



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Robert J. Beverly, Sr., and family

[Marjorie Beverly Elliott, June Cordové Mayo, Henry Elliott, Tanya Beverly]

Interview Date: June 14, 2004
Interviewer: Pat Taffe Driscoll
Transcriber: Cynthia Skelton

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

[Note: a partial family tree is provided at the end of the interview.]

DRISCOLL: ...June, interviewing the Beverly family at 1531 D Street NE, in Washington DC. And the people present here now—is it still—the people present here now are...

R. BEVERLY: Robert Beverly, Sr. I'm the oldest living now. I'm 86.

DRISCOLL: Okay. You've had a birthday since we've read about you in the newspaper.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, that was in February.

M. ELLIOTT: I'm Marjorie Beverly Elliott, and I'm the youngest. [laughing] And I am 79, or will be 79 in two months. Pretty close now.

MAYO: And I'm June Cordové Mayo. I'm the daughter over Rose Cordové, who presided in the house for many years up until her death. And...

DRISCOLL: So you're the daughter of the lady who raised you guys?

M. BEVERLY: No, our sister's...

MAYO: Yes, yes that's what she's saying...

DRISCOLL: Your sister who raised you guys.

MAYO: Yes, their sister that raised them. I'm the daughter.

M. ELLIOTT: [directed to R. Beverly] She ain't raised you!

[General laughter]

MAYO: Alright now.

DRISCOLL: We'll have to consider what we want to go in here.

H. ELLIOTT: My name is Henry Elliott. I'm the husband of the youngest Beverly here, Marjorie Elliott.

DRISCOLL: And Mr. Elliott says he's not going to have too much to say, but we think he might join in later on. So feel free.

H. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

DRISCOLL: There was a big article in the news...in the *Washington Post* on December 27, 2003 about a family who lived at Third and Independence for...

M. ELLIOTT: 308.

DRISCOLL: 308?

M. ELLIOTT: 308 Independence Avenue SE, formerly B Street SE. And our family resided there for 117 years. And this house was built by my grandmother in 1886, I think it is.

DRISCOLL: 1886?

M. ELLIOTT: Yes. And someone in this family resided there up until this year. Until the year of 2004 there have been someone of the Beverlys living in that home. For 117 years, which really amounted to six generations. Six generations have lived there. What else can we say about the house? There were eight children, born to the daughter of the builder of that house, which was our mother. Our mother had eight children. She raised eight children in that house, and her mother and her aunt lived in that house and also her husband, and through the years we grew up and married and moved away but there was always someone who stayed there. The last person and the person who lived there the longest was Rose Beverly Cordové. And she lived there for, oh God, about 30 years.

R. BEVERLY: A little more.

M. ELLIOTT: Mm hmm.

DRISCOLL: How do you spell Cordové?

M. ELLIOTT: C-O-R-D-O-V-E with a hyphen over the 'e'.

MAYO: Accent.

R. BEVERLY: That sounds [unclear]

MAYO: Accent.

M. ELLIOTT: Excuse me, I'm not being...

DRISCOLL: Ooh, heard French.

MAYO: Well, this is what Catholic school did to us!

[lots of laughing]

MAYO: Punctuate, dot every 'i' and cross every 't'.

[laughter]

M. ELLIOTT: And of that marriage, her daughter was raised in that home. Her name is June Cordové Mayo.

MAYO: Sitting here now.

DRISCOLL: She is here now and what do you want to say?

MAYO: Well, I want to say I have some very fond memories there, and when you speak of growing up in a tribe, growing up and being raised by a village, I had the privilege, out of all the grandchildren, because of my mother's position, being there after her mother died and kind of, taking surrogate presence for her brothers and sisters. Not him. Not him. [indicating R. Beverly]

DRISCOLL: He was grown up and out of there?

M. ELLIOTT: He was grown up. Yeah, yeah.

MAYO: He was grown. And we were...

M. ELLIOTT: We were the younger kids. We were the younger, and there were three youngers that still stayed there after my mother passed. There were three, like, let's see, 14, 12, and ten...

R. BEVERLY: And George.

MAYO: Let's see. Lillian was the youngest.

R. BEVERLY: He was there then.

M. ELLIOTT: He wasn't raised in here neither.

MAYO: Oh, y'all keep talking about this?

R. BEVERLY: He was grown. But he was there.

MAYO: She was the overseer.

M. ELLIOTT: She was the overseer of the three youngest. Of the three youngest.

MAYO: Since you all don't want to go there.

M. ELLIOTT: And I have to say this also because we keep focusing on our mother because it was our mother's mother who built the house, but we must not forget that our father was there all the time, carrying the weight of all the other people who lived there. He was the worker. And he stayed there and kept house and home together until he passed in 1970, I think.

R. BEVERLY: He worked as a postal carrier.

M. ELLIOTT: He was a postal...mail carrier for 35 years.

R. BEVERLY: He worked over at Embassy Row and that was his route, up on Embassy Row.

M. ELLIOTT: He was a great father.

MAYO: And a great grandfather.

[murmurs of assent]

DRISCOLL: That's...

MAYO: Let's see, how many grandchildren did he have?

DRISCOLL: That's pretty great.

M. ELLIOTT: Well, he was the one who kept it going. He really kept it going.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah he did.

MAYO: I used to know the number.

M. ELLIOTT: Of what?

MAYO: How many grandchildren there were. Because we all would come there for visits with our grandfather. Christmas Eve we would spend with our grandfather, and...

DRISCOLL: So there were real holidays of family together.

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, much family.

MAYO: Yeah, Christmas was...

M. ELLIOTT: Much togetherness...

R. BEVERLY: Over the years

MAYO: My husband and I had our wedding there. And my 16th birthday party was there. So a lot of...I have a lot of memories there. A lot of memories there.

DRISCOLL: Sounds like there's...

R. BEVERLY: A lot of love went between them four walls.

MAYO: Yeah, yeah.

R. BEVERLY: A lot of love.

M. ELLIOTT: And many friends came. Daughters and sons. We had a pal that he grew up with and we thought he was our brother. She had a pal that she grew up with that she thought was her sister...

R. BEVERLY: Thought they were the family!

M. ELLIOTT: ...because they stayed there as much as they stayed at their own house!

MAYO: Pajama parties there. My girlfriends and all would come there for pajama parties. And when I listened to my aunts and uncles talk about all these people that I grew up thinking were our relatives because they lived in our house so much! [general laughter] They were so close...I mean any of his friends, her friends, her brother and sister's friends, there were so...it was a house where people just gravitated to because it was an open door there. Anybody could come, anytime.

DRISCOLL: A loving house.

R. BEVERLY: This little pal that we were talking about. 'Little brother' I called him because he was closer to me than I was to my two brothers. My oldest brother was away from me and my youngest brother was much younger than me, but his name was Dickie.

DRISCOLL: Dickie who?

R. BEVERLY: Dyson. Last name was Dyson. Richard Dyson. We always called him Dickie. Dickie baby. And sometimes when we got in trouble or something, mama would try to send him home or grandma would send him on back home, he lived on the very next block. And, or even I would be down there and something went wrong he done, I was home and my dad would look down the dining room table and say, 'Where my other son? What did y'all do? Who [unclear]? What did y'all do today?' And mama say, 'I sent him home!' 'Why?' Because he wasn't there sitting there at the table to eat.

M. ELLIOTT: That's how [unclear]...

DRISCOLL: You're really close.

R. BEVERLY: Right. He lived in the 400 block, the very next block.

DRISCOLL: It sounds like there were lots of happy gatherings. Can you describe them?

M. ELLIOTT: Oh yeah, there was lots of love in that house.

MAYO: Christmas with you guys as kids.

DRISCOLL: Yeah, what was Christmas like?

MAYO: It was just carried on.

M. ELLIOTT: Well, it was something! [laughs]

DRISCOLL: Was it the same for you as it was for you?

M. ELLIOTT: I imagine so.

MAYO: No.

R. BEVERLY: No, you don't think so?

DRISCOLL: You tell me.

R. BEVERLY: No. For us, for me, when I come along, you got an apple and an orange and a candy cane in your stocking. They were hanging on the mantelpiece in the living room, or the parlor as they called it. That was a room you couldn't go in. Only certain times you allowed in that room. The door stayed closed. You didn't go in there; you stayed in all the rest of the house but you wouldn't go in there unless some special occasion. Company comes from church or something and then you could go in that room. But Christmas was the big time to go in there.

MAYO: Weren't there two parlors...?

DRISCOLL: So kids got to go in at Christmas.

MAYO: Weren't there two parlors there?

R. BEVERLY: Well, that back one, we call that the sitting room.

MAYO: The sitting room, yeah.

R. BEVERLY: That was called the sitting room that was right behind the front room.

M. ELLIOTT: The first room was the parlor and that stayed closed up all the time except...

R. BEVERLY: All the time.

DRISCOLL: For you too...

M. ELLIOTT: No. No.

DRISCOLL: The big kids.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, uh huh.

R. BEVERLY: On Christmas we would have a Christmas tree, and Papa would always come in and he'd kneel to see the baby and he'd go to Eastern Market to get it—Christmas Eve Night—because always, he say, a little cheaper then...

M. ELLIOTT: Now, trees were very cheap then, and you could get a tree for about two, three dollars.

[UNKNOWN]: Oh, less than that.

R. BEVERLY: No you couldn't. You bet you could for about a dollar and a half.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: We put those on sleighs because we had snow, oh yes!

MAYO: Isn't that something how we had snow every Christmas for years?

R. BEVERLY: Yes, there was snow at Christmas. I don't recall a Christmas that didn't have snow, and the ceilings over there about 12 feet, and that tree would go all the way up to the top. Go up in the corner, we would sit it up there for the little ones when they'd come down and it'd be all set up for them.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: They'd be all dressed and what not. But you didn't have electric lights in those days, or the things that you have on trees nowadays...

DRISCOLL: What did you have?

R. BEVERLY: My sister Mary, she used to do a lot of them and we used to help her. Popcorn, and you'd thread the popcorn with the thread, a strong string, that'd go all around through the tree. And then you had some kind of ball, but they were different balls than what you get today. Bright. And you'd have all that over there. No lights, or anything, and set down on a tub of water to keep it fresh. Oh, I think Christmas...

M. ELLIOTT: But your balls then were glass balls, so...

R. BEVERLY: That's what it was.

M. ELLIOTT: ...they reflected the candlelight in the room. That's how you got the light.

R. BEVERLY: Right, the candlelight. There wasn't no electricity in the house at that time. When I was born...

M. ELLIOTT: Gas, we had the gas.

R. BEVERLY: Oil.

M. ELLIOTT: Oil. Oil Lamps. Okay.

R. BEVERLY: Kerosene lamps when I was growing up. And I recall going upstairs carrying a little lamp to go to bed. Little kerosene lamps to go to bed. They had the big lamps downstairs with great big globes, something like this lamp was sitting in the parlor...

DRISCOLL: That big?

R. BEVERLY: With a great big globe, and the chimney would come off. And that'd be one of my chores—cleaning the chimneys. Get black soot from the chimneys. All them chimneys. Oh, I had a lot of chores.

DRISCOLL: Did you?

R. BEVERLY: Oh...yes

M. ELLIOTT: All children did in those days.

MAYO: Yes, you had to bring the coal in.

R. BEVERLY: Yes, we got coal, but before it was just wood.

MAYO: Oh yeah, right, the wood stove. The pot-bellied stove.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, you had the pot-bellied, wooden stove. Then you had coal in there. And I tell you, that house was cold!

[general laughter]

R. BEVERLY: Because if you moved a foot away from that pot-bellied stove, you'd freeze! And it was a funny thing, because—remember we were talking about it—how we'd go in there at the time and it didn't make no difference to us, all the children were out and around and we thought we were the same as they were, because you'd walk around in the house in the winter with an overcoat on. It was just that cold. If the stove was over there and you were on the other side of the room you'd freeze! But it was still daunting.

One of those chores, you had the hardwood floors and then one of my jobs was to wax the floor. But there's a difference between waxing today and waxing back in that day. You had a kind of paste wax and put it on, and grandma would make sure you got it on right, then she'd have two bricks that she covered with a piece of velvet. She sewed some velvet around brick and slid it down every side, back and forth on each plank. She stared over me, looked at it, 'That ain't good enough now, let's get a little more on it. Push it a little harder. Push it a little harder.' You'd get them floors to shining.

DRISCOLL: If you know what it looked like, then you could appreciate it.

R. BEVERLY: Oh yeah. It was a beautiful, gorgeous house back in them days. All the lace curtains would come down.

MAYO: And the velvet, heavy curtains and you talk about the cold, I know I've heard you all talk about the shutters and the heavy drapes that would keep the cold out.

R. BEVERLY: The drapes would keep the cold out and you'd close the shutters on the front

DRISCOLL: Shutters?

M. ELLIOTT: Shutters on the inside.

MAYO: Yeah.

H. ELLIOTT: They were floor-to-ceiling windows.

MAYO: Yeah, those long windows.

H. ELLIOTT: I hope the man who ever bought the house keeps the house the same. He says he's going to do it.

M. ELLIOTT: He's going to restore it, rather than change it.

DRISCOLL: I see that when I walk back and forth [in front of your house].

H. ELLIOTT: Oh right. A whole lot of them houses...

M. ELLIOTT: All those windows had shutters, top and bottom, and they'd close in the winter, and they had heavy velvet drapes...

MAYO: ...velvet...

M. ELLIOTT: ...that you could close

R. BEVERLY: They went from the ceiling to the floor.

M. ELLIOTT: Part of the reason why that parlor stayed closed was because you didn't have to heat it, you know, when there was nobody there. You really didn't use it. You went in there to clean... You went in there to clean it, to dust it, and wax it and stuff like that, but then you closed those doors and the doors moved into the wall—go into the wall and come out—pocket you call them...

DRISCOLL: Pocket doors.

R. BEVERLY: We stayed in the basement, mostly. Where we could act normal, we'd have fun. That was a no-no, that parlor. [laughing]

M. ELLIOTT: We couldn't go in that parlor. [laughing]

R. BEVERLY: That was a no-no. Couldn't do it.

DRISCOLL: And for you too?

M. ELLIOTT: Oh yeah. Oh, but by the time... I would say by the time I was school-aged, the house was opened up. It opened up then because we had central heating. I remember when I maybe was about five or six years old and they put the electricity in the house, and put the heating system in. I remember that. And they put radiators and steam and heaters and put them in there, and I was about five or six years old then. That's when the house, I think, became more open.

R. BEVERLY: More open.

M. ELLIOTT: Open.

DRISCOLL: Did you get to...

M. ELLIOTT: No thank you. [general laughter]

DRISCOLL: ...to wax it?

M. ELLIOTT: No thank you. [more laughter]

R. BEVERLY: I was the only one that I can recall—me and Dickie baby—were the only ones that were pushing the bricks up and down.

DRISCOLL: What did the girls have to do? What chores did you have?

M. ELLIOTT: oh...mainly dishes, washing the dishes and basically helping with cooking and stuff like that because I learned early how to be a housekeeper because our mother had a stroke when I was about 12. Let's see, I was about 12 or maybe about ten.

R. BEVERLY: Really? Ten, I think.

M. ELLIOTT: I don't know.

MAYO: How old was Lillian? Start there because she was the youngest. She's about eight.

M. ELLIOTT: She's about ten.

MAYO: Right, right.

M. ELLIOTT: So, it was when I was about eight, so then a lot of the chores came to us because she could no longer cook, you know. But she lived after her stroke. She lived maybe about ten years after her stroke. Uh huh. But she was, you know, once you...you reach a level from a stroke you just go on with your life and do whatever you can. And she was paralyzed on one side but she still had good faculties and could talk and still liked to dress up. She was...

R. BEVERLY: Oh, boy.

MAYO: Oh, I brought some pictures. [Family looks at them]

M. ELLIOTT: ...dress up...she was a dress up lady. She dressed up every day.

R. BEVERLY: Oh, boy.

M. ELLIOTT: But she didn't do anything. [general laughter]

MAYO: Yes, she did. Yes, she did.

DRISCOLL: ...take care of all of you guys...

MAYO: Yes. And what she did was she made things stay beautiful.

M. ELLIOTT: She had all these eight children, too.

R. BEVERLY: That's right.

M. ELLIOTT: All these eight children well trained to do what they had to do, you know.

DRISCOLL: What a gift. Could you do that?

MAYO: Her husband on the...yeah, I'm doing something. [Family looking at and commenting on the photos.]

R. BEVERLY: [unclear] relatives, we had my two uncles in the backyard.

M. ELLIOTT: Oh yeah.

R. BEVERLY: She was a dresser.

M. ELLIOTT: That's her when she wasn't dressed.

MAYO: Yeah, this is her when she wasn't dressed. [general laughter] That was in the back yard with the three oldest children.

DRISCOLL: Oh, she looks so happy. The look on her face is...

MAYO: The amazing thing is...it...how long was she and Papa married before the first child came?

DRISCOLL: Look how happy.

M. ELLIOTT: Ten years

MAYO: Ten years.

R. BEVERLY: It was before—ten years before the first boy was born.

M. ELLIOTT: Many children—she had eight children.

R. BEVERLY: That's right, eight.

MAYO: One behind the other.

R. BEVERLY: Oh yes.

M. ELLIOTT: One in and one out, that's what I'd say!

MAYO: Yeah. One in and one out!

R. BEVERLY: A story about them babies, though. Those babies look like...coming right fast. In those days the doctors would come to the house.

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, yes.

R. BEVERLY: A doctor named Dr. Simon Carver.

M. ELLIOTT: Carson.

R. BEVERLY: Carson.

MAYO: Carson.

R. BEVERLY: And he was in there with the ladies, and I remember Grandmother always telling me, the baby doctor brings the baby in the black bag that he comes in the house with. And I think it was George's birth. They go upstairs—the baby was born, George was here—but he'd gone upstairs to check, and left his bag on the hat rack sitting in the hall. And we was—my smart self—I was inquisitive, wanted to see about the babies in the bag! [giggles]

MAYO: Inquiring minds wants to know.

R. BEVERLY: So I just opened the bag to look in it and Grandma come out of her room and caught me. And she didn't get angry so much about wanting to know about where the babies come from but from touching something that doesn't belong to you. Because we were taught you don't touch nothing that doesn't belong to you. So I had to go out in the backyard, cut a switch, and she tore my little legs up. But I always thought that maybe if Mama didn't like the baby he brought, she could trade for one he had in the bag. [general laughter] And that's really what I thought! I thought that that's why he brought extra ones in the bag, so you could trade the little baby! [laughing]

M. ELLIOTT: [laughing] Yeah, this is what happens when people don't tell you the truth!

[more laughter]

MAYO: Yeah, there were just certain things they didn't talk about at that time.

R. BEVERLY: I was only nine! I was just nine years old!

M. ELLIOTT: Nine years old...Can you imagine someone eight or nine years thinking that...

R. BEVERLY: [protesting] No!

MAYO: Yeah, but not today.

R. BEVERLY: I thought Mama might want to trade him—George—for somebody cuter!

[Laughter]

M. ELLIOTT: You thought! You didn't think? You thought...?

MAYO: Yeah, you thought!

M. ELLIOTT: Couldn't send it back.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, I thought, on account of his bag. Dr. Carson's bag.

MAYO: When you say Dr. Carson, I think about this is where I tail-end with you all, you all been dragging me around all my life. Dr. Carson took my tonsils out, so, you know, so...

R. BEVERLY: He was still around

MAYO: He was still around.

DRISCOLL: Now was this...

M. ELLIOTT: They became friendly with him when he was a fresh, young doctor, so therefore he born all of us...

R. BEVERLY: All eight.

MAYO: And some of our children, too.

[Murmurs of assent]

DRISCOLL: Was his office around... Was his office near?

R. BEVERLY: No.

M. ELLIOTT: No.

MAYO: No.

M. ELLIOTT: It was in Northwest.

MAYO: Florida Avenue.

R. BEVERLY: Off Florida Avenue.

M. ELLIOTT: Up off of Florida Avenue.

R. BEVERLY: He birthed... he brought us all into the world. All eight of us.

DRISCOLL: Looks like he took good care of you.

MAYO: And then some of the...

R. BEVERLY: ...and the children!

MAYO: Yes, that's Peko, and Johnny...

R. BEVERLY: Willy, Johnny... all of them then...

MAYO: Mm hmm.

M. ELLIOTT: I think he stopped with Billy.

MAYO: With Billy?

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah.

MAYO: Johnny—Johnny, you know, was born there at the house, because I was there.

DRISCOLL: What year was that?

MAYO: Oh, my goodness. I must have been about five, something like that. I think about five.

M. ELLIOTT: It couldn't have been more.

MAYO: No, couldn't have been more than that. But I remember William was in that middle bedroom. And John Smith was born there. Yeah.

M. ELLIOTT: It got by me.

R. BEVERLY: To go back to Grandma...

[laughing]

M. ELLIOTT: I wasn't there.

MAYO: yeah, yeah.

R. BEVERLY: She was born on the Hill. On the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue, sometime. Her parents had been slaves. Her father and her mother—but they were freed before Emancipation—evidently the master had freed them.

DRISCOLL: The Carrolls?

MAYO: She did her homework.

R. BEVERLY: That's right...Carroll. The biggest slave owner and the biggest property owner in the District. And my grandmother's mother's name was Harriet Carroll. You know what I'm saying?

DRISCOLL: I hear what you're saying.

R. BEVERLY: Yes, Carroll had...

M. ELLIOTT: Your grandmother's mother.

DRISCOLL: So was she...was she the child of Charles Carroll?

R. BEVERLY: I don't know, but she carried his name.

M. ELLIOTT: Her name was Carroll.

R. BEVERLY: That's all I can say, and he freed them. They owned half an acre of land and if you read the histories about slaves, that's what happened, they took care of their children that they had by the slaves. They took care of them. That's how Mom's Grandma was born on the Hill. She was born there in 1849, I think it was. Grandma was born in 1849, if I remember. She knew all about Civil War and all about the slaves. She used to take me over to the old Capitol Courthouse and Jail, where the Supreme Court is now. It used to be big old red brick buildings set up high on a hill, and then high wrought iron fence around it. When I was about five, six, seven years old. And she'd take me over there and show me the slave block, where they used to auction the slaves off, and she could tell me about how she would see them bringing them in, all chained up and ready to take them over to Georgetown and put them on the boat and ship them down the river—wherever they were selling them. But she...she was freed because her mother had been freed by them, and the father's name was James Reed. The father's name was James Reed but that paper that I had wanted—your son Hughie had had it on something they were doing—that's not in there now. [Looking through folder of papers].

M. ELLIOTT: It's not in there?

R. BEVERLY: No, no. It's not in there.

MAYO: Hughie still has papers?

R. BEVERLY: No, he got it all in that book, and they had signed some papers for something, and it had them listed as James Reed and Harriet Carroll, free people of color. That's how it was wrote on the paper. That was the paper I was showing to old man Razor at that time, he'd never seen nothing, no deed like that. Evidently, they...after her mother died she must have sold the little farm to her brother James...James, the names go right through the family.

MAYO: Yes, yes.

R. BEVERLY: They keep going through our family. But her brother was named James after her father, and her sister was named Harriett, that was our great aunt Harriett, and they...

MAYO: Was that the house on 17th Street?

R. BEVERLY: They had sold the farm up there and bought that property, which is now 308 Independence Avenue, and that's how they got on that side [of Pennsylvania Avenue] because Grandma used to say that was all woods and fields up there. It was rural.

M. ELLIOTT: When that house was built there weren't any other houses there.

R. BEVERLY: And there was a creek.

DRISCOLL: No other houses?

M. ELLIOTT: No, that was the first house built.

R. BEVERLY: On that...

DRISCOLL: On the...on B Street.

M. ELLIOTT: On B Street. That was the first house.

R. BEVERLY: Originally—it was originally because Rose had a picture of it. A little three room frame house on the back of the lot. A little white—and we used to white wash the house—on the back where the shed was...

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

R. BEVERLY: ...you'd have to wash that, whitewash. I know about whitewashing!

M. ELLIOTT: [laughing] yeah.

R. BEVERLY: Whitewash means [unclear] and water. [laughing]

DRISCOLL: Yeah.

MAYO: So this is where you got all your talent from.

[general laughter]

R. BEVERLY: The shed and the fences, and there's a little stream, and that picture got away from her. [sounds of dismay] When she went into the Thomas House up there, it got away from us. Aunt Ethel Cole—she had a picture of the original house before they built the big brick house on the front end of the lot. Because it was a double lot. It was actually a double lot, you know. A lot of people don't know it but it's a double lot.

DRISCOLL: Then did they tear down the little white one?

R. BEVERLY: That became...

M. ELLIOTT: Oh yeah, yeah.

R. BEVERLY: ...that became the coal shed.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah.

DRISCOLL: Where if you were bad...?

R. BEVERLY: Where they kept the coal.

M. ELLIOTT: And you went and got switched!

DRISCOLL: I was wondering...that's what I had heard...

[lots of laughter]

R. BEVERLY: Sometimes. Yes, yes, sometimes.

MAYO: Now that was gone by the time I came along because I remember the back yard when I came along, was a brick...

R. BEVERLY: Brick wall, yes.

M. ELLIOTT: When I came along, too.

MAYO: Well, no, it wasn't a brick wall [R. Beverly also speaking] because it was the Chinese laundry that the back...came into the back, and the kids that, you know, were the family of the Chinese laundry used to sit on the wood fence. It was a wood fence then, and, you know, talk and play back and forth, because we could move back and forth in that yard. No, the brick wall came much later.

R. BEVERLY: Much later, I was in New York.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, yeah.

MAYO: Much later.

DRISCOLL: Is that the Moy family?

MAYO: You know...I...the Moy...

DRISCOLL: Is that the Moy family?

MAYO: I'm trying to remember. The Chinese laundry that was...

R. BEVERLY: I don't know about a Chinaman but the Smiths lived upstairs.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, they did.

MAYO: On top of the laundry.

R. BEVERLY: They were black folk.

MAYO: Right, they were black, but there was, I remember the Chinese family...

R. BEVERLY: But I can't remember the name of the laundry.

MAYO: Yeah, yeah, there was...

R. BEVERLY: He and his wife lived there...

MAYO: ...a black family...

R. BEVERLY: ...two kids or something...

MAYO: Yeah. Yeah.

DRISCOLL: And little girls?

MAYO: Yeah, I think there was a...

M. ELLIOTT: ...couple of little girls.

DRISCOLL: Because they've been interviewed.

MAYO: Okay.

R. BEVERLY: Okay, so that was part of this.

MAYO: Okay!

DRISCOLL: And they were talking about playing with the kids...

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, right.

MAYO: Oh, then they're the ones then.

DRISCOLL: So you'll have to look up Moy or M...I'm not sure how you pronounce it, but I think they're on the Internet.

MAYO: On the Internet, okay.

[continuing murmurs of delight]

MAYO: Well, you know they say six degrees of separation.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, they're still around.

MAYO: Once we start speaking to each other...

R. BEVERLY: Yeah.

MAYO: The history comes together.

R. BEVERLY: The Moys have been away from here for a great many years now.

[murmurs of assent]

M. ELLIOTT: They were the first ones who gentrified that house.

R. BEVERLY: Right.

MAYO: Yeah.

M. ELLIOTT: That was one of the first houses that was gentrified.

MAYO: Now, tell me, when did the building on the corner get there?

R. BEVERLY: That was there when I was born.

M. ELLIOTT: No, it wasn't.

DRISCOLL: That great big one?

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, it wasn't there when I was born.

M. ELLIOTT: Because I can remember going...

DRISCOLL: You were born in 1918...

R. BEVERLY: 15. That building was there, because it was a bank...

M. ELLIOTT: It was a bank?

R. BEVERLY: ...on the ground floor.

M. ELLIOTT: Okay.

R. BEVERLY: Germania was the name of the bank. After World War I they changed it from Germania to some other name and then they built that other bank over on Pennsylvania Avenue, right on the corner, on Pennsylvania Avenue.

MAYO: And the Plumbers, how long were the Plumbers there, you know, that lived...that had the tenant shop?

R. BEVERLY: The tenant...tennis?

DRISCOLL: Tennis? Tennis?

R. BEVERLY: Tinnners. Roofers.

MAYO: But weren't their names Plumber?

M. ELLIOTT: No, no, no...

R. BEVERLY: No. [unclear murmurings] Pumphrey.

MAYO: Pumphrey. I knew it was something with a 'P'.

M. ELLIOTT: A family of Pumphreys. They lived next to our house.

MAYO: Right next to our house.

M. ELLIOTT: They lived over top of two stores...two stores there, used to be a tailor shop, and this roofing company...

R. BEVERLY: Roofing company, right.

M. ELLIOTT: And the roofing family lived upstairs...

R. BEVERLY: Pumphrey up on the top...

M. ELLIOTT: Over the top of those two stores..

R. BEVERLY: I wonder if he's still living?

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, not the roofing man!

R. BEVERLY: No, I know he's not, but I [unclear]...

M. ELLIOTT: The son took over that business...

R. BEVERLY: Name was R.B. Smalls?

M. ELLIOTT: R.B., R.B., no, his name wasn't...something...Pumphrey. He was the son of one of Mr. Pumphrey's daughters.

R. BEVERLY: Daughters, okay.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, then I've forgotten now what their name was. But he had three daughters. Mr. Pumphrey had three daughters...

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, I remember them.

M. ELLIOTT: And, I think, and a son...

R. BEVERLY: We used to play with all them children...

M. ELLIOTT: Now he had one son...

R. BEVERLY: We used to play with all the children in the block. We was the only black family...

M. ELLIOTT: ...Our family shopped with them for a long time...

R. BEVERLY: Just so it happened.

DRISCOLL: And there wasn't any hassle?

R. BEVERLY: Oh no. We were in and out of their houses. They came in our houses...

MAYO: Even when I came along...

DRISCOLL: Way it should be.

R. BEVERLY: They ate in our houses, we ate in their houses. If we done something wrong, their parents got on us. Our parents got on them. It wasn't no hassle. No. It was no hassle...the only thing you'd do different is when you went to school. When you...

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: ...at school you found there was a difference.

M. ELLIOTT: And then you had your friends, and they had their friends, and as you got older you'd gravitate to your friends and they gravitated to theirs, but it still was a very mutual relationship there on the block.

DRISCOLL: So you were still friendly...

M. ELLIOTT: and neighborly when you were home.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, oh yeah. The third house had a doctor on the corner...McQuillan?

M. ELLIOTT: McQuillan, yes.

R. BEVERLY: He had about four kids.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, he had about four, five children.

R. BEVERLY: Sure, and we played with all of them, and he was Irish, or Scotch, or something or other, and then on the other side of the alley was the Sousa's house...

MAYO: You know about John Phillips Sousa.

[multiple unclear voices about Sousa]

MAYO: I thought he was across the alley.

[more unclear voices about location]

M. ELLIOTT: He was on the same side of the street as we was...

R. BEVERLY: ...The Polis lived in there and he had about six kids, and we played with all of them. And then the Schneiders across the street, they had three children, I think. They were all...we played with all of them. You know, wasn't no different. We just played.

M. ELLIOTT: All those houses are gone.

R. BEVERLY: They built the church. [Capitol Hill Presbyterian]

DRISCOLL: Oh, the church.

R. BEVERLY: You had houses from the church all the way out to the corner.

M. ELLIOTT: Right. Grocery stores up and down the corner.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, well, they had the little A&P store...

M. ELLIOTT: Before they built that...

R. BEVERLY: A little A&P on the corner...

M. ELLIOTT: ...bank, there used to be stores there.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, right. Grocery...

M. ELLIOTT: Some kind of grocery stores...

R. BEVERLY: The A&P.

M. ELLIOTT: Was it A&P?

R. BEVERLY: It was A&P because it was painted red. [unclear] You know A&P, little grocerers. Momma used to go there.

DRISCOLL: Do you remember a grocery store on the corner of Fifth and Independence, on the...across...

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, there on the street. Yeah. It was DGS.

M. ELLIOTT: DGS, yeah. That's what it was.

R. BEVERLY: DGS. It was a DGS...

M. ELLIOTT: There was a High's ...

R. BEVERLY: They were groceries from all them new jobs. They were groceries to be delivered from all them stores. All the boys had to...get a little work. They'd pick them up to do a little work, you know, because I had a *Washington Evening Star* route. That was a great thing. One of the best things around, I think, and I used to deliver all around my neighborhood...

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

[Having come from a school meeting, Tanya Beverly joins the family and informally greets her relatives.]

T. BEVERLY: I'm Tanya Beverly, the granddaughter of Robert Beverly. I was just discussing with the group here that my daughter attends Kettering Elementary, which is a communications and academics school, and her school has something called 'write a book', where the kids actually have to write the book, make the cover, the binder, and everything, and do the illustrations. And she got first place for her book of poems called "Poetry of the Heart." And when she set out to do that this year—she's done it every year since second grade; they start them in second grade—and this year, though, before she sat down and started, she said, 'I'm going to win this year.' [Laughter] Before she even...

MAYO: Sounds like Aunt Sarah!

R. BEVERLY: That's good!

T. BEVERLY: ...and I said, 'Bishira, this is the whole county', and [general laughter] I wanted her to be, you know, realistic. And she said, 'but I'm going to win this year'. And when we sat down today, I reminded her that she told me she was going to win. I just want y'all to see her certificate here.

[various indistinguishable positive murmurings]

MAYO: This is her baby, and I will show her little, teeny baby. [showing photographs]

T. BEVERLY: She's even bigger than that...

R. BEVERLY: [unclear]

T. BEVERLY: Right.

[Oh's and ah's all around]

DRISCOLL: How beautiful.

T. BEVERLY: One of the poems is dedicated to her grandfather, which is the one she gave to him for his birthday this year. The poems and the book was submitted after the new year, just after they come back off of their Christmas break, and then they're read...and then they're submitted to the county. And so many people...and her school's...the person...who...a second grader got third place for the whole Prince George's County. So my...her school...within her school she got first place. But in the county, he got third place. He was a second grader, and he wrote a book and illustrated it. Their school is known for that. Would you like me to read her poem? Okay. It's called "Great Granddad", by Shira Williams:

I see a man, bold and bright, smart, handsome, and full of might, who will love me always, day or night, and when I'm aged to be 103, even if I'm gone, he will always be.

M. ELLIOTT: [chuckles]

MAYO: Beautiful.

DRISCOLL: How old was she when she wrote that?

T. BEVERLY: She was ten.

M. ELLIOTT: ...this year...

R. BEVERLY: ...just this year...

T. BEVERLY: ...yeah...

MAYO: That's fantastic...

T. BEVERLY: But my favorite thing was...

MAYO: Did you frame that?

T. BEVERLY: Well, she did that. She made a frame and everything.

M. ELLIOTT: She made the frame?

T. BEVERLY: Yeah, she made it. She did the art...there's this special kind of...it's real gold, and you have to put it on...It was something.

MAYO: Yeah, yeah.

T. BEVERLY: I was swapping classes...

R. BEVERLY: [directed to Henry Elliott] She been to your class? She been to some of your classes?

[lots of laughter]

MAYO: This is the artist of the family, Henry Elliott. He's the artist.

T. BEVERLY: [unclear background comments]...but yeah, so, I was feeling real proud when I saw it.

H. ELLIOTT: [unclear] She's beyond me.

[general laughter]

T. BEVERLY: I don't want to interrupt anymore, I just wanted to...I told her I would be late because I wanted to make sure I got her settled in when she got home.

MAYO: Yeah, yeah, right.

M. ELLIOTT: Very good. Wonderful to share.

MAYO: It is. It is. And the tradition goes on.

DRISCOLL: That's exactly what I was thinking. It's a tradition of love and caring...

MAYO: So we're dealing with Bishira as—what generation now? I've lost count.

T. BEVERLY: She's fourth...

MAYO: Fourth. Now, is she fourth?

R. BEVERLY: I have one son...

MAYO: No, wait a minute...fifth...

T. BEVERLY: I was going to say fifth, but I wasn't sure.

R. BEVERLY: ...and that one son gave me six grands, and then six grands'll give me 13 great-grands, and one great-great-grand. So it's going!

MAYO: Yes.

R. BEVERLY: It's still going!

DRISCOLL: That's great. That's great. We talked about Christmas as a holiday. What was it like for you, Christmas?

M. ELLIOTT: Christmas, for me, was, as a young child, you didn't see anything. Nothing was apparent about Christmas. There was no sign of Christmas when you went to bed Christmas Eve. There was nothing in the house that looked like Christmas. But when you woke up on Christmas morning, there was a big tree, and all the goodies hanging, and all the presents under the tree and everything. You didn't get a lot of things, because it was a lot of price, but we always got a new dress, and we always got a new pair of shoes, and we always got one toy, which usually was skates, which were always confiscated by the brothers by spring. [laughter] We never could find our skates come spring! Because there were such things as—what did you call those things?

R. BEVERLY: Skate mobiles.

M. ELLIOTT: And they would make them out of wood from orange crates...

MAYO: Right.

M. ELLIOTT: ...and they would...put the...nail these skates on the bottom, so that's where our skates always disappeared to. [laughter] And because all the skates looked the same, so you could not identify that that's my skate! You know, we just lost our skates somewhere, somebody took them, or we left them around the corner when we were playing. They had all these excuses, you know, but this happened all the time. And...

DRISCOLL: How about for you? What was...

MAYO: Well, Christmas for me was, by the time my generation came on, I'm the second oldest of the grandchildren, and as the other grandchildren came and my aunts and uncles moved away and had their own homes, we would all come to Papa's on Christmas Eve, and this became a tradition. This became our family reunion because all of his daughters, of course, having their own homes, wanted him there for Christmas. So he decided, well, Christmas Eve, everybody will share me. So all of us came to his house, 308 B Street, on Christmas Eve. And he would have these little envelopes for all the grandchildren for money according to how old you were. And if you were up in the top three oldest, cause there were some years between us, then you got a little more than the other ones. And one of my cousins who is very good about money today, he was the one—we were always trying to catch up with—because he always had the money *long* after Christmas was gone. Ours would be gone and he would still be...you know, that's John Smith I'm speaking of...

H. ELLIOTT: And still does...

MAYO: And still does. And still does. So we cousins shared that closeness, that bonding, because we knew every Christmas we'd be together. No matter who was together through the course of the year, we knew at Christmas time we would all be at Papa's house.

DRISCOLL: So that's a tradition that really...

MAYO: That was the tradition up until...

T. BEVERLY: Last year.

MAYO: Yeah, yeah. Still.

DRISCOLL: How about for you?

T. BEVERLY: For me, Christmas was a time where I got to meet relatives that I didn't get to really know that well growing up, because I didn't grow up very close to my grandpa because he lived in New York, but once he moved back here we started going over to what we called 'The Big House'—I'm sure y'all remember—

MAYO: Yeah, The Big House.

T. BEVERLY: Yeah, The Big House. And in our minds, we all believed it is, and we still do, The Big House. And I still feel very attached to that house, because that's where I met my Aunt Marge, my Aunt

Lillian, my cousin June, my Aunt Ethel, and her mother Aunt Rose. And for me it was a special place because my daughter this year made the very special comment—she said, ‘when the house sells, what are we going to do for Christmas?’ And that just stood in everybody’s mind, because now we don’t know. We didn’t do anything this year. We’re just, like, stagnant. You know... So now we have to come up with another house...

M. ELLIOTT: [softly in the background] You didn’t do anything? [sniffing]

T. BEVERLY: ...another tradition, another place, but we didn’t do...

M. ELLIOTT: You didn’t do anything?

T. BEVERLY: ...nothing. Because everyone was so...

MAYO: In a tizzy.

T. BEVERLY: You know, it was a very emotional time. So it was like, what do we do? And my daughter was the one who said it. ‘So where are we supposed to go, what are we supposed to do for Christmas?’ And I said, ‘well, I don’t know’, because she...my daughter doesn’t really like to wear dresses, or dress up, she likes to be fancy dressed but not dressy dressed like Christmas dressed. But on Christmas, she would give in and wear that pretty, pretty dress, and her mother started her on that tradition by buying her a really pretty Christmas dress, so after that I could buy her pretty dresses, too, but other than that, she won’t wear a pretty Christmas dress. So she had gotten one this year for her birthday, and she said, ‘mommy, where am I going to wear my pretty dress?’ So she wanted—this dress has not been worn yet.

M. ELLIOTT: Well, well. The house is wherever the family is.

R. BEVERLY: We have to do something.

T. BEVERLY: And that’s where we’re going to have to pick up.

MAYO: Yes, yes.

H. ELLIOTT: Another thing I came in on, being married Marjorie, the youngest children when they would get old enough, just handed out the gifts to everybody.

MAYO: That’s right! That’s right.

M. ELLIOTT: Yes!

H. ELLIOTT: That’s...Everybody got a gift. Everybody got a gift.

[murmurs of assent]

T. BEVERLY: Step kids, step moms, step dads...

H. ELLIOTT: ...friends...

T. BEVERLY: ...friends...

MAYO: ...yeah, even people who brought friends with them, you know. I can remember especially with Margie, she used to always have these extra...have a shopping bag with extra gifts, in case somebody...there were boy’s gifts and girl’s gifts, so all she’d do is take, you know, a boy’s gift out if you brought a friend, then that friend got a gift also. So...

DRISCOLL: Really?

H. ELLIOTT: [unclear] I was new on this block was when Margie and I first met, that’s my first Christmas going over to their house. I had a gift, too!

[laughter]

MAYO: Yeah.

H. ELLIOTT: She gave me a gift! Lucky!

[laughter, unknown voice says, “Lucky you!”]

H. ELLIOTT: Then I asked Beverly...it wasn't long...wasn't very long... 'Mr. Beverly, I want to marry your daughter. May I marry your daughter?' And we made a joke of it. He said, 'oh yes.' I said, 'if I had known you would be so happy I would have charged you ten dollars!' [much laughter]

MAYO: But my grandfather, Mr. Beverly, he...

DRISCOLL: That Mr. Beverly?

MAYO: Yeah, their father, my grandfather. He was a part of everybody's life. You know, every friend that you all had knew Papa. Every...and I was...I must admit that...I'm a little ashamed to say it, but it took me a lot of years to realize that my grandfather's name was not Papa, because I called him Papa all my life, mimicking them from the very first day I spoke. Because I didn't know my grandmother that well. She died...I think I was a year old when she died.

R. BEVERLY: That's right.

MAYO: But my grandfather's kind of lived in that house through my teen years, and, you know, former years I got to know him very well. I was very close to him. But he knew everybody. He stayed around with everybody's friends and...

H. ELLIOTT: Yes, he did...

MAYO: Yeah, [laughing] he did. I mean, down to my...my husband, I think about my husband lived in the next block, 412 Independence Avenue, and—the Mayo family—and he—do you know the Mayo family?

DRISCOLL: I do. My kids went to school with their kids.

MAYO: Okay. Okay. Well, I'm part of that family. My husband is now deceased, but we were together, praise God, for 43 years before he died, so I, you know, kind of grew up with that family too in that neighborhood.

DRISCOLL: Well, this has been a really...a setting for you...you have to grow and develop...into...

MAYO: ...yeah, yeah...a wonderful life.

M. ELLIOTT: And to live in on the Hill, as they call it, and the exposure we had to things like the Marine band concerts and things that we went to Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings.... We dressed up and went and sat on the lawn and listened to the music of the Marine band, Army band, or Navy band every week. That was our evening activity.

R. BEVERLY: It used to go on at the Capitol.

M. ELLIOTT: Mm hmm.

DRISCOLL: It was the Capitol.

M. ELLIOTT: Wonderful. Just...just all the different things that just went on in the area, you know.

DRISCOLL: And you were easily and comfortably a part of them? There wasn't the...

R. BEVERLY: Mm umm. You sat with everyone else.

UNKNOWN: Yeah, no problem.

T. BEVERLY: Did you all tell her about the market? That was always the thing that was...

MAYO: Yeah, Eastern Market...

T. BEVERLY: ...amazing. The Eastern Market...It was serious. You tell us the experience...

M. ELLIOTT: It was his experience.

R. BEVERLY: I don't mind telling...

M. ELLIOTT: Not mine.

R. BEVERLY: I would go with Grandma to Eastern Market.

DRISCOLL: The lady all dressed up?

R. BEVERLY: No, no.

M. ELLIOTT: No. Every morning.

R. BEVERLY: On Saturday morning.

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, okay.

R. BEVERLY: The farmers would come in with their horse and wagon, bring all their products...live chickens and rabbits and ducks and geese, and she'd...did a lot of the cooking at the house, and she would say, 'boy!'—because I thought that was my name! [lots of laughter] She used to call me boy. 'Come with me now, we're going to the market.' Get some chicken. And she'd buy maybe four or five, and I'd watch her feel them, pat them, and 'why'd you feel them, Grandma, what you doing that for?' And she said, 'I don't want bones! I want meat on them.' And she would buy the leghorns. I knew it all, what you could do with them, how to cook them and what to do with them and all. And she put them in a coop out in the backyard, until we put them on the table, wind up on the table. But that's where she would put them all.

M. ELLIOTT: Mind, live. They were live.

R. BEVERLY: Live. They were live.

MAYO: Did you ever have to...

R. BEVERLY: Yeah...

DRISCOLL: ...Wring their necks?

MAYO: Break their neck and all that?

R. BEVERLY: No, Grandma wouldn't wring their necks.

MAYO: She just...

R. BEVERLY: She had a...wooden piece of log that we would cut kindling with for the coal stove I was telling you about. She had a hatchet. And I would have to hold the chicken by the head...[laughter]

M. ELLIOTT: Mm hmm. [laughter]

R. BEVERLY: ...And she'd come down with the hatchet and chop the head off, and it was amazing to me how the chicken would run around the yard!

MAYO: Yeah. I wouldn't know that.

R. BEVERLY: And, you know, it was just amazing, how I might...seven, eight, nine minutes, seven, eight, something like that...and I'd hold that chicken and just keep holding it as it run all around the yard. All around. And on Christmas, Papa didn't always like turkey. Grandma must have a goose. She would get that goose from Eastern Market, too. A goose from Eastern Market. And then she'd take the feathers and put them in a mattress, as the filling. And I used to love to sleep in Grandma's room.

M. ELLIOTT: Feathers...feather pillows.

R. BEVERLY: Get down in that mattress in cold, cold winter and you didn't need nothing! [laughter] I tell you, I'd even sleep with Grandma. That's where I learned to drink coffee. She'd always give me a little saucer and I'd sip it in the saucer.

M. ELLIOTT: Mm hmm.

R. BEVERLY: I was her boy...

M. ELLIOTT: Mm hmm...

R. BEVERLY: Because see, my mother had a problem with me. [laughter] When I was born, [laughter] she took one look at me and she said, 'Grandma, take him!'

DRISCOLL: Awww...

[laughter]

R. BEVERLY: I just kidding you. [lots of laughter] She had a problem...

MAYO: And now I know why!

M. ELLIOTT: You mean, she had a hard labor with you?

R. BEVERLY: No! No, no. [laughing] Geez, sister, I was just kidding with you.

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, oh. [laughter]

R. BEVERLY: Grandma took me under her wing most of the time. She took me under her wing.

DRISCOLL: So did you do a lot of the cooking then?

R. BEVERLY: Grandma?

DRISCOLL: You.

R. BEVERLY: No...

MAYO: No, I was just saying that that's why you became the cook in the family...

R. BEVERLY: I... Yeah...I became the cook...

MAYO: Yeah, he's a fabulous cook.

R. BEVERLY: I came to cooking later. I watched her...

MAYO: Yeah...gourmet.

R. BEVERLY: And I watched my Dad—he could cook...

MAYO: Yes, Papa...

R. BEVERLY: My mother could cook. My sisters, well, didn't get by. [laughing]

MAYO: Yeah [lots of laughter]

M. ELLIOTT: Now [unclear] could cook!

MAYO: Sure enough.

R. BEVERLY: Because they just had to clean...they didn't have to cook.

M. ELLIOTT: We never had to cook. We were the clean-up crew!

MAYO: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: Well, I didn't either...the cooking...

MAYO: Papa...Papa did all the cooking most of the time, because that's where I learned...

R. BEVERLY: Mama [unclear]...grandma [unclear]...

MAYO: ...how to do...make biscuits, and I remember him doing the turkey at Christmas...

R. BEVERLY: Yeah. But Grandma did a whole lot of the cooking. Downstairs, the kitchen was in the back part of the house by the lower level. Lower level in the basement. A big old iron wood coal stove that we used to cook on, because we didn't have gas then, back then. We'd cook on that, and I can't even tell you...boy, the aromas that used to come out of that...

MAYO: Mmm hmm.

R. BEVERLY: She used to cook something else. Grandma could cook. She was a real cook. And I used to watch her. But where I really learned, back in the thirties, during the Depression, I went into Triple C camp, and that's where I learned how to cook. And then I went from that to cooking at the Naval Hospital, and on the railroad, and I give all that up and went into another career. [laughs]

DRISCOLL: What was your second career?

R. BEVERLY: Union man, with Teamster's Union. After that I went to New York. I became a union man until I retired.

MAYO: And that was something Papa....

T. BEVERLY: [unclear] What was Triple C? When you said you went to Triple C?

R. BEVERLY: That was during the Roosevelt...after Roosevelt became President. It was in the time of...what you had—Great Depression. There was no jobs for grown men much less a guy of my age. And I was so smart in school that I quit. [laughter] Worst thing I ever done in my life. I quit school in my last senior year, and I walked away from school feeling I knew too much, and I was—it wasn't that I wasn't getting good marks.

DRISCOLL: Were you ever at Eastern [High School] ?

R. BEVERLY: No. Not then. Couldn't go to Eastern then.

M. ELLIOTT: Nooooo.

MAYO: Not then.

R. BEVERLY: I went all the way up to Northwest—Armstrong Technical High. You had to go there. They had three schools: Cardoza, Armstrong and Dunbar. [for African American students]

MAYO: Dunbar.

R. BEVERLY: I went to Armstrong, all the way in Northwest. But I quit, and Papa said, 'you're going to have to do something someday'. Somewheres he found out about the Triple C camp, and this group—the organization that...

DRISCOLL: Conservation Corps?

R. BEVERLY: Yes, Civilian Conservation Corps. We worked in the forest, for the Forest Service. First I worked down in Brandywine, in southern Maryland for about six months. Then they moved us up into western Maryland, right on the borderline of Pennsylvania, and that's when I really did get into cooking. After I got up there, I got into cooking up there. The mess sergeant would always see me in the mess hall doing KP work and that used to be extra duty, if you done something wrong they'd put you on cleaning crew. That wasn't why I was in there. My guys that I used to hang out with, they would want to go on weekends and get leave on Saturdays and go to towns like Cumberland, Paw Paw and Kaiser. Wasn't nothing to do, and I'd stay at camp and I would tell them, 'Well, I'll take your place in the canteen', and have a little canteen club. That's why the Army had USO, but you didn't have all that fine stuff like the Army USO. And you could get, you know, candy, cakes, [unclear], articles, things like that, books. And they would have to give me their...

MAYO: Ration stamps...

R. BEVERLY: ...stamps for the month, if I was going to take over the canteen. And he'd ask me, 'how come you always in here Saturdays?' You seem to be so interested in cooking because I don't have to say nothing but you're always there helping the cook. He said, 'well, I got an opening coming up three months from now. Would you like to have it?' I said sure. And they sent me to Army cook school, Uniontown Gap, Pennsylvania, for 30 days. I liked that, because we were in brick barracks, not in the wooden barracks, which were cold. And I liked it, and that's where I got my first really...

MAYO: And all of that started with Grandma...

R. BEVERLY: Yeah.

MAYO: ...taking you to the market.

R. BEVERLY: That's right.

M. ELLIOTT: Live animals.

MAYO: Yes.

R. BEVERLY: Yes.

T. BEVERLY: So can you imagine today if our parents had left to go the market, and we had to pick out a live chicken, and take it home, and put it in a chicken coop.

MAYO and BEVERLY: Uh huh, yeah.

T. BEVERLY: I don't think so! [much laughter]

R. BEVERLY: No?

[Lots of overlapping voices]

MAYO: I had the experience, you know, when I lived in Lakeland with my, yeah, with my grandfather, my father's father, they had...we had chickens out there. In fact, that my father used to do the wringing of the neck thing. Sometimes he'd do the chopping block like you're talking about but he would do the wringing...

R. BEVERLY: ...you could buy rabbits... [at Eastern Market]

MAYO: ...snatch it and he'd walk around the yard...

M. ELLIOTT: ...rabbits, yeah...

R. BEVERLY: I think you could just grab it by the head, because on 17th Street, going back this way now, Washington was rural. All this area, I remember when they built these houses, but all this area was rural from 17th Street... If you got past Lincoln Park it was all rural. We used to come up here and hunt rabbit. Maybe one of us might have... one guy might have a little BB gun, an air rifle. We'd catch rabbit, catch possum, coon, all lived in this area...

MAYO: Well, now, I have a little memory of the kitchen, somebody coming in the kitchen when I was a little girl, with rabbits and coons, and laying them on the kitchen floor.

R. BEVERLY: That was us.

MAYO: Okay.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah.

MAYO: I can see the picture.

R. BEVERLY: You probably...

MAYO: Yeah, I can see that. I can remember that.

H. ELLIOTT: You were telling about the time about the paying for the house, about going to the Booker T. Washington bank. And the bank knew...

R. BEVERLY: Oh yeah. [Gets out old bank book to show]

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: That were ours. Didn't get that book. We got a book from the bank that Frederick Douglass...[unclear]

H. ELLIOTT: Yeah, Frederick Douglass.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, Frederick Douglass established a...

H. ELLIOTT: ...established a bank...

M. ELLIOTT: ...in 1800 [reads from book] "to assist colored people's ability to save money to buy property in Washington DC." This is what was written in this book, and our grandmother used to save one dollar every three months until they got enough money to build that house. You can go to a bank and borrow money, sure...

H. ELLIOTT: ...our house...

M. ELLIOTT: Right...

R. BEVERLY: You see this was the final payment. That's the final payment on the house. I don't know what...how long the time was before but [unclear]

H. ELLIOTT: [laughing]

R. BEVERLY: That was the final payment on the house.

MAYO: And they had black people working in the bank...

M. ELLIOTT: ...built that house...Black craftsmen built that house.

DRISCOLL: Wonderful.

T. BEVERLY: And that's the payment book that's sitting right there...

M. ELLIOTT: That's where they used to put it.

T. BEVERLY: One dollar at a time, that's the book.

M. ELLIOTT: One dollar every three months until they saved up enough money to build that house. I think that's amazing.

T. BEVERLY: It is, but they did have a house on their land in the back of the house.

MAYO: Yeah, we talked about that. Little white frame house.

M. ELLIOTT: ... before the big house was built...

DRISCOLL: That is wonderful to have your history right there.

R. BEVERLY: This is the old deeds, copies of the old deeds to the house.

DRISCOLL: She has a nice hand...the handwriting.

MAYO: Yes, yes.

M. ELLIOTT: See, this passing down this information is very critical at this point, because we're leaving...

R. BEVERLY: ...that house...

T. BEVERLY: ...soon...

DRISCOLL: Not too soon!

T. BEVERLY: Not too soon, I'm not thinking about that.

R. BEVERLY: But I'll been here, you always say...

M. ELLIOTT: ...longer than you before.

MAYO: Yes, you know what I'm saying.

R. BEVERLY: What did I tell you?

M. ELLIOTT: So, uh...

MAYO: Well, I'm so happy that we are able to sit while you all are still in the house.

M. ELLIOTT: It's important...well, you all don't have this information. I don't have what he has, you see. I never experienced the stuff that he experienced.

R. BEVERLY: I had tried to get Huey to come.

MAYO: Yes.

R. BEVERLY: And I started to get history. He started it. I lost him. He started putting some on tapes. He did get some on tape, but...because I said, you know, he's going away for a week, and when I got those you know I got from Cousin Rose...

MAYO: Right.

R. BEVERLY: Not Cousin Rose, Cousin Charles...not Marguerite. Marguerite wouldn't talk to me.

MAYO: No.

R. BEVERLY: And James. Because they had a...

DRISCOLL: Why not?

R. BEVERLY: They just didn't want to talk about it then.

MAYO: Yes.

R. BEVERLY: And my grandfather, Mr....

MAYO: Purdy

R. BEVERLY: James Junk...John!

MAYO: John Purdy! [laughing]

R. BEVERLY: And there's a story about him, too.

DRISCOLL: Which is?

R. BEVERLY: Well, he was a minister with the Methodist church, and that little trouble began...

M. ELLIOTT: This is the father of our mother.

R. BEVERLY: Right.

M. ELLIOTT: This is our grandfather.

R. BEVERLY: Our mother's father. I never saw him. None of us.

M. ELLIOTT: And in our growing up years, whenever you asked where was Grandpa, you always got, 'we don't talk about that in this house.' [laughing]

MAYO: And you got it mostly from your grandmother. [laughing]

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, mama, too. Mama too. And where I really got the whole story from was Cousin Ethel, great Cousin Ethel. That was Mama's cousin. They were children of Grandma's brother, James. And they told her what happened. He had eye problems. [laughter] Eye problems. He couldn't keep his eyes off the ladies. [laughter] So they transferred him to a little church in Nashville, Tennessee, and Mama and them had to move...Grandma had to move down to Nashville Tennessee. Mama was a little baby, and she was going into that household until Mama was born. And they moved down to Nashville Tennessee. And he never got cured of that problem. Got in trouble again. Had eye problems, and took off with this lady and went to Chicago. Nobody written no more about him. I couldn't never...Grandma, I would ask her, and she'd say, 'shut your mouth boy! We don't talk about that old rascal!' That's all she would say to me on where he is today. 'Just shut your mouth, boy. I told you don't ask me nothing about that old rascal.' [laughter] That's all she would tell me, but we never saw Grandpa.

M. ELLIOTT: Never did.

R. BEVERLY: Never saw him.

MAYO: That's amazing.

R. BEVERLY: Never saw him. Mama always used to, as she got older and got sick and all that, you know, worry about him and all.

M. ELLIOTT: I never heard her speak of him.

R. BEVERLY: She would speak to me a little bit because she worried he might come back and try to claim the house. And Grandma always told me, when I tried to ask her something about how she got the house and all, from Grandpa, she would always say to me—she had a—you know how Grandma could talk to you. No, you don't know what's said. But she had a funny way she would talk. She said, [puts on a gruff voice] 'that old man, that old rascal, he had nothing!' [laughter] 'He had nothing! That's my house! He had nothing to do with that. He had nothing.'

DRISCOLL: And she saved up all the money to...

R. BEVERLY: That's right...

MAYO: How old was my great-grandmother, your grandmother, when she died?

R. BEVERLY: Grandmother died in 1932, I think.

DRISCOLL: Oh, God. That's uh, 70...

M. ELLIOTT: That's her mother? Who are you talking about?

MAYO: Your grandmother.

[UNKNOWN]: Grandma? Grandma used to bring me to Grandma's house...

M. ELLIOTT: Grandma died in 1933, I think. Something like that.

[other voices]

DRISCOLL: That's 71.

M. ELLIOTT: Something like that because I know that I wasn't more than about four or five years old...

H. ELLIOTT: [unclear] death certificate. She died cause she was born in 49. She died in 33.

M. ELLIOTT: In those days they used bring bodies back to the home...

MAYO: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: Right.

DRISCOLL: For the funeral.

M. ELLIOTT: Yes, that's when you used the parlor.

DRISCOLL: That's one of the times! [laughter] Christmas and funerals...and company.

M. ELLIOTT: That's right.

MAYO: And while we're on that subject I'd like to add that my mother, who died in 1997, died in the very room she was born in. So she went full cycle in that house.

M. ELLIOTT: ...in that house...

[phone rings]

DRISCOLL: That's so special.

R. BEVERLY: Lots of years gone by. And we were all born in that big front bedroom. [Phone rings] Every last one of us. [lots of laughter]

MAYO: I want to ask you all to...when the Library of Congress was built—I know when we were kids, the grandkids...

R. BEVERLY: It was already built.

MAYO: It was already built. But we used to go in there before they got all the security going, and ride—I don't know if you experienced it—and ride the tram down in the...

M. ELLIOTT: ...that's the Capitol.

R. BEVERLY: The Capitol.

MAYO: Is that the Capitol?

[many voices affirm that it's the Capitol]

MAYO: Okay, I knew it was one of those, when we were little kids.

H. ELLIOTT: Yeah, the little tram-thing.

MAYO: Yeah, that little tram-thing. But of course now, there's no way. You can't even get near it. But I remember we used to ride something that was in the Capitol.

R. BEVERLY: Two wings had, from their offices...

[lots of voices]

MAYO: Right, right.

R. BEVERLY: ...where they go to all those others. You see, where the annex now to the Library, not the first annex right off of Third Street, but the other one, up the offices—Second Street. That's where Carroll Street used to run through...

DRISCOLL: Yes.

R. BEVERLY: Used to run through there...

DRISCOLL: ...little houses...

R. BEVERLY: ...little houses...

MAYO: Yeah, my best girlfriend lived on Carroll Street. That's where Barbara lived...

R. BEVERLY: ...great big house belonged to the Carrolls, must have been the Plantation house, I guess. Big white house.

MAYO: Yeah.

DRISCOLL: Where was that?

R. BEVERLY: That was right on the corner of Carroll and Second. I recall that great, big white house. And it had columns.

DRISCOLL: I bet.

R. BEVERLY: And then...you had other people lived down the street, in the little houses...and all, and I actually...

MAYO: Yeah, that's where Barbara Smith lived.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, Well, I didn't know she...

MAYO: Yeah, she...

R. BEVERLY: ...was telling me about it. I knew she lived in nearby on the Hill but I didn't know...

MAYO: And those were the little houses that, you know, the slaves lived in.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, right.

MAYO: Those little houses before they...

M. ELLIOTT: Didn't your other friend that lived around there...the boy and the girl...?

MAYO: Oh, Joan and Richard Gaither.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, yeah.

MAYO: Yeah, because that's, by then, they really made those houses...renovated those houses and made them really gorgeous.

R. BEVERLY: But they cut Carroll Street completely out of it because...

MAYO: Yeah, the Rayburn Building...

R. BEVERLY: ...the library is now.

MAYO: yeah, they put the Rayburn Building there. That's when they tore all those houses—the whole block, they took that whole block. But when Barbara lived around they still had the horses trough and you know, the horses thing that you put the thing, they were still in the street.

R. BEVERLY: Dr. McWhorter had a horse and a wagon. The very second house from our house. And he had...

MAYO: Mm hmm.

M. ELLIOTT: Used to be a trough right here on the street...

MAYO: Mm hmm.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, well, he had a trough there because he had blocks—stone blocks...

MAYO: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: ...where the ladies would get up and step up...

MAYO: Right, to step up on the...

R. BEVERLY: ...on the carriage. And there was a thing that you tied up around the horse's...

[affirmation from numerous voices]

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, I remember that.

R. BEVERLY: When I grew up there were lots of horses.

MAYO: I mean, even when I was over there...

R. BEVERLY: ...lots of horses...

MAYO: ...the ice man came with the block of ice so he could fill the ice box...the ice box...

R. BEVERLY: Old man...we used to ride on the back...

MAYO: ...the rag man came...

R. BEVERLY: ...in the summer, get up on the back of the ice wagon. It was a nice ride, because all that ice...

MAYO: Yeah, yeah.

R. BEVERLY: And the fire company was over there in back of the market where the school pool is.

MAYO: Right, right.

DRISCOLL: Yes, yes.

R. BEVERLY: We would go dicking all over there to help the firemen, groom the horses, muck the stalls, and they used to cool the wagon that carried the ladders and the other wagon, they had four white horses. Tom, Barney, one named Jean...I can't think of the other guy. What his name was. But these big, beautiful white horses. We'd go over there and help them groom the horses and muck the stalls and feed the horses. Oh, there were plenty of horses all around Washington.

M. ELLIOTT: I'm going to tell you something, too. The difference in young males growing up...they were out. We were really confined as children. We didn't go anywhere.

DRISCOLL: Girls.

M. ELLIOTT: That's right.

R. BEVERLY: No, no, no.

M. ELLIOTT: No, you just sat on the steps and be little ladies. And they would be roaming all over the place. In the daytime as little kids we could play in front of the house or in the yard. Mostly in the yard. Come dinner time you went and took a bath, and put on a little summer dress, and then you set on the porch and you played little games called, 'May I'?

MAYO: Yes, Mother, May I? And hopscotch, did you all play that?

M. ELLIOTT: Played hopscotch.

DRISCOLL: Did you do jump rope?

MAYO: Jump...double Dutch.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, we do that. But we couldn't go away from that area. As girls, you just weren't allowed to do that until, I guess, I guess I was about...

END TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

MAYO: She's doing it right.

DRISCOLL: We're taking a small break for eating purposes.

[Ed: Mr. Robert Beverly had prepared a delicious lunch of varied salads, cakes, lemonade, and coffee for all. A few background comments are removed from here because they were not part of the interview.]

DRISCOLL: Okay, wait a minute. Okay. We are going back to talking. We're having a rather elegant repast made by Mr. Beverly and served by his sous chef, Tanya, but since he was a great cook during his life, he has a cooking story. Okay.

R. BEVERLY: Okay?

MAYO: Yes, tell us what we're eating here.

R. BEVERLY: I was talking about Grandmother's sister, the great aunt Hattie. See, and she was named after my [her] mother. Her mother's name was Hattie, too. So the name just kept going, you know, through the family. And she was very stern, and remember—she would come down them back steps every morning, have a cup of coffee...

[UNKNOWN]: ...back steps...

R. BEVERLY: ...down in the basement kitchen, where the kitchen was in the basement. And she would go up the steps down in the basement. Well, if kids was in the way she would say, [adopts a gruff voice] 'Outta my way. I ain't got time today. Outta my way. Outta my way. Outta my way' And she wore these long black clothes...

M. ELLIOTT: That's what I remember.

R. BEVERLY: Black bonnet, tied up under the chin. If it was cold wintertime she'd have on a long cap, black cape, and a shawl if it was in fall or something. She was the missionary. She went out on the corner saving souls. That was her job. She went every morning with this Bible, going around on the corner all over Washington, saving souls. Then she got involved in the...what do you call it? Back when they...about whiskey.

H. ELLIOTT: Temperance. Temperance.

MAYO: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: She got involved in Temperance Movement, and she got locked up in the Capitol prison that I was telling you about. That's what Grandma was telling me about it. They locked her up in the Capitol prison, and that's where all that civil action comes from in the family. You, me, different ones got involved in all this kind of civil action, tried to change things. It came from her.

DRISCOLL: I'd like to hear more about that too.

R. BEVERLY: Oh, yes, alright. There's a whole lot there. [laughing] I could be alone with her alright because I'd go upstairs sometimes to the bathroom and—up the back steps—and she'd say, 'Bob, is that you?' And I'd say, 'yeah'. She'd say, 'Come in here, boy.' And her room was right off the back bathroom in the back. And I'd go—the rest of the children were scared of her—and I'd go in there sit and talk with her. Maybe ten minutes, that's about all she'd give me. [laughs] But she wanted to know how I did in school, what went on in school that day, did I read my Bible lesson this morning? And then after that, 'Now you can go.' That's how she said it, 'Now you can go.' I'd go in there and talk with her all the time, but they brought her body home and grandma's body home. And another thing about that, when they used to bring people home, Grandma would go visit them. She'd take me with her. Aw, everybody knew Grandma Purdy. I don't think anybody on that Hill didn't know Grandma Purdy. But whether she knew you or not, if she spotted what they called a crepe—funeral crepe hanging on the door, she going—she'd say, 'boy, sit there. Don't you move. Sit down on the step until I come out.' Grandma be in there for an hour, even more, visiting, paying her respects. People would come in, like I said, when you had the body laid out. It looked to me, it must of laid there a month. I knew it didn't, but...I knew it lay there two or three days, anyhow, where people would be coming back and forth about from the house.

M. ELLIOTT: Is it people's [unclear]?

R. BEVERLY: Oh yes, but she knew everybody on the Hill. Everybody knew her. Everybody knew Grandma Purdy. But it was on the corner of Third Street, Mr. Kenny. He had a spice, tea and coffee and sugar store. And you'd smell that coffee when it was roasting, oh you smell so good. And she would send me over there to get the coffee for her, and 'you tell him, 'grind it twice''. And when I tell old man Kenny that, he'd say, 'you don't have to tell me. I know what Grandma Purdy wants and how she wants it. Boy, don't say that to me no more. Don't say that to me no more! I know just how Grandma Purdy wants her coffee and that's how she'll have it. Because if she don't she going to send it back over here!' [laughter] But everybody knew her. She was...she was...weren't quite a stern as her sister, but her sister was an old

maid and was very stern but she'd wear—and Grandma wore them long clothes, too—the long coats and high buttoned shoes and all of that.

DRISCOLL: My grandmother did too.

R. BEVERLY: Yes! Yes.

H. ELLIOTT: [unclear] Avenue Two.

R. BEVERLY: This hasn't changed all that much.

T. BEVERLY: Don't get you a cup out. You just want it like that?

DRISCOLL: Yes.

T. BEVERLY: Okay.

R. BEVERLY: The Hill hasn't changed that much over there.

MAYO: What about Sherrill's Bakery?

R. BEVERLY: Yes, Sherrill's Bakery.

MAYO: Remember Sherrill's Bakery?

DRISCOLL: Sure.

MAYO: The best honey-dipped donuts in the world.

R. BEVERLY: Some of the best aroma coming out of there. He was a big German.

M. ELLIOTT: Big man.

MAYO: Mm hmm.

R. BEVERLY: Tall [unclear]. Maybe about—maybe close to 400 pounds—but he had that gorgeous white yellow hair, most beautiful white hair he had. He owned that bakery.

MAYO: Then there's two sisters, I mean, three daughters...

DRISCOLL: Were they sisters? Daughters.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah.

MAYO: Yeah, they're gone now, both of them.

R. BEVERLY: But he had the most beautiful head of white hair. Oh, but he was a lot of fun...joke with you, he'd laugh, 'how'd you like the hair?' Joke with you, laugh.

M. ELLIOTT: He lived around the corner on Third Street in that great big red house.

R. BEVERLY: Right. Mr. Sherrill.

MAYO: And I remember when...

DRISCOLL: That was his?

M. ELLIOTT: Mm hmm.

DRISCOLL: That was his, that red house around the corner?

R. BEVERLY: Right on the corner.

M. ELLIOTT: That's where he lived, I guess.

R. BEVERLY: Yes.

DRISCOLL: Because one of those houses on Third Street has a trough in the front yard.

[murmurs of assent]

R. BEVERLY: That's probably it. A lot of troughs.

M. ELLIOTT: I think he's the first, the biggest red house. The first one.

R. BEVERLY: One. That first house.

M. ELLIOTT: You know, off of Pennsylvania Avenue.

R. BEVERLY: That was his.

H. ELLIOTT: History 1.

M. ELLIOTT: It just came to me, this man just left me right that fast.

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, one other thing that I remember as a child was seeing President Roosevelt. Every Sunday evening, I don't know when he went to the Navy Yard to get on that boat, but every Sunday evening at around six o'clock, we were sent [laughter] to stand on that little square and wait for the President to come by. And he would come by in an open car and we'd stand there waving, and he'd wave back. And every Sunday he would go on the weekend and stay on this boat that was docked at the Navy Yard. When he came back to the White House he would always come down Pennsylvania Avenue, so we were always told, 'it's quarter to six now, get over on the square so when the President comes by...' And he'd be in this open car, and he would just waving, and we would just wave, then go back and do whatever we were doing.

DRISCOLL: But that was part of your life, to greet the President?

M. ELLIOTT: Yes!

R. BEVERLY: All the inaugurations, we'd go to see them, up on the East front of the Capitol, always had them on the East. First one I saw was Harding.

DRISCOLL: Harding?

R. BEVERLY: Harding. Yeah, must have been Harding. Then Coolidge, then—who came after Harding—then Hoover, then Roosevelt, right.

M. ELLIOTT: The first parade I remember, they were forming or something right there on B Street.

R. BEVERLY: They did all inaugurations...

MAYO: Yeah, I remember that. I remember that.

M. ELLIOTT: ...and I remember this little teeny man...

DRISCOLL: This is for inauguration parades?

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: They all formed right there.

M. ELLIOTT: I remember this little teeny man with his stovepipe hat, and he was a marching... somebody told me that was the president! Now, I don't know. This is just a memory man, you know, I don't know...

H. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Tanya.

T. BEVERLY: You're welcome. Want some more?

H. ELLIOTT: No, thank you.

DRISCOLL: Thank you very much.

M. ELLIOTT: I don't know who that man really was. That was the first time I remember a parade. A parade of the inauguration... it was at that time.

R. BEVERLY: All the parades used to form between A, East Capitol, all around that area...

MAYO: Yes.

M. ELLIOTT: Yes.

R. BEVERLY: Particularly Northeast.

MAYO: But even for me I remember this was the date for Johnny and I when we were courting to go up to the Capitol to the concerts, still. You know, they were still going on, even through my childhood.

R. BEVERLY: Really.

M. ELLIOTT: And Billy the dog!

MAYO: Billy the dog! There was this German police dog...

T. BEVERLY: German Shepherd...

MAYO: ...that were there when I arrived, when I was born. And I remember Lucia, my oldest cousin and myself, we used to get on the back of this dog. And this dog, she was so nice. She would just let us do...

R. BEVERLY: ...do anything...

MAYO: ...anything to her. And I remember when Papa finally had to put her to sleep. I happened to be there then and it really broke my heart because that was my playmate for so many years. Really broke my heart. And Papa didn't know how he was going to tell me that Billy—because he took him and said we're taking him to the doctor because he was taking him to put him to sleep. And when he came back without Billy I just didn't know how to take it. I just didn't know what to do with that. That was my first experience, I guess, with death of someone close.

R. BEVERLY: We always had some kind of dog, didn't we?

M. ELLIOTT: Grandma Purdy's.

DRISCOLL: Did you?

R. BEVERLY: All these dogs, somehow or other.

DRISCOLL: Just one?

M. ELLIOTT: Different dogs...

R. BEVERLY: Just one at a time.

DRISCOLL: One at a time.

R. BEVERLY: But different dogs. But Billy was a Grand—Mama's dog. When she had a stroke they would take her to walk in the square and put her on the bench, and he would sit there with her until she was ready to come home. And she'd tell him, 'go to the house'...

MAYO: And he'd bring her back home...

R. BEVERLY: '...and tell them I'm ready to come home.' And he'd come over to the house and he would bark, or he would scratch on the screen door, because nobody closed doors back then, and they knew that was Mama ready to come back home. And then somebody would go over and get her and bring her back home. But he was right there. That was her dog.

T. BEVERLY: That's a good dog.

[much assent]

MAYO: Oh, he was, he was...it was a she! It was not a he!

R. BEVERLY: I know!

MAYO: In all those years...

R. BEVERLY: Ethel found that dog!

MAYO: ...I was saying, 'why are we calling him...'

R. BEVERLY: And she thought it was a boy!

M. ELLIOTT: We didn't know...

R. BEVERLY: Didn't know the difference!

MAYO: You all didn't know the difference!

R. BEVERLY: So after we named it we just let it stay there! But it was a female!

M. ELLIOTT: ...the difference between the sexes.

[much laughter and more banter]

R. BEVERLY: We say, that's all right, her name is Billy boy.

M. ELLIOTT: Billy boy.

MAYO: Yeah, because when I found out it was a she—Barbara told me, 'this is a girl dog.' I said, 'well, if it's a girl dog, why are you all calling her Billy?'

R. BEVERLY: Billy boy. That was her...

H. ELLIOTT: There's another good person, that was Billy Jean King, was what we...

MAYO: Right.

M. ELLIOTT: No, no, we didn't...

MAYO: But talking about not closing and locking doors, my girlfriend and I, who lived on Carroll Street, Barbara, we used to play paper dolls in the vestibule, and the vestibule doors would be wide open. And in the summertime we used to sleep in the vestibule. We would get our pillow—and when I look at that vestibule now I say we had to be awful little to have slept comfortably in this vestibule—but we did, and those were the days of bats. And the bats would be up in the ceiling, and we would have—like I'm hearing these kids with these cicadas—every time you look up these little kids are running screaming, because these cicadas are landing on them—and I think about us and bats. That's how we reacted to the bats. You know, didn't want them to get in your hair. If they got in your hair, you know, it'd be...

M. ELLIOTT: They'd cut all your hair off! [laughing]

MAYO: Yes.

T. BEVERLY: Is that what they'd tell you?

MAYO: Yes, because they would tangle your hair all up and try to make a nest in your hair...

M. ELLIOTT: Don't let them get me!

R. BEVERLY: Yes, they have claws, like, see, and they would tangle in your hair...or Mama would have me running around with the broom, banging at them...

MAYO: Yes! Getting them out of the house...

R. BEVERLY: ...getting them out of the house.

MAYO: That's right.

R. BEVERLY: All of them would run out the house! Girls, mama, everybody, run out of the house.

MAYO: Yes! Bats.

T. BEVERLY: How did they end up in the house, though?

MAYO: Because the house is open...

M. ELLIOTT: Doors...we didn't have windows like we have now.

MAYO: And you know the two doors in the vestibule? They stayed open most of the time.

R. BEVERLY: Nobody closed doors. Only in the wintertime.

M. ELLIOTT: Through the windows too.

MAYO: The windows were up.

T. BEVERLY: Okay.

DRISCOLL: Because the summer was hot.

MAYO: Right, right.

T. BEVERLY: And there was no such thing as screens?

M. ELLIOTT: There were such things, but maybe you didn't have enough screens or maybe we broke the screen and nobody thought to put another one...

MAYO: Yeah, yeah.

R. BEVERLY: It was always something, and they would get in there.

MAYO: They would get in there.

R. BEVERLY: And all them trees around. Then you have St. Mark's church was right back of us.

MAYO: Oh, St. Mark's church.

R. BEVERLY: And that belfry, that's where you would find the bats.

T. BEVERLY: Oh.

M. ELLIOTT: But they would get in that house and be in there for two, three days.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah!

M. ELLIOTT: You couldn't find them and you'd be scared to go to sleep.

MAYO: Yes.

T. BEVERLY: [unclear] more crackers? [passing food]

MAYO: Oh, God, yes. The bats.

M. ELLIOTT: You'd be scared to go to sleep!

R. BEVERLY: Bats around here.

MAYO: You don't see bats in the city now.

R. BEVERLY: Don't have any trees.

T. BEVERLY: Nope. Well, see we have bats in our backyard.

R. BEVERLY: You've got trees.

MAYO: Because you've got trees. That's what happened.

T. BEVERLY: And they only come out at night when we have the pool light on, though...

R. BEVERLY: Right.

T. BEVERLY: If the pool light is not on, we don't see them. As soon as we turn the pool light on if we're swimming at night, they swoop around. We just scream! We don't get out of the water, we just scream. We've never seen them swoop low to us, but they swoop enough that we know they're out there.

M. ELLIOTT: They can't see in the light.

R. BEVERLY: No.

M. ELLIOTT: They're swooping around...

T. BEVERLY: ...they're just swooping...

M. ELLIOTT: ...because they don't, can't tell where they are.

MAYO: That's why they fly into you in the daytime.

[laughter]

M. ELLIOTT: My mother used to tell me, 'put the lights out. Just put the lights out and open the door, and they'll go out'. [laughter] And we're running, screaming.

R. BEVERLY: She'd have us running around with them brooms. 'Get a broom! Run them out the front door. Out the front door!'

MAYO: Get the bats out of the house.

[laughter]

R. BEVERLY: And then the dogs would be after them. They'd be jumping trying to catch them, you know, all the time. Never could get them, they'd be up too high, but Grandma would have that dog. It was one of these dogs that you'd spell d-a-w-g, you know. Not pedigree, just dog! [laughter]

M. ELLIOTT: That dog...

MAYO: Heinz 57! [laughter]

R. BEVERLY: That dog would have a way when spring come. He'd go over that back fence—I never seen a dog climb a fence before in my life but I seen him go over that back—big old brown, whatever he was. Over that back fence, and would disappear come March or April, he'd go and he'd be gone until maybe June or July. Then he'd come back, and he'd be full of mud and cockleburrs, and everything that you could think of. Where he'd go...I guess hunting ladies...I guess, springtime.

MAYO: Yeah, he had another family he stayed...

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, or something, but he would take off. So Grandma would have to wash him. Put him in a big washtub. It sat out back that she washed the clothes in. And she'd save all of Father's tobacco from his pipes and his cigars or whatever he was smoking, crumbled it up and would put it in this hot water, and she said it would make the trees drunk when she'd pour out the water. [laughter] But it would also make this old dog drunk! So then she would tell me, 'now you take him, and go in the woodshed and bring that big trunk out.' Had one of them big old hide trunk and put him down in the trunk and cocked the lid up a little bit and put a big rock up on top of it. He'd go to sleep. Leave him down inside the...

MAYO: ...trunk...

R. BEVERLY: ...trunk until he'd sleep it off.

M. ELLIOTT: Sleep it off!

R. BEVERLY: But that was Grandma's dog. He would take off, oh, he would take off, just as religious...Then we had one more dog. That one...

H. ELLIOTT: Was he a d-a-w-g too?

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, he was one of them d-a-w-gs too. Ethel was always finding these dogs...

MAYO: Oh, Ethel was the one bringing the dogs.

R. BEVERLY: This dog, we had to get rid of him, because Papa said, 'no, I'm not feeding him my food.'

H. ELLIOTT: Sure does looks good [serving crab salad and crackers]

MAYO: Want another one?

H. ELLIOTT: No, thank you. Thank you very much.

T. BEVERLY: Would you like another piece?

DRISCOLL: Thank you.

R. BEVERLY: I kind of tripped him up with some crab meat.

[pleasurable agreement]

DRISCOLL: They're wonderful.

T. BEVERLY: They're looking good.

R. BEVERLY: So there they are. He was still home. Mama had cooked down in the basement on the big old coal stove. She had cooked a leg of lamb, put it out on the edge of the stove to cool off.

MAYO: Uh oh. I know where this is going.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah. Dick and I came out of the back yard and she's hollering at us, 'grab that dog! Grab him and get that piece of meat from him.' He had come up them back steps from down in that basement with this leg of lamb and you could see the lamb crackling, you know from the...And he had it in his mouth and run down side of the house into the front part of the house with the lamb, leg of lamb in there. We took that lamb from him, Mama took that leg, I didn't know what she going to do. She washed it off, and that lamb went on the table. We ate that lamb. So the next time—Papa said he do that one more time he had to go—next time he got some biscuits...

M. ELLIOTT: It was rolls...

R. BEVERLY: Rolls or biscuits...

M. ELLIOTT: The rolls were sitting out to rise.

R. BEVERLY: To raise, that's right.

M. ELLIOTT: They weren't even cooked.

R. BEVERLY: Right, weren't cooked. But they cooked in his belly! [laughter] We heard him down side of the house and he had dug a hole down there side of the house where he could get out the heat. And he was out there moaning and carrying on, we went down and you could see him rising! All them rolls just rising all in the poor dog's belly...

[much laughter]

MAYO: Like a cartoon!

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, just rising right in that poor dog's belly. [laughing] We had to give him something to work it out.

MAYO: That had to be something too.

R. BEVERLY: So Papa said, he got to go now, otherwise if he don't go I'm going to shoot him. I'm going to shoot him. So Dick and I took him, called ourselves getting rid of him. Brought him back over by DC General—where DC General jail is now—thought we had lost him. Played all day with him over there, didn't see him, didn't see him. We got home, that dog's sitting on the front porch! [laughter] Sitting on the front porch. Papa said, 'Didn't I tell you to get rid of that dog?' 'Alright, Dad, we going to get rid of him.' We took him way down to Oxon Hill. I don't know what happened to him. We never saw him no more.

H. ELLIOTT: So he didn't make it back?

R. BEVERLY: No, he didn't make it back that day, across the river. We took him across the river. He never made it back. But he had to go. That dog would steal, ummm. Papa said, 'no, he can't stay here. I ain't feeding him.'

MAYO: I was going to ask you, Margie, when I think back to when you and mother and Ethel had the dress shop in Anacostia—talking about across the river...

R. BEVERLY: Ethel wasn't involved.

MAYO: Ethel wasn't involved? She was a Marvin or something? It was just you and Mother.

M. ELLIOTT: Yes.

MAYO: Where did you all get your sewing skills from?

M. ELLIOTT: High school.

[Phone rings]

MAYO: But I mean, you know, Grandma or Great Grandma didn't...

DRISCOLL: Where did you go...

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, high school. It was a vocational high school [Phone rings] that taught dressmaking, hairdressing, things like that, carpentry, stuff like that. That's where I learned to sew.

MAYO: Yeah, I went there also. I followed tradition with my aunt. No, I just wondered if there was any sewing going on when you all were kids. Was there...?

R. BEVERLY: Oh yeah.

M. ELLIOTT: Was there?

R. BEVERLY: Yeah. Grandma used to...she had a sewing machine.

MAYO: Did she?

R. BEVERLY: One of the old pedal ones, that you'd pedal.

M. ELLIOTT: Oh yeah. But you see, I came along and life changed—became so different.

MAYO: Yeah, yeah.

M. ELLIOTT: Because I came along and Grandma and Aunt Harriet had died then, by the time I was five or six years old, they were gone...

MAYO: Gone...

M. ELLIOTT: ...by the time I was eight or nine, something like that, mom had a stroke, so there was not that much...

R. BEVERLY: ...not that much...

MAYO: ...going on there...

M. ELLIOTT: ...relationship there. Other than just talking, you know. So, the things I learned I learned in school or...

MAYO: Well, my mother probably was the one that picked up the sewing there.

M. ELLIOTT: Well, I think she might have learned something about sewing when she...

MAYO: Right, when she talked Grandma.

M. ELLIOTT: ...was a young girl.

MAYO: Yeah, that's what she talked about.

R. BEVERLY: Well, she probably didn't. Mary though, Mary wasn't too much into that.

MAYO: No, Mary was not into that at all. Mary was...she was the music. Mary was the music.

R. BEVERLY: She played music and writing.

MAYO: Right. I told you that trunk that I found in that room when I was a teenager in the closet was full of music Mary had written...

R. BEVERLY: ...she played piano...

MAYO: ...and stories...

R. BEVERLY: ...and violin...

MAYO: ...and that ended up in the basement...

DRISCOLL: In that house?

MAYO: Yeah, there in that house.

R. BEVERLY: She'd write stories, and...

MAYO: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: ...she'd have them...

T. BEVERLY: Does anyone still have those stories, by any chance?

MAYO: No. They all got...

M. ELLIOTT: All down in the basement...

MAYO: ...in the basement...

M. ELLIOTT: ...how that works...

T. BEVERLY: Because there was a lot of stuff when we went down there that was watered out.

MAYO: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah. They're gone.

T. BEVERLY: Even when we went down there it didn't get reboxed.

M. ELLIOTT: It was another transition.

MAYO: Yeah, that was another transition.

R. BEVERLY: Right, that was the drop off house.

MAYO: Yeah, that big house, everybody dropped off stuff there.

R. BEVERLY: Every time somebody got married, got new furniture...that would wind up in that basement. In case somebody needed it, and somebody would...

MAYO: ...come and get it...

R. BEVERLY: ...so they could get it. You know, the house was that type of house for all of them—support in a storm, always safe.

MAYO: That's right.

R. BEVERLY: Keeping up people to support them in a storm. Anybody needed, they always come back.

M. ELLIOTT: Always come back home.

T. BEVERLY: I think that's why I'm so sad that we don't have it anymore.

R. BEVERLY: Always somebody, one way or another, giving back there. Joe came back there, let me see. Joe came back there...

MAYO: George...

R. BEVERLY: George came back there...

M. ELLIOTT: Ethel the only that didn't.

MAYO: Ethel is the only one that didn't. I told you all, I—this is how I got to be close with all...

R. BEVERLY: I didn't go back there after I got married.

MAYO: But this is how I got to be so close with all of you all, because of my being in that house during any one of you all's transitions back to the house. Now of course, yours was visiting all the time. You came to visit from New York.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, right.

MAYO: After you left there, you know, that was it. But your visits...

R. BEVERLY: I left after I got married, but...

DRISCOLL: How old were you when you left?

R. BEVERLY: I got married when I was 20, about 20. I married a young bride. [laughter] She was, what...

M. ELLIOTT: 17?

R. BEVERLY: 17. Had to ask permission. That marriage didn't work, though. That's another story we won't talk about. [laughter]

M. ELLIOTT: Not going to talk about that, no. [laughing]

MAYO: No, don't talk about that. [laughing]

R. BEVERLY: That's where I got that one son.

DRISCOLL: That runs in the family, too. [laughter]

MAYO: At least with the men it does. We women seem to do a lot of talking.

R. BEVERLY: Yes, but I married her while marrying the whole family. It wasn't just the bride, I married the whole family and that just didn't work, so I had to depart. But anyhow, that's why I never came back...

MAYO: Right, yeah.

R. BEVERLY: I never came back to the house. But all those other people, there was always something changing, and then your mother moved back in there...

MAYO: Yeah, right.

R. BEVERLY: ...and she maintained it...

M. ELLIOTT: For a long time there.

R. BEVERLY: And then she goes, and when she had to come out from Detroit to come here she followed him behind.

M. ELLIOTT: In and out. They came in and out.

R. BEVERLY: Oh yeah, I remember.

MAYO: And that's what I'm saying. It's strange enough I was there during all of these transitions that the aunts and uncles were going through, so I lived with all of them at some point, and I mean, as much as I used to visit up in New York with you—Johnny and I, we visited a lot up there—so I've always had this special attachment. [tearful]

R. BEVERLY: You were there more than all those other generations...

T. BEVERLY: And she's the oldest grandchild.

MAYO: Next to Lucius.

R. BEVERLY: Yes.

MAYO: Lucius is the oldest.

T. BEVERLY: Really? I always though you were the oldest.

MAYO: I know.

R. BEVERLY: Everybody...

T. BEVERLY: That's because I only met Lucius a few times...

MAYO: Yeah, because he left here and he hasn't really been back that much. He hasn't...

T. BEVERLY: She says it's during the holiday season she usually sends a newspaper type of writing...

MAYO: A newsletter.

T. BEVERLY: A newsletter of her family and what has gone on throughout the year. That's her gift, you know. Now that's one thing that I don't know if they spoke about, and I don't know who started the tradition, but they started homemade—making homemade things—you know, homemade baskets and homemade wines, homemade breads and goods, and I ended up taking cooking lessons [laughter] because I wanted to start helping, too! And so I took cooking classes.

MAYO: And her cookies are fantastic!

T. BEVERLY: Well, I took cooking lessons just so I could...

R. BEVERLY: So you could do it.

T. BEVERLY: ...join in and get...I mean, it was very, very special to me that I get to make my cookies, because everybody was giving something. Like they said, it was all the kids and all the adults—because I was a child—would have their little bags. But when I became an adult and I came to the house, I was still getting stuff and I didn't give anything, and I felt like, well, it's time for me to give something back. So when I finally moved out on my own, owned a house, a girlfriend of my mother's made the best cookies, and she came over to my house at six in the morning, because if I wanted to learn, I had to do it on her time, but she'd come to my home. I said, okay. She said, 'make sure the butter is soft' by the time I get there, and that's all I remember of that time of her making me get up by six. She was there at six on the dot, and we made these cookies, and I've been making cookies ever since.

MAYO: Well, I've got to really speak to what you say about when you started becoming an adult, and growing up and feeling that it was time for you to give back. This is when you knew that you had finally

arrived at the adult stage, because you were coming in on Christmas Eve with bags instead of just going out with bags.

T. BEVERLY: Yes.

MAYO: That's when you knew you had finally grown up, and you had finally joined the adults.

T. BEVERLY: It made me feel so special, because everyone's running around going, 'oh and this is for you, and this is for you,' and I wanted to do it too.

T. BEVERLY: We started the Christmas Eve after Mama passed, because Papa was alone, so that was why...it all started then. Always go to the big house.

M. ELLIOTT: And let me add a little something to that, because...

T. BEVERLY: Now I know how you started.

M. ELLIOTT: That's not the whole story.

MAYO: No, that's not the whole story.

M. ELLIOTT: The whole story is...well...

R. BEVERLY: I was in New York.

MAYO: Here's the rest of it.

M. ELLIOTT: When our mother passed, then he was by himself, right, so we had one sister who always thought that we should be at her house on Christmas...

MAYO: Ethel. It was Ethel.

M. ELLIOTT: She should be in his house, and I'm saying, 'he had eight children. He had eight children; why should he be at your house?' [laughter] And because it was for Christmas dinner.

[UNKNOWN]: She wasn't even his...

M. ELLIOTT: I know how it is. Well, I told her, okay, we'll do this. We'll go there on Christmas Eve and have a party and you...

MAYO: You can have him all you want on Christmas Day.

M. ELLIOTT: So, it solved the problem and nobody got mad with anybody.

MAYO: No.

M. ELLIOTT: You're supposed to come to my house on Christmas Day. That's what she said.

MAYO: Yup. Yup.

T. BEVERLY: I love Christmas Eve. I'm glad you all came over there.

M. ELLIOTT: Well, this is how we started. That's why.

MAYO: And it really became a family reunion.

R. BEVERLY: A family reunion.

MAYO: Christmas Eve became the family reunion.

T. BEVERLY: People came from Atlanta...

M. ELLIOTT: And all over...

T. BEVERLY: And on Christmas my cousin Peko came. People came from all over. Who would have thought it was going to be the last one?

MAYO: Right.

T. BEVERLY: People didn't know that.

MAYO: You didn't know that.

T. BEVERLY: But people came from all over. This was a pretty big one, and you had...

MAYO: And then one of the most terrible storms ever that night, and I never drive in bad weather...

T. BEVERLY: I don't either, but...

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, everybody...

MAYO: Everybody came...

T. BEVERLY: And I don't either, and I drove with kids!

R. BEVERLY: It would be the last one we had in the big house.

T. BEVERLY: It was that snowy time, and icy, and I just could not miss it because...

M. ELLIOTT: And you didn't.

T. BEVERLY: ...I even got my daughter in on the cookie-making...

MAYO: We had, that's what I'm getting ready to say. The Christmas before then, we had one, and I have the video—you know, the Christmas after mother died, I have the video.

T. BEVERLY: You have Christmas?

MAYO: Yes.

T. BEVERLY: Really?

R. BEVERLY: When?

MAYO: Yes, after Mother died. We had Christmas dinner because I have the video. Seludo, and Young...

M. ELLIOTT: We have not had any missed Christmases...that I remember.

MAYO: No.

M. ELLIOTT: We had one last Christmas...

R. BEVERLY: Where'd we go?

M. ELLIOTT: ...at the big house.

MAYO: Yeah, Peko. That's the one.

M. ELLIOTT: Ah, that was the one, yeah.

MAYO: Yeah, that was it. Yeah, because the house didn't go on the market until September.

R. BEVERLY: That's right.

MAYO: The end of December.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, we had this...

MAYO: Yeah, and we had...

R. BEVERLY: I thought we had that in November.

MAYO: Well, now, wait a minute.

DRISCOLL: This year.

R. BEVERLY: [unclear] November.

T. BEVERLY: Yes, that's the one. Wasn't at the big house.

[unclear exchange continues]

MAYO: Okay. Yeah. Because the house went on the market then.

T. BEVERLY: Because I remember...

[only snippets of overlapping conversations are intelligible—Ethel's house, year before]

T. BEVERLY: Did you talk to them about how your parents knew all the people up and down the coffee shops and the...

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, I was telling her, everybody knew Grandma Purdy.

T. BEVERLY: I think that was something, when you'd go into those shops and she would tell them which ones, and they were like, 'I know what you want, I know.'

[MULTIPLE VOICES]: Yes.

R. BEVERLY: Everybody knew Grandma Purdy. Everybody on Capitol Hill knew her.

M. ELLIOTT: And how she would go to school.

MAYO: You would never know where your mother was going to show up in your classroom. When we were in elementary school you never knew when your grandmother was going to show up.

DRISCOLL: So you were on good behavior?

M. ELLIOTT: You better believe it. [laughter]

DRISCOLL: What differences do you see now between now and then?

M. ELLIOTT: What, do you mean school?

DRISCOLL: Everywhere.

R. BEVERLY: Everything.

T. BEVERLY: Well, one of the one big differences that I spoke of when the tape was off that I reiterate now is, when they came home from school, they said the ladies had to come straight home from school, sit on the block, didn't go nowhere. Well, this is 2004 for the tape's sake, and my daughter's in fifth grade, my youngest. My oldest is 12. But my youngest is in fifth grade and I just gave her a key this year, so when she comes home she can let herself in.

END TAPE 2/SIDE 1

TAPE 2/SIDE 2

T. BEVERLY: She's very, very ready for real food. But you know what I'm saying? But June was saying that she was a latch-key kid, too...

MAYO: Before they coined the phrase.

T. BEVERLY: [unclear] because this is 2004.

MAYO: Yeah, this is when—of course Papa was always at the house when I was going to Giddings School, down—where was Giddings? Down...

[UNKNOWN]: Thirty.

DRISCOLL: Giddings?

MAYO: Thirty, yeah. I went there up until the third grade, then I went to boarding school from the fourth grade to the eighth grade in Pennsylvania. But even though Papa was there, there were times when he wasn't there. If he was at the market—he wouldn't have to stay home. My mother became a working mother, and I had a key to the house. But so often then...

DRISCOLL: But that was what year?

MAYO: Oh, that was in, let's see, just got to do the math. 50...

M. ELLIOTT: [unclear] the 40s.

MAYO: That was in the 40s.

T. BEVERLY: You were eight, so count eight years from when you were born.

MAYO: Okay, that was—I was born in '40.

T. BEVERLY: Mm kay, so...

MAYO: So that was '48. That would have been 1948.

M. ELLIOTT: [unclear]

MAYO: Yeah, in the fifties.

DRISCOLL: How did living through that war affect you guys? [referring to WW II]

M. ELLIOTT: Well, I would say this because of the job that father had. There was not...

MAYO: He was a postman.

M. ELLIOTT: There was money; there was continuous work. There was no interrupting of work. So we never experienced not having food, but there—we did experience, you know, the heating. The coal wasn't there for you and the food—as rationing of food, sugar and meat and stuff like that. Yeah, we had to deal with that. But at least we had the money, was available there for us to have that, you know. And then, I think, the second World War was a blessing to us as far as jobs because at that time I was coming out of high school, so jobs became available to us. And the rest of my sisters and brothers, it was a good time for us, you know. And only two—one person in our family went into the service. One brother, George, went into the service. Youngest brother.

MAYO: What was Bill...was in college then? Was Bill in college?

M. ELLIOTT: He was a married man. He was...

MAYO: Yeah, right.

M. ELLIOTT: ...married man with children at that time. [not selected by his local draft board]

R. BEVERLY: I thought I was going to go. Y'all thought I had gone.

M. ELLIOTT: Yes.

R. BEVERLY: Because I really wanted to go. Because that's why...

DRISCOLL: What happened?

R. BEVERLY: The Triple C's. I could have signed up if I wasn't in the Triple C's. So I came out hoping I was going to get into the service. Didn't take me.

DRISCOLL: Why?

R. BEVERLY: Well, it all started—they claimed I had something wrong with my kidneys. Now when I went in, the doctors at Walter Reed Hospital—all the doctors—said there wasn't nothing wrong with me. I come out with nothing wrong with me. Mama took me to Dr. Collins, the same doctor, he couldn't find nothing wrong with me. But they didn't want too many black soldiers at that time, and there wasn't too many places for you to go, too many outfits for you to join in.

MAYO: I bet.

R. BEVERLY: I spent 30 days over Fort Meade and all you thought I was gone.

M. ELLIOTT: We thought he had gone.

R. BEVERLY: And I did good enough with my cooking, I was, you know, I was going to get something. Next thing I come skipping home, I'm in uniform on discharge. I felt terrible about it, you know, and they give me that old 4F. Good Lord, I got that changed when I went to work at the Naval Hospital, cooking, and there's where I spent the bulk of the war, cooking at the Naval Hospital. Over at Georgetown and I would cook. Then they had opened a new one up in Bethesda. That's where I really learned my cooking then. Really learned to cook. I never got to the service...George was the only one went into the service.

M. ELLIOTT: And he served most of his time in California at the MP, transporting prisoners back and forth and looking cute.

R. BEVERLY: Oh, yeah. [laughter]

MAYO: George is George. George is George.

M. ELLIOTT: Yeah, you know, at the MP they just set up. He loved that. Traveling on a train.

R. BEVERLY: He looked pretty good in it.

M. ELLIOTT: How fine he looked in a uniform.

MAYO: I don't know how he worked that out.

R. BEVERLY: Boy, he was something.

DRISCOLL: You had wanted to talk about the plaster molding?

R. BEVERLY: Oh yes, I think I said all that I had to say about it except that...

DRISCOLL: Except it wasn't on the tape.

R. BEVERLY: Oh, I'm sorry. The ceilings were 12 feet high. And that was fantastic—the moldings were hand- molded and hand-hung on the back all around the parlor ceiling, with the plaster medallions like you see the paper. [referring to the *Washington Post* article]

M. ELLIOTT: And then all around the ceiling and...

DRISCOLL: ...the edge of the room, joining ceiling to wall.

H. ELLIOTT: Not a crack in these houses, nowhere. Absolutely was fantastic.

DRISCOLL: Absolutely plaster.

H. ELLIOTT: Absolutely plaster. Absolutely plaster. Yes. Beautiful.

R. BEVERLY: All the bricklayers, the carpenters, the lamps, the plasterers, they were all black. You had all black workers doing that type of...Some were slaves. Some were free.

DRISCOLL: But your mom...

M. ELLIOTT: Hired them. Yeah.

DRISCOLL: Great.

MAYO: Now when you say carpenters I think about my husband and his brother built the bookcases in the living room that went all the way up to the ceiling. Mother always wanted her leather chair in there with her books surrounding her. And one day that's what she decided. She looked at my husband and, 'you and Johnny—you and Jimmy—y'all can build the bookcases [unclear] can built these bookcases.'

R. BEVERLY: Still there. Did anybody take them?

MAYO: No. They're still there.

M. ELLIOTT: They are still there.

MAYO: They're there. They're permanent. No, they're permanent.

T. BEVERLY: I mean, they didn't...

MAYO: You could take, you know, you tear out the wall...

R. BEVERLY: If you tear out the wall.

MAYO: ...but they made them to attach to the wall.

T. BEVERLY: The wall is the backing.

H. ELLIOTT: I was married to Marjorie then, when that happened.

M. ELLIOTT: Were we?

H. ELLIOTT: I was married to you when...

MAYO: When Johnny and Jimmy built the bookcases?

R. BEVERLY: No, you had started...

[general assent]

M. ELLIOTT: Our first date was in that house. [laughter] First day I met him, I took him there.

H. ELLIOTT: And they wanted to know where she got me from! [laughter]

MAYO: But you had...you're talking about...

R. BEVERLY: I still wonder! [laughter]

[overlapping voices and more laughter]

MAYO: The girls that went to school with me at least, I went to St. Cecilia's Academy up on East Capitol Street. The school had been integrated only for—I think about three classes graduated before my graduation. And they were only, let's see, when I started in my freshman year, there were six black girls. When I graduated I was the only one in my class. But all of the girls, because we were small group, and, you know, takes kids at a small school, so the classes were small, and the small group of black girls who was all kind of you know whatever grades we were in, we took lunch together. And they would come to my house because it was in walking distance and some of them lived out in Anacostia—some of them lived in Northwest. And my mother or my grandfather would have this snack for us, and we would, you know, sit on the floor in the living room. In fact, when my husband proposed to me in a letter, I read the letter to all my girlfriends that met and they became part of our whole history. And we had a reunion the year after my mother died at the house there. And they all came and we took pictures, and my husband did a video of the whole scene and then we went out to dinner, but, you know, there's a lot of things that have happened in that house.

T. BEVERLY: Well, the food, we keep talking about the food. That was one of the things that I really enjoyed about the holidays was the different food that people would prepare which was really nice. More people prepared the food as I got older, it was more catered. But when I was young, it was cooked. You know, it was their recipe.

MAYO: Yes, everybody brought their specialty.

T. BEVERLY: Their specialty. But I used to love that. I would take big, big old plates back home. [laughter] It was so good. Especially when I was single and on my own, that would be my next—because remember it's Christmas Eve, so that was my Christmas Day food. And I always thought it was very special that they had this on Christmas Eve. And I even brought my younger daughter when she was, like—she had just turned one and she was walking, and my husband was at work, and he worked really late, and he got off and I went and picked him up and we were still having Christmas, and so they got to get like the edge of it, you know. Just a little bit of it, we got to get a little play, and then changed my daughters into pajamas, but there was this—I could still have my family there, with him, there, for a minute. You know, and then take him home.

DRISCOLL: So he was brought into that?

T. BEVERLY: Yes, he was definitely brought into the fold.

M. ELLIOTT: What about the time when we had Santa Claus come to the Christmas?

T. BEVERLY: Oh, I have a picture of that!

MAYO: Yes, yes. My husband played Santa Claus.

H. ELLIOTT: That was Marty.

MAYO: Yes, that was my...

H. ELLIOTT: Marty was...Marty...

MAYO: He was really upset about that last week. How could Santa Claus be here when he's supposed to be at my house? You know, what is he doing here? And my husband had gotten to work in the community, so he had done Santa Claus for some underprivileged kids—the county gave a big celebration for them a few days before Christmas and he was Santa Claus for the week, so he kept the, you know, Santa outfit. He said, 'but this year, we going to do Santa for real and his granddaughter....'

R. BEVERLY: What was Johnny doing dressed up?

MAYO: Yes, he said, you know, the other little kids were all excited to see Santa. And she says, 'what is this? You're supposed to be at my house. What are you doing here?' [laughter] And these are all the pictures that we've taken that we've got to pull together now.

T. BEVERLY: You actually gave me that picture...

MAYO: Did I give you that picture?

T. BEVERLY: ...to make a copy and I gave it back...

MAYO: Okay.

T. BEVERLY: Because I thought it was so cute, you know. She had that little red and white one on. That was the only time you really dressed cute. You know, pretty.

DRISCOLL: Christmas Eve?

MAYO: Yeah, Christmas Eve.

T. BEVERLY: Because it was time for your mommy to put your cutesy outfit on.

MAYO: And even the adults, we had our Christmas shoes, or, you know, with Christmas trees, or...

T. BEVERLY: They had Christmas sweaters...

M. ELLIOTT: Christmas sweaters. I always remember your sweaters. Every year, they'd come in, they'd have on Christmas sweaters.

MAYO: That's right.

M. ELLIOTT: We had a theme.

MAYO: Yes, we keep the theme going.

[overlapping voices, unclear]

T. BEVERLY: The house was always decorated...

MAYO: Oh yes.

T. BEVERLY: ...I actually have some of the...the things from the house. When the house was put on the market we cleaned up the basement and kind of distributed stuff, and one of the things that I wasn't even looking at—it wasn't even a thought—it was just left there and it was like the last thing out of that house. And I thought, 'oh, what is this?' You know and we had to get rid of it and I opened it up, and I'm opening up the bag and I looked there and it was a poinsettia. And I thought, 'well, I love poinsettias, I'll take this' because it didn't look like a Christmas decoration because in my house we celebrate Kwanza, so I said, oh, I can take this because it doesn't look real Christmassy. I got it home, to my surprise, plugged it in and the poinsettia...

M. ELLIOTT: It was beautiful.

MAYO: Mm hmm.

T. BEVERLY: I was—that to me was the best thing I ever... I got so many compliments. In the bay window—I set it in my bay window, and I don't know how far back that goes but I felt so special because it was, like I said, it was a continuity.

MAYO: Yeah, that whole thing.

T. BEVERLY: And I just loved that I have that poinsettia.

DRISCOLL: Piece of history. The connection. The connection.

T. BEVERLY: Yeah, it's beautiful.

MAYO: When I think back, the most overwhelming part for me is walking in that house and seeing it empty.

M. ELLIOTT: Oh, yeah.

H. ELLIOTT: Oh, I know. That's what—I think that's what caused everybody a little...

R. BEVERLY: You know many times, I take a little walk, rather than looking at the empty house.

MAYO: That really was sad.

R. BEVERLY: But time moves on.

T. BEVERLY: He can take it better than most. [laughter]

MAYO: Well, I'm a crybaby.

R. BEVERLY: Time moves on, you know.

MAYO: Yes, it does.

R. BEVERLY: And it served its purpose.

MAYO: It did.

M. ELLIOTT: Now I don't know what I'd ever do if I couldn't go in that house.

MAYO: I know. I've been going in there all my life.

M. ELLIOTT: What in the world? How might it be that I could never go in there again? And now?

H. ELLIOTT: You can.

T. BEVERLY: But you know, the man who bought the house, he did say we could come down and visit and he did say we could come and take pictures still, and when he spoke to me, he said, as long as he still owns it and still has somebody to have communication with him, a connection, then I feel like I'm still a part of that house. As long as he staying there, I'm going to always still claim it, I'm going to always let all my children know it, and let their children know it, because I know...

R. BEVERLY: I know you will.

T. BEVERLY: It's something that we built. We built it. It isn't like somebody else built it. It's ours, and as long as I know that, it going to be a piece of history for my family. You know, my personal children, they're going to keep that going.

DRISCOLL: And this could be a piece of history for a lot of other people, too.

MAYO: Yes. Yeah, I feel that way about, you know, the time that my son spent there with my mother helping her keep the house going, you know, he would come and paint the front steps for her, and he would do different chores around every weekend there for her when she got to a place where... But she used to do the plumbing and the painting and all of the stuff, too. But even when... the fact that my grandchildren had the opportunity to be in that house, and be a part of that too.

M. ELLIOTT: All the different generations.

T. BEVERLY: We actually have seven on this side, because he has a great-great.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah.

MAYO: For Ethel, too.

R. BEVERLY: He bought the house back in them days, how they managed to finance it. How they managed. Blacks didn't walk into banks, and you couldn't borrow money and get a mortgage to build a house then.

R. BEVERLY: But I remember Grandma saying, telling us when they sold the farm, she told me, when they sold the farm they had a cow, and a horse, and that was the first down payment on the lot. With a cow and the horse. They sold the cow and the horse, and that was the first down payment on the lot. And then that little bank...

DRISCOLL: And then she saved the money and deposited that money in the...

R. BEVERLY: Right.

T. BEVERLY: And if—we don't have that document with us now, but inside the document it read that she wanted Negroes—she didn't use the word Negroes —

[UNKNOWN]: Coloreds.

T. BEVERLY: and colored, colored people...

MAYO: Colored people...

T. BEVERLY: ...to advance through financial means, and that's why Frederick Douglass started that bank in the first place. And that bank is still existent today. It's the Industrial Bank of Washington.

MAYO: Yeah.

R. BEVERLY: Grew out of that bank.

T. BEVERLY: It is still in existence throughout the United States. Throughout the United States.

[general assent]

[UNKNOWN]: Where it's all at...

M. ELLIOTT: ...the biggest...the biggest...

[UNKNOWN]: ...some other bank...

T. BEVERLY: Right, it's merged...in North Carolina recently, and it's a huge bank...

R. BEVERLY: That's the one you were...

[UNKNOWN]: ...because I saw...

T. BEVERLY: ...big [unclear] that is a really—and it's still owned and operated by African Americans, still, to this day. The same bank.

R. BEVERLY: Every three months they paid the money.

DRISCOLL: A whole dollar.

M. ELLIOTT: Mm hmm. One dollar.

T. BEVERLY: And if you look at the register and you look on the paper and you see that one dollar...

M. ELLIOTT: One big dollar.

R. BEVERLY: [unclear]

MAYO: A dollar went a whole lot further then.

DRISCOLL: That's a lot of money.

R. BEVERLY: The final paper of a thousand dollar receipt that I showed you.

[overlapping voices]

R. BEVERLY: 1904 was the final payment on that. Everything they did.

T. BEVERLY: My daughter asks me all the time about that. She says, 'how come they still call penny candy penny when it costs ten cents?'

[laughter]

T. BEVERLY: She said that they other day. A penny's not a penny anymore. She says they shouldn't call it penny candy anymore.

MAYO: I was getting ready...

H. ELLIOTT: See, back in those days, he was telling us before that, they used to do it for a half-penny. For a half-penny.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah. I remember...

H. ELLIOTT: For a half-penny.

R. BEVERLY: Yeah, I remember that.

T. BEVERLY: I never heard of that.

R. BEVERLY: Oh yeah.

H. ELLIOTT: Yeah.

T. BEVERLY: You could buy that with a half a penny?

H. ELLIOTT: Yeah, for a half penny.

T. BEVERLY: You could get two or something so you could give them the whole thing

DRISCOLL: Well, you could, if you only had a little bit...they were littler...

[overlapping voices]

T. BEVERLY: It was a real coin? Oh!

[many voices assert that it is a coin]

T. BEVERLY: A half a penny! Now that's something y'all have taught me today!

DRISCOLL: I'm hoping that, you know, if you all will think if there's anything you missed that you want to say and add to this, just, you've got my number. Please give me a call and I'll come back. And I really would like to be able to get a photographer with this group. I want to take pictures, so...

M. ELLIOTT: And some of the documents...

DRISCOLL: And the documents. And I've got a form to sign about the documents. I'm going to take...

T. BEVERLY: Is that the form that you have right here?

DRISCOLL: Yeah.

MAYO: You need to sign this line.

DRISCOLL: Everybody who spoke needs to sign that.

[brief organizational comments about pens]

R. BEVERLY: My sister, Margie and I, are the only two siblings left out of the eight.

DRISCOLL: Put who you are.

[More organizational chatter]

T. BEVERLY: I kind of kept her updated saying that, with regret.

[More organizational chatter establishing how to sign and to identify individuals as their family relationships]

DRISCOLL: Is there anything else anybody wants to say on the tape?

T. BEVERLY: I thank you and I appreciate you taking the time to...

[Family members join in thanks]

[UNKNOWN]: We should have a picture with her!

M. ELLIOTT: And we love talking.

END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 2

END OF INTERVIEW

Beverly Family Tree
(highlighted persons participated in this interview)

