause the schools would take us. So we would go then. And then we started dating, go to the museums.

**JUDY:** She never told me. (laughter)

**ELLEN:** I don't know.

**RUBY:** It also got to the point like after Junior High School the two—three of them went to Anacostia, and I was bussed over to what is now Duke Ellington. Western. But the group of us that were bussed from Hine got to know the drivers, the trolley car drivers. So that if they didn't see us out on the street they would clang for us? And several times I had to dash from the laundry to catch the trolley in order to make it up to school. And they know that, so they would make sure that—they would creep along, five minutes to get from one end of the block to the other so that we could make it. That's how kind people were in those days. Totally different from today.

**JUNE:** We went the other direction. We caught the trolley to Barney Circle.

**RUBY:** Yeah, but we got to know like five drivers, cause it was important to us. It was like a 45 minute ride.

**JUDY:** Everything that went that a way—you had to make sure you didn't get on a Navy Yard bus...

**BRADEN:** So when did you all graduate from High School?

**JUNE:** In the 60s. I think '61, '60—well one year after each other. I can't remember.

**RUBY:** I'm not trying.

**ELLEN:** She still keeps on going, to study.

**JUNE:** And I had had enough.

**BRADEN:** It was before the worst parts in urban schools, and the anti war movement and all that—you all were finished before then... Do you remember the late sixties in Washington, you were all still local? Do you remember that time, the time of riots and all of that?

**ELLEN:** You mean the Luther King? Oh the fire coming down here—I don't know what happened. At the time I am at 16th Street, right? And then the girl help me, close the door, close the door.

**JUDY:** Mom was working at a carry-out shop...

**ELLEN:** Carry-out shop...

**JUDY:** Trying to make her way home. I was working at the State Department, and they said it was hard that it was hard, everything at the Capitol was being blocked off. I think they had to put the trash trucks around the Capitol, Joe told me that. I had to work late anyway. I eventually got home. But I remember they were burning the streets of D.C., the H Street Corridor, over on 14th Street.

**JUNE:** I wasn't working that day. I was home taking care of one of the babies.

**RUBY:** I didn't have a problem. I had someone to drive me home. It was a black person, so I didn't have a problem.

**ELLEN:** Was it Ducky [a family friend]?

**RUBY:** No.

**BRADEN:** Do you remember antiwar protests taking place downtown, did you ever go see them? Did it impact your life here on the Hill any way?

**JUDY:** Since I worked at the State Department and a lot of the protests were held on the Mall, especially around the Lincoln Memorial, a lot of us would go during our lunch hour. And we walked down there when Martin Luther King was giving his "I Have A Dream" speech. So I remember those days. Anytime there was a protest of some kind there was a lot of security and police. And we'd go out at lunch time to see what was happening. So I was pretty close to all of that.

**RUBY:** Was I at the White House then?

**JUDY:** I think you were at the White House.

**RUBY:** It's pretty quiet in there. We hear nothing inside you see a lot of the protests. And if you did you saw it on TV. You just had your work to do.

**BRADEN:** Do you have any particular feelings about the mood of the city during that time? You saw hippies everywhere—or there were lots of kids coming to Washington to be a part of that.

**RUBY:** I don't know what my feelings were at that time because I was so entrenched in the federal government where policy and issues were done. To see the people come it was just like, it's another group and they too will come and go. And make their say and demonstrate whatever.

**BRADEN:** What do you think is the most the same on the Hill for the time you've been here?

**JUNE:** The Library of Congress.

**RUBY:** Esso gas station now called Exxon.

**ELLEN:** I don't know.

**RUBY:** And some of the buildings here you can see how the frontages have been kept the same but you know they're modernized inside and the real estate prices have just skyrocketed around here. A lot of the churches give meals to the homeless people, but the problem is a lot of them have nothing to do until they're fed, so they're just standing around and therein lies some of the problem. They get anxious for their food. Plus the stupid parking—you have to have a sticker now to park in front of your house, and if you don't you're limited to two hours or three hours whatever it says. And we found out that even though you can park in these different sections, you cannot park in this block and then move across the street two blocks away cause it's still this section and you can be ticketed. I don't know how people do their errands in this whole ward.

**BRADEN:** What do you think, June, what has stayed the same for you?

**JUNE:** The only thing that stayed the same was the Library. And this house. This pink house. Whenever I would go anywhere and I would take a cab, they would not know the address, I'd say just go down Fourth Street and see the pink house. The thing that has changed—down on Sixth Street, the corner house, used to be where the billboard used to be. There was not a house there, just billboards, you just saw different advertisements for this and that. And then within the last the two or three years they finally built a house there.

**RUBY:** Two. Two townhouses. At \$649,00 for that little itty bitty property for one townhouse.

[Tape starts to change speed here.]

**JUNE:** That's one thing that has stayed the same and one thing that has really changed. And this house.

**JUDY:** Capitol Hill has always been a popular attraction. It's always been very busy... people are always coming and going. I guess that's why I've always loved Capitol Hill, even though I don't live on it anymore. There are a lot of attractions. I'm glad for this project, the Overbeck project to try and bring back some of the memories. It's an interesting part of D.C. A lot of valuable information.

**BRADEN:** One of the goals of the project is to document the stores and the things that were there, that have changed and people's impressions. And to document everyday life on Capitol Hill for all the people who were around who remember the different time periods.

**RUBY:** I can tell you some of the same trees where we played tag or hide and go seek are still there. I was telling Alicia that Capitol Hill used to be just the Capitol Hill area, and now because everybody wants to be a part of Capitol Hill it's gone like over the Sousa Bridge. You have to stop somewhere where the Capitol Hill ends and starts. At one time even Chinatown was at the base of the Capitol. the west side. And then they were asked to move their location to where they are now. So this second go round they weren't amenable to moving again. Since they had already established a location and put that Gateway there. They weren't going to be pushed again.

[pause in the tape]

**RUBY:** We're going to go down the 300 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, the south side, starting on the Third Street side of Pennsylvania Avenue, there was Morton's Pharmacy on the corner. Then it was Mr. and Mrs. Tom Lantz's cleaners, then there was a title store—it was always a black storefront and then later on it became Barbara Held's real estate. Then from there Edith and Mike Carillo's grocery store.

**JUDY:** No, it became the Emporium also.

**RUBY:** Up there? After the real estate? OK, then three owners. Mike Carillo. Then that changed hands to the Colavito's. Then you had where Jack and Janet Smith lived on top of the Eddie Ball's radio and TV repair shop. Then you had the cleaners next to our laundry, then you had James T. Ryan Funeral Home, then you had Bob White's Restaurant and Rathskellar, then you had Lombardi's Liquor Store, then you had Sam's Barber Shop, then you had Tony and Catherine's Shoe Repair, then you had a big card store which went downstairs, Hallmark something, then you had that little restaurant...

**JUNE:** No, the liquor store.

**RUBY:** OK. Then you had the Tune Inn. Then you had the Safeway. And we're coming to the end—at that time the Esso.

**BRADEN:** Doesn't even feel like that block was long enough to hold that many...

**RUBY:** Across the street, coming down on the even side, was the ABA Bank American. Was it American Bank Association?

**JUDY:** That's where we all had our accounts, remember when we started going to school, Mom and Dad had opened up an account for each of us, and we would put our money in it.

END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 1

END OF INTERVIEW