



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK  
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

---

**Interview with Georgiana Barnes**

**Interview Date:** February 5, 2003  
**Interviewer:** Sharon House  
**Transcriber:** David MacKinnon

This interview transcript is the property of the Ruth Ann Overbeck Capitol Hill History Project.  
Not to be reproduced without permission.

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

**HOUSE:** Today is February 5, 2003, and I'm at the home of Mrs. Georgiana Barnes. We're here for the Ruth Ann Overbeck History Project to learn a little about the history of Capitol Hill. We're at Mrs. Barnes' home. She's at 413 6<sup>th</sup> Street SE.

So Mrs. Barnes, first tell us a little about where you were born and about your early life and family.

**BARNES:** Well I was born in St. Mary's County, Maryland. I attended Holy Angel's Catholic Church. Now it's called Avenue where I was born.

**HOUSE:** And what county was that?

**BARNES:** St. Mary's County. I attended a public school of Maryland, which was named Abells. That was the name of my school. I graduated at 7<sup>th</sup> grade, that's when you graduated. After that there wasn't any school that I could attend in Maryland.

**HOUSE:** Why was that?

**BARNES:** Well there wasn't any high school for black children.

**HOUSE:** There wasn't any public high school for black children?

**BARNES:** There wasn't any public black high school for children, black children. So you either had to send your child away to Baltimore in order to get more education or to Washington where you could get a higher education, like going up to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**HOUSE:** You told me the other day when we were talking that there were three disappointments in your early life.

**BARNES:** The first one was when my father died.

**HOUSE:** How old were you then?

**BARNES:** I was seven, almost eight when my father died. Because I asked my mother, I asked my mother at the funeral, at my father's funeral, was my Uncle Robert, which was her brother. I said, "Well Mama, will Uncle Robert be our father now?" And she said, "No darling, Uncle Robert is your uncle, he's your mother's brother."

And then my second disappointment was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade when my teacher told me that there wasn't any Santa Claus.

**HOUSE:** In the sixth grade?

**BARNES:** I think no, it wasn't the sixth grade. It must have been the fourth or the fifth grade.

**HOUSE:** So you would have been about 9 or 10 years old?

**BARNES:** Yes. And she told the class, "You children know there's no Santa Claus?"

**HOUSE:** Did most know at that time?

**BARNES:** No, I don't think they did. I don't think so. So that was my second disappointment.

And my third was when my mother used to send us to confession. We used to go every Saturday evening. We lived near St. Aloysius Church on North Capitol Street. And one evening all my sisters and brothers went around to confession. And there was an elderly priest there and he told us to go to our *own* church. I think that really hurt me because I came home and I asked my mother, I said Mama, "Father told us to go to our own church," I said, "What does he mean?" And then she started telling the whole family of us children that all Catholic churches we could go to, but we knew we had to sit in the back or stand in the back of the church or whatever. That's when, that was my first inkling of segregation.

**HOUSE:** Well you hadn't faced discrimination before, you didn't...

**BARNES:** Oh yes, I had faced, I mean, oh I think that was my first. Before then though in Maryland when we children used to walk to school, black children walked to school and I know a lot of times buses would pass with white children on the buses. But there wasn't any black. We didn't ride the buses. We had to walk. I think that was one—I never really—it didn't sink in until we went to confession and when the father told use to go to our own church.

**HOUSE:** So did you go back to that church?

**BARNES:** Yes, we went back, I went back. Mama always taught us, you know, she'd say, "You don't go to church to worship the priest or the people. You go to church to worship God." And so, yes we went back, I went back to confession, but we never wanted to go to that priest. There were other priests there. You know, confession had different priests, so you didn't have to go back to him. We didn't stop going to St. Aloysius for confession.

**HOUSE:** Can you tell us when and why you first came to Washington, DC? How did that come about?

**BARNES:** Well as I said, at 7<sup>th</sup> grade my brother and I we had graduated, so there wasn't any more education; wasn't any more schools that we could go to in Maryland to get any more education. Because my older brothers, when they finished, well really they didn't even finish 7<sup>th</sup> grade. They went to work

after my father died. So my mother decided, she said well—at that time 1927, it was something like 1927, and the depression came. My mother couldn't find work anywhere in Maryland. She was a domestic, where she worked in white people's houses, cleaned the house and cooked and washed and ironed. At that time, during the depression there wasn't anybody, the white people weren't hiring any black women. There wasn't any work down there for her to do. So she set us down and told us that she was going to come to Washington. She left the oldest brother that was at home—he was my brother Edward, because my brother Robert was up here already in Washington and he was living with my sister Elsie and he was working at one of the hotels there by Union Station.

**HOUSE:** Do you know what hotel that was?

**BARNES:** No I don't. I used to know the name, but I forgot it now. He was a bus boy there. He was sending my mother a little change, whatever he could. But he was living with my sister Elsie. So, she set us down and told us that she was going to leave us there with my brother Edward, he was the next to oldest brother, and she was going to come here to Washington and work about two years. She said she'd save her money and she would come down and get us. And that's just what she did. My mother worked up here in Washington for about two years and left us with my oldest brother, who was married, that was James, and my other brother Edward—left us with them and she came up here and worked. And then came down in about two years; she came down and moved us all up here [in 1929].

**HOUSE:** And then did you go to school when you came up?

**BARNES:** Yes, I went to Douglas Simmons School on 1<sup>st</sup> Street and New York Avenue; no 1<sup>st</sup> and Pierce Street. That was Douglas Simmons graded school.

**HOUSE:** This was in Northwest?

**BARNES:** Yes, in Northwest.

**HOUSE:** And this was a public school?

**BARNES:** Yes, this was a public school.

**HOUSE:** And was this a black school?

**BARNES:** Yes it was a black school. And when I graduated from Douglas Simmons, they put me back one grade. I had graduated in Maryland at 7<sup>th</sup> grade, but when I got up here, they gave me tests and they put me back in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. So, I went to public school here at Douglas Simmons until the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Then I graduated from there and I went to—it was Cardoza where Terrell is now, Terrell High School. It was Cardoza High School then and I went there.

**HOUSE:** And that was in Northwest?

**BARNES:** Yes that was in Northwest.

**HOUSE:** And how did you and when did you come to Capitol Hill? Now you didn't call it Capitol Hill?

**BARNES:** No, it was just plain Southeast Washington. First I came here in 1933 after I got married. On the day I married I came over. I came home after we left my mother's house where we had a little reception and everything.

**HOUSE:** Was that a special day?

**BARNES:** Christmas Day.

**HOUSE:** How did you happen to get married on Christmas Day?

**BARNES:** I don't know, we just decided to get married on Christmas Day.

**HOUSE:** Did you get married in the church?

**BARNES:** I got married in the priest's house because my husband wasn't a Catholic, although he had been going to a Catholic church for 10 years, and he lived with a Catholic family, he just never went through the instructions to be a Catholic. But, anyway, I moved over—when we got married that evening we came over to Southeast. We lived at 414 D Street SE. We lived with his brother.

**HOUSE:** It's right around the corner from where we are now.

**BARNES:** Next door to Ebenezer Church at 4<sup>th</sup> and D Streets SE. We had a room, it was his brother's house, but we had a room and we had the use of the kitchen.

**HOUSE:** And how long did you live there?

**BARNES:** We lived there, let me see, I came in '33, we moved in '41, that would be eight years that I lived there. We found a house. By that time we had four children then, so we found a house at 305 10<sup>th</sup> Street SE. And that's where we moved. Then we were in the parish of old St. Cyprian's, which was a black Catholic church.

**HOUSE:** And then when did you move to this house and why did you move here?

**BARNES:** We moved, let's see the house at 305 was a small house and our family was still getting larger and larger (laughter), so my husband said, he wasn't going to put in any more money in the house on 10<sup>th</sup>

Street. He was going to look for a larger house and that's what we did. We began to look here in Southeast at houses. We had an agent and he found this house.

**HOUSE:** And now you just mentioned that you went to St Cyprian's when you were on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. But when you were over here on D Street where were you going to church then?

**BARNES:** We were going to St. Peter's then.

**HOUSE:** So, in like 1933, as early as that, you were going to St. Peter's?

**BARNES:** Yes '33 and '34.

**HOUSE:** How was St. Peter's then, was it different?

**BARNES:** St. Peter's was like all the rest of the churches. We had three seats [pews] in the back on the blessed Mother's side that we could sit in.

**HOUSE:** Three seats?

**BARNES:** Three seats. And if those seats were filled you stood up in the back of the church.

**HOUSE:** And did that happen sometimes that you had to stand?

**BARNES:** No, most likely I always got a seat to sit down. But if you came in late, you know, some people had to stand in the back.

**HOUSE:** When did that change? Do you know?

**BARNES:** It had to change—I think Cardinal O'Boyle—I think when he started desegregating the schools, I think that's when we stopped sitting in the back of the church. That was in the fifties.

**HOUSE:** And then you started going back to St. Peter's?

**BARNES:** After we moved back here at 413 6<sup>th</sup> Street—by that time my children, some of my girls were grown and had married and had children. So they started sending their children to St. Peter's Catholic School. So my husband said there's no sense in some of us going to St. Cyprian's and some of us going to St. Peter's. Why don't we all, since we were nearer St. Peter's than St. Cyprian's now that we had moved down 6<sup>th</sup> Street, then let's all go to St. Peter's. So that's when we started. Everyone started going to St. Peter's when—after my grandchildren started going to St. Peter's school.

**HOUSE:** And I know you are very active in that church now, in fact I understand you've just received an award recently for your volunteer work. Tell us a little about that.

**BARNES:** I just received an award [ed: the Archdiocesan Order of Merit]. It was news to me. I belonged to the Sodality and I helped. I'd go to the Sodality Union meetings and I would bring back reports because our prefect at the time, Marguerite Smith, was very ill and she couldn't attend the meetings, so I would go to the Sodality Union meetings and bring back reports of what was going on and what the other parishes were doing. And I always—had a bazaar—always worked with the bazaar to raise money. I always had the food basket, and I would ask the different people at St. Peter's to bring any canned goods and I would fill a big bushel basket. And we would raffle that off. I was in charge of it. We would raffle that off, taking chances. Sometime I made the highest—one time I made \$48, I would make sometimes \$50, \$55, something like that. But anyway it would always help with our bazaar because Father would ask the parishioners to bring usable things that they didn't want. We would sell them and we would have a bake sale and all the ladies would bake cakes and different pastries and we'd sell them—just anything to make our bazaars a success.

**HOUSE:** When did you get that award? Was that very recently?

**BARNES:** Oh yes. I got it just last month.

**HOUSE:** Oh well, congratulations! So going back now to the early years. Were you working outside the home? Tell us what you did and where you did it.

**BARNES:** I worked there at the House Office Building. I started at the Longworth Building in 1953. Well my husband was the only one working, and his salary just couldn't pay all the bills. So I said, "Well I'm going to find myself a little part time job." So one of my neighbors on 10<sup>th</sup> Street had said, "Mrs. Barnes, where are you from?" I said, "I'm from Maryland." She said, "Why don't you go down to see your congressman and maybe you can get a part time job." She was my neighbor and we had been talking about—you know, I had been talking about to her that, you know, how hard it was for us to pay the bills—get the bills paid. So I decided—I went down to the House Office Building to see my congressman from Maryland—ah what was his name [Congressman Small]? I have a letter upstairs now that he wrote to me—I kept it.

**HOUSE:** What did the letter say?

**BARNES:** It was telling me that he was glad to hear from me, and that he would do whatever he could to help me get on at the cleaning department at the House of Representatives. That was—we cleaned the Congressman's suites.

**HOUSE:** So you worked at nighttime then?

**BARNES:** Yes I worked at night. Oh I couldn't work in the day because my husband worked in the day and I had to be here with these children. And so I worked at night. The congressman he helped me to—he talked to the superintendent there who was Mr. Ridgle. He sent me to a lady named Miss Bessie Koon; she was our supervisor, sent me to her. She was in charge of all of the ladies that worked at the House Office Building. And I went to see her and she—after two weeks I started to work there. I had four congressmen's suites I had to clean. You had to dust—they had polished floors and you had to polish the floor—you had dry mops that you ran over the floors. Cleaned the bathrooms and dusted everywhere. Well, you just had to clean.

**HOUSE:** They all had bathrooms in their offices?

**BARNES:** Yes. And you had to clean them. And then I worked in the Longworth Building was the first building. When they built the Rayburn Building our supervisor would then send different groups of ladies over to the Rayburn Building to clean it. Oh it was so dusty. It was new, but it was dirty because it was full of dust from the construction. We cleaned that whole building; groups of ladies. Then by that time I had become a supervisor or foreman. I had become a foreman then. And that means I had so many ladies that worked under me. I was their foreman and they worked under me. Then from there I was promoted from a foreman to a supervisor. That means that I had a whole floor in the building to supervise, to take on the ladies, to see that the work was done, see that the suites were clean. After the ladies cleaned them it was...my job was to go in and see that everything was as it should be cleaned.

**HOUSE:** Now this wasn't a little part time job? You must have been working full time by this time?

**BARNES:** By this time, yes, they had given us—first they give us three hours, then they gave us six hours.

**HOUSE:** A night?

**BARNES:** Uh huh. Then later on they gave us eight hours. By the time we had eight hours, I was a supervisor then. And I was in charge of Rayburn Building—the Cannon Building, the Rayburn Building, the Longworth Building and Annex One, which was the hotel across the street. And then the old FBI building. That was Annex Two.

**HOUSE:** You were in charge of all of these?

**BARNES:** Yes.

**HOUSE:** Wow! How many people did you supervise?

**BARNES:** I think I had 300 and some ladies all together.

**HOUSE:** Wow, that's amazing! That's a lot of people. You must have had a lot of problems with that, no? People calling you and not coming in, sick or something. You had to keep moving your crews around.

**BARNES:** Well I had foremen then, other supervisors.

**HOUSE:** Supervisors under you?

**BARNES:** Under me, yes.

**HOUSE:** That's a big time responsibility.

**BARNES:** It took me—I worked 26 years.

**HOUSE:** Did you say you also worked at the Library of Congress?

**BARNES:** No, no, no. I didn't work at the Library. This was the House Office Building.

**HOUSE:** Well, that's an amazing career. Where did your husband work?

**BARNES:** He worked for the Sanitation Department, District Sanitation Department. He worked for 41 years in that same place, Sanitation Department.

**HOUSE:** Okay, you mentioned your children. You said you took the job initially because...

**BARNES:** Yes, my children were going to school then. In the day I had to be here with them.

**HOUSE:** How many children did you have?

**BARNES:** All together I had twelve children. And they all went to—they all graduated from old St. Cyprian's School, which at first was called St. Ann's Academy right there on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Right here on 8<sup>th</sup> Street SE before the Oblate Sisters sold it and now it's a townhouse there. It was St. Ann's Academy; then it was old St. Cyprian's School.

**HOUSE:** And that went what, through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade?

**BARNES:** Yes, it went to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade...from the kindergarten to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**HOUSE:** So all twelve children went there?

**BARNES:** Yes.

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

**HOUSE:** So tell us a little bit about how you raised your family. You mentioned the other day that you had some rules and some of the practices of the family. Tell us a little bit about that.

**BARNES:** Well let me tell you first about St. Cyprian's School where my children went. I'm always grateful to the Oblate Sisters of Providence. They were nuns, black nuns. And the Josephite Fathers, they were priests from the Josephite Fathers. Even now I work with my daughter who is the assistant president of the Oblate Sisters of Providence. It's alumni now. My daughter now is assistant to the president. And I still work with her whenever they had affairs or anything for the Oblate Sisters. And then we have the homecoming in October. We always go to Mass and everything to greet the sisters.

**HOUSE:** Where are they now?

**BARNES:** They are in Baltimore, Saint Francis Academy.

**HOUSE:** And you were grateful to them?

**BARNES:** Yes still am. They really saw that your children...that they learned. If you had a child that [was slow to learn] the nuns would always get in touch with you. 'Cause I always went to the meetings that they had for the parents—PTA meetings. I'd always go to them and talk with the nuns and everything. And they'd tell you too if any of your children was falling, not getting their work like they should, they would tell you. Then too they would—the elderly nuns that weren't teaching at the time, they would take the children that was slow in the work. I had one son, William, he was—I think he had failed in the second or third grade. We had a Sister Irene, she would take children—she had got elderly and she wasn't teaching. And she would take these children and coach them and they were thinking from then on; they would really excel in their work. That's what my son did. She took him—she told me, Sister Irene told me one time, "Mrs. Barnes, I know he can learn. I can tell by shape of his head!" (laughter) And had us just dying laughing. Sister Irene said that she could tell by the shape of his head that he could learn. Anyway, all my children graduated from old St. Cyprian's.

**HOUSE:** Would you like to tell us a little bit about the family rules and activities and whatever they were with the children?

**BARNES:** The children were—they could go to Hines [Hine Junior High School, 7<sup>th</sup> & Pennsylvania Avenue SE] and play basketball in the evening after they got—first thing they would do was do their homework when they come home—but at 6 o'clock in the evening, at 6 o'clock they knew that they had to be home, because that was the time we said the rosary as a family. My husband and all my children,

whenever they were out playing, out front playing, or at Hines playing basketball at school, or anywhere they knew that they had to be home at 6 o'clock, because that was the time we said the rosary. And then too, it was a certain time we said the rosary, that was 6 o'clock, but it was also time for us to—you know, dinnertime. And my husband used to always tell them, "Since your mother's able to cook the food and everything, you be here on time to eat it." And if sometimes my boys would forget or be playing or didn't come in, my husband he had already said, "If you're not here on time when we sit down to eat, you don't eat!"

**HOUSE:** They weren't allowed to join you later, huh?

**BARNES:** No. But I would always fix something for them. My husband didn't know it. (laughter) I'd always fix something for them. It wasn't very often that they didn't get here in time to eat. I'd always fix a sandwich or something or other for them later on.

And then too, they knew too—I didn't keep them cooped up in the house. They'd played outside but they knew that if they played outside, they'd play on this block. I didn't allow them to go around to some other block or somewhere or another. If they went down to the park, they went down—the older children with the younger—the older children looked after the younger children to go down to the park, which is right down in the next block, and played. But most—I let them—they played right outside front here where I could see them.

**HOUSE:** Tell me a little about the neighborhood in the early years—of course you lived here in the 30's, 40's, 50's and of course you live here now. Some of the earlier years—what was the neighborhood like and how was it different than it is today?

**BARNES:** The neighborhood...well we had more black families here than we do now.

**HOUSE:** In this block or do you mean all the houses?

**BARNES:** In this block. We had some black neighbors around on D Street. It was this block, but it was D Street. And then we had neighbors—I think one, two, three—we had about six or seven black families on this block when I—when my children were growing up. Now I think it's only four of us black people, black left on this block now.

**HOUSE:** So this would have been in the 50's when you had black families on the block?

**BARNES:** Yes, I think about—I don't know whether it was seven or more—oh yes it would have been about 11 because Pearl Bailey's father and stepmother and her sister and brothers lived down the street in one of the houses from us.

**HOUSE:** Who was this?

**BARNES:** Pearl Bailey.

**HOUSE:** The singer?

**BARNES:** The singer, yes. Her father and her stepmother and her half sisters and brothers lived down the street. They lived two doors, I think, either two doors or three doors down from me. She came here one time, she and her brother Bill. They came to see their father. She came here; she came here in a limousine, I think. She and her brother, they went in to see their father. And the stepmother lived two doors down. And she came here one time to see her father and her stepmother and her brother Bill came—you know the two came at the same time.

**HOUSE:** What about when you lived on 10<sup>th</sup> Street? Was that neighborhood fairly mixed?

**BARNES:** No it was mostly—we had—they mostly were black. We had I think about four or five families on 10<sup>th</sup> Street that were white. Most of the rest of them were black.

**HOUSE:** That would have been in the 40's. Did people get along fairly well, were there problems?

**BARNES:** Yes, they got along fairly well. My children—and I remember there was a house way across the street from us—we were 305, so they must have been 304—they were white and the children, they played together and my children they played together real good. We didn't have any trouble with them. They all got out there and played. There were several other white families up the street and they were good neighbors. I don't remember any strife or anything between the families. But I know it was more black on 10<sup>th</sup> Street than it was here. It's always been, on that side it's always been white. White people neighbors and they've been very nice. We always got along together on 6<sup>th</sup> Street. And then Miss Bergman, she's from Friendship House, she used to live in the corner house. She was a nice lady. My oldest son used to go and cut her grass for her, put her trash out and things like that. One day she came over—I was standing out front—so she came over and gave me a compliment about how nice and mannerly my children were. So I said, "We teach them to be good children. It's nothing else but to behave yourself and treat other people like you would want to be treated."

**HOUSE:** She was an administrator at Friendship House or what did she do at Friendship House?

**BARNES:** I don't know what... I think she dedicated Friendship House to... her parents or she turned Friendship House over to the public. That's where my children used to go to play and had different teachers that would teach them.

**HOUSE:** This was after school?

**BARNES:** After school. Help them with their grades; help them with their homework and everything.

**HOUSE:** When, would this have been in the 50's?

**BARNES:** It would have been in the 50's and 60's.

**HOUSE:** Now you volunteered over there, when was that?

**BARNES:** Oh my, I guess it had to be in the 50's or 60's. I would just answer the phone. I was in a little office like, and I would answer the phone and take messages.

**HOUSE:** Do you have any sense about how Friendship House is similar to or different from it was then? Now than it was then?

**BARNES:** Oh yes, my goodness.

**HOUSE:** How would you describe those differences?

**BARNES:** I haven't been over there lately. I don't remember them having the senior citizens; taking care of the senior citizens and have buses that pick them up and carry them different places like they do now. It wasn't that, it was just children.

**HOUSE:** So more limited; fewer services?

**BARNES:** I think it's more services now. Back when my children were going over there it was for the children. They had teachers that would help them with their homework and take them on trips. When they'd go over there and they would supervise them. After school programs, that's mostly what they did then. But now, I think, I know they have senior citizens over there now and I think they help more families and things like that.

**HOUSE:** OK. Let's go back and talk about again, if we can, the 30's and 40's. And talk about, for example, where did you shop and where did you do business? What neighborhood businesses did you use?

**BARNES:** It used to be, right there on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and D, where there is a white apartment there, that used to be the Sanitary, a Safeway. It was Sanitary then. We called them Sanitariums not Safeways. There was one right there. And then after they got to be Safeway, I think they closed it up. That's before they built that little white brick apartment right on the corner.

**HOUSE:** Now was that when you were living here in the 30's?

**BARNES:** Yes, when I was living on D Street. But by the time I moved back here, the Safeway was right across the street from the market, Eastern Market right there. There was a Safeway there, but now that's closed.

**HOUSE:** Where else did you shop? Did you shop at Eastern Market?

**BARNES:** Yes, I used to go and shop at Eastern Market. I used to buy groceries, greens and things from people who used to bring up their trucks from their gardens, especially on a Friday and Saturday, just like they do now.

**HOUSE:** From the outdoor markets?

**BARNES:** Yes.

**HOUSE:** Who else did you do business with?

**BARNES:** Safeway was the main thing.

**HOUSE:** What about other things besides groceries?

**BARNES:** I know my husband he used to in the evening or Saturday, he would go up to the 5th Street Market and get different greens and things by the bushel basket.

**HOUSE:** That's at 5<sup>th</sup> and Florida [Avenue, NE]

**BARNES:** Yes. He'd go up there on a Saturday evening. Then there used to be a grocery store there at 10<sup>th</sup> and C Street. My husband worked there for, oh my, for 10 or 15 years in the evening after he got off his other job.

**HOUSE:** What did he do there?

**BARNES:** He waited on people. He put up the groceries. Whatever had to be done he would do. The owner was called Ben Miller. He was a white guy. He was nice, was very nice, he and his wife both. His wife's name was Annie. My husband worked for them part time for about 10 or 15 years. That was his evening job after he got off his regular job.

**HOUSE:** Well you were working hard to get that meal together for everybody at about the same time, weren't you?

**BARNES:** Yes. With that many children in those days you had to work in order to accomplish. The children when we get talking now, they say, "Well Momma, you know there was a lot of us and we were poor, but we never missed a meal." I said, "No you didn't."

**HOUSE:** So what transportation did you use, especially in the early days?

**BARNES:** My husband always had some old piece of car. But then too, at the beginning we rode the streetcars. And after the streetcars were the buses. So that's the way we traveled.

**HOUSE:** Where did your husband get gas for his car?

**BARNES:** At this gasoline station right here on 9<sup>th</sup> and the Avenue (Pennsylvania).

**HOUSE:** Distads?

**BARNES:** Yes.

**HOUSE:** And that's been here since the 30's?

**BARNES:** Let's see, I don't think it was Distad's then. He got gas from there and there was a Texaco, still is, at 13<sup>th</sup> and the Avenue. He used to go there too and get his gas.

**HOUSE:** You told me the other day that when you first came here some people were still using horses. Who was using horses?

**BARNES:** When my husband first went to work for the Sanitation Department, they had mules. They didn't have those big trucks they have now; they had mules.

**HOUSE:** Oh really? So this would have been in the 30's?

**BARNES:** Yes, the 20's and the 30's.

**HOUSE:** So the mules would be bringing carts down the street?

**BARNES:** The big carts down the street where they collected the trash.

**HOUSE:** How many mules would be on a cart?

**BARNES:** They would have four mules for one—yes four mules pulling those big trucks.

**HOUSE:** How many guys would work on a truck?

**BARNES:** There would be one driving the mules and the others would be collecting trash and garbage and stuff. There were about six or seven men to a truck.

**HOUSE:** Were there other people who were using horses? You mentioned something about...

**BARNES:** Yes. There's a horse trough—the pole is still down there now, right down here on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and—it's sort of like almost in the middle of the block—6<sup>th</sup> and South Carolina Avenue. It was a

trough there, but they removed the trough about five or six years now. They moved the trough, but the pole is still there. They left that there.

**HOUSE:** So did neighbors ride the horses? Who was riding the horses and using the trough in those early 30's?

**BARNES:** No. In the 30's, I don't know. It was here when we moved here. I know the policemen had horses, you remember. People that rode around in the parks had horses. Officers that were in charge of the parks, they had horses. But anyway they removed that trough; I guess it's been about five or six years that they moved it. But they left the pole there, that's still there.

**HOUSE:** I wanted to ask you about World War II and what your memories are of that and the neighborhood. Do you remember when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

**BARNES:** Yes indeed, I remember.

**HOUSE:** That was on a Sunday. Do you remember where you were?

**BARNES:** Yes. We were living on 10<sup>th</sup> Street then. I hadn't moved here yet. And when President Roosevelt passed, I remember my neighbor said to me, "Oh Mrs. Barnes what's going to happen to us?" See, we were in World War II then. She said, "What's going to happen to us, our President is dead?" We were talking to each other over the back fence. I think I was hanging out clothes and I think she was too. I said, "I guess by the grace of God we'll get through." Let's see I had one brother then—altogether I had two brothers to go in the service. The brother over me—he was the next one to me—he went in in '40—they drafted him in '40, '41. Then my next brother went in—my brother Joe. I don't know when he went in. I know he went in after my brother Arthur.

**HOUSE:** So what was it like on Capitol Hill during World War II? Did people do things a lot differently?

**BARNES:** We had ration books. I used to even give some of my neighbors,—at least they asked me for some of my rations—like sugar and things like that were rationed. By me having a bunch of children—I always had enough ration books for me, for us to buy and some left over. I would always give some of my neighbors—they would ask me and I'd let them have it. You weren't supposed to do that, but we didn't need them all, so why not help our neighbors that did need them.

**HOUSE:** Was there anything else that was done for the war effort? Do you remember? Those blackout blinds?

**BARNES:** Oh yes, I remember having them. And then my next-door neighbor, they had a bunch of children too on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. He was—what did you call them—an air raid warden. Whenever they had an air raid he would go out and help. Mr. Jackson.

**HOUSE:** What did he do?

**BARNES:** I know he was sort of like a policeman.

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

**BARNES:** (continuing) He was an air raid warden. He would go up and down the block and see that people drew their blinds so you wouldn't see any light. You had to put your lights out and everything and have things dark. You couldn't have lights on so you could see from the front. He was something like a warden. I know he would canvas the block we lived on and I'm thinking he would go to other blocks. I think he had a certain distance that he would have to go to see that people drew their blinds and kept the lights out and see that everything was dark.

**HOUSE:** If somebody was driving they couldn't use their car lights, right?

**BARNES:** No.

**HOUSE:** How did they see? Did they keep on driving or did they just stop?

**BARNES:** They had to; I think you were supposed to stop and park somewhere when they had a blackout. Because it said blackout. I know we used to have to draw the curtains, drapes and everything and turn out the lights.

**HOUSE:** Were there big celebrations in the neighborhood when the war ended?

**BARNES:** Oh yes, yes indeed. People went up and down the neighborhood laughing, singing and dancing. World War II was over, my goodness. It was much like 4<sup>th</sup> of July used to be. Shooting off firecrackers and singing, people hollering at each other.

**HOUSE:** Just in the streets?

**BARNES:** Uh huh.

**HOUSE:** Well that's all the questions I have. Is there anything else you would like to share with us that I didn't think of to ask?

**BARNES:** No, I can't think of anything else.

**HOUSE:** Well I really appreciate you talking to us because it was very interesting, so I thank you very much, Mrs. Barnes.

END OF INTERVIEW