



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Rose Lovelace

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

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

O'BRIEN: ...2003

LOVELACE: 2003. We're at Little Sisters.

LOVELACE: I live at the Little Sisters of the Poor in Northeast Washington, and I'm very happy here. I'll put that as an aside of it. It is a lovely place, and my sister and I both live here, reside here.

O'BRIEN: Can you tell us your name and...

LOVELACE: I am Rose Eileen Lovelace and...

O'BRIEN: Do you spell Lovelace L O V E L A C E?

LOVELACE: Uh huh, just the way it sounds.

O'BRIEN: Ok.

LOVELACE: Everybody wants to call it "Loveless". They seldom hear the Lovelace, I think that's it. But I was born in Washington, DC, at home on March 23, 1911 and...

O'BRIEN: Where was home at that time?

LOVELACE: It was Southeast Washington. They had, it was just after the war, or the war was ending back then, and we moved from another portion of Southeast [314 16th Street SE], and I remember the moving [to 1612 H Street SE] because I was about maybe seven years old [at least nine] and to me it was lovely because it was brand new, and I liked new things and sparkly things, but I did have difficulty keeping it the way I wanted it even as a child because I had two brothers...

O'BRIEN: Do you remember the move?

LOVELACE: Ah, not exactly just into the house. I don't remember how we got there or whatever they used then, and I remember the night that my sister Josephine who is as I say living here too, and she was born in December of 1918, so I was very young, but my mother had arthritis in her shoulders at the time the baby was born at home, and so I—we had a visiting nurse at that time, Metropolitan Life instituted that—and because my mother could not handle the baby, the nurse told me how to do it so I would bathe her and take care of her. At the same time I had a brother who was two years younger than I, but he was—he had meningitis and he was a mute, he couldn't hear, couldn't talk and at that point in time he

couldn't walk and couldn't see very well, but he came out of all that. So I was little mother to two children {laughs} when I was very, very young.

O'BRIEN: Was it common that women would have their babies at home?

LOVELACE: Yes, everyone did then.

O'BRIEN: Can we just pause for just a moment here? OK, we're restarting.

LOVELACE: The family, the birth of Josephine...

O'BRIEN: Right, that was what we were talking about. Do you remember anything about that birth? Do you remember any details of it?

LOVELACE: Oh, I remember it was at dinner time that the rest of the children, and I guess I was shunted next door to neighbors you know while this was going on and my oldest brother—I had three brothers and one was a mute as I said—but the oldest brother Lewis, he took over the cooking because they were hungry {laughter} that evening. I mean they were used to dinner so that started that and went on for a long time while mother recuperated and then she went right back into the routine. But for Jo, I know one day when she was a newborn more or less, she had what we call spasms and you know the eyes roll back and whatever and I was terrified, but after that she got over it of course, and ever after that I was so afraid she was going to have one of those, what is the other name for it?

O'BRIEN: Seizure? Sounds like you're describing a seizure.

LOVELACE: Yeah, anyway that was it and as I was saying, I took care of the two of them, she as a baby and then Pat, his name was Patrick, he would go out or take him outside, he walked with crutches for, and he had a temper and he knew what he wanted, but he'd be sitting on the curb. Now we did have cobblestone streets there, and we had one of the feeders of water where the, the horse, horse trough is what it was, and I can picture that in my mind. But, anyway...

[The 1930 census provides the following for 1612 H Street SE:

Reese, Lewis S.	57	born VA;	Father: Wales; Mother: VA	Salesman
Josephine T.	52	born Irish Free State	Father: same; Mother: same	
Lewis Jr.	23	born Washington DC		
James J.	21	born Washington DC		
Patrick H.	16	born Washington DC		
Josephine R.	10	born Washington DC		
Lovelace, William	25	born Washington DC (son-in-law)		
Rose	19	born Washington DC]		

O'BRIEN: Do you remember the address there, Rose?

LOVELACE: It was 16th Street SE, and I believe it was the 300 block. [314] I think so.

O'BRIEN: OK. And you had a horse trough out the front?

LOVELACE: And on the street uh huh, and the cobblestones. And I remember a woman coming by in her electric car, and she had to get water for some reason or other put into it. But she was one of those with the, you know the lace collar thing, you know the uppity uppity, and I see this car and no noise you know, the thing crept up on me {laughter} is what I remember. So , of course, then they went to gasoline as you know, the Ford, I remember the first Fords that they had and eventually my older brother—a car was purchased and he drove it, he thought it was his car. It was supposed to be the family car {laughter}.

O'BRIEN: So prior to that you took public transportation or walked most anywhere you had to go?

LOVELACE: We had what they call a hansom cab and that's in my other, you know, the woman who did my personal history up to a certain point, she had never heard of the word of hansom, so she spelled it h- a- n- d , which it isn't, it's h-a- n, hansom. And no, your doctor, our doctor was in downtown—Northwest Washington, which was called downtown—and I know his name was Llewellyn Elliott (?). He was a Britisher [Welsh], and my father had to go and get him and bring the doctor there to the house. But...

O'BRIEN: And, so, tell me about the hansom cab, what, what....

LOVELACE: You've seen them in the movies I'm sure, like a two-seater.

O'BRIEN: Uh huh.

LOVELACE: And it's horse drawn and it's a small car, high and...

O'BRIEN: Do you remember the cost of that at the time? Do you remember how much that would cost?

LOVELACE: Cost, no, no I didn't go into those things until later when I was going to buy one or somebody else was....

O'BRIEN: {Laughs} Just curious.

LOVELACE: I should remember, but I remember pictures taken of the Ford that we had and the mute brother would be taken over to—outside of Baltimore, Irvington—to school, and he stayed at least for the week, no he stayed longer than that, and every once in a while my mother would want to be driven over there and, of course, Lewis was doing us a big favor, but he'd have me, I'd sit in the back seat turned to watch to see if any cops were following. That's the kind of guy {laughter} he was.

O'BRIEN: What was he doing that he wanted you to watch for the cops?

LOVELACE: He was speeding.

O'BRIEN: Oh, speeding

LOVELACE: According to that at 25 miles I think was the top speed something like that.

O'BRIEN: And what was the speed limit?

LOVELACE: That was it.

O'BRIEN: Oh, the speed limit was 25.

LOVELACE: ...was 25.

O'BRIEN: So what was the top speed of the car?

LOVELACE: I really, that I don't know either.

O'BRIEN: But he was always going faster than that.

LOVELACE: Faster than he should have been, so he wanted me to watch for the cop, that was my duty. Then we'd get over there and he'd get impatient, you know, to go home. But Pat liked it over there. It was run by the nuns and we made friends and I, he, he went there until whatever the limit was for boys, young boys.

O'BRIEN: And this was, where was the name?

LOVELACE: Irvington, outside of Baltimore.

O'BRIEN: Irvington.

LOVELACE: Uh huh and later he went over to...

O'BRIEN: That's kind of a long ways to go, wasn't it?

LOVELACE: It was a long way and mother inquired about everything all over the states and I think the only other school for mutes was in Massachusetts or something like that. Now we have more, thank God, and there's more interest in it, you know.

O'BRIEN: Do you know when Gallaudet came?

LOVELACE: Then Gallaudet is the higher school but they had, I forget the name of the lower school where Pat went from Irvington and eventually into Gallaudet

O'BRIEN: Oh, really.

LOVELACE: Uh huh. And then he got out of there and he did work, Coca Cola hired them at that time because they didn't talk; isn't that awful?

O'BRIEN: So they knew they could get nice work out of them? {Unclear; over speaking}

LOVELACE: ...the money, and there wouldn't be any time wasted so he had to watch the line, and then afterwards he worked at Woodward and Lothrop as a presser and so then, well anyway, that's the early part. Should stick with...that is what you want, not updated stuff?

O'BRIEN: All the stuff that's on the Hill. How, how did the seasons affect the city?

LOVELACE: How does what?

O'BRIEN: The seasons. When it was hot and there was no air conditioning.

LOVELACE: Oh, it was terrible {laughter} but we survived. We used to inquire if, you know, at night, my father was the last one to turn the lights out and whatever, if we could sleep on the floor on a pallet was the idea. Why we thought down there was cooler I don't know.

O'BRIEN: 'Cause the heat rises?

LOVELACE: I suppose. But anyway that was a big deal. And then most of the houses then or the better houses quote had these huge porches on the back of the house, and most people afterwards had them turned into an apartment or just enclosed you know that's the...

O'BRIEN: So the porches on the backs of the houses...

LOVELACE: ...and they were about 18 feet, they were very, very big and so that eventually as I say when they had it turned into enclosed, but people slept out there in the wintertime some of them. It was like a TB cure to sleep out with the, just the screen and the cold air.

O'BRIEN: Really?

LOVELACE: Uh huh. 'Cause that's what they did at the place, what was it called Dale or something, in Maryland where they took the TB patients at that time but they used to...

O'BRIEN: They put them on the porch to sleep?

LOVELACE: Uh huh.

O'BRIEN: So would the whole family go and sleep?

LOVELACE: Oh, no. no just a bed or something—out there...

O'BRIEN: On those huge porches on the backs of houses?

LOVELACE: Uh huh.

O'BRIEN: So why did they make them so large?

LOVELACE: I don't know. I never thought of that, but they don't do it anymore of course. I don't know and as I say then you had to have a—if you turned it into an apartment and you wanted an outside entrance, you had the stairs, stairs that went up to the apartment in the back, which my mother had eventually as the years went on, she had it turned into a very pretty apartment. And, oh, I don't know, daily life, you said something about what did we do to for play—I never...

O'BRIEN: What did the kids, especially like in the summertime when it was hot and stuff, what did the kids do to cool off and....

LOVELACE: First thing we wanted to do was get our shoes off and walk in the grass. Of course, I think that still goes on. And test your feet as to how hot you could stand the sidewalks and that sort of thing. I didn't have any play toys that I remember. I used to like to play house but back of the steps were open so these old steps that went upstairs, I'd put my legs through there and have makeshift things to make a model house, you know, on the step. Very simple thing, but I would say to my mother, ask her what she did when she was little, 'cause that's way back when and she said oh, we just had our best clothes on for church, went to church and then we sat and picked daisies or did something like that {laughs} so it had improved from that time on anyway. I think she was born in 1887 [1882] it would have been. She said she was 22 or 23 when she got married and at that time the ages for getting married, she was close to becoming an old maid as they {unclear} at 22 or 23. But you see it changed with each era and now it's back to the working women and waiting to have their children and all that. In fact that's what my granddaughters did. They'd make older mothers but yet they seem to be in better shape than some of the previous ones were.

O'BRIEN: So where did you, where did you go to school?

LOVELACE: I went first to Holy Comforter which was at 14th and East Capitol, I think it's 14th and, went there for a few years and then transferred to St. Cecilia's Academy which was at Sixth and East Capitol, and it had a school for girls and then we had, I called it the bridge of sighs that went over to a small housing that had boys, a few boys, and you dare not get caught getting up on the bridge {laugh} to see the boys or vice versa. Anyway it was great, and I remember little incidents there in school. Had a neighbor girl went to school with me and she was pretty wild even for that era, and her mother, they were

not Catholic, her mother sent her there for a better education to see what they could do with her. So we had a French—and so the French nun got so annoyed with her one day 'cause she wouldn't behave, she put her in the closet and then everybody went away and left her, they forgot her {laughs}. We would walk to school together and she was something. She would insist on trying to make, get into a...some sort of altercation with the black people. We had one place now, speaking of the black people, where they lived. They lived in a certain spot...

O'BRIEN: Section of town?

LOVELACE: Huh?

O'BRIEN: A certain section of town?

LOVELACE: Yeah, and it wasn't very large and it...

O'BRIEN: Do you remember where that was?

LOVELACE: Where it was? There was one, yes, off of it would be that, 15th and something. Of course they ran according to number and whatever. 15th and something, I don't remember the name of the school though. Somebody asked me that.

O'BRIEN: Like Southeast or Northeast?

LOVELACE: Southeast again. As I say most people stayed in their own bailiwick more or less and I do remember alleys and that was a copy from Europe, that sort of thing and that was in much the same area as the black people.

O'BRIEN: So most of everything that you needed was pretty, pretty close to home for the most part and you stayed pretty close to home. So traveling to Baltimore or something was a like a big deal...

LOVELACE: I was lucky enough to have an aunt who cared for me in particular, and she had nieces in Baltimore and so she would take me and we'd go by train, and we left from 15th and H NE—Northwest, whatever it is down there, Northeast. Because one of the, I think it was the B&O, came into there [The B & O left from Union Station]. You'd never know it now. Ah, and that was something to remember. And then she gave clothing of any kind to her nieces then her husband, my uncle, insisted that I have the same thing so I had a fur coat, a curlicue coat [probably Persian lamb] as I remember and a beaver hat. Beaver was very expensive material. So I had all those things and my father for, had a friend who did embroidery and sewing, so I remember I had a dark blue taffeta dress all embroidered with something or other, so I thought I was the cat's whatever. Anyway. I, I came up that way until foolishly I've always wanted to do

things quickly and do everything all at one time so I, from St. Cecilia's then I went to Immaculata which was all the way up in Northwest Washington, at Eighth and Q, way up in there.

O'BRIEN: How long would it take you to get there?

LOVELACE: ...off of Rhode Island Avenue. I don't know, went by streetcar {laughs} as some kids say what is that. And, of course, not like a bus where they can take you and then drop you off so you go one line and then you would transfer or whatever and go the other way.

O'BRIEN: Do remember the route that you took?

LOVELACE: Uh huh, Pennsylvania Avenue, 17th Street at the very end of it where the bridge was all the way up to—well Sixth, Seventh. Some of them went as far out as Glen Echo that ran that whole line. But, so what else did I do?

O'BRIEN: Well, let's go back for just a minute, you were starting to tell me and we got kind of sidetracked, about the situation with, in the grade school with this little sort of troubled little girl, and you were telling me about how people lived and stayed in their own areas.

LOVELACE: Uh huh.

O'BRIEN: So where was the area where the African Americans stayed, you were talking about there was a certain part of town...

LOVELACE: Uh huh.

O'BRIEN: Where was that, do you remember?

LOVELACE: Well, because we were all the way down, my mother and father's home is one block there that was set on H Street, and no one ever heard of H Street SE, but it was all to itself, and it was one block and at the end of it was the man, I forget his name right now, who had, made the gravestones and engraved those. And then you went a little further and there you're facing one of the gates of Congressional Cemetery so that was part of what we did, go over into the cemetery. I remember some of the—it had a statue of a little girl who had run out in the street and been killed so they had her in a glass enclose. I remember that in the cemetery. And then as I say, Sousa and some congressmen way back when, and that's why it was given the name it was. Eventually, I don't know, they all went to either Arlington or somewhere else when they buried. But then, get back on track, Rose....

O'BRIEN: And different parts of town for, so where did the rich people live, where did the really poor people live?

LOVELACE: Northwest.

O'BRIEN: Northwest?

LOVELACE: Uh huh, always. And the medium, you know, medium class of people in the lower parts of Northwest. The others would go out like Foxhall Road and that sort of thing. And the embassies were on Massachusetts Avenue near Florida Avenue, way out, near American U, in that area. After that they started spreading around and some of them were down across from Watergate, which surprised me in later years. I have been into the Russian Embassy which was on 16th Street when I was working that is and...

O'BRIEN: When, when were you working around there?

LOVELACE: When was I working? Ah, well, I started finish school at—I skipped some grades so at 16...

O'BRIEN: How'd you do that?

LOVELACE: Well, I guess {laughs} they just put me in higher grades, so I got out.

O'BRIEN: So you were really smart?

LOVELACE: I don't know, I guess so, I guess so. I loved to read, I said I read before I went to school to learn to read, somehow or other I loved to look at the newspaper and my mother had a set of books that was called the Books of Knowledge and in it you'd have something that I could read in my, whatever it was, Shakespeare, little bits and pieces of that, and what else that I liked so much. But anyway I got a lot of knowledge {laughs} from the Books of Knowledge, so I was, and as far as people were concerned, I was very sensitive always to people, and I knew a lot of things that I shouldn't be knowing you know, men and women and the whole bit.

O'BRIEN: How'd you know all that?

LOVELACE: I don't know. Just something. So now I'll bring it up to date, some of the brothers were on the altar and one of them is named Jesus {Spanish pronunciation}, Jesus {English pronunciation} and afterwards they were talking about his being on the altar for some of these wonderful things we had around Easter time, and he and the priest off the cuff, they were standing there talking and said something, he said something to the priest, "I almost didn't do something," and I said, "Yes, Jesus, I knew that you hesitate." He said, "How did you know?" I said, "Well I can read, I read the expression on your face first," and the action of his body whatever, so anyway, I guess I was—Jo's the inquisitive one but I somehow or other I take in things that she doesn't but that's the difference in personalities.

O'BRIEN: So then when you were 16, you, where did you go?

LOVELACE: I went to work.

O'BRIEN: You went to work? Where was everybody else at 16, other 16 year olds, what were they doing?

LOVELACE: Dating, I—my mother let me go with young people, but the reason {laughs} I had a friend whose brother-in-law was a manager of a ball team, baseball team, so that's where I met my husband and ah...

O'BRIEN: He was a ball player?

LOVELACE: He was a ball player. He was very good but then right after we were married he had his fingers cut off and he couldn't play ball anymore.

O'BRIEN: What happened?

LOVELACE: He was a cabinet maker, made furniture, and the saw just—anyway he couldn't play ball anymore but that's what was going on—at Margaret and her sisters and other girls and then we'd get together you know, just kids, that's really what we were. And then the man that I married, he was six years older than I, and he had a car which was a big thing, a sports roadster, they all had pictures of that, when he had the roadster {laughs} so that was the one of the attractions I guess. Anyway, so I was married at 17, but at 16 I had, I went to business school in addition to my getting out of school early, and I also had gone downtown, this is that ambition of mine, to type envelopes at this big barn-like place [Pension Building?], and you had to type so many before you got paid, but I would type up a storm. That's how I became such a fast typist make, you know, I was determined to get the money that was there.

O'BRIEN: How fast were you at your fastest?

LOVELACE: I really don't know, but I competed with the girl who won the prize for the District, Mary Alexander, and she really was, you know. But my son used to say, afterwards when things happened you know and I had to stay home, I worked for Judge Edrington, but anyway he would dictate over the phone, and I had paper and stuff there, and so my son knew I'd make the typewriter almost jump off the table. He says "Mom can type with her toes." {laughs} Anyway, I started that too early, that's the idea, I don't think, what would anybody today know at 17? You get married and the first thing you have children, so I had two children a year apart, and the first one then lived two years and he died and then the second one I raised 'til he was 17 and he died.

O'BRIEN: Ooooooh.

LOVELACE: Then, I had Bob, thank God, and I had another child in 1949, an infant that died. So out of the four I have the one.

O'BRIEN: Wow.

LOVELACE: But now my son Bob has four children, has three girls and one boy, so it's nice.

O'BRIEN: Right.

LOVELACE: And now they have children {laughs}....

O'BRIEN: So that must have been really really hard.

LOVELACE: It was, I ruined my health though I think I started way back when, had migraine headaches and still bothering. Early today, with the summer, so....

O'BRIEN: {talking in background} OK, let's pause for a second.

O'BRIEN: I'm going to ask you to tell me a little bit about your recollections of the holidays and how, what you did on various holidays, what they were like.

LOVELACE: Uh huh. Well, they were all done at home and at one point, the house that was near the cemetery there, we had a big back yard, and they would have a watermelon plugged and then cut for the kids, had homemade ice cream, you made ice cream in one of those little freezers, you only made so much at a time but that was given over to the kids to make, do—the adults had hard-shell crabs and, of course, beer or whatever it was they drank at the time and that was it, it was just you know everything was sort of homemade you never thought of doing anything else. Then in later years as you know they started all this big community celebration and the community there on Capitol Hill.

O'BRIEN: What community celebration in particular are you talking about? Do you remember how, what started and when?

LOVELACE: No, but I do remember back when I was walking to St. Cecilia's [southeast corner, Sixth and East Capitol], now I'm regressing again now, Lincoln Park, and we had the bands, the military bands would come there and play.

O'BRIEN: Oh, really?

LOVELACE: Uh huh, and we had like a little gazebo there where the musicians were and then that was in the summer, ever so often just like they have them downtown you know later on. You know, that was fun.

O'BRIEN: And the whole family would go or....?

LOVELACE: No, not necessarily because my family was disconnected in the fact that the boys did their thing, you know. And I can remember one, one brother was a football player and the other was not, and then Pat of course, the mute, he had his own thing and his own friends. So it was a little disconnected. And my mother was a real motherly type who never went out except to church and that sort of thing. And you always saw her in the house dress as they called them then. And you were so happy when she got dressed up which she had the clothes, but to dress up and go somewhere and later, in her later years, she would go with her sister to play bingo at the churches. Of course, they say, they kid about that. They say, say something religious and they say bingo {laughs}. Anyway, she did that....

O'BRIEN: Well, the closets are so small in those houses so it certainly makes you think wardrobes were not terribly large

LOVELACE: They weren't and my bedroom, I finally got to the large bedroom on the front in the house, and I had a bedroom suite in there, but it was unusual. They had what they called double beds, some of them were brass, some were iron. And, let's see what else....

O'BRIEN: So when you had a bedroom suite, what was that?

LOVELACE: It was bureau and I did for the first time, I had a, you just mentioned the word.

O'BRIEN: Oh, the dresser and the chest and....

LOVELACE: Ah, no, you know, where you can hang the clothes up?

O'BRIEN: The closet?

LOVELACE: No.

O'BRIEN: Armoire?

LOVELACE: Hmm...

O'BRIEN: Like an armoire?

LOVELACE: Yes, something like that, uh huh, with the suite. And so that, that was really enjoyable to come into that. It depended on who left home for what reason {laughs}, you know that you fell heir to. 'Cause we had an older sister, Mary, who's the oldest in the family, and as I say she left home early. She went to work the First World War, she was at the War Risk they called it and ah....

O'BRIEN: What was that?

LOVELACE: Like selling bonds and that sort of thing. And she, when the armistice was declared, she was the last one on the Army truck and her foot got caught in the wheel.

O'BRIEN: Ahh.

LOVELACE: So, talking about communication, her girlfriend was with her too, and she had to come all the way to Southeast Washington, it happened in Northwest, to tell what had happened. So then I can remember the great excitement, they saved the shoe, she had on lace that came up to about here. They tried to bring them back not long ago. And they kept the shoes there as evidence, but I don't think anything was ever done about it. But there again, was, we didn't have a telephone, no, seldom people did way back, you know, and so it was the newspaper, the extras that came out on the street, the boys calling "Walkstra", it sounded like "Walkstra", you know. And that was how you got the news. Just imagine now what happens.

O'BRIEN: Right, so you get the news from the extra...

LOVELACE: We're probably right there.

O'BRIEN: And how often did the extras come out?

LOVELACE: When something special was going on. It just depended, you know, like of course the end of the war would be and the headline was...

O'BRIEN: Extra?

LOVELACE: ...yeah big.

O'BRIEN: Right. So how long did it take her friend to get across from Northwest to, would that take like a half hour, an hour?

LOVELACE: It would take longer I guess, I don't know. So what we have today, they would never envision. You know. In fact, in fact, along that line we had a place called Graceful Care that we got people to come in and either take us shopping or do something for us and they gave, the Graceful Care people gave a great big shindig at one of the hotels in Virginia inviting all people sort of my age bracket or whatever because they said that this is what we happened to build through the 50 years at least, you know, to the world what it is today. It was because of the people living now who lived then and did all these things.

O'BRIEN: So what was the Graceful Care, where, how'd...?

LOVELACE: That's the name, she—her mother had died, this woman, and her name was Grace so she named her company Graceful Care, and it just like any other you'd call and see if... We latched on to one particular woman who would come most of the time and became a friend more or less.

O'BRIEN: So had did you—how—was that expensive, was it....?

LOVELACE: Very expensive and then you know the time...

O'BRIEN: Why would you do that, why.....?

LOVELACE: Well, because ah, {pause; cuts off}

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

LOVELACE: This is later now, when Jo and I needed help.

O'BRIEN: OK, so what kind of help did your mother get and how and....?

LOVELACE: Just using the black people, and I don't know how they contacted them or what because there weren't any agencies as such and...

O'BRIEN: Did you put notices on bulletin boards and stores or shops....?

LOVELACE: I don't remember doing that at all although there must have been because, remember those tables in one of those quick eating places where they had the old newspaper thing? So I guess it was similar to that and maybe a little paper that came out with ads in them.

O'BRIEN: Some local... publication

LOVELACE: Uh huh. But I don't remember... See, these are the details and you'd have books full of everything that you did and we were not, a lot of information was lost too about the family and a family Bible we had and the only thing we could find after everybody moving around, in and out, was the box that she kept it in. Mother.

O'BRIEN: And you never found it?

LOVELACE: But the Bible disappeared and now, so in my, in this one, how many years ago, five or six years ago, that this lady did for me, I took the time to try to find out the different relatives, and so that when they were born and when they died and whatever, so that's all in my book too. That'd be about the only reference book they had.

O'BRIEN: Right.

LOVELACE: In fact, my daughter-in-law borrowed it, that's why it's down at Bob's house.

O'BRIEN: OK, so when we were talking a little bit ago you were telling me then at 16 you got a job, at 17 you got married...

LOVELACE: Uh huh.

O'BRIEN: ...had the four children, your husband, what was he doing, he was a cabinetmaker. What happened when he had the accident?

LOVELACE: Well, see two or three horrible things happened in between there. We had the Depression and that was something else, whatever, if you can recall in those years. Anything, it just went from bad to worse. And there was a time in the Depression that nobody, nobody had work, no money. I don't know, I look back now and I wonder because we had these two children close together, we wheeled them around in the summertime and couldn't even afford a five cent, what do you call them, snowball that was a drugstore there on Pennsylvania Avenue {laughs}, we'd go past but we couldn't afford to buy one. It was terrible. So that's what these Graceful Care meant in that you'd help build or rebuild what we had had before.

O'BRIEN: So what kinds of things did you do then for money, did all the kids then try to get whatever work they could get and then contribute to the household, or...? What happened?

LOVELACE: Well, it just wasn't anything to do. I don't recall. My two brothers were working. But that, they were leading more or less their own life. Of course, they stayed at mother's home, they had to pay something whatever it was, so that kept her going and my husband even took awful jobs, rebuilding some old houses and like that. Then all of a sudden, it broke loose and the government was hiring again and he was, he made fine instruments among other things. He worked for the Coast and Geodetic [Survey]. He made fine instruments for them.

O'BRIEN: For whom?

LOVELACE: Delicate instruments for Coast and Geodetic Survey for measuring and whatever, so he was very good. We still, in the family, have some furniture that he's made. I have one granddaughter who likes that sort of thing. But anything old. And when I moved out I had several beautiful marble tables, and she wanted those but she has an eclectic house. She likes it that way. She has asked for this ring. I said, sure, when I die you can have it. Right now I can't get it off again {laughs}. But um....

O'BRIEN: So what did you mother do then when you were gone and Jo was gone?

LOVELACE: Well then part of the time I moved back in and then that's how I could go to work. I was the first one who got a job after the Depression and I had been out for five years, and the funny thing was, I was practicing my shorthand for no known reason. Of course, that's me and it rubbed up wanting to go back, and I got a call from a friend, and I have never looked for a job in my life, I've always been asked to take their job or whatever. And she called and she was going to go to work for some in the Patent Department, it was all patent law. As I say, when I—I didn't know what a patent lawyer was. I didn't know much of anything of the outside world. But anyway, she, one of the girls in the business school was

[Interruption from another person coming in.]

O'BRIEN: ...were a lot of hard times.

LOVELACE: Well, oddities just here and there and whatever but the others were so in debt and hurt so much, you know, you remember things like that.

O'BRIEN: What else do you remember about the neighborhood during those bad times?

LOVELACE: Um, for the most part people were friendly, and it was like borrowing a cup of this or something or other, and my mother was, instead of being Irish, she should have been German 'cause she always had the coffee pot on and whenever you came in you had to have something to eat and that used to annoy me no end because I wanted order {laughs}, I was always trying to strike out for order and what with the boys, when they were little or younger, it was awful, moving into the new house, and they didn't respect these beautiful floors, whatever you know. They were kids.

O'BRIEN: And the house being the one at, in Southeast at 17th Street or 16th Street?

LOVELACE: Uh huh, 17th, uh huh.

O'BRIEN: And having come from where? Where were you...?

LOVELACE: Not far away, I think they were up at C Street, something like that. I was born at somewhere on C Street SE which would be, you know, more or less in the same whatever.

O'BRIEN: So then they moved to get a bigger house?

LOVELACE: I suppose so, I really don't know. I used to go and look at the house in which they said I was born, and I thought, oh, I'd love that. It had a different entrance {laughs} and ...but we had moved. Anyway, I really don't know....

O'BRIEN: And where's your dad in all of this, you don't talk too much about your father.

LOVELACE: No, he was a, {pause} well, I don't have any real special memories about my father. He was a quiet man. He was from Virginia.

O'BRIEN: What did he do for work?

LOVELACE: He was in the merchandising and {pause} I can remember he and my mother talking about different things, but he, what I remember about him is, in the mornings going to school he'd—he went to work a little later than we, than I did going to St. Cecilia's. I had to walk from 17th Street up to Sixth {laughs} and East Capitol, is a good walk. I remember one super duper cold morning, and I was going to be the talk of the class by wearing socks that came right under my knee, {laughs} not much showing but anyway, and they apparently, they were wool but they weren't warm enough that morning. So it was the only time in my life I ever went back to the house and he hadn't gone yet. Said, “What are you doing coming back here?” I remember things like that. “You should keep on going.” But the man in that era, at least he, he wore the finest of suits, always had liquor in the sideboard or whatever they call it. I remember he had an uncle who used to come up and visit. And the uncle's daughters would come, and one of them was like, you know, the grand lady and my mother was so silly, but no, she was kind-hearted, she waited on all of them you know, when they should have been helping or doing something. But anyway, he had two daughters. And then on my mother's side there was the—her brother and his wife who had no children so they were very good, they were very good to me.

O'BRIEN: Were they all from this area?

LOVELACE: No, mother's relatives were in Northwest, up across from St. Stephen's, Georgetown section, I think, I, 23rd, 25th Street.

O'BRIEN: Do you know what brought....? So your mother and your father were from DC?

LOVELACE: I don't know. My father was from Virginia.

O'BRIEN: Oh, Virginia.

LOVELACE: And I think they met in the merchandising business because my mother had worked in merchandising. I had a picture of her, you know they wore the long black skirts and the white blouse with the puffy sleeves and all that sort of stuff. And her family was from this area because they had what they called the old house was way down where one of the stadiums is now and we thought it was the country. 'Cause I'd go down and stay with her in the summertime for a week or so, and I know she had oil lamps and you know the whole bit. Feather beds and that sort of stuff. Summer kitchen.

O'BRIEN: Summer kitchen?

LOVELACE: A summer kitchen.

O'BRIEN: What is a summer kitchen?

LOVELACE: It's outside the regular kitchen, and you know, all the old, even the wealthy people, had the extra kitchen outside.

O'BRIEN: Really?

LOVELACE: Uh huh.

O'BRIEN: So what was the purpose of that, so you could use the oven and not heat the house up?

LOVELACE: To keep the smells and everything out of the rest of the house. And also they thought it was cooler because in the regular kitchen, they had these big stoves where you lifted the lids, you know, and all that, had coal, so, so that would be too hot. So I, in the other one, I don't know what they used to cook, but it was cooler. It usually was more frame than a brick, you know, that sort of thing. So this old house—mother's sister Anne lived in that, and she at one time had a dairy and so she had one remaining horse when I remember, and I was terrified of the horse. But she had chickens, so I could feed those and that sort of thing.

O'BRIEN: And this was where the stadium is now? [probably not RFK Stadium]

LOVELACE: Just about down there which we thought was country {laughs}.

O'BRIEN: Wow. So you were right at the very edge of town?

LOVELACE: Uh huh, more or less. Yeah. And then we'd walk, did a lot of walking and I can remember walking with my father, who he had short legs like I do but he could walk so fast, my aunt named him the Speed but I'd walk down there to go to her place in the summer. And then when I was down there, there was nothing but what they called the commons. Now that's just an English expression, and it's just nothing but a big field. So at night that evening we'd start out and go somewhere it was, walking, she and my aunt and I and get ice cream and I think we took it back with us. But anyway, then coming back, it was just pitch black, that sort of thing. Light the lamps and that was one of her duties, was keeping the lamps clean. Um, and walking up the stairs, you know, with a—carrying a lamp. That was a dangerous way to live, wasn't it?

O'BRIEN: Sure was.

LOVELACE: But anyway, they evolved. Oh, I know what the new house quote that my father bought, it had a gas light in it and that was super duper. That was new stuff. And the bathtub that was up on legs you know, they built them that way....

O'BRIEN: Why was that?

LOVELACE: Well, nobody had invented it. You know you come into a new era and you have something new.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember what kinds of food you ate, what was really popular?

LOVELACE: Much the same as today, I think. Because I remember going to the store to purchase things. The only thing was, in the store, you had your butcher, one butcher and a big butcher block and you could stand and ask for whatever part of whatever.

O'BRIEN: Where was the butcher?

LOVELACE: He was somewhere within the confines of this whole area of....um.....cemetery, whatever, you know, the whole thing went around. I don't know how many blocks it would be. And it was off of one of these things, they had an alley, and it wasn't until very late in life I learned that that was a European thing. That's why Georgetown is that way. You know, some of those streets were just alleys. And originally, they tell me that an alley came up to house the black people who worked for the white people in the big house.

O'BRIEN: Ohhhh.

LOVELACE: So, that's how it started with the, an alley. And so they kept it up for quite a few years, I guess they thought that was the thing to do. But Georgetown was really, squeeze one together, one, they're all pushed in there together. And yet at the same time they had those beautiful houses that are still there that they show every once in a while.

O'BRIEN: Uh huh. Uh huh. So do you remember any, any changes in the neighborhood,—sort of during any particular periods of time? Do you remember say the '20s being different from the '30s or the '40s in the way the neighborhood looked or the character of the neighborhood?

LOVELACE: Yes, but it's so subtle, you know, when it happens. It's just like now when something, you wonder when certain thing went out and this is in.

O'BRIEN: Right.

LOVELACE: I remember, I don't know how old, quite a few years we had a lamplighter, you know we had the lamps on the streets and every evening, getting dark, they would pull that thing, and it was a gas lamp and many of the houses had glass doors, I can remember that.

O'BRIEN: And what was that about, do you now?

LOVELACE: I don't know, it was just the way they were building things at the time. And,, I remember a snowstorm we had, that terrible one they keep talking about I was in St. Cecilia's then and the roof of the theater fell in. I don't know what year that could have been, but anyway, one of the girls from St. Cecilia's happened to be in the theater that night, and she was a dancer but she had her legs cut off. [Crandall's Knickerbocker Theatre, southwest corner of 18th and Columbia Road NW, January 29, 1922, 98 dead]

O'BRIEN: Oh, no!

LOVELACE: And of course, it killed her but anyway. So it was a good long hike from where I lived, and I can remember, you know, how ignorant we all were about the Chinese and the rest, you know, the Chinese laundry, and we'd go past and tease the Chinaman. No ticky, no shirty, no whatever, you know. The kids used to say. It was a simple life and you know and then you'd come all the way past that and come to Lincoln Park. So some evenings you could go up there. Was a good long walk but you went. Very...

O'BRIEN: So, did you have sidewalks, to walk on?

LOVELACE: Oh, yeah, eventually then as you know they built something else they'd have concrete. No, they had brick, red brick. And you know, over in Vienna, Virginia where we came from they were restoring Vienna and they did that, but I don't think it's a good thing to do because they won't stay in the ground. You know, they keep popping up.

O'BRIEN: Right.

LOVELACE: But we had the red brick. At first we had cobblestone and...

O'BRIEN: Did you have sidewalks when you had the cobblestone?

LOVELACE: Yes, I mean a type of red brick, uh huh. Everything seemed to have steps in front of it 'cause there again, I would worry about my brother and steps as a little one. I was just born a worry wart. Anxiety....

O'BRIEN: What was your impression of the local politics?

LOVELACE: I think most of it {laughs}, not a very good impression. But I—last night I was listening to this thing about Bennett and the latest thing after having written a book on, many books on virtues and whatever, they found out he had a vice. Well, doesn't everybody?

O'BRIEN: What's his vice?

LOVELACE: It—gambling. And he's gambled so much money away, you know. He's gotten big and fat. Whatever. Anyway, it's...

O'BRIEN: But do you remember the local politics, local DC politics, just what was going on with, you know, politics in the city and local issues, just about the people and schools and taxes and the city services, I guess.

LOVELACE: No, no, not too much. See, I moved out of, in 1941, I think I told you, to Alexandria first, because my husband was sent to Belvoir to work. So we lived over there during that period. Right, the war hadn't ended yet, because over here I was taking a couple of streetcars to go to work...

O'BRIEN: Were you working at that time?

LOVELACE: Oh, yeah.

O'BRIEN: Where?

LOVELACE: I was working for another firm of patent lawyers, and this same girl called me again and said she had gone into the government, she went into Interior and Bureau of Mines, and said why don't you come down and take a test. And I thought about it and I thought, I've never been in the government {laughs}, I've done everything else. So I, they tested me. I had to go to the Pentagon. No, that wasn't the time I went to Pentagon. Anyway, they tested me and I came out a hundred percent, so then it was a question of where they were going to use me. And lo and behold, when they gave me her job, I felt so bad, 'cause she worked in the chief's office, and um.....

O'BRIEN: Did she still want her job?

LOVELACE: Well, she had no choice, you know, she was working there and all of a sudden they put her in one of the divisions.

O'BRIEN: Yeah.

LOVELACE: It was a, all done under Economics and Statistics so, at that time, they were still watching the metals and minerals, so that was a... But she didn't work much longer 'cause something else happened in her life. That's the way it is, you know. Nothing's static. It keeps on changing. I didn't stay too long

because I had Bob, the one that, who did survive, somebody keeping him or whatever and I used to leave, try to leave as early as possible. And finally he came up with the whooping cough and something else and you know, so I decided to....

O'BRIEN: Stay home....

LOVELACE: Go back into my other job. I have done public stenography and then worked for other people.

O'BRIEN: What was the other job you decided to go back into?

LOVELACE: Um, public, more or less patent public, related to the patent office.

O'BRIEN: And now, when did you go to the Pentagon and what was that about?

LOVELACE: Oh, later on then, {laughs}, much later on. Well, Jo went to Switzerland, to the embassy over there, and she kept after me to come over, so, oh, I know what. The last job that I had, I quit that job. That's the only time. I'd been working for them for five years, I guess. I used to stay about five years, and somebody would call me for something else, and this job—oh, my husband died of a heart attack. We'd just started to buy a new house, a new car, and Bob was in military school. So I was panic stricken because I had resigned {laughs}. So I went to work for these other people. They had two firms. And I was with them, coming the fifth year, when, you know how women are, if you work with them and whatever, I had one who was, my Bob would call a brown-noser, and she didn't want my job as manager, but she was always advising me what I could or could not do, you know. So she used to keep in contact with the big boss, with the big boss. And she came out one day with this silly little file that one of our members of the firm had gotten while he was out in California. It was just a stupid case, wasn't worth a dime. And someone, certainly wasn't I, because there were four girls there, and one of them refused to even make a card for call up. you know and to keep. She, or somebody, must have taken this file and, or else one of the men did and left it somewhere. Anyway, it hadn't been taken care of. I never inquired later what happened, but {laughs} but the two of them came out and said something about, why wasn't this done. I didn't even answer them. I think I'd had it up to here with her. And I just bopped the file up in the air and they knew, everybody got real quiet, you know, I started cleaning my desk right away and walked out. He wrote me a letter later and sent me a couple hundred dollars. Anytime I wanted to come back. No, no way... So anyway, I was on the free then and living by myself, and—'cause Jo had left. She wanted me to come over, so I decided to do that. So I went over to stay a month, and I stayed three months and came back because somebody in the family was getting married. So I'd been hopping around, this job that job, but my contention is, oh, I finally went to work with a house director at Maryland and....

O'BRIEN: What's a house director?

LOVELACE: House mother, they—some of them called them. I had 50 girls in my house, two different sororities I was with, and they liked me and I saved them money and all that, but I finally thought, oh, I don't need this, so I was on the loose again. That's when, couldn't stay put, I was living on Columbia Pike in Arlington, which is not far from Navy, I could have walked, those temporary buildings they still have. So I took the test and all of them wanted me. So I chose Navy 'cause it was close by {laughs}. And ran into nice people again. And I was there only a few months when my son, the headhunter, he told me about a woman he had met, somewhere around Capitol Hill, her daughters or somebody needed a house director at Maryland and suggested that I, I had met the woman, that I would like something like that. It's a hard job. So, I went and I, left one of them....

O'BRIEN: Is that the university?

LOVELACE: Uh huh.

O'BRIEN: Uh huh. OK.

LOVELACE: So I was in a sorority house. Ah, it was fun. It was nice to be around young people. Course they can set you crazy at times if you take it seriously. But they didn't want me to leave, of course.

O'BRIEN: So that was when you left DC?

LOVELACE: No. Yeah. Because my husband had died and um....

O'BRIEN: So you left after that?

LOVELACE: No, I didn't really leave DC. I didn't. I stayed in Virginia and still stayed there. But I lived alone a couple times, I was living alone.....

O'BRIEN: Did you leave Capitol Hill?

LOVELACE: And Jo came back and we took an apartment together and then eventually we took a three bedroom apartment to accommodate her daughter who at that time was feeling her oats or couldn't settle down or something. Had her in Catholic school and then she thought she wanted to go to the mixed, but I can't even think of the word. Anyway, boys included.

O'BRIEN: Uh huh, co-ed?

LOVELACE: Co-ed. And she still didn't get straightened out too much. She married as soon as she could.

O'BRIEN: So, but how old were you, or what year was it, what was the year that your husband died, do you remember that?

LOVELACE: '57. [1957]

O'BRIEN: '57.

LOVELACE: {laughs} The Dark Ages.

O'BRIEN: And so then when you and Jo moved into an apartment that was off the Hill, that was not on the Hill

LOVELACE: Not on the what?

O'BRIEN: On the Hill..

LOVELACE: No.

O'BRIEN: Not on Capitol Hill?

LOVELACE: No, no.

O'BRIEN: OK, so....

LOVELACE: No that.

O'BRIEN: So did you leave Capitol Hill then after your husband died?

LOVELACE: Um, now what did I do. I tried to get work in Alexandria, as a secretary but the salaries were not high enough. So that's when I fell into another job. I met a friend at lunch and she wanted, and that was for, he was a former judge, Edrington, in private—just going into private practice. So I went to work for him and that was one of the best jobs I had 'cause if he had work you worked and if he didn't you know you could do what you wanted to do. So that suited me just fine. But anyway, when I took the test again, going over to the Pentagon to take the test, that was on my own volition, you know, because I couldn't stay put without doing something, and living alone.

O'BRIEN: And how old were you at this point?

LOVELACE: Lord knows. I guess 60? 'Cause I worked 'til, at something or other, 'til I was 70, in my 70s. As I say, my son is a headhunter and he was always finding something for me to do. {laughs}

O'BRIEN: That's good.

LOVELACE: Maybe you know him, Morrie Tobin, have you ever run into him on Capitol Hill? They called him the mayor of Connecticut Avenue.

O'BRIEN: Oh, really?

LOVELACE: Uh huh. So I went, and he said it would be an easy job, which it was except for the man who was in with him. And he worked me to death. But Morrie, everybody called him that, he was a character, out of this world. And I found out for him all I had to do was to be very sure if anyone who called being a lobbyist, I didn't realize I was working for a lobbyist {laughs} to tell the truth, and the morning I showed up to work, I had this solid oak door and a dozen roses all tacked on the door for my arrival. {Laughs} And then one day he decided, somebody was coming...

[Pause; someone enters room.]

O'BRIEN: The last little area, the last question, but what did you like most about living on the Hill?

LOVELACE: Oh, I don't know, maybe the atmosphere, difference in people. People affect me greatly. {Unclear} I never show, I don't show it, I don't think, but just the people. I'm a people watcher, I like people. And even if I don't like them, I try to treat them decently or whatever. That's what we get around here all the time, too, it's, you know.

O'BRIEN: And so you liked—you felt like there was a lot of diversity on the Hill and you liked that?

LOVELACE: In a sense, yes. But then, I'll back up again to when I went to work for Navy, I choose Navy. Um, something I was going to say, I've forgotten already.

O'BRIEN: We're talking about the diversity on Capitol Hill.

LOVELACE: No, no. {pause.} I don't know, Linda. {Pause} Seems like the oldest things are the quickest things {??} you mind. I go back so far.

O'BRIEN: What did you dislike about Capitol Hill, living there?

LOVELACE: Oh, I don't know, I really really don't. And then afterwards, had friends who lived in the Georgetown section. But what gets me about saying Capitol Hill is they now have it running from the Capitol down to 17th Street at the end of the car line, which is ridiculous 'cause that's not Capitol Hill, but that's the way they advertise places. I really can't put my finger on anything in particular now. I guess it was changes in my life more than whether I liked or disliked because I was, I was burdened because of, I kept my son in college, I mean got through high school and he was about to graduate anyway. So I took right up with that, but I wanted to work in Alexandria. See, I had to think in different phases.

O'BRIEN: Did they call, did they call that area where you lived and where you grew up there, was that called Capitol Hill, what was it called?

LOVELACE: It wasn't then. It was just southeast Washington, Sousa Bridge area and the end of the car line. That was what it was noted for.

O'BRIEN: Was there any area referred to as Capitol Hill?

LOVELACE: Any what?

O'BRIEN: Any area, referred to as Capitol Hill?

LOVELACE: Oh, yeah, up around Second, Third, and we went to some restaurant down Pennsylvania Avenue we liked ... and down to St. Peter's Church, which was on the Hill.

O'BRIEN: {cell phone rings} Excuse me. Gosh, I think that might be about it, Rose. Is there anything else you think of that you think we should know about in understanding...?

LOVELACE: No, because in doing my other one, I relied on her to ask me the questions and that was the way it was, and then of course I start rambling from one to the other. I tell you, there's been so many years in between I get them all befuddled sometime.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember any sports teams? When your husband used to play on a sports team?

LOVELACE: They were called, this one was called Hess AC. But he was ready to go into sort of big time. You know, but they used to play ball in front of what is Union Station and of course was there? In front of that was just a lot or a common open ground and that's where quite a few teams used to play there before they went, and then of course the stadium was up Florida Avenue where the Washington Senators played. That was the big deal, that was big deal around here, for entertainment, you know. At one time they used to have a great big lighted sign down at 14th and Penn [Pennsylvania Avenue NW; northwest corner]. Do you know where Bassins is or was there? First outdoor restaurant where they could serve liquor and whatever. 14th and Penn, across from the Willard. And, anyway when the ball, the season was on, you'd get the results you know and people, it was more or less like New York City, it reminded me of, you know. They put a...

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

END OF INTERVIEW