



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Admiral Charles Loring Waite

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TAPE 1/SIDE 1

J. CITRO: This is Joe Citro. It's Sunday, January 5, 2003. Connie and I are in the home of Admiral Waite [24790 Deep Water Point Drive, St. Michael's, MD], and we are going to interview him for the Ruth Ann Overbeck project.

WAITE: You're welcome, Connie and Joe. Glad you made it. We had a little snow this morning; we're okay now.

J. CITRO: Admiral Waite, why don't you tell us a little something about your family.

WAITE: Alright. What I'm going to talk about mostly occurred between 1926 and 1929 in Southeast and Southwest Washington [Waite was born March 18, 1923]. I'll tell you about my grandparents first because they're important in my life and in my parents' life. Two sets of grandparents like everyone else—one set lived on 10th Street SE; there was Charlie [F.] and Emily Lang. The other set lived at 803 G Street SW and there was Charles P. and Katherine Marie Waite, my father's parents.

My parents [Charles P. Jr. and Evelyn M.] married very young—my mother was 17, my father was 23, he was in medical school. All their life and in the period I'm talking about, they were both working hard just to make ends meet. My father interned at St. Elizabeths Hospital, which was a civil service job and therefore paid more than a regular internship, which paid something like \$30 a month in those days. After that he joined the [U.S.] Public Health Service, which again offered additional income, which explains why after 1929 we started moving around the country because the Public Health Service stationed us in various places—Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, for the Bureau of Mines. After that he went into private practice and opened an office in Anacostia, at the corner of Pennsylvania Ave and Good Hope Road, above Silver's drugstore [2341 Pennsylvania Ave. SE]. And then we moved to a new area in Northwest Washington, called American University Park. He was the first doctor in that area. And that's where I spent the rest of my childhood before World War II—in that area, American University Park and Spring Valley.

My grandparents, which I mentioned before, my maternal grandfather, Charlie Lang, actually had various jobs early in his life. He actually sold vegetables off a wagon and later worked as a foundry man in the Navy Yard making large pieces of armament. Whereas my other grandfather, Charles Paul, whose family had come to Washington just before the turn of the century, worked at the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. He was a printer. And where they lived at 803 G Street SW, he could walk to work every

morning. And his wife, Katherine Marie, whose maiden name was Spate, was a staunch Irish-Catholic woman, who was a very superb artist. They were a typical “lace-curtain” Irish family. They lived in a three story, English-basement-type house, which was heavily furnished with paintings, all sorts of objets d’art, and the latest victrola and the records that went with it, so that was very delightful to stay with them. The reason I’m talking about this is because of my working parents I spent a lot of time with my grandparents, both families, and one family were Methodists and the other were Roman Catholics and that made life kind of interesting for both my parents and me from time to time.

My grandmother on my mother’s side was an organist in the West [?] Methodist church in Southeast Washington—very accomplished musician. [possibly Wilson Memorial ME Independent at 754 Eleventh St. SE or Haven ME at 1401 B St. SE.]

J. CITRO: Do you remember exactly where the church was located?

WAITE: Yeah, it was on 10th Street SE [sic]. Don’t get too detailed; I’m lucky I can even remember some of these addresses {laughs}, but as late as the 1940s the church and the school where my mother went to school were all still there in the same place. The 10th Street residence was a rowhouse, was what in those days we called an areaway, which gave you access to the back alleys. You could go from a main street into the back alleys through these little brick hallways that divided houses, and they were three stories and had a sleeping porch on the back, and the front yards were rather limited. Almost all of them had a wrought-iron fence around the front, and instead of lawns it was just plain dirt, which was good for us kids because we could play all we wanted there. Had some interesting neighbors, my grandparents. They were good friends with John Philip Sousa because he lived so close to the Marine Barracks [Sousa left Washington in 1892. There were other Sousa families in SE.] and they were also friends of the family of Matthew Brady, the famous Civil War photographer. And because of the way I remember it, I even remember all their friends’ names. There were German people named Federlein; there was an Irish family named Callahan. And they were all wonderful people, and I spent a lot of time playing with all those kids and growing up in that area. Now that’s about all I want to say about that first question.

[The Langs lived at many addresses: from at least 1916 through 1923 at 910 Tenth SE; 337 Ninth Street SE in 1925; 21 Sixth NE in 1928; 1209 East Capitol in 1932; 330 Rhode Island Ave. NE in 1934 and 314 Channing St. NE in 1936—and perhaps a few in between.]

WAITE: My father, when he was at St. Elizabeths Hospital, was a general practitioner, took care of—even though the people were insane, they still had medical problems, and he took care of that. That later on rubbed off on him, and he became a psychiatrist—board-certified psychiatrist. At the age of like 49 or so, he finally got his wish and ended up as president of the North-South Dakota-Nebraska

Psychiatric Association. He joined the Army in World War II the same time I joined the Navy and spent three years in the Army, one overseas, and was in Normandy and Germany and came back in 1945 because he had enough points to get home early. That was another time when the family was broken up when my father went off to war, they sent him first to Camp Grand, Illinois. He worked in a South Chicago beach hotel and went overseas from Taunton, Massachusetts, to Taunton, England, and then staged over into France after D-Day.

WAITE: Now if you like I can talk about the neighborhood of Southeast-Southwest Washington. First and foremost in my memory is Lincoln Park, which is at the end of East Capitol Street, or not quite the end, but quite close to the end of East Capitol Street. Then that was a delightful place, and the first statue of Abraham Lincoln is there, a statue of him emancipating the slaves. It was before the Lincoln Memorial was built. And the Lincoln Park was a delightful place all year round but mostly in the summer because there were all these little foreign vendors selling snowballs and popcorn, little kerosene wagons which they pushed in faithfully every evening. The neighborhood was lighted by gas lamps, and there was a little man who came around with a ladder and a hook and lighted each lamp every evening and put 'em out in the morning. There were horse troughs on almost every corner because there were still quite a few horse-and-wagons around.

The Southwest Washington area was very interesting. The Waite family lived about two blocks from Water Street, which is now Maine Avenue [sic], so it was a bustling place. There were all kinds of ships and excursion boats and what-have-you coming in, it wasn't just seafood, it was produce in those days. Watermelons and fresh vegetables and everything else came in there. And there was also an interesting neighborhood because they had the last horse-drawn fire horse and fire engine station there {laughs}, which every time that was really something to see go by. And then nearby there was a street called seven [sic - four] and a half street, which was the shopping area for Southwest Washington. There was a movie theater there. I had an uncle who loved to go to the movies, and he'd drag me along. These were all silent movies of course. But it was a fun place to go and even though, you know, I'm only, say, three or four, I still enjoyed it.

Now over on my other grandparents' side, there was the Eastern Market, which was just half a block off Pennsylvania Avenue, area of the old Naval Hospital and what is now called, what was then called the Hines Junior High School, which had been the Eastern High School, which both my parents attended Eastern High School before they built a new one. And I don't know whether it's still there, but the old Naval Hospital was there [901 Pennsylvania Ave. SE], and when I was little there were veterans from the Civil war occupying it and an occasional veteran from the Spanish-American War. Of course, as the years went by, the mixture changed—you had less Civil War veterans, more Spanish-American War veterans,

and that was right next to, very close to, our favorite theater, which was called the Avenue Grand, which was on the same side of the street and just a short distance away. The Avenue Grand—my mother had two sisters, one of them who's now dead, played the piano there for the silent movies, a talent she picked up from her mother who, you see, played the organ.

J. CITRO: I wonder if the Avenue Grand was the old Capitol Hill theater that was still standing....

WAITE: No, no, no—that's on the other side of the street; that's a modern theater. When I say modern, that didn't come along until almost late 1930s and early 40s. I've been to that theater, too, but the Capitol Hill Theater is on the north side of the street [650 Pennsylvania Ave. SE]; the Avenue Grand's on the south side [645—649 Pennsylvania Ave. SE]. This I know for sure. The Eastern Market was particularly interesting, which was right behind where that Capitol Hill theater would have been—was a bustling place, where the farmers came in across the, what's now known as the John Philip Sousa bridge from Anacostia with their produce every weekend—all sorts of fresh vegetables, meats, and poultry and one thing or another. Sawdust on the floors. It was a giant supermarket that was run by individual people. Then, of course, the Navy Yard was open and running with the comings and goings of sailors when this was on Seventh Street Southeast, and the Marine Barracks, where we occasionally got to hear a concert from Sousa, who also played on the South Capitol steps or the East Capitol steps in the summertime. And then the other interesting things in that area of Southeast Washington was the first Piggly-Wiggly store [1403 B St. SE?], which was the first self-service store, you know, other than that—my grandmother, when they lived on Tenth Street. Hi kitty, that's Cleo, excuse me, she's very affable. Anyway, they lived next door to a Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea store [possibly 1312 B St. SE], which was an A&P, which is now I think called Super Fresh, or something. It was very convenient because it was just across the alley to go to the store. But then everything came off the shelf; you ordered a cup of this or pound of that or one thing or another. But the Piggly-Wiggly store was the first self-service store, and the reason they called it that is that it had these turnstiles that would let you in but not let you out, you see, so you would have to go by the cash register. I remember a trip to that store.

J. CITRO: Do you remember where that was actually located?

WAITE: Oh, if I had a map of Washington, I could pinpoint it exactly, but I can't even tell you the correct address for my grandmother's house which was a couple blocks away from, one block south of Lincoln Park. I know one street that used to be B Street is now Constitution Avenue [It was later clarified that Waite's B Street was Independence, not Constitution Ave., that is, Southeast, not Northeast.]

J. CITRO: That's right.

WAITE: And there was a cross street that runs into the east end of Lincoln Park, and they lived right on that corner. And that house is still there. Then two blocks past Lincoln Park was a car barn where the streetcars left. And that was exciting, too, because they came right down East Capitol Street, approached Lincoln Park, and then took off down Massachusetts Avenue. In the summer time, they ran these summer cars, which were open on the sides, and that was always a thrill to ride.

C. CITRO: {pulling out a map} This is Lincoln Park and 12th St. We actually live here on the 100 block [of 12th St. SE]. This is B Street [Independence Ave.], and 11th comes into the park. This end is Massachusetts Avenue. There's Kentucky Avenue and 13th Street.

WAITE: This would be more like 13th and B, would be where B and 13th come together. Okay.

C. CITRO: That's right. Okay. And where were your grandparents?

WAITE: Right on that corner.

C. CITRO: 13th, you're saying.

WAITE: Right. And right here was the Bryan School.

C. CITRO: Yes, that's right.

WAITE: Where I went to second grade, I think {laughs}.

C. CITRO: Okay, so they were on 13th rather than 10th.

WAITE: Well, the front of the house was on 13th. Wait a minute, the first house was on 10th. They moved.

C. CITRO: Okay, and then they moved.

WAITE: So there were two houses. Oh sure, they moved up in the world.

C. CITRO: Okay, so they were ...

WAITE: This was a big house because it accommodated a lot of people. It was not only my mother and father, my sister and I, but also some of my cousins and lord knows what. And my grandmother cooked her tail off every Sunday for them {laughs}.

[Charles P. Waite Sr. lived at 803 G St. from at least 1904 until 1928. Charles P. Waite Jr. lived with his parents in 1925 and Loring Waite—presumably a brother—lived there in 1928. According to the 1930 census, the Waites no longer lived at 803 G St SW, and Loring and Ethel Waite lived at 1214 B St. SE

with Richard Williams and his wife. Charles P. Jr. is not identifiable in this census. In 1932 the Loring Waites were still at 1214 B St. SE and Charles P. Waite Jr. is listed as working at the Government Printing Office, but with no home address. Charles F. Lang also lived at 1209 East Capitol St. SE in 1932. While 1214 B St. SE is in the middle of the block, it may be the “big house” referenced above.]

C. CITRO: Right, but they’re at the corner of 13th and Mass, is that what you’re saying?

WAITE: 13th and Constitution [actually, Independence, the northeast corner of 13th and Independence]. The house is still there, and right behind it is an alley and the next thing was an A&P [1312 B St. SE?], and then across the street was the Bryan School [1315—1355 B St. SE]. And down the street was a place called Kraline’s Ice Cream [a brand name?], where we could go in the summer time and get—this German family made home-made ice cream, and then there was a Breyer’s ice house near by [probably the Carry Ice Cream Company at 1337—1353 D St. SE]. You know, I can’t tell you all the exact locations and everything, but these are the things I remember.

[There are no building lots between the intersection and the alley next to the former A&P at 1312 B St. SE. It is possible that the Langs lived at 156 13th St. SE for a short period of time, but only in part of the house.]

Let’s see, did I miss anything? Oh, I know, the hospitals in the area because as a physician I’m very interested in that {cat meows}. Here’s my other cat. Hello, Randall; that’s Randall and that’s Cleo. Anyway, I told you my father interned at St. Elizabeths Hospital. But the neighborhood hospital in those days was Providence Hospital [Second and D Streets SE], which is now out Michigan Avenue in a big complex. That was a Catholic hospital, and there was a beautiful nice parkway across from the front of the hospital, and I’d been a patient in there a couple of times because in those days everybody caught everything—you had the measles, mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, you name it, I had it. Then also just down from Union Station on Massachusetts Avenue was Casualty Hospital [708 Massachusetts Ave. NE], which I later worked in as a medical student {laughs} and drove the ambulance for them. And then down by the Anacostia River was Gallinger, which is now DC General, but Gallinger Municipal Hospital 19th and C SE], in which I spent a couple of years as a medical student, and that’s a huge place, taking care of a lot of indigent people.

WAITE: And, let’s see, what else. Oh, and then right by Union Station was the old Sibley Hospital [1140 North Capitol St. NW], where I was born. I was delivered by a horse-and-buggy doctor, name of J.C. Piles, who actually, you know, went from house to house, house calls in a horse and buggy. And then the other interesting thing medically in those days besides those hospitals was on Capitol Hill, right where the Senate office building is or maybe the House office building, that would be on the south side and the

street car used to ride right up and down that south side, there was a thing called a diet kitchen. And a diet kitchen was the city's way of making sure that young infants like myself were being properly fed and so forth. My mother would take me in there once a month to get weighed and show me off, because I guess I was breast fed and was a fat little devil {all laugh}. So I became, apparently, the darling, according to my mother, of the diet kitchen, which was just, you know, a stone's throw from the Capitol grounds. And there was a car barn right next to it, by the way, where all those buildings are now.

WAITE: Let's see...okay, now I'll talk about, one of your interesting questions, which interested me the most, was how we survived the summer heat in Washington {all laugh}. I have more answers to that than you'll believe. We did very well. Of course, even now, my grandchildren, they don't know whether it's hot or cold, they just go out and play. I'm sure we were the same way, but, this much I remember. First of all, the older folks, like my grandparents, sat out on either the front stoop or the back porch with hand fans that the funeral homes gave out. And my grandmother would say, you know, hey, I think I felt a breeze, you know {laughs}, and she'd be sweating like a trooper. So, then there was, on the back of these houses and more so in Northwest Washington, but some in Southeast and in Southwest, were what we called sleeping porches, which were nothing more than screened-in, you know, porches on the back of the house. On the second floor because on the first floor, the first porch, there was an ice box which had to be replenished from the ice man, who knew how much ice to give you every day because you had a little square card with 25, 50, 100 pounds, whatever you wanted. You'd put that in your window, and then he'd come by with his horse and pick off a chunk of ice, weigh it, and put it on the back porch. And that meant that unless you had some little fancy drainage thing, you had to empty a drip pan, so that was the back porch and the back yard. And then in the back yard there was usually a wood shed and remnants of an out house, I guess, from the old days. Then there was lemonade and the snowballs and then the home-made ice cream, sodas at the drugstore, hoses had been invented, so we could get wet by sprinkling ourselves with a hose. Then the interesting thing in Southeast Washington, and this is particularly apropos of the Capitol Hill project, was a thing called lawn parties. Have you ever heard of lawn parties? There was a social event, very much in the summer time. It was a dress-up affair, and someone that had a side yard would decorate it with Japanese lanterns, and there'd be benches and tables and with food and lemonade and so forth. It was a social gathering and everybody went to the lawn party and had a good time. Let's see...Oh, for adventure and to cool off, we could go to Great Falls, which was up the Potomac River, and the way you got to Great Falls you took the street car to the new Key Bridge, which had been built to bring the unknown soldier back to Arlington, and over to Rosslyn, which in those days consisted of three pawn shops, a cherry smash factory, and the Old Dominion railroad station—that's all that was there, you know, that's a big city now. And you caught a train that'd take you up to Great Falls to spend the day {cat meows} Yes, I hear you. So, then, the other thing we could do for adventure, and I know my parents did

this when they were young, they took the street car up Connecticut Avenue to Chevy Chase Lake, which was—you know where Chevy Chase Circle is? You know that area?

J. CITRO: Yes, yes.

WAITE: And the District Line? Well, about two or three miles past that was Chevy Chase Lake, and there was the end of the street car line, and the street car company, called Capital Traction Company in those days, had built a dance pavilion, and they all went up there and danced, you know. And then later on they built a big swimming pool, which is still—I don't whether it's still there or not, but it's just past the Columbia Country Club on that side. Let's see... Oh, and then the real adventure when I was young is we took the train from, it was in Northeast Washington—do you know the area Bladensburg Road?

J. CITRO: Yes.

WAITE: Okay.

J. CITRO: Yes, I do.

WAITE: At Bladensburg Road and New York Avenue was a train station called Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis Electric Railroad, and that ran to Annapolis Junction, where you changed trains; it came down Baltimore and took you right by the Naval Academy where you got on a ferry boat, called, in those days, it was the Governor Harrington. It was a paddle wheeler and it took you to the Eastern Shore. And the reason we came over here is because we had relatives over here [the Eastern Shore]. My grandmother on my mother's side, all her family were from here, whereas her husband, my grandfather, his family had come from Germany right after the Civil War. So, anyway, we had all sorts of cousins and aunts and uncles over here, and we came over here, and this place in the 1920s was very, very primitive {laughs}, but it was a great place to come as a child because we had a row boat and we could go fishing and catch crabs and wade in the water and, you know, just have a grand time. Place smelled like god-awful thing, there was no good, there were outhouses and chicken coops and pig sties and the roads weren't paved, they were paved actually with oyster shells. So that probably explains why I came here, even my father came back here after World War II and opened an office, you know, he was the doctor in town and then when I retired from the Navy, after awhile we started coming over here on weekends and then came over full-time. Anyway, so it all ties in.

WAITE: The suburbs were another place that was always cooler, you know, if you could go up in Northwest or Northeast Washington, that's a little higher than the city. Of course, Washington, DC, was built in damp swamp, you know, Foggy Bottom and places like that where the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery is, was a miasma of yellow fever and malaria and God knows what else. But if you went out into

the suburbs up, say, Massachusetts Avenue near the Washington Cathedral, it was cooler. And so my parents had an early Dodge touring car, and we'd all load into that and go up, on a summer night, and, you know, we could cool off that way, too. So that covers how we handled the summer times. There was plenty of options. Oh, and, of course, the grand avenue was to catch the street car at Lincoln Park and ride all the way out to Glen Echo. Do you know where Glen Echo is?

J. CITRO: Yes, yes.

WAITE: Out Cabin John Road? And, boy, that was a real treat, just riding that street car over the trestles and through the woods and coming and seeing the amusement park all lighted up with the carousel and everything. And, I guess it's still there but it's not in the grandeur that it was when we were kids. Now, we also, you know, I can remember playing around the Capitol grounds when I was a kid. We thought nothing of walking through the whole Capitol building and exploring the place. We all had passes to the Senate Gallery if we wanted to go in and listen to some old guy talk, you know {laughs}, but we went down to the basement and found an old statue of George Washington which the Smithsonian had rejected because it didn't have enough clothes on it, you know, and things like that. We'd ride the subway, which was, they had this little train that ran between the Senate office building and the Capitol and that was neat. Then, I remember my mother telling me, that was one of the worst injuries she had was roller skating down Capitol Hill as a child and losing control and banging up her knees, you know, and so forth. But, it was pretty open and free in those days; everybody was pretty friendly. And, of course, nearby were marvelous things like the Smithsonian Museum, you know, which on a rainy day or snowy day you'd spend all day in there just as kids without any supervision. It cost ten cents to get on a bus, and we'd go to the museum and whatever. And there was the Library of Congress, too, which was another interesting place. Oh, it was a great place to grow up. And then later on the Folger Shakespeare thing, which came a lot later [1932], but East Capitol Street was a grand street in the 1920s; it was elm-lined and shady, you know, and the homes were rather nice. There were a few homes that had more than one family in them, you know, but most of them were fine old houses where a lot, I guess, maybe the Senate and congressmen had lived at one time.

WAITE: And some of them had dining rooms where you could go for Sunday dinner and that sort of thing. Now, special events that occurred in my life while I was there I think you'd find quite interesting. One of my very first memories, in 1926, was Navy Day, October 13, 1926. The Navy Yard had open house, and one of the features on Navy Day was a hospital ship called the *Repose*, which was the latest, brand-new spanking hospital ship since the *Red Rover* had been built during the Civil War, you know. And I was about three or four, but I remember very vividly because I remember seeing the operating room and the wards and the galley and everything else, and the way I got aboard is some big sailor picked

me up in his arms and carried me up the gangway. And to me that's sort of the greatest coincidence in the world because, later on, you know {laughs}, I spent so much time in the Navy, and I didn't remember that until much later in my life, but I do remember it very vividly. And the second thing was that my mother took me, on Pennsylvania Avenue right across from the Avenue Grand, and we stood there on the sidewalk and watched Colonel Lindburg come back from Europe riding in a car with Calvin Coolidge, and that was quite memorable. Then the next thing I remember was Taft's, President Taft's, funeral. He wasn't president then but he was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, but he had died in office and they had this grand funeral to the Capitol for him. We went to that. My grandmother was a great one for going to events, too {laughs}, and she took me to all the inauguration parades. She took me to Roosevelt's first inaugural, March 1933, it was cold and miserable, but it was a great parade and we were there long enough to see President Hoover and Roosevelt up to the Capitol and then come back with the change of the presidency, and one of the highlights of that parade was a bus full of Civil War veterans, all waving. Let's see, oh the other interesting coincidence, was in watching Colonel Lindburg from a distance in 1926, I got to shake hands with him in person in 1940, just because I was dating a girl whose father was a Senator from Minnesota who was a friend of the Colonel. But it was graduation day from high school, 1940, when I'd come back from the high school, Senator [Ernest] Lundeen was his name. He was killed later that year in a Pennsylvania Central Airline crash. But he said there's somebody out on the porch I want you to meet. Okay, now, let's...

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

WAITE: Board games—Parcheesi, you ever heard of that? {laughs}

C. CITRO: Yes, I played it.

WAITE: It's an old ... Monopoly hadn't come out then in those days, I think. But then, my father and his cousins got together at least three or four times a year and had a big poker night, you know, and as we got older we were allowed to sort of get a hand occasionally, but the big entertainment was radio—both for us kids and for the parents. I can remember the radio show that really grabbed everybody in those days was called Amos and Andy, now it's not politically correct at all. But at seven o'clock on Sunday evening, all my grandparents and parents and family all sat around this radio waiting for the latest Amos and Andy and that was it. And, of course, you know, occasionally we went to a movie or two, but with the games and the radio, when we were kids, of course, we were allowed to listen to the radio between five and six, just before dinner, to hear Little Orphan Annie and the Ralston Rangers, which was a cowboy thing from Ralston Purina. And what else? There were several others—Jack Armstrong, the all-American boy, it's

hard to remember. But those were serials, they were 15 minutes long, and they were continued and cliffhangers and one thing and another. And the radios were quite interesting in those days, you know, my first radio memory was in 1929 in Pittsburgh, which had a station called KDKA, which was the first radio station in America, and we listened to that on a crystal set, and the way that was done was it had earphones, like you're wearing now, and it had a little cardboard megaphone you put on the front of it and then you could hear it, you see. And then later on, radios got very fancy. They had things called super heterodyne [?], one thing and another. There was a variety of programs, of course. Okay, that takes care, I guess, of family and entertainment. We went on vacations, of course, too, you know—went to the beach. In those days the beach that we went to was Colonial Beach—you ever heard of Colonial Beach?

J. CITRO: Yes, yes.

WAITE: It's still there, but, you know, Colonial Beach was actually just a beach in those days {laughs} instead of—I don't know what it is now.

J. CITRO: Is it down in Virginia?

WAITE: Yes, Colonial Beach, Virginia. If you go down Route 3 and cross the Potomac River bridge, have you been across that thing by the power plant which goes over towards Port Royal?

J. CITRO: Yes.

WAITE: The same route John Wilkes Booth took.

J. CITRO: Exactly.

WAITE: But the Dahlgren Station—it's south of that.

J. CITRO: We've gone right by that.

WAITE: But the interesting thing about Colonial Beach was it was mostly boarding houses and so forth and the beach, but they had these pavilions where everybody went to play bingo and one thing or another, you know, which is why my parents and grandparents liked it. And we kids we got over-sunburned {laughs}, nobody knew anything about that. My father was a doctor. I was shocked to learn that he let me overdose to the point of blistering sometimes. Anyway, that was another thing I'd left out—the beach, going to the beach. Later on, it was Beverly Beach. Have you heard of Beverly Beach?

J. CITRO: I've heard of it, but I'm not quite sure where it is.

WAITE: Okay, it's right next, you know where Annapolis and then there's a town just south of Annapolis, like on the Prince Frederick Road, but Beverly Beach is on the bay and it's very close to

Annapolis, you know. And the interesting thing I remember about Beverly Beach was quite shocking nowadays because it had this big sign, "Gentiles only." In other words, they wouldn't let, they were very anti-Semitic. But that didn't seem to bother anybody, you know, there was sort of a jukebox joint, you know, and wild. Anyway, that was so much of the beach. We very seldom ever got to a place like Ocean City or anything. That was just too far away.

J. CITRO: When you went to Colonial Beach did you actually drive down there?

WAITE: You could go two ways—on the boat, and that was the other thing I left out was the excursion boats that left Water Street, and there was an amusement park about 40 minutes down just past Fort Washington, I can't remember the name.

J. CITRO: Marshall Hall?

WAITE: Marshall Hall. That's exactly it, and there were these excursion boats that took people down to Marshall Hall and you got off the boat and did all the shenanigans and got back on, and then on the way back, it was quite interesting, because there were a lot of drunken people on board and sometimes they'd have these big fist fights and so forth, and police would have to meet the boat and drag them off and so that became rather untenable. Colonial Beach was a little tamer, but Marshall Hall was a den of iniquity, apparently. You could also go to Colonial Beach on a train, you know, which I never did. But most of the time we drove down in a Model T or something like that, you know.

J. CITRO: How were the roads when you drove down there?

WAITE: Oh, well they're two lanes, you know, the problem was not the roads, it was the tires, which you had to repair from time to time unless they were solid, you know, and cars would overheat and one thing and another. Interesting automobile experience. The longest motor trip I ever made was 1933. My father's grandfather, my grandfather on my father's side, family had come from Chicago, so he had a sister, you know, and brothers up there. So in 1933 my father decided we were going to drive to the Chicago World's Fair, which we did. And that was an interesting trip in 1933 {laughs} in a Model A Ford, you know. And no superhighways or anything, and we had trouble just getting over the Allegheny Mountains, for God's sake {all laugh}. But the World's Fair was quite an interesting experience, enjoyed that immensely, and I got to meet my grandfather's sister, Aunt Irene, who had a great detail of family history. The Waite family history goes way back in this country to, you know, the Revolutionary War, and she had it all documented, you know, names and places and who married who and how many children they had and so forth and so on.

J. CITRO: Where are the Waites from originally?

WAITE: England and Scotland. Richard Waite came to what is New Hampshire in the late 1600s and his son, fellow named Loring Francis Waite, that's my middle name, Loring, had two wives. The women didn't live as long as the men because of childbirth and one thing and another, but he had a raft of children. Jason Waite was a captain in the First New Hampshire infantry in the Revolutionary War, and Loring Francis's brother was captured by the British at Fort Stanwick, which is now Rome, New York, and hanged as a traitor {laughs}. And several other Waites were incarcerated for selling either gunpowder or whiskey to the Indians, I don't know, but it's all in there. But one of the Loring Francises, that was my Aunt Irene's grandfather, had moved all away across the state of New York into Mackinaw, Michigan, and that's where he was in the First Michigan Volunteers during the Civil War. And then he married a French-Canadian girl named Leveque, Irene Leveque, and they opened a fur business and had a big fur store in Chicago and that was the family that we went to visit. So I still have relatives up there. {talks to meowing cat}

C. CITRO: Were your parents born in Washington?

WAITE: Oh yes, they're both native Washingtonians, went to high school there in Washington.

J. CITRO: Did you say your father went to the old Eastern High School?

WAITE: And father and mother both, that's how they met.

J. CITRO: Okay, which was near the Eastern Market, I believe.

WAITE: Right across the street and right across the street from the Avenue Grand, you know, it was a red-brick school building which later became the Hines Junior High School.

C. CITRO: You mentioned about Bryan School. Did you go there at all?

WAITE: Oh yeah, when my father had that office in Anacostia, then I can remember my mother dropping me off at the Bryan School because when I was staying with my grandmother, I'd started in that school and so continued in that, you know, went to second [grade]. I went to first grade in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but the second and third grade, Bryan School, and the fourth grade in Philadelphia {laughs}. It was something else. When we were in Oklahoma—that's another whole interesting story—Oklahoma when it was, you know, just barely a state when the Indians had just discovered oil on their property and become very wealthy and people were taking advantage of them and one thing and another. Oklahoma—the Public Health Service sent my father there to do research on silicosis, which was an unknown disease, a hard rock mining problem, from the Bureau of Mines in Pittsburgh, so we spent a year there in Oklahoma, a wild place.

C. CITRO: That was fourth grade, you said?

WAITE: I didn't go to school there.

C. CITRO: Oh, fourth grade was Philadelphia.

WAITE: Philadelphia. The Arch Street public school on Arch Street.

J. CITRO: We live just a block and a half west of the old Bryan School, which is now being converted into loft apartments, and they're also building about 39 new houses there.

WAITE: It was a rather tall building, as I remember it, and to all those little guys, it still seemed tall to me..

J. CITRO: Yes, yes. It's very handsome.

C. CITRO: They added a modern addition to it, and we used to vote there.

J. CITRO: They tore down the 1950s addition, and they're actually busy working on the building itself.

WAITE: The other memory I have, you know, the Congressional Cemetery, which was a place I hate to even think what's happened to it, but it was quite a historic spot that I would have love to have seen preserved, and old Anacostia, you know, I went to one of the schools there, too. But we lived, I say, right on the corner of Good Hope Road and Pennsylvania Avenue, at Silver's drug store.

J. CITRO: Which of the high schools did you graduate from?

WAITE: Oh, I went to Woodrow Wilson, one of the first people. That was a brand-new school. Prior to that it was all Western. Let's see, there were Central, Eastern, and Western high schools. That was opening. And then there was McKinley, which was a technical school. But Western took care of all Northwest Washington in those days,. But just before, I went to Gordon Junior High School, which is still there, I think, on Wisconsin Avenue just above Georgetown, and when I finished there, I was supposed to go to Western, but they said, no, you're going to be one of the new students at Wilson High, which was a great school. We had our 60th reunion not too long ago. I graduated in 1940, so we had 60th reunion at the Columbia Country Club and quite a few of my classmates are still around, you know. This was 1940 you see, so this was a group that all just prior to World War II. Lost quite a few people in the war, of course, and a lot of us ended up in the services, you know, career people and so forth. Some went to West Point, some to the Naval Academy, I went to Georgetown Medical School and was in medical school when the war started and they made me... I had a reserve commission, that was called an ensign hospital volunteer probationary (HVP). My commission, and I still have it, signed by Frank Knox, who was

Secretary of the Navy. They'd been in school just barely a year and not even quite a year, and they said, wow, we have a new program, called the V-12 program. Army had a similar program, called the ASTP, Army Student Training Program, or something like that. And since I was in the Navy, one day they came and took us out of school and went to the receiving station in Anacostia, got my shots, ID card, and a uniform, and was back in school within a couple hours {laughs}, you know, but the Army, no, they took.... We got laughed at, we came back in our sailor suits and they were laughing at us and, a month later, here comes the Army and they grabbed all the Army guys, which was 90 percent of our class and took them to Camp Pickett, Virginia, for three months {all laugh}. And, you know, and treated them just like boot soldiers—you know, some wise sergeant would say, is anyone here a painter, you know, and you end up with a bucket and a paint brush, and depending on what your talent was you got these terrible jobs.

C. CITRO: So, when did you serve in the Navy?

WAITE: I served, I was commissioned in the Navy in 1942 and retired in 1976 with a few bumps and things along the way. I interned at Bethesda Naval Hospital, when it was full of World War II casualties, we had 3,000 patients there, a lot of temporary buildings, it was grim. And at the end of my internship, I went down to the headquarters of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and there was a man named Captain Fulton, I remember it very well, and he was what they called a detail officer and I guess because of our V-12 thing, where they paid for our tuition and so forth, we were obligated to serve a couple of years, and I felt very strongly about that obligation. So I went down to see Captain Fulton and he said, well, where do you want to go, and I said, you got any ships that are going around the world? And he sat back and took a gasp and started laughing, picked up the phone, next thing there were ten captains all standing around looking at me, saying... and then he said, You probably think we're crazy, but you're the first guy in the last few years come here wanting to go to sea, which I did, you know, because, to me, if you've got to be in the Navy, you might as well be in the Navy. So there was a fellow named Yarborough, Oscar D. Yarborough, who said, hey, I got a new program, you want to try it. How would you like to be a deep-sea diver and then I'll send you to regular line officers submarine school in New London and after that you'll have your choice of duty at Cocosola [?], Panama, Hialeah Heights, Hawaii [?], San Diego, California, and also you'll get 100 dollars a month extra pay, you know, for doing all this silly stuff. So I said, boy, that sounds great, and great fun. I was all of, what, I graduated from medical school when I was 22, by the way. And so I was all of 23, going on 24. So I went back to the hospital and found four more guys to go with me and we all went, you know. And the reason they needed submarine diving medical officers was because they'd run out of them. World War II had ended all of a sudden and all these guys vanished and they didn't have anybody to do the program. So we went to Navy diving school in the Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. I learned to dive in the Anacostia River, which was a real thrill, and then up to

New London, Connecticut, and took the regular submarine course and then they gave me, I was a doctor for a submarine squadron in San Diego for three years, which was kind of interesting, and one of my instructors in the submarine school lives just a couple of miles from here, Jim Calvert, who was later the commandant of the Naval Academy, and so that's how I got started in that business. And I did that for, oh, a couple of years, then, when I was a full lieutenant. In those days, promotion was very small, I was a JG [Lieutenant Junior Grade] for seven and a half years {laughs}, you know, but I got to be full lieutenant. I had a chance to get a civilian residency at Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C., which I did. This is 1949, after I'd come back from sea. Then, the Korean War started. Next thing I know there was an underwater demolition team, they called them frogmen in those days, this was a forerunner of the Seals, and I had written an article on all the medical problems and so forth and so forth, which apparently had been widely accepted world wide—Italians and the French and the British jumped on it, and so I became an undersea expert and spent quite a few years doing that—off and on, sometimes I was chief of Pediatrics at a hospital, and sometimes I was commanding officer of the Navy Submarine Medical Center and stuff like that. We had a program called Sealab. You ever heard of that?

J. CITRO: No.

WAITE: Ever heard of George Bond, ever heard that name? Scott Carpenter, an astronaut?

J. CITRO: Yes.

WAITE: He was one of the ones that joined our program.

C. CITRO: So you were a pediatrician and...

WAITE: Submarine diving specialist. You know, if you're going to be in the Navy, you should at least, always held this, you should have an operational specialty through things that really counted, and you've got all these dependents of people ashore and you do yourself a lot of good taking care of them, too, so it worked out very well—35 years of working with top, the submarine was the cream of the crop in terms of intellect and so forth, and I knew [Admiral] Rickover and all that great crowd. And my wife agrees, if we had to do it over again, wouldn't miss it for the world, you know, because we had a great time in the service. The Submarine Medical Center wasn't established until 1963 or 4, and they appointed me the first commanding officer. {introduces his wife, Regina}

J. CITRO: Actually, one thing I would like for you to do is just summarize your life chronologically, when you were born, your schooling, your Navy career in terms of years, when you retired.

WAITE: Right. Born Washington, D.C., March 18, 1923, Sibley Hospital, old Sibley, next to the Post Office and Union Station. Spent part of my early life moving around with my parents because my father

was a Public Health Service doctor, came back to Washington to stay in 1933 and then my father had an office on Brandywine Street, Northwest, right, one block from Western Avenue, at 4927 Brandywine Street NW.

[Charles P. Waite Jr. is listed in City Directories as working as a doctor for the Government Printing Offices from 1932 through 1940. City Directories for 1934 and 1936 list his address as 4937 Brandywine St. NW and in 1940 as 4004 49th St. NW.]

Went to Horace Mann elementary school in Wesley Heights, right next to the Glover Archbold estate out there, Loughborough Road, American University. From there went to Alice Deale Junior High School, Woodrow Wilson High School, went to the University of Maryland for a year, till I decided I was going to be a premedical student, transferred over to Georgetown, graduated from Georgetown in 1946, after having been in the Navy program for training medical officers and interned at the Naval Hospital, Bethesda, and then went into the submarine deep sea diving business attending various Navy schools. I went, they even sent to things like damage control {laughs}, and that was one of my early experiences was going to the early atomic bomb, Bikini thing, you know, and my job when I came back was to write procedures for submarines and submarine tenders on what to in the event of an atomic attack, you know. Submarines were easy because all we had to was dive and wash all this stuff up, but other was all decontamination and so forth. Then I got my board-certified specialty in Pediatrics, and after that I alternated in jobs as chief of Pediatrics or as a submarine squadron medical officer. Later on I became a force medical officer for submarine Pacific, and I was dean of the Naval Medical School, which was in the old days located down at where the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery is. In the early 1900s, if you wanted to be a physician in the Navy, and it was very hard to get in, because times were hard and so forth, but you went, they sent you for indoctrination to the Naval Medical School, where you learned all about foreign diseases and immunizations and Navy things, you know. That was later moved out to Bethesda, and I was the commanding officer of that for awhile, and then {talks to cats}. Then I was surprised, promoted to Admiral quite early, what they called deep selection, I guess. I was 45 years old and I was, it was summertime, and I was home cutting the lawn, some Admiral called up my wife and said, hey, guess what, your husband was just promoted to Admiral, you know. I wasn't even there {laughs} to know about it, but anyway. Then my first job as a flag officer was quite interesting. I worked for two 4-star admirals, both submariners. One was commander in chief of the Pacific fleet and the other commander in chief of the Army and Navy and Air Force for the whole Pacific. One was Admiral McCain, whose son is the Senator, and the other was Admiral [Bernard Ambrose] Clarey, both deceased now, of course. But that was an interesting job. I was responsible for medical care of personnel for about 90 million square miles of the Pacific from the North Pole to the South Pole, from the West Coast to the Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, you know. But I had this big staff of Army, Navy, and Air Force people that helped me, but

I did a lot, spent most of my time traveling, you know, down in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, occasionally up to Korea, you know, to check out things. But that was a busy, busy three years. And from there they wanted me back in Washington to head up a new branch called operational medicine as a headquarters. And I went back for that, and then I became deputy Surgeon General, and then I'd been an Admiral five and half, almost six, years, and under what we call a gentleman's agreement, I had to retire at the age of 51 because I'd been an Admiral too long {laughs}. You know, I didn't feel like quitting, but I did, so somebody else could get promoted, you know. And that was it. That was July 1, 1976. So I've been retired almost as long as I was on active duty {laughs}.

C. CITRO: What have you been doing in those years?

WAITE: Oh, well that's another whole story. I've had lots of interesting things to do since then. I was professor of clinical physiology at the University of Hawaii. The governor found out that the Navy wasn't going to treat all their diving injuries anymore, so he needed people trained in a new facility, which I put together for him, and what do we call it, a turn-key operation, you know. But that was kind of fun. And then after that we came back here. When I first retired, I worked running an emergency room at new Sibley Hospital out there in Northwest, McArthur Boulevard, Spring Valley. When I was in high school, we lived at 4004 49th Street, Northwest, which was Spring Valley, in what we called a Miller-built house.

J. CITRO: They're still building houses.

WAITE: Yeah. But Spring Valley in those days was, you know, just starting to build up... {silence} An interesting thing about living in that area were all the old Civil War forts and things that were around, which we as kids explored as a great thing. I had a lot of stuff we excavated.

C. CITRO: So, you were just saying you were in Hawaii and then you... oh, oh, and then were back in D.C., and ...

J. CITRO: How long have you been in this house?

WAITE: Oh, since... I'll have to ask my wife {laughs}. My old memory is better than my new memory here. But, it's been since 1982 or 1983 when we came back from Hawaii. Now, I've kept busy here doing a lot; I'm on a board of directors for a few nursing homes and stuff, you know, vestry of the church, and just keeping this place up. I have a vegetable garden in the back woods, and we grow flowers and one thing and another. And I had a stroke in 1988, that's why I limp so badly. But that's all, I'm not complaining, because some people have strokes that are totally incapacitated, but that just slowed me down considerable {laughs}. Kept me out of trouble. But, before that, I used to play a lot of golf and go sailing a lot. I'm not that agile anymore, so.

J. CITRO: I need to clarify one or two more things. When did you go to the Bryan School? For what grades? Do you remember approximately what years?

WAITE: Whatever, however, if I was born in 1923 and I went to the fourth grade, how old would I be?

C. CITRO: You said second and third grade in Bryan.

WAITE: Really?

C. CITRO: You said first grade in Pittsburgh.

WAITE: That's, that's probably right, yeah, I'm trying to remember.

C. CITRO: So in second grade, you're eight.

WAITE: We moved around so much that it gets confusing, but I was definitely in first grade in Pittsburgh. And then I was definitely in the second, yes, because my father opened an office in Anacostia, right, so I was probably there two years, second and third.

C. CITRO: Yeah.

J. CITRO: And I want to be sure I understand, it was your grandparents lived on 10th Street Southeast and then...

WAITE: One set of grandparents lived on 10th Street Southeast.

J. CITRO: Okay, okay.

WAITE: I used to be able to give you the exact address and, for some reason, I can remember the 803 G Street SW for my paternal grandparents.

J. CITRO: Okay. So it was your mother's parents on 10th Street Southeast, and then they moved to, was it, 13th and ...

WAITE: Right, whatever we figured out, 13th and B, right.

C. CITRO: Right on the corner [of 13th Street and Independence Avenue, SE].

WAITE: So, and then the reason, you know, the only reason I spent so much time in Southeast Washington, if I'd been with my parents, you know, I was with my grandparents—both sets. And even later on, you know, when we lived in American University Park, I spent summers with my father's aunt—they had a seafood business, a big seafood business on 22nd and P Street Northwest called Burdine's [2151 P St. NW].

J. CITRO: Now, that name is familiar to me.

WAITE: Anyway, my Aunt Mollie [Burdine] had this beautiful old house right across from a riding stable [1417 22nd St. NW]. There was ... you know where there's a trestle bridge that streetcars went from Dupont Circle into Georgetown, that's on P Street, okay? Then one block up was Massachusetts Avenue and the Cosmos Club and all that stuff, then half a block in on 22nd Street, you know, they had an English-basement-type house. Hey, kitty, come on, come on up here, come on, up, come on sweetie. It's alright. I know, you want to just have attention, you little devil. So, I haven't been very hospitable. Got plenty of coffee and cookies, these are delicious.

C. CITRO: Yeah.

J. CITRO: Do you have any photographs of your grandparents?

WAITE: Lots, lots of them.

J. CITRO: Are you willing to share them?

WAITE: You'll have to help me because there's a television set sitting on top of them. {laughs} But they're there, you know. Both sets of grandparents.

J. CITRO: Is it possible to see them today?

WAITE: Oh, sure.

J. CITRO: I think we're going to end the interview right now.

WAITE: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

EPILOGUE

Charles Loring Waite, 80, a Navy physician who retired as a Rear Admiral in 1976, died March 19, 2003, at Easton (Maryland.) Memorial Hospital.