



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Barbara Held Reich

Interview Date: March 7, 2002
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[TAPE 1, SIDE 1]

ROSENFELD: ...at 3012 O Street, Northwest, in Georgetown, and we're going to start by asking Mrs. Held, how did you come to Capitol Hill? How did you—Were you born there? Did you—How did you come to become involved in Capitol Hill?

HELD REICH: No, I was not born on Capitol Hill. I was born in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and lived in Georgetown most of my early life. And, somehow got interested in real estate. And a very charming man was selling his house in Georgetown and moving to Capitol Hill on Philadelphia Row. I met him. I didn't know Capitol Hill well and became intrigued.

ROSENFELD: Do you remember his name?

HELD REICH: I don't. I was trying to remember it the other day. That's a long time ago.

ROSENFELD: How long was that?

HELD REICH: Long, long time ago. I looked up some dates the other day for you. It was about 1959.

ROSENFELD: 1959. So you were just starting out in real estate then.

HELD REICH: Correct.

ROSENFELD: And he wanted you to make this transaction.

HELD REICH: He introduced me to Philadelphia Row.

ROSENFELD: Okay. And what was your impression? What did you think?

HELD REICH: I was amazed. Really, I was in a way ashamed that I lived in Washington and didn't know the Hill. And after I got into real estate, I used to talk to people on the phone and they'd say, "Where is Capitol Hill?", truly. "Where is it?" And I became sort of irritated about that and I would say, "Do you know where the Supreme Court is?", you know. "You know where the Capitol is?" Many [?] didn't.

ROSENFELD: What was the scene on Capitol Hill at that time? Was it—Who was living there? What were the houses like? Had—Was it easy to buy a house there? Were the houses cheaper there?

HELD REICH: Oh, yeah. Houses were cheaper everywhere then. What was it like? Of course, the facades of the houses were beautiful, but they were not well cared for. And it was considered the wrong part of town.

ROSENFELD: Why?

HELD REICH: Just had a bad reputation. Southwest and Southeast and Northeast. I think there was a lot of discrimination. And we fought that.

ROSENFELD: How?

HELD REICH: We did not discriminate at all. Not at all. We tried to get the people if—Do we want to get into how we started getting houses _____ ?

ROSENFELD: Sure. When you say “we”, clarify for me—

HELD REICH: My office.

ROSENFELD: Okay.

HELD REICH: Barbara Held, Inc. All the people that were in my office were interested in restoration—working for Capitol Hill, cleaning it up, or doing restoration. And, we were intrigued by, in the very beginning, the alley dwellings. And I think they are very, very interesting. There’s nothing in Georgetown like that except one, Amanda Walk. It used to be called Bell’s Court. And, then there was no competition in real estate. There was my office and Donohoe and Company.

ROSENFELD: Where was your office?

HELD REICH: I had two or three. In the beginning, it was in the 300 block of Pennsylvania. And Donohoe did just rentals. It was a very fine old real estate office. And we sort of worked together. We began by studying where the alley courts were, the alley dwellings, and calling the owners of the houses that were vacant, starting there.

ROSENFELD: To?

HELD REICH: To get them for sale. And, a lot of them were boarded. It was—It was very slummy. Yesterday, since I didn’t keep my date with you, I went over and looked at all of them again. Would you like a list?

ROSENFELD: Sure.

HELD REICH: Rumsey Court was one of the first. That’s the rear of the 100 block of C, Southeast, and has four houses. The largest is Gesford Court, which most people don’t know about.

ROSENFELD: Gesford? How do you spell that?

HELD REICH: G-E-S-F-O-R-D. That is a big one.

ROSENFELD: Where's that?

HELD REICH: That's the rear of the 200 block of 11th Southeast. Drive in there. There are thirteen houses.

ROSENFELD: Wow.

HELD REICH: And, then, Miller's Court. I'm sure you know that.

ROSENFELD: I've heard of that.

HELD REICH: That's the rear of the 300 block of A Northeast. Terrace Court is the rear of the 200 block of A Northeast. And the last one is Archibald Walk. Most people don't know about that one. That's the rear of the 600 block of E Street Southeast, four houses. That's a very interesting one in that the District—we were trying to get a permit—I bought those houses. They were vacant and they really— They didn't have bathrooms or anything.

ROSENFELD: Really.

HELD REICH: And we were trying to get a permit and the inspector said you can't do that unless you can prove that people lived here. And I couldn't prove it. I just couldn't prove it until, at—

ROSENFELD: You mean, as opposed to horses or carriages.

HELD REICH: Yes. And at Donohoe Real Estate, there was an old, old man, Archie Donohoe, a sweet, dear, darling, precious man. And he remembered collecting rents there. Had to fill out an affidavit. So, we named it after him. Archibald, that was his name.

ROSENFELD: Oh, you named it.

HELD REICH: Archibald Donohoe. Don't you love it?

ROSENFELD: Why were you interested in the alley dwellings?

HELD REICH: Because they were in such bad shape. Because people were looking for places to restore. We wanted to sell houses that were vacant, because there were so many vacant houses. Frankly, I was concerned about displacing poor people. Very. I really was.

ROSENFELD: So, you didn't want to go around and sort of convince some old lady to sell you her house and then flip it.

HELD REICH: And, often, an old lady—I think practically everybody in real estate does it. If an old lady's husband dies, they want to sell right away, we'd say, then, why don't you wait a year. You know, because it's a big, big, big thing to move.

ROSENFELD: Right.

HELD REICH: And that was certainly true, very true in Rumsey Court where—

ROSENFELD: So, by going to vacant dwellings, then you weren't going to—If you went to a vacant place then you wouldn't have that complication.

HELD REICH: Yes, it was better. Yes. And, then, if, say, a house was for rent, we would call the owner. We wanted to get houses. It was a big process of clean up, cleaning up the blocks, doing a great deal about having trees [pruned]. It was not cared for by the District.

ROSENFELD: Why not?

HELD REICH: I don't know. It was slummy.

ROSENFELD: What was the—Was it racially mixed?

HELD REICH: Yes, and not just black and white. A lot of Chinese. I think that's the charm of Capitol Hill, don't you?

ROSENFELD: Yes.

HELD REICH: Oh, absolutely. And there were some very fine black people that had lived there for many, many years, and they wanted the neighborhood to improve.

ROSENFELD: Was it primarily a government employees—

HELD REICH: No.

ROSENFELD: —place? Blue collar?

HELD REICH: Yes, blue collar, yes. It was rentals.

ROSENFELD: And, yet, so near the Capitol.

HELD REICH: Right near the Capitol, yes. Oh, I'm sure people rent—people that worked there rented apartments. But, they didn't—

ROSENFELD: So, who did you start selling these newly—

HELD REICH: Who did we sell to?

ROSENFELD: —restored houses to?

HELD REICH: Yes. It wasn't easy because certain people didn't want to go beyond, say, 4th or 5th Street. And, we thought, we being my office and other people who were doing restoration, thought that it would begin to improve Northeast and Southeast right up hugging the government buildings. And that was wrong. It didn't. It just was Southeast. Northeast had a sort of bad connotation. It's funny, isn't it?

ROSENFELD: Yes.

HELD REICH: Well, Southwest still does have it.

ROSENFELD: Yes.

HELD REICH: It's funny, too.

ROSENFELD: Right. Yes, it's funny. We live on East Capitol, so one side of the street is Southeast and one side is Northeast, and, you know.

HELD REICH: Yes. What hundred block are you in?

ROSENFELD: 600.

HELD REICH: Oh, great. That's lovely.

ROSENFELD: My husband bought that house in '72 or 3, and the house next door at that time was boarded up. It had plywood on the windows. He had lived on Independence when he came to the Hill in '65, and, he, you know, couldn't imagine living anywhere else. But, so, you started selling these houses to—Were they urban pioneer, young couple types? Or—

HELD REICH: You couldn't really put them in a category. I think that people, in general, that like old houses are looking for them. And, once it began, it was great. One of the funny things I was thinking of the other day, on the Hill, was, trying to get a mortgage was very hard.

ROSENFELD: Really?

HELD REICH: Very hard. Leonard Bernstein was the one. Banks didn't want it. There were a lot of foreclosures and the income was low. So we decided that we'd concentrate on the 600 block of A Street, Southeast. [Telephone rings.] Forgive me for this.

ROSENFELD: Sure. [Tape interrupted.]

HELD REICH: Because there were people there who stayed there for generations. Inherited there. Some of them were wonderful, wonderful people. And they welcomed so much—a lot of the early work on the Hill was cleaning the streets, screaming to the District government, cleaning the alleys.

ROSENFELD: Of what? Garbage? Or—

HELD REICH: Litter. Yes.

ROSENFELD: Just like old pieces of wood and branches and—

HELD REICH: Well, weeds. And trying to get the brickwork repaired, plant trees, all that.

ROSENFELD: So, that required, what? Many calls to the Department of Public Works?

HELD REICH: It required really going down to the District Building and screaming. And there were a lot of people doing that. Mainly, Curley Boswell. I'm sure everybody knows him. He was the true pioneer.

ROSENFELD: He was a resident.

HELD REICH: Yes. His family lived there for years and years. He did wonderful, marvelous—House just sold of his—New Jersey Avenue, I can't think of the address, I could look it up—that I sold to him perfectly—Sold to—Curley did it over, sold it for \$90,000. It just sold for a million. Whew! Beautiful, big house.

ROSENFELD: Did you ever think that there would be a day when houses were selling for a million dollars?

HELD REICH: No. Who did?

ROSENFELD: So, it was a slow process.

HELD REICH: Very slow, interesting process. A lot of work and a lot of fun.

ROSENFELD: What was fun about it?

HELD REICH: Well, there was a camaraderie among the people that lived on the Hill and it still exists. I think Capitol Hill is the friendliest area that I know of in Washington. I don't know it that well. [?] And it was a challenge. And the early pioneers that were there were intrigued with seeing the change and they all helped one another. People loaned money to friends to help them along.

ROSENFELD: To buy their house or to—

HELD REICH: Restore.

ROSENFELD: Restore. Because they saw it as a benefit to the neighborhood as a whole?

HELD REICH: Yes.

ROSENFELD: What were the schools like at that time?

HELD REICH: I don't know that much.

ROSENFELD: Were they still segregated?

HELD REICH: I don't know that much. Good Lord, were they segregated? I hope not. In 1959? I don't think they were that great.

ROSENFELD: The people who were buying, wouldn't they—would they ask about the schools? Or would—

HELD REICH: They would and usually went to private schools, I think.

ROSENFELD: What were the private schools that were—

HELD REICH: Well, Sidwell Friends was the most popular.

ROSENFELD: Oh, so they would go all the way across town to do that. Unless they were going to go to one of the Catholic schools, I guess.

HELD REICH: Oh, yes. That was popular.

ROSENFELD: Was there a particular time when the tide turned, so to speak, and suddenly you couldn't get enough houses to sell? Or—

HELD REICH: Well, it was a very slow process.

ROSENFELD: Very slow.

HELD REICH: Yes, very, very slow. And we did a lot of fun things. One was hilarious. We dreamed up a tour—we being my office—calling it the “Houses In Process Tour”. And, it was a really fabulous real estate gimmick because none of the houses were for sale. And we hired a little bus—it was very hick-y—and we served lemonade. And I talked about a dozen people who were doing their houses over themselves, not someone else doing it, and they—pointing out the pitfalls of doing it yourself. And it was very, very, very popular, truly, it was. Barbara Jennings worked for me and she had her house open on Independence Avenue and said that she'd been working on it for about eight years and she couldn't get

the plaster right. And she pulled down a wall and ruined all the electricity. All the pitfalls. Which a lot of people did houses themselves, and some of them were horrible in taste. I don't know by whose standards, but that's all right. But, people did help one another greatly. I think that early beginning—Well, it was mainly the Restoration Society and the little—What did we call it? Associations. We started associations.

ROSENFELD: Sort of neighborhood associations?

HELD REICH: When I think about it, it's hilarious. The first one—I drove down there yesterday and looked. The first one was called PAPA. And that was Curley Boswell and Henry Lange, Arline Roback, and myself, and it was Pennsylvania Avenue Progress Association. And we got everyone in the—If you look at the 300 block of Pennsylvania now, and that was so junky. We got everyone to paint the front of the building, just clean up.

ROSENFELD: What were some of the other businesses around you that were junky?

HELD REICH: Well, a laundry, funeral parlor, drug stores, grocery stores, restaurants. That wonderful restaurant that closed. No one had great interest in the exterior of the property, you know. That's understandable. Pennsylvania Avenue Progress Association. And, then, we moved—And, believe me, some of those meetings were hysterical. We didn't have any money but we had a lot of fun—moved to the 200 block of Seventh Street. And began—this was a very fine association—Market Row.

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes.

HELD REICH: And, that helped, it helped greatly.

ROSENFELD: When was that?

HELD REICH: When did it begin?

ROSENFELD: Yes. When did you move to Seventh Street?

HELD REICH: I'm not good at any dates.

ROSENFELD: Give me a guess.

HELD REICH: I guess, I guess fifteen years ago maybe. Actually, it was very successful.

ROSENFELD: Market Row.

HELD REICH: Very, very. We had a lot of wonderful people who were interested in helping one another. And, simultaneously with Market Row, the third of our associations—this all has to do with restoration—was called Barracks Row.

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes.

HELD REICH: And, that now, you know, is being greatly worked on. Those three, Market Row and Barracks Row, were preliminary to CHAMPS, really the reason for CHAMPS. We couldn't really get going that much. We didn't have any money.

ROSENFELD: How were you funded?

HELD REICH: We just kicked in money.

ROSENFELD: Dues? Or donations?

HELD REICH: Yes.

ROSENFELD: And, was the objective of each association the same, to kind of spruce up a particular block.

HELD REICH: It was to get better tenants, frankly.

ROSENFELD: Ah, to get better tenants.

HELD REICH: Yes. Upgrade the tenants. And interest people in improving the look.

ROSENFELD: I'm wondering, did you have a particular philosophy or conviction about city life? I mean, during that time, most people were moving to the suburbs, not into the city. But, as time has shown, the city is really the most efficient way to live. And, without the city, this whole region would collapse. This is the reason why all the suburbs are there. Had you read, for example, the work of Jane Jacobs or any particular writer who shaped the way you went about all of these associations and making this a more viable community?

HELD REICH: I don't think so. It all just grew like Topsy. That's an interesting question, though. No. I'm very opposed to trying to make a neighborhood be elite. And there are poor people living in Georgetown, believe it or not. There are people who have had their houses here for generations, and they're beat up. I know a lovely lady that lives near here, and her house is so old and falling down, and the plaster—She's not moving. She's like—

ROSENFELD: And it's just going to stay that way.

HELD REICH: "I ain't moving," she says. Just like Rosa Parks.

ROSENFELD: Did you ever—Did you live on the Hill during this period of time?

HELD REICH: Oh, yes. A lot.

ROSENFELD: When did you live there?

HELD REICH: I lived in three houses there.

ROSENFELD: Okay.

HELD REICH: See, I did my homework. I looked up the addresses. 617 A Street was the best. And I'm going to brag about that. That and the office that I restored—You know the National Capitol Bank? The old National Capitol Bank, do you remember that building?

ROSENFELD: Remind me. It was over—

HELD REICH: You couldn't forget it.

ROSENFELD: Not the one that's on Pennsylvania Avenue now?

HELD REICH: Yes, they tore that down to put up the new bank.

ROSENFELD: Oh, okay.

HELD REICH: So, I owned the building next to that, and restored that building. It was handsome as anything. And the Restoration Society gave me the award for the best commercial and the best residential. Of course, it was Bob Reich that did this hard work. You should get the Diddens. Do you have the Diddens?

ROSENFELD: I think someone is doing that.

HELD REICH: Talk about the old bank. Oh, that old bank was wonderful. I loved it. It was not to be believed.

ROSENFELD: So, you lived at 617 A. I'll have to look at that when I go home.

HELD REICH: Yes, it's a house, one of the really, really old houses. It's a frame house, very early, and the front of it we kept the same. And, then built on to it. Absolutely— Oh, you must go and see it— fabulous. There's an atrium and a little pool in the middle of the house. Goes way back. They were very deep lots there. All of these were on the tour. And then 650 Independence was a wonderful house. You know that house? It's a very big house.

ROSENFELD: Just trying to get it in my mind's eye.

HELD REICH: Not far from Eastern Market.

ROSENFELD: Right. Who lives in it now?

HELD REICH: I don't know who's there now. It's been sold a couple of times. That's a huge house with a big carriage house.

ROSENFELD: Is that the one with the lions in front?

HELD REICH: Yes.

ROSENFELD: Okay.

HELD REICH: Marvelous house. We worked very hard on that.

ROSENFELD: Why did you move? New challenge? More space?

HELD REICH: We moved, I think, to get enough money to go to Europe, go around the world.

ROSENFELD: You mean sell the house and—

HELD REICH: Move. Keep going.

ROSENFELD: Did you?

HELD REICH: Went around the world.

ROSENFELD: On a—

HELD REICH: Bob Reich was very ill with cancer and he wanted to go around the world. So, we did it. It was in the days of Pan Am. Do you remember Pan Am? Makes the going great.

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes.

HELD REICH: Keep going, couldn't—had to go in the same direction. That's a marvelous, just a marvelous thing. Going around the world, we met people that had been going around the world for years and years and years. Mainly professors. They just keep going.

ROSENFELD: So, you took a year to do that?

HELD REICH: We didn't take a year. We took a long time, two or three months.

ROSENFELD: When was that?

HELD REICH: And we rented the house—Then Bob was very sick and we moved in this house.

ROSENFELD: This house here.

HELD REICH: Yes.

ROSENFELD: Is Held your maiden name?

HELD REICH: No, Beatty.

ROSENFELD: B-E-A-T-T-Y?

HELD REICH: B-E-A-T-T-Y. Beatty.

ROSENFELD: Okay.

HELD REICH: I'm very proud of it.

ROSENFELD: And, so—There was a Mr. Held.

HELD REICH: Yes. That was Cathy's father. Rev. Beatty, there's his picture. He was my father—he was the minister of the Lutheran Church in Georgetown. So, I grew up in what was called the parsonage.

ROSENFELD: Oh, boy.

HELD REICH: Episcopalians call it the rectory. Lutherans call it the parsonage.

ROSENFELD: I lived on 34th and Prospect, no, 34th and M, when I was in kindergarten.

HELD REICH: Really.

ROSENFELD: And a few years, well, quite a few years later, my parents bought a house on 34th Street where my mother still lives. She always loved Georgetown.

HELD REICH: Where on 34th?

ROSENFELD: She's at 1514, it's between Volta and P.

HELD REICH: Yes, I know that well. Yes, that's where I grew up. Our house was Volta and Wisconsin. That's a very nice area.

ROSENFELD: Yes. But, we like Capitol Hill.

HELD REICH: Better. I like them both. Capitol Hill has more community than Georgetown.

ROSENFELD: Yes.

HELD REICH: It does, truly. Don't you feel that?

ROSENFELD: I absolutely—

HELD REICH: That there's more of a feeling of get things together. Oh, decorating for Christmas, how I worked on that. And be on the Board of Eastern Market. All the causes that people have there. It's fabulous.

ROSENFELD: I'm curious to know how, over the years, the influence of it being that close to the U.S. Capitol and all those members of Congress and their staffs changed over the years. How did the—It seems now that there is some

-- You know, there are people who live on the Hill who work on the Hill.

HELD REICH: Oh, a lot. Are you asking did members of Congress begin to buy?

ROSENFELD: Yes.

HELD REICH: Oh, yes.

ROSENFELD: When did that start?

HELD REICH: Who was the guy that ran for president—I can never think of his name—and was so popular among college kids?

ROSENFELD: McCarthy?

HELD REICH: Yes, Eugene McCarthy was a really good guy. And he was writing a book. And I got to know him quite well through friends. And he was—

ROSENFELD: Was this after he ran for president? Or before?

HELD REICH: Before. Quite a bit before. And he was looking for a place to live on the Hill that he could not be recognized and have privacy and all this stuff, and he lived in Archibald Walk for a long time. He's still very much around. Eugene McCarthy. And, the Moynihans. Did over a house for them. Two houses for them. They no longer live on the Hill. But, I think that the people that live on the Hill now, a lot of them, don't know or don't remember anything very derogatory. The sort of things I'm talking about. In a way, it was more interesting. You know, the early Capitol Hill. And some of those people were great. When we lived in 650 Independence, there were people that had—and that wasn't that long ago—they had chickens and they sold eggs in the alley. One man had a lamb.

ROSENFELD: Good lord. When was this?

HELD REICH: Not that long ago. When I lived there. It's a wonderful place.

ROSENFELD: Do you think it's become a bit too elite?

HELD REICH: No, I don't know anything about that. I couldn't—

ROSENFELD: Too much gentrification or—

HELD REICH: I couldn't—I don't—I hope not. Do you?

ROSENFELD: I think it's on the border. But—

HELD REICH: Yes. Well, certain blocks had a very bad reputation. Well, Gesford Court for one. That was considered sort of beyond the pale.

ROSENFELD: Just because of its location?

HELD REICH: Yes.

ROSENFELD: Or because things happened there?

HELD REICH: Yes, oh, yes. And to live on Kentucky Avenue, that was an area that was very dangerous, really.

ROSENFELD: Was it a racial thing?

HELD REICH: Yes.

ROSENFELD: How did the—

HELD REICH: And we had meetings talking about it.

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes?

HELD REICH: What we could do. People that lived in the area. What we could do about it.

ROSENFELD: What were the issues?

HELD REICH: What could we do about the crime? Sasha Bruce. You know about Sasha Bruce?

ROSENFELD: I know who she was and I know there's a house named after her and I know she was murdered in southern Virginia.

HELD REICH: Did you know Sasha Bruce?

ROSENFELD: I didn't, but we have a house in the same county where that house, that Bruce house is.

HELD REICH: Well, Evangeline Bruce just died.

ROSENFELD: Right.

[TAPE 1, SIDE 2]

[Tape not clearly audible, but Rosenfeld seems to be saying something about Sasha Bruce.]

HELD REICH: Well, Sasha Bruce was dead.

ROSENFELD: Okay.

HELD REICH: And Evangeline backed what is called Sasha Bruce [House], really, I think in memory of her daughter. And I was on the Board. And I signed the mortgages—Oh, my God—for Sasha Bruce. Stuck my neck out, and couldn't—And, now, it's a very, very fine organization—they're on 8th Street, about the 200 block or 300 block. And they did a great deal to help young people, young teenagers, with all their problems. One of them was copying something that began in San Francisco called Safe Place. And Safe Place is any fire house. A kid can run away from home and go there, and Sasha Bruce has the only shelter for young kids. And we had the house named after Rosa Parks. Rosa Parks came to the Hill, maybe you were there, went to Lincoln Park. It's a very, very fine thing. They have about, I would say, five or maybe more houses on the Hill, dealing with a lot of problems. One is pregnant girls who continue to go to school, and they take care of them after the baby is born or work out a solution for the adoption.

ROSENFELD: How did the riots in 1968 affect peoples' attitudes about buying?

HELD REICH: They were frightened. We didn't have riots on the Hill. But, there was some throwing of stones. I remember that night very well. And Henry Lange—Did you know Henry Lange?

ROSENFELD: I didn't, no.

HELD REICH: He was a true leader on the Hill. Wonderful fellow. Mike Lange is his son that has Hawk 'n Dove. And the night of the riot—he's not living so I can say it—he got a little inebriated and got on the top of the Hawk 'n Dove and started shooting up in the air and everything. And people were frightened. And there was some damage to the fronts of buildings in that block.

ROSENFELD: From him?

HELD REICH: No, just people mad and frightened. Yes, that was a terrible thing, that riot, wasn't it? Which is—I've read a lot about that, afterwards, how riots start. And usually they riot in their own neighborhood. You know, they don't have money. Northeast is what was terrible.

ROSENFELD: But, so, were people more reluctant to buy?

HELD REICH: I don't think it lasted, but there was—What in the—I would think, more than anything, it would be people afraid to rent commercial property. I don't know.

ROSENFELD: What about red-lining? How did that work and how did it—Did you—

HELD REICH: Don't live in certain neighborhoods.

ROSENFELD: Was there—

HELD REICH: We had a house for sale in Northeast and it was open on Sunday. Lee Wakefield was there and a group of people came in and had great big signs, "Sell us a house that we can afford." And they picketed the house, and it was very bad.

ROSENFELD: Who were they?

HELD REICH: They were people who were mad about the high prices and it was, I guess, racial. And, we met with those people in my office. We had seminars about what we were doing. And, it was shortly after the riots, I think. But, that was a very bad period.

ROSENFELD: Do you remember what the—

HELD REICH: And very frightening, very, very frightening.

ROSENFELD: To you personally?

HELD REICH: Yes, I was afraid sometimes.

ROSENFELD: Afraid—

HELD REICH: I wasn't afraid of getting shot or anything like that. I think I was afraid, maybe, for Cathy or—Fear is hard to figure out, isn't it? Sometimes it's not sensible.

ROSENFELD: Yes. Just a little, sort of unsettled—

HELD REICH: Yes.

ROSENFELD: Do you remember the price of that house that they were picketing?

HELD REICH: Yes, I would—about—I would say it was, maybe, \$35,000. Which was a lot of money, then.

ROSENFELD: And did that return? Did that kind of protest activity come back or did they go away?

HELD REICH: No.

ROSENFELD: Or did they figure out how to buy a house?

HELD REICH: No. But, it was a statement that was being made against real estate people, and I think it's probably understandable. There was a man who had worked in civil rights and he said that picketing often happens when they select some cause that they think will react and do something. I don't know whether that's true or not. But—Southwest is another story, because Southwest was supposed to be, you know, for low cost housing and it wasn't. It was a big gyp. And they took down beautiful houses.

ROSENFELD: Beautiful houses, yes. That was a—

HELD REICH: I'm going to—We're going to have to—They said an hour.

ROSENFELD: Has it been an hour already? My goodness!

HELD REICH: I'd like to fix you a sandwich. Would you like a tomato sandwich?

ROSENFELD: Sure, sure.

HELD REICH: Anything else we have to talk about?

HELD REICH: The first house tour—I have that date—was 1959. And if that wasn't a rat race.

ROSENFELD: And this was sponsored by?

HELD REICH: Restoration Society.

ROSENFELD: Okay.

HELD REICH: And Restoration Society was founded in 1955. The Restoration Society was a little knot of people. We were going to do—We were going to restore houses.

ROSENFELD: You mean as a—

HELD REICH: As a group.

ROSENFELD: As a profit-making entity?

HELD REICH: Oh, just to improve the neighborhood. Curley Boswell was the leader of that. And we met in that wonderful big old building that's right beside the Senate Office. You know that big—

ROSENFELD: The National Women's Party?

HELD REICH: Yes.

ROSENFELD: Yes, that's fabulous.

HELD REICH: It is fabulous. In the back part of that. Gee, we had wonderful parties and a marvelous time. But, it was difficult. I have to hand it to the people that did that. And every year we said this is the last year, we're not doing this anymore, it's too hard. And I would move my furniture into those houses that were open. After it went on and on and on, maybe the—I had all, all three of these houses were open many times, especially 617 A. It's a lot of work. It's expensive, it's backbreaking. Oh, my Lord! And we—I remember I sold the house and talked these people into being on the tour and they said they couldn't. And before the—It was the house I owned. And I put greenery into the garden, laurel and things like that, to make it look beautiful. And my conscience began to hurt. And I went back about, oh, I guess a year later, and I said "You know I gyped you. I know you thought that was shrubbery." And it had rooted. I confessed.

ROSENFELD: So, it was shrubbery.

HELD REICH: But, you can imagine the funny things that happened. And talking people into doing it. And, then, in the beginning, we didn't have the jitneys.

ROSENFELD: That's still going.

HELD REICH: I know it is.

ROSENFELD: It's amazing.

HELD REICH: Terribly crowded, I know.

ROSENFELD: Yes. It's become one of the most popular—

HELD REICH: Lot of work.

ROSENFELD: Enormous.

HELD REICH: Yes. So, all of those things worked together. And, as we began our conversation talking about camaraderie, that's a big part of it. You know, helping one another, which they do now, I know.

ROSENFELD: Yes.

HELD REICH: They ask you to loan you [?] some lamps, and you did that.

ROSENFELD: And you did. And I think the schools have helped in keeping young families there and helping develop friendships. And, then, they sort of spread out and—

HELD REICH: Surely, yes.

ROSENFELD: It's very much a neighborhood. My husband likes to call it a village.

HELD REICH: He's done a lot, his writing, yes. Did he write for Roll Call?

ROSENFELD: Yes, and then he switched to The Hill. When did you move from the Hill?

HELD REICH: I don't know. I don't know dates, I really don't. Some people say, now, April the 8th in 19—Have we completed our—

ROSENFELD: We can, we can—

END OF INTERVIEW