



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Josephine Shore

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Material contained in brackets [] has been added by editors subsequent to the interview.

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

O'BRIEN: I am here with Josephine at Little Sisters of the Poor and Josephine is going to tell us about ...

SHORE: My early life, my earliest recollections or do you want statistics or how shall I start? My life in DC I remember as a child, very young, guess I must have been seven or eight. I remember playing on the streets in my neighborhood which I understand you cannot do these days; especially today with a killer running loose but we used to get out on the street and play ball, and I lived in a neighborhood that had very few girls.

O'BRIEN: Exactly, do you remember the address?

SHORE: Yes it was 1612 H Street SE, Washington, which is near Barney Circle and near the Congressional Cemetery and I can't think of what else is in that area. Now, it is down toward the Stadium where they play football, was it is Kennedy Stadium what is it called now? In that area.

O'BRIEN: And you lived there do you remember from when to when? What time period are we talking about?

SHORE: I lived there—I was born there at home and I lived there until I got married in the 1940s.

O'BRIEN: So this would have been—how old are you now?

SHORE: I will be 83 next month—no not next month, December coming up; December 18 [2002]. I'll be 83 and I lived in that area for what, 21 years I guess it would be and I got married and moved away from there.

O'BRIEN: So you are almost 83 and you lived there for 20 years so that would have been what years—from seven or do you remember even the years that you lived there?

SHORE: Sure, from the time I was born 1919 until 1941—1940, November 1940. So that's 20 years.

O'BRIEN: OK. And so as you recall growing up there you used to play in the street?

SHORE: We could play in the streets and I especially remember the summertime and playing in the street. After it had rained we would get out on the street in our bathing suits, get part of the rain and then run around in the gutters if you please. That was a pleasant memory. Then because where I lived was near 17th Street, SE and that was downhill, we would ride—I would ride with the boys in their wagons down the hill and I recall distinctly falling out of the wagon and breaking open my chin when I was maybe nine

years old. So I—as I said I didn't have any girls to play with so I played with the boys, so I had to do boy stuff all the time.

O'BRIEN: So what do you remember about the traffic in the roads and the amount of cars and maybe trolleys?

SHORE: Well we had streetcar service that came to Barney Circle which was one good block from where I lived and there was a turn around, the street car would turn around and go back up town.

O'BRIEN: What road was that? Pennsylvania Avenue?

SHORE: Pennsylvania Avenue. So that was the foot of I guess you would call it the foot of Pennsylvania Avenue and the beginning of a bridge that went over to Anacostia. So in that area I remember the streetcars very well because later on when I met my husband-to-be he did not have a car so we rode the streetcars a lot. And I can remember being out on the last streetcar {Laughs} coming home from downtown Washington.

O'BRIEN: Was that scary?

SHORE: No. No there was nothing to be afraid of. I would walk anywhere in that area and there was nothing to be worried about. 'Course, my Mother worried about me being out so late. And then when you got home you would sit on the front porch in the summer time. My Father would get upset sometimes and he'd stick his head out the window and say "come in the house, Jo." {Laughs}

O'BRIEN: But now going back to when you were younger and playing in the streets.

SHORE: We would play ball, play baseball, roller skate. We had wagons, bicycles, down the street from us there was a stone cutter who took orders from people who were going to bury their relatives in Congressional Cemetery. So we would go down the street and watch the stone cutter and maybe taunt him a little bit because he ...

O'BRIEN: So he had a shop down the street?

SHORE: He had an open-sided shop where he would cut the stones, engrave them, you know, and he was Italian so we used to tease him you know for being smart young people, too smart, I should say. We would tease him. Another thing I remember about early childhood is that we had hucksters as they were called come around and sell vegetables. Then we had someone who would come and deliver coffee, tea, milk. These were all separate deliveries.

O'BRIEN: How where they doing this?

SHORE: Well, they would do it in a car. But the huckster would come around with a horse and buggy. I remember that and then he came later on with a truck. So he sold fresh vegetables door-to-door.

O'BRIEN: So how would you know he was there?

SHORE: Well there were certain days he would come in certain times of day so you would go out and wait for him.

O'BRIEN: So you would be on the look out. Would you place an order ahead of time or just get what he had that day?

SHORE: Well you would do both, you could place a standing order or you could choose what he had for the day, depending on how much you wanted. So I can remember fresh fruits and fresh vegetables which you can't imagine these days.

O'BRIEN: And the coffee?

SHORE: There was a company called M. E. Swing that had an office downtown E Street, NW, Washington and they sold coffees and teas and I believe they sold cocoa too, I am not sure.

O'BRIEN: Now how do you spell that, the name of the company?

SHORE: M.E. and the last name was Swing. My Mother would order from them and she would get a bill at the end of the month or whatever. So that was unusual, but I remember those things.

O'BRIEN: So did you go—where did your Mom shop for groceries?

SHORE: They had a local grocery store that was at 15th and E Streets, I believe, see we lived between 15th and 17th Streets, SE. So we would go north of H Street, the alphabet does down at that point, goes from H to G and there was an avenue that came through there, Potomac Avenue, and then I think it was—I can't remember if there was a D Street but there was an E Street and the grocery store was on 15th and E Streets, SE.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember the name of it?

SHORE: The proprietor's name was Cohn, C O H N, so that was a Jewish family that we dealt with. So you go there for your dry goods or your meats—sometimes poultry and sometimes eggs. Well he carried most everything.

O'BRIEN: Are you comfortable, Jo? Do you want to sit back or lean back cause this moves with you.

SHORE: Well I have a peculiar back.

O'BRIEN: Is that OK now, are you comfortable?

SHORE: Yes. I guess I am more comfortable when I am in bed. {Laughs}

O'BRIEN: We could do this lying down if you want.

SHORE: {Laughter} See I have a bad arm, a bad leg, a bad back—falling apart. It is all accumulation of things. So I am never really comfortable. Anyhow, let's see, where were we? Back before 1940.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember what your earliest recollection is?

SHORE: I don't remember when I was a very small child. Maybe the first grade. I went to school at 15th and East Capitol Street to a Catholic School called Holy Comforter.

O'BRIEN: Holy Comforter—St. Cyprian?

SHORE: There was a school there. I don't know, is it still there?

O'BRIEN: Uh-huh. And how did you get there? You walked?

SHORE: Walked. When you hear these stories that your Dad told that he walked six miles to whatever, {Laughs} we walked, I don't know, maybe two miles. But we would walk to school in the morning and we'd come home for lunch and we'd walk back. So then we walked home after school so that was a good bit of walking, which kept us healthy.

O'BRIEN: Did you have a lot of homework in the evening?

SHORE: Loads. When in the higher grades you came home loaded with a stack of books and the books were big and seemed awfully heavy, in retrospect. Later on we had book bags; innovation.

O'BRIEN: Yeah, right, and they break your back.

SHORE: And I would walk through different neighborhoods on 15th Street. One of the things I remember is that there was a black, I guess you would call it a sidewalk church, it was just a couple of stores that were converted into a black church and they would call themselves the "holy rollers." So they would—at times the church would be open and we could hear them over there singing and praying which was lively, to say the least. We walked through different kinds of neighborhoods, different types of houses, and as we got closer to Massachusetts Avenue, I think it was, there were more stores; one of which later on was a liquor store and there were different types of stores in that area.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember any in particular in any particular locations, and did the kids have like a corner candy store they would run to?

SHORE: They did have, we had one kiddy corner from the school so we either go there in the morning before school or at lunchtime or after school. And one of the things that we used to like to buy were sour pickles which came out of a huge jug of pickles. And, of course along with the sour pickles they had chocolates and hard candies and all in the store. Some kind of lollypops or candy on a stick—one of which was called a sugar daddy. Do you remember hearing about that?

O'BRIEN: The hard, the caramel?

SHORE: Yeah, yeah. You remember that. Then they had penny candy. You would go in and choose whatever.

O'BRIEN: Mary Janes?

SHORE: Yea they had Mary Janes and I don't remember any of the others, chewing gum, bubble gum which was sort of verboten with the Nuns.

O'BRIEN: What did you do for money? Did you work jobs, did you baby-sit?

SHORE: My Mother gave me—when I was very young she gave me a small amount of money. When I was in high school I worked downtown because one of my sisters worked in Whelan's Corset Shop and I would go down and model bras because I was a teenager and was just the right size with bras. Was one of the things I did. And I was not long out of high school before I started to work with the government down there. It was in Northwest Washington in what is now a museum, I think, on G Street [the Building Museum?]. We jumped from childhood to high school, didn't we? High school I went to St. Cecilia's on East Capitol which I believe was on Sixth and East Capitol Street and I don't what's there now. They closed all the girls' schools or combined all the Catholic girls' high schools at one point.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember how many children there were in the area, I remember your saying there weren't any girls in your neighborhood.

SHORE: Later on there was one girl that moved in the neighborhood I remember. Her father was a policeman. It was nice to have a policeman on your block. You felt more secure.

O'BRIEN: Who was your block made up of mostly would you say, was it government workers or who lived there, who were the neighbors and what kind of things did the neighbors do together?

SHORE: There were no community affairs that I can recall except in the summer time the church would have what they call a carnival and you might see some of your neighbors there, but we were Catholic and there were not many Catholics on our block.

O'BRIEN: What were they mostly, do you remember?

SHORE: I think they were mostly Baptists. One Lutheran family, it is funny I can't remember, oh, next door to us were Southern Baptists. But from my viewpoint I didn't watch, you know, what people were—how they were practicing their beliefs. There were no black people. There were people of German descent, no Italians, except for the stone cutter. The rest were Caucasians. Would you like a peppermint?

O'BRIEN: No, I'm good, thank you.

SHORE: So where should we go from here? You gathered that I went to Holy Comforter in elementary school and I went to St. Cecilia's for high school and after high school I went to a short, six-months, I think, to Strayer's Business College, and then I went to work for the government.

O'BRIEN: We were talking about the make up of your neighborhood and what ...

SHORE: Oh, that's right; we got off the track.

O'BRIEN: What most of the people who lived there; what the families did. Did most of the—first of all was it mostly families?

SHORE: I would say "blue collar", mostly. My brothers were sheet metal workers and next door to me was an older couple; their children were grown or I remember as grown, and I think the husband worked for, gosh, the Post Office or something like that so there were people who worked for the government and there were some who worked for the District government. There were [some] people we did not have any contact with; they were reclusive. There was one in the neighborhood on 16th Street and apparent she was a lady of — it was rumored she was living with a politician in the pre-Roosevelt administration and she was the talk of the block. {Laughs}

O'BRIEN: Yeah, you could watch her coming and going.

SHORE: Her boy friend would come to her house, I can't remember who the guy was, I guess it was a Republican {Laughs} as we were all Democrats.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember the politics of the area at all?

SHORE: We talked politics—mostly Democratic except for my father who was from southern Virginia and he would just, I think out of devilment, he would be a Republican. Because we couldn't vote; we didn't have any vote back then. You don't now, do you? Just have a representative.

O'BRIEN: Right, as far as federal.

SHORE: As far as going to the polls ... but there was much discussion of politics.

O'BRIEN: But on the local level.

SHORE: Well there was talk on the national level too and I think several of the families were from either southern Virginia or North Carolina so there was a mix of conversations, depending on who was representing the states. Senator Byrd was the talk of the household for many years. This is Senator Robert Byrd which would be, gosh, 80 or 90 years ago. He was Senator Byrd of Virginia which I think was Robert Byrd but he was known to politics by offering people a basket of apples if they would vote for him. Can you imagine? {Laughs}

O'BRIEN: That's interesting.

SHORE: Isn't it? There is a Senator Byrd now, I think in Congress and he is very outgoing so whether he would be a grandson ...

O'BRIEN: Or related. What would be concerns of the day as you remember? Whether in high school or college or when you got a job, what were things that concern people?

SHORE: Well there was Roosevelt and his reconstruction, I mean his New Deal and before that [sic], of course, there was the war, World War II.

O'BRIEN: How did this impact locally.

SHORE: It impacted in our home because I had two brothers who were older and what do you call it, they didn't enlist; they were drafted. One was in the Seabees in the Navy and the other one was a foot soldier and he is the one, my brother who was a soldier, was with George Patton and his army and went to victory in Europe, finally. My brother was in the Navy and he was a Seabee, what they call Seabee. They went ahead and built ports and repaired ships and things like that; it was a high point when the two of them met in Ireland, I believe it was, and that was a good place to meet and try out the pubs. {Laughs} They both liked to drink. My brother who was in the Army died later on of stomach cancer in one of the military hospitals here. The other one died of cancer also so I don't know if it was that construction work or not.

O'BRIEN: You said earlier there were sheet metal workers. Where?

SHORE: Yes it could have been that. They worked for my uncle who was in the sheet metal business. He was one of the first—his name was Murphy, Patrick Murphy, and he was of the first ones in the air conditioning business which started way back when. So they worked for him as I don't know what you

call them. They didn't have a title—they called them sheet metal workers. They had a union. So they would cut metal.

O'BRIEN: Where were they doing this?

SHORE: He had a business in Northwest Washington off of Georgia Avenue, so it was out of there.

O'BRIEN: So how did they get to work?

SHORE: Good question. Streetcar. They would carry their lunch. I can just see my Mother fixing their lunches and then later on we had a car in the family. It was left to us from this same Patrick Murphy, and I learned to drive on this 1936 Buick. One of those we had to step up to get into, and had a stick shift. Can you imagine a teenager driving that? Well, the traffic was nothing compared to what it is now. Here I am tooling around and taking my family in this Buick {Laughs} just like being a chauffeur. [static distorts comments] They really trusted me.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

[**O'BRIEN:** We're on.

SHORE: We are. What did you do?

O'BRIEN: Hum. I'm turning this monitor volume. I think we are on. Why don't we say where we are and what we are doing and I will go back and just do a quick check.

SHORE: This is the new year 2003, January 17, and we're in the Little Sisters of the Poor ...

O'BRIEN: Hello, Hello, I am on and working Jo. How are you?

SHORE: I am wearing down.

O'BRIEN: Oh I am sorry. We're on and working, my dear.

SHORE: OK. I will see if I can get my tongue to work again. I will repeat myself. We are at Jean Jugan Residence on Harewood Road doing a taping session with Josephine Shore who is age 83 and rapidly loosing all her recollections.

O'BRIEN: No she is not. {Laughs} She is too hard on herself. Josephine, the last time we got together we were talking about your childhood.

SHORE: That's correct and as I remember I think I mentioned the fact that we had simple games that we played and usually on the same block on which we lived either in the street or in the alley. You know that we had alleys all through Washington, DC and sometimes there was housing facing outside buildings. Did you know that?

O'BRIEN: Yes. Why don't you tell me about that. What do you remember? Do you remember who used to live there or anything about the insides of them or even...

SHORE: No. Because our particular block which was houses that were built after World War I. They were new when my parents brought them—fairly new. They had in the back of the block garages—they built them in rows and garages were very simple with sheet metal doors that you opened and people either used them for cars or for storage. But there was single lady in the block adjacent to ours on 16th Street in a house visible to us [beyond the garages?]. She apparently was living with a powerful man from Capitol Hill. Her comings and goings were watched by all the neighbors. Remember this was along time ago. It would hardly bear mention now. So that was one of the things that went on in our alley.

O'BRIEN: And this is what address again?

SHORE: [We lived on] H Street between 16 and 17 Streets on H Southeast. Adjacent to Congressional Cemetery. Also nearby was a stonecutter so that one could order a stone for a grave before or after a funeral and apparently there were many Congressmen buried in this cemetery. That's where it got its name. I think John Phillip Sousa was one of the historic people that was buried there. It was interesting to walk through the cemetery and look at the different monuments; one in particular that I remember was of a young woman or a young girl that had an angel on top of the grave. That was the sort of thing you did to amuse yourself in the summertime.

O'BRIEN: Walk through the cemetery.

SHORE: Walking through the cemetery. It wasn't spooky because it was during the daytime. And then I think I mentioned that we played with wagons and skates and baseball, softball, and in the summertime would walk in our bare feet when it had rained and there was water going down to the gutters. That was a big thing to do. I can remember the freedom of being maybe nine years old or eight years old running around on the street in your bare feet and carrying on.

O'BRIEN: Were the gutters the same as they are now?

SHORE: Yeah, they were about 10 inches high, something like that, and of course, at the end of each block there would be a sewer where it would come out. There were not very many cars parked along the streets as there were garages in backs of the homes.

O'BRIEN: Did everybody have a car?

SHORE: No. Very few cars. We had a car in my family—it was a Model T and my brother, who was much older than I, drove it and he was considered kind of harem scarem. He drove the car and used to take us on trips to Baltimore to visit a second brother who was deaf—there was a school for the deaf in Baltimore run by a group of nuns.

That's where he was educated as a child and when he grew up he came home and he went to the deaf school here in Washington, what it is called?

O'BRIEN: Gallaudet?

SHORE: Gallaudet, yeah. And learned a trade with his hands so he could go and get a job but unfortunately it was around the time—in 1930s—when we had a depression and so he could only find jobs—menial jobs like working in a dry cleaners. One of the jobs he had was with Coca Cola which was very repetitious where they would inspect the bottles. You had to return bottles at that time, and they would inspect the bottles for any foreign matter before they were put under high water pressure and washed.

O'BRIEN: And where did he do this?

SHORE: Down southwest Washington—I don't know where the Coca Cola plant was.

O'BRIEN: How long did it take you to get to Baltimore when you would take those rides, do you remember? What the roads were like?

SHORE: Oh, it must have taken two hours because the speed limits were real low—about 35 miles was the limit. But you have to remember that was an open car so to be prepared for rain or something you would have to put on these leather flaps on the sides and they made a great deal of noise when you were going by driving. And my Mother was very nervous riding with my brother. She would say {Laughs} “Oh Lewis, watch out for this, oh you are going to fast” or something like that. Anyway these are memories of a very young person. I can remember sitting in the back seat {Laughs} and sort of holding on {Laughs}.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember what the roads were like? In your neighborhood?

SHORE: They were two-lane; oh, in my neighborhood? Two lanes, that's all, and we were next to an Avenue. I think it was called Kentucky Avenue, and we were in the neighborhood not too far from where the Capitols, the Caps, play. [sic. The Senators played at RFK, but not until the early 60s]

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

O'BRIEN: Near the prison and you would often get...

SHORE: Near the prison and beyond the hospital and the present day sports stadium, I can't remember the name.

O'BRIEN: RFK? And what become this Gallinger Hospital you are talking about is that what was...?

SHORE: It went out of business. Gallinger it was called at that time. [Gallinger Municipal Hospital 19th and C SE]

O'BRIEN: Is that what became DC General?

SHORE: I think so. Yes. So that would have been 19th and C or something like that. So we, our life revolved around those things. I went to a Catholic elementary school and we walked to school and we walked home for our lunch and we walked back so we would have four trips a day walking up to 15th and East Capitol Street.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember what the traffic lights were like?

SHORE: I don't remember any traffic lights.

O'BRIEN: No traffic lights.

SHORE: Stop signs.

O'BRIEN: Stop signs. No traffic lights.

SHORE: I don't remember any—and on the way we would pass a store-front African American Church called the Holy Rollers and they were, sometimes they would have services when we were passing by so we were intrigued with them because they wore white robes and they were very emotional expressing their prayers so we would be fascinated watching them as we walked by.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember where this was?

SHORE: Yes it was around E Street—16th and E. Yes, 15th or 16th and E, SE. It was an all residential area, mostly residential—it was near a public school and I can't remember what that one was on 15th Street. What else was going on in the neighborhood ... we would walk up to Massachusetts Avenue and beyond that to East Capitol Street. Our big treat was to stop at a candy store that was diagonally across

from the convent and the school where we would buy these big fat sour pickles for five cents ... that or candy so you can see how our tastes ran, from sweet to sour—sour to sweet.

O'BRIEN: What were the options when you were going to the store, were there a lot of different choices or a couple types of candies or ...

SHORE: The candy store would have a whole showcase full of penny candy.

O'BRIEN: They were in a showcase.

SHORE: We would buy what you get most for your money. So we would buy those.

O'BRIEN: Someone would serve them to you?

SHORE: You would point to what you wanted or tell them what you wanted in the case they would take it out and put it in a little bag. I can't remember any particular candy, oh one of them was called some sort of dandy taffy or something like that on a stick. You are testing my memory now. {Laughs} Really testing it. That was a great thing to do back then, either that or stop in an ice cream store. They had High's ice cream stores. You have heard of those?

O'BRIEN: Oh yeah. I love High's.

SHORE: They were in business for a long time. But that was a little bit later when I was going to high school which was at Sixth and East Capitol, another Catholic School called St. Cecilia's. The first school was called Holy Comforter. Holy Comforter still is operative, the church, that is. I don't know about the school.

O'BRIEN: I think the school is, also.

SHORE: Is it?

O'BRIEN: That's on East Capitol.

SHORE: St. Cecilia's closed in the 60s [sic, 80s], I believe, they combined so many Catholic girls' high schools and made one. St. Anthony? No.

O'BRIEN: So St. Cecilia's was the Catholic girls high school that you went to?

SHORE: Yes.

O'BRIEN: And you walked there?

SHORE: Yeah. It was fun or seemed to be fun because we would—on East Capitol Street there was a drug store around Seventh or Eighth Street and East Capitol so the girls would go there. Unfortunately I must say were trying to smoke at that time ... {Laughs} bad habit ... and talk about boys, and so forth. And the place to meet the boys was to go to the movies and meet the ushers. That was were I met my husband, he was an usher.

O'BRIEN: And where did you go to the movies? Was that downtown?

SHORE: No. Pennsylvania Avenue and Eighth Street there was a movie called the Penn [on the north side] and the Avenue Grand, they were opposite one another. You've heard of them? [both were between Sixth and Seventh, with the Penn opening in the 40s]

O'BRIEN: Yeah, I had completely forgotten about that. So you used to go there?

SHORE: Yeah, that is where I met him. He had been an usher in a northwest movie house and they moved him down there and I met him at the Penn. That's another story. {Laughs}

O'BRIEN: Are you holding out on me?

SHORE: I don't want to talk about that one.

O'BRIEN: So do you recall—anything that you can remember about going to the movies there?

SHORE: I remember it was very inexpensive. I didn't actually have an allowance so it must have been around 35 or 50 cents or something like that. I wouldn't swear to that—it must have been something I could manage to get. And we were not too far from the Marine Barracks at that point. We would go to the movies to see the movies, of course, mostly romantic ones that they were showing—this would be in the late 30s or from '34 to '38, something like that. Let's see what else I can remember. Of course, we would walk down there—there was a streetcar service along Pennsylvania Avenue that started at Barney Circle, SE and went all the way downtown northwest to 15th and H or something like that.

O'BRIEN: So you could jump the service if you wanted to; jump on and go?

SHORE: Well, you had to pay. {Laughs} The streetcar could take you—you could transfer and go out to Glen Echo; I am trying to remember how they went. Guess they went through Georgetown.

O'BRIEN: And where did you do most of your shopping?

SHORE: Grocery shopping?

O'BRIEN: Your shopping as a teenager, on F Street?

SHORE: F Street was a big shopping area. Woodies [Woodward and Lothrop], Hechts, Lansburghs, Kanns, those were the main ones.

O'BRIEN: And you would take the trolley there?

SHORE: Yes. Go down to Seventh Street and transfer.

O'BRIEN: What did you do for work in high school?

SHORE: Well, my senior year I think I had—I worked for a patent attorney at the Earl Warner Building at 13th and E. I started out working by the hour or a few hours two or three times a week for a patent attorney, who was a one-man affair, doing typing.

O'BRIEN: 13th and E NW?

SHORE: Yes. Right next to what was, what was the theatre down there?

O'BRIEN: The Warner Theatre?

SHORE: No, no, the live theatre. Use to have a live theatre there.

O'BRIEN: The National?

SHORE: The National.

O'BRIEN: The Warner Theatre is a live theater..

SHORE: Now, but before it was a movie [theater] they had stage shows. And they had two other theatres downtown, the Fox and the Capitol and one called the Palace. So up on F Street you had your choice. The Capitol had live shows and they had someone there who would play the grand organ in between the movies. So that was a big thing to do. Movies sort of ruled your life, my life, at that point.

O'BRIEN: Because?

SHORE: Well, something you could do that was inexpensive. I didn't have a car. I was allowed to drive a car when I was 16. The car did not belong to me, it belonged to my uncle who had died before I graduated high school and he left it to my mother, his sister. And it was a great big Buick with a running board if you remember they use to have a running board. It was a very nice car, a very big car, and I learned to drive when I was 16 and drove that car and drove my family to the beach, the beach which was Chesapeake Beach, and North Beach [Maryland].

O'BRIEN: Was it pretty lively then, Chesapeake Beach and North Beach?

SHORE: To me it didn't seem lively, I don't know, it may have been. We just went down there as a family and with friends who would invite you...if you had a cottage you would invite them. Anyway it was a nice change, that's all.

O'BRIEN: For like the weekends?

SHORE: Or a week or two or ten days.

O'BRIEN: I want to go back to your driver's license. Where did you get your license? Do you remember?

SHORE: I think it was downtown at the District Building.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember taking a driving test?

SHORE: I don't remember. Must have been easy or something. I don't remember any drawbacks. There was not that much traffic on the streets either. A two-lane road going to the beach, black tops and I would drive mostly in the daytime, of course. And my father had a job, he had been working as a salesman in Goldenberg's Department store, which was downtown Seventh and New York Avenue. He lost his job there and he took a job at what was called Gravelly Point which was the beginning of the [construction at] National Airport. So I would drive him out there.

O'BRIEN: So what did he do there?

SHORE: I think he was a watchman. I would drive him to his job which was quite a trip you know. If you can imagine going down Constitution Avenue, how it is these days, compared to what it was then, there is a great deal of difference. {Laughs} And then over the bridge—14th Street Bridge. So I was a wild and dangerous woman. {Laughs}

O'BRIEN: Really.

SHORE: Not really, I am kidding.

O'BRIEN: But you thought you were. You like to think of yourself that way. So what was going on at Gravelly Point at that time?

SHORE: They were building the National Airport.

O'BRIEN: They were building it at that time?

SHORE: Yes.

O'BRIEN: You graduated from high school when?

SHORE: I graduated from high school in 1938 and right after that I went to work for the government in downtown Washington, Seventh G, I think it was called, I can't think of the name of the building [Pension Building, now the Building Museum], they were doing the census or something at the time. I went there as a typist. I transferred from there—while I was there I got married—then I transferred from there to the [temporary] Navy Building on Constitution Avenue [at 18th?] where we took care of something called the sailors' jackets which were about 11-inch cardboard-type containers where they kept the records of the sailors, where they were at a particular point. And then I became pregnant so I stayed home until my children were born. And after that we jumped from Washington, oh , I must tell you that would be from 1944, 1941-1945 I lived in northwest Washington on Rittenhouse Street when I was married my second child, my daughter, was born there, then I moved to Arlington, Fairlington; when they built new apartments there and this is out Shirley Highway in Alexandria or they called it North Arlington. From there I moved to California and my husband had a job there ... he transferred and while I was there I got divorced. After that I was on my own.

O'BRIEN: Then did you come back there shortly thereafter?

SHORE: I came back here after about six years. I came back in 1956; something like that. Then—do we go on?

O'BRIEN: When you came back here?

SHORE: Sure.

O'BRIEN: Let me ask you one quick question too here, Jo. When you graduated high school.

SHORE: I went to work with the government.

O'BRIEN: Is that pretty much what everyone was doing?

SHORE: They were doing that or getting married. {Laughs} School, college, was not mentioned at that point. The name of the game was to get married. We didn't have any options and it wasn't even talked about in my family as far as I recall. Although a few of the girls I graduated with went on to college; not all of them. It could have been a different story if I had gone to college. Maybe not as good, who knows.

O'BRIEN: That's right, it is anybody's guess. Do remember what the clothing was? What the dress was and what you thought about it, and did you see a lot of blue jeans and that?

SHORE: No. In the summertime I would wear like a sailor-type cotton pants with a flared bottom. You know I can't remember much about them.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember if you had a lot of clothes? Did most people tend to have a lot of clothes or have just a few outfits?

SHORE: Well, my husband was making very little money, so I recall wearing a lot of navy blue and white, I do remember that. We did wear shorts in the summer time, short shorts were in, tank tops, sort of tank tops, and the dresses were below the knee. You know, I don't remember much about clothes. You see I wasn't crazy much about clothes. Rose probably would.

O'BRIEN: Aside from the questionable neighbor who was entertaining the congressmen, do you remember any other stories from the neighborhood?

SHORE: Well, right across from us there was a family and the father was a policeman and he had a brother in the area who we heard—no, there was another neighbor there whose brother was in the bootlegging business, which was talked about, of course, and there was a mysterious lady who lived diagonally across from us from the entrance to the house, who had a big shepherd dog which was a watch dog, and we were scared away from her premises often by this dog. You know like a Rin Tin Tin what is it called?

O'BRIEN: A shepherd, German shepherd?

SHORE: Oh yeah, I couldn't remember. Other than the stone cutter down the street, most people were quiet. One couple from North Carolina moved in which was a little bit extraordinary as most people were from Washington. But there weren't any...

O'BRIEN: I think you told me the last time, Jo, that in your neighborhood when you were growing up most of the people there were...

SHORE: Were blue collar. Some government. So it was middle-class families there most of them, as far as I know. {Laughs}

O'BRIEN: So then you left and came back around in 1956 I think you said.

SHORE: Yes.

O'BRIEN: When you came back where did you go?

SHORE: Where did I go?

O'BRIEN: Do you remember where you lived when you came back?

SHORE: First I lived with my Mother.

O'BRIEN: And she was still in the same house?

SHORE: Mother was still in the same house, and where did I go? That is a good question. I will have to look at my resume and see what I did do. See what I mean, I have blanks.

O'BRIEN: That is fine, Jo, this is just for what you do remember, not to worry. Do you remember—had you noticed changes in the neighborhood—do you remember anything about changes in the neighborhood?

SHORE: More cars. This is after World War II now talking about. One thing about World War II I remember I was with my husband and two children and we lived in northwest Washington on Rittenhouse Street as I mentioned, but when Peace was signed everyone got in the car and everyone went downtown tooting their horns and riding around to celebrate. That was something to remember. I remember everyone turned out of their houses. That was peace in Europe—VE day. Then they had VJ day, too, with the Japanese.

O'BRIEN: And now '56 this... what is the racial situation like on Capitol Hill at this point?

SHORE: I would say it was entirely Caucasian except for maybe some of the back streets.

O'BRIEN: Were you around during any of the riots? Do you remember any of that period, coming into the 60s?

SHORE: In the 60s I was overseas. I was working from '65 to '68 I was in Switzerland working for CIA.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any relatives still living on Capitol Hill?

SHORE: No, I don't think so. My parents had died in the 50s so we were no longer back in Southeast there.

O'BRIEN: They died and you all sold the house after they died?

SHORE: Yes, back in 1955.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember when they died why you would not live there?

SHORE: Well I was in California until 56, and they both died...

O'BRIEN: When you weren't even here?

SHORE: Yes.

O'BRIEN: That might be the end of your recollections for Capitol Hill, Jo? Do you think we've expired it?

SHORE: I recall going back to Holy Comforter Church when I came back. I think I came there to get something for the records and the whole parish was African-American. I think it's continued to be so. Because I went there for a service and I was startled, although I had read about musicians on the altar and different things that went on. You know it was almost like a revival-type Mass.

O'BRIEN: So it really changed.

SHORE: Uh-huh. And that area had changed. It was that particular time or a little later I went back they had taken in that area where there was something called the car barn where the streetcars were housed. When the streetcars went out that building, I think, stayed empty but then they converted it and made apartments or condos, I do not know what year that was. '60s '70s or later. I don't recall the dates. I was surprised at that, of course, and I never did go back to look at the school. One thing they used to have when I was going to school there which would be up until 1934, they used to have, in the summertime they would have carnival in the school yard to raise money for the school. So we would have such things as you know like you would have at Glen Echo, you know, booths, different stands and all.

O'BRIEN: For games?

SHORE: Whatever. That's kind of vague but I remember food: hot dogs, ice cream and games of knocking over something; knocking the bottles down. Jeepers I haven't thought of these things in many moons.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember what daily life was back then in terms of—I am thinking about how our lives are now and how much I know they have changed.

SHORE: Oh, much slower paced. We didn't have the constant TV blaring at you or the constant ads and the radio there were some ads but not very many. I can recall my Mother listening to the radio constantly. It was mostly music. And as far as the TV was concerned it was Lawrence Welk or something like that.

O'BRIEN: What do you remember about your Mother's life?

SHORE: I remember that she had a very hard life. When there were six children in the family and three boys and three girls. My older sister went to work when she was 14. She went to work in the ladies' lingerie store. I can't remember what she did first but I recall a story, a family story, about her when World War I was over there was a big celebration downtown and people were riding around in trucks.

She was getting in or getting out of a truck during this celebration and she wore high top button shoes and because she had those on she was saved from having her foot smashed coming down, getting in or getting out of the truck because she had that type of shoe on. And my sister Rose told me that for a long time they kept that particular shoe for the story. Isn't that something?

O'BRIEN: Wow.

SHORE: I haven't thought of high top shoes in many moons. Talk about fashion.

O'BRIEN: High top button downs.

SHORE: Yes and my older sister Mary wore skirts and big white blouses and bouffant hairdos I don't know whether you would call it bouffant. They wore something in the back to puff it out—it was call a rat because it was leather covered wire, I think, that made like a long sausage I guess in the back you tucked the hair under. Speaking of that, that is the way we used to put our hair up what with leather-covered rollers. They weren't exactly rollers. They were leather and underneath there was a bendable wire so that when you rolled it then you would just fold it over.

O'BRIEN: Really. There is a gadget like that that's on television now.

SHORE: Now?

O'BRIEN: Any everyone thinks it's this brand new thing. It's probably a new fiber on an old idea. So Jo, you said your mom's life was hard. Why else do you think her life was hard?

SHORE: Well, because she would have a washing machine; she did not have a dryer. She could wash the clothes, the sheets, etc. in the washing machine then she would hang her clothes out on a clothes line. She waited on my brothers a lot and they worked in sheet metal—they used to install air conditioning. They were sort of electrician and combination sheet metal workers and they would have these heavy clothes she would wash and hang them out. She would iron shirts and wash sheets and towels and hang all that stuff out and then she would have to go grocery shopping or she did some of that by telephone. We did have a telephone. There was a local grocer who would deliver. Then she cooked big meals for them and of course, waited on people when they were sick. She had six kids. I thought her life was hard. Her big interest in life was church. Going to church, belonging to different associations connected with the church. She was a strong Roman Catholic.

O'BRIEN: Which parish did you all belong to at that time?

SHORE: Holy Comforter. I thought she had a hard life. Even into her sixties and seventies she was living in the house with one of my brothers and still waiting on people.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember where you all went to the doctor? Who the physician was or how you did that?

SHORE: I don't recall too many things connected with a doctor. I know we all probably had whooping cough or something like that. But the doctor came to the house. One time my father had to go and get the doctor and this is an old story where he had to go and hire a cab which was horse-drawn. I don't know what year this was it must have been during World War I time or something like that. The doctor had an office in northwest Washington so we had to go to the doctor's office, get the doctor, hire the cab, bring him home and they were called Hansom Cab. That was a wild story.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember that was for? Who was sick with what?

SHORE: It could have been my brother Pat, I am not sure. He had spinal meningitis. That's when he lost his hair. He was an infant when that happened. We did not have any dramatic illness as far as I remember. I was told before I was born before we moved to this "new" house and lived on 16th Street, NE; no, SE, the whole family had the flu at the same time (static on tape). There was a whole room of sick kids. [probably the flu epidemic of 1918/1919].

O'BRIEN: She was a good woman. I think that about does it, Jo.

SHORE: It depends on how many alleys/avenues you want to go down.

O'BRIEN: Whatever you remember that you want to tell me.

SHORE: Well, this is for Capitol Hill, right? When I got married I got away from there, and I did not go back to that area very often. I did have some relatives who lived on Capitol Hill, on 17th and E Street.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember what was considered Capitol Hill back then?

SHORE: Certainly. Up to where I went to school, Sixth and East Capitol. Capitol Hill (tape fades, no sound)

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

END OF INTERVIEW