



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK  
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

---

**Interview with Walter Schwartz, Jr.**

**Interview Date:** December 1, 2006  
**Interviewer:** Adam Graham  
**Transcriber:** Adam Graham

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

**GRAHAM:** This is Adam Graham and I am conducting an interview today with Walter Schwartz, Jr. for the Overbeck Historical Project. We are in Walter's home in Washington, DC and this is tape 1, side 1. Well thank you very much...Walter, for agreeing to...sit down with us and agree to participate in this project.

**SCHWARTZ:** My pleasure.

**GRAHAM:** And we appreciate it. I wanted to try to get some general information about your background and—so why don't we start out...with your birth. Where were you born and in what year?

**SCHWARTZ:** I was born in 1936, here in Washington, in the [static]...oh my goodness the...hospital, was is it, the [Columbia] Hospital for Women...

**GRAHAM:** Hospital for Woman.

**SCHWARTZ:** And I, I—the name of it had—I had the piece of paper in my hand a minute ago [laughter].

**GRAHAM:** Oh, that's OK, we'll...

**SCHWARTZ:** But it's...the Hospital for Women...on Pennsylvania Avenue NW in Washington, DC.

**GRAHAM:** OK, great. And to whom were you born? Who were your mother and father?

**SCHWARTZ:** My mother was Bernadine Tomlinson Schwartz. My father was Walter W. Schwartz, Sr. And they were from, originally from Homestead, Pennsylvania.

**GRAHAM:** OK. And when did they come from Homestead?

**SCHWARTZ:** They came in about 1933 or 34.

**GRAHAM:** And why did they end up moving to Washington?

**SCHWARTZ:** It was during the [Great] Depression and they, and Homestead, Pennsylvania was pretty hard hit by the Depression. There was work in Washington for, you know, some...in some lines of work. My dad wound up being a...a bellman and an elevator operator at a hotel in downtown Washington. And...then that's what he took.

**GRAHAM:** And they moved down here together?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes.

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** Well they...he moved here first and then he went back and married her and brought her back down with him.

**GRAHAM:** Great. And which hotel did he start working in?

**SCHWARTZ:** He started at New Colonial Hotel...in...and that was located at...15<sup>th</sup> and M Streets NW just north of the Washington—the present Washington Post building.

**GRAHAM:** And how did he find that job?

**SCHWARTZ:** I don't know. I think a friend had come and told him about it, had come to Washington earlier and written back, or called back, and visited back and told him about it. So he came down to...give it a shot.

**GRAHAM:** Great. And was it a large hotel or was it small?

**SCHWARTZ:** It was pretty large for the time. As I remember the building itself was two wings and we had six, seven—seven stories, seven floors. Which at the time is a fairly large hotel, couple of hundred rooms.

**GRAHAM:** And he left...during the war [World War II] is that right?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes...he had...well actually he had gone to another location...another hotel, The Plaza. And then during the war he was—I guess he volunteered for the Office of Naval Intelligence and he went to Norfolk [Virginia] for about six months, six or eight months. We were there in 1940—I remember we went down...there—he came back up to get us in 1942. And...that year there was an enormous blizzard on Palm Sunday. And we had like three feet of snow and he got stuck up here. And he was in effect, even though he was a civilian, he was AWOL [laughter] because he had to get back to Norfolk in time to go to work [laughter] that day. That following day.

**GRAHAM:** But they kept him anyway?

**SCHWARTZ:** Oh yes, yes.

**GRAHAM:** That's good. And so he returned to work in the same hotel?

**SCHWARTZ:** He returned to work at The Plaza hotel. Which was at First and D Streets NE...right south of Union Station and just north of the Senate office buildings. He...he was recalled...and his employer Mr. Blackstone, Robert Blackstone...indicated to the depart—well to the War Department that...housing

was a vital industry in Washington, DC, especially in view of the fact that we had...three floors of...Navy WAVES, that's women in the Army—in the Navy—and SPARs, which was women in the Coast Guard, who were occupying those floors of the building...in the hotel during the war as part of the, our war effort.

**GRAHAM:** Sure. I know that...your father worked for Office of Naval Intelligence and then you yourself later went on to work for the military, was he at all involved in this process of...choosing these women to come in to work....

**SCHWARTZ:** I don't think so. I think—he might have been, you know, involved in making the arrangements for them in blocking the rooms and all that sort of thing, but I don't, I don't know, that was, I was, well I was...

**GRAHAM:** Six?

**SCHWARTZ:** Six years old. So...that's not something that I was privy to.

**GRAHAM:** And while...while he was working for the hotel you were also living in the hotel, your....

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes...

**GRAHAM:** family was...

**SCHWARTZ:** Dad was a resident manager and...so we had an apartment in the hotel, on the first floor of the hotel.

**GRAHAM:** And so you grew up—your father worked for the hotel all of your childhood, is that right?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes.

**GRAHAM:** So you lived in a hotel all your childhood...

**SCHWARTZ:** I lived there, but for...about three years I went to—because life was so hectic in Washington and it was what we now call ground zero, considered a high target and it was very stressful and...I was very young. I went to a boarding school in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, for three years, the first three years of school. And...that was Saint Francis Xavier Academy and/or Xavier Hall in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and it was run by the Sisters of Mercy. And I spent three years there at boarding school, came home in the summertime though.

**GRAHAM:** Do you remember at all, when you were living in the apartments, how large the apartments were? What was the general layout?

**SCHWARTZ:** The apartment was...a standard hotel room size. It was, you know, really just a hotel room that had been converted to our...use as...as our apartment. We had two rooms, what was a living room and...a bedroom and a bath. And on some occasions, when the hotel wasn't busy, I was permitted to have the room on the other side of the bath, it was connecting bath which only connected when... when I was living in the other room. So, there was—it was pretty small...what 10x12 [feet], something like that...

**GRAHAM:** Wow...

**SCHWARTZ:** Two 10x12 rooms plus a bath.

**GRAHAM:** Because it was so small did you spend a lot of time outside of your...

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes, I spent a lot of time in the lobby and...as soon as I...as I learned to read I would go and cadge comic books from the lady that...that ran the newsstand, Lilly Thompson. And...we called her 'battle axe.'

**GRAHAM:** Oh? Battle Axe?

**SCHWARTZ:** Battle Axe, yes. Dad said she was an old battle—that was a term you used about, you know, a forceful woman in those days. She was an old battle axe. And she was very fond of me and I of her, and we just called her Battle for short. [laughter]

**SCHWARTZ:** And I used to borrow the comic books to read. So I read all the comic books that came out...

**GRAHAM:** And then you brought them back to the store?

**SCHWARTZ:** Oh yeah...[laughter] and then I brought them back to the stand.

**GRAHAM:** Did you have friends in the hotel as well? Were there other staff?

**SCHWARTZ:** Well, there were...the staff all looked at me—growing up in a hotel is something like...you have a whole staff full of fathers and mothers, surrogate. And I couldn't get away with anything because somebody would tell on me or correct me right on the spot. And all of the...the desk staff—in those days in Washington it was still very much Jim Crow, very segregated. The...desk staff was all white and the, all of the wait staff in the dining room were all white. Now the cook staff were all black. The bellmen, and the elevator operators and the housekeeping staff were all black, were Negroes.

**GRAHAM:** As manager of the hotel did your father hire the people...

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes.

**GRAHAM:** He did. And so how did he—must have purposefully taken part in trying to decide who was going into each field, did he try to keep it segregated? Or do you think that...

**SCHWARTZ:** I don't—It wasn't a matter of...of trying. I just—it...

**GRAHAM:** It was just...

**SCHWARTZ:** In those days that just the way things were.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** White men didn't apply for jobs as bell hops...in that hotel. Now in another hotel I worked in, where he had worked earlier, the bell staff was all white.

**GRAHAM:** And what made that division? The class...

**SCHWARTZ:** I don't know...

**GRAHAM:** of people?

**SCHWARTZ:** I really—I couldn't know what it was. It was... Mr. Blackstone, the owner of the hotel, was an old Virginian, and that might have had something to do with it. Hotel up the street, I—Pete Parish was, he was the owner of the Carroll Arms, where we also lived at different times...

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** He was from North Carolina, from...High Point. High Point, North Carolina, I think. And...they had all Caucasian, all white people, on the wait staff in the dining room and the bell staff...there were white. So who knows? I mean it was just a tradition of the way the hotel had come up.

**GRAHAM:** And what was your, you had mentioned your relationship...with the staff being one of them being kind of being a father or mother figure...

**SCHWARTZ:** I...yes well the—we had a maid, and I can't remember—Bessie Johnson, I can remember her last name, her name was Johnson...and she was...she later became the housekeeper when she was actually too old to go out and work in the rooms anymore they...they made her a housekeeper so she could supervise the other, the other women on the staff. The—she took care of me, sometimes...she would sort of like baby-sit for me. She looked after me. The bell captain was named Clarence, I think also, Johnson, but they were not related...

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** And one of the, you know, fondest memories I would have is...he took me out to his house, which was a little house out in the country in Maryland somewhere...and I spent the day with him one day, with his family. And I thought that was really neat.

**GRAHAM:** And what did you do?

**SCHWARTZ:** Well I was very young, but I guess I played with his children and grandchildren and just, you know, had a good time. They fed me and it was really fun.

**GRAHAM:** You had said that for eating, a lot of the times, that you wouldn't go to the grocery store...but you would actually sometimes eat in the restaurant.

**SCHWARTZ:** We almost always—we always ate in the restaurant. Mom had a hot plate back in our apartment. We had one closet which was larger than the other closets, a little bit bigger. And we had room there for a hot plate and...an icebox, a refrigerator. And we would keep some food back there, but mostly, almost always, we ate in the dining room, in the hotel dining room.

**GRAHAM:** Do you think that...you were isolated at all from the culture that was going on in Washington just because your main figures that you interacted with were the staff and you lived in the hotel...

**SCHWARTZ:** Until I went to school. And then at that point it was—the area around the hotel was a neighborhood and it was...and I had my classmates and spent more—after I started the school, I mean this is after I returned from boarding school, I went back into the fourth grade at Saint Joseph's [parochial School] in—at Second and C [Streets] NE. I...had a normal life after that as far as—and I probably spent more time on C Street than in the hotel. Then I spent more time outside playing with my...schoolmates and my friends from the neighborhood.

**GRAHAM:** Great. And...where did you go to high school?

**SCHWARTZ:** Gonzaga [College] High School.

**GRAHAM:** Gonzaga.

**SCHWARTZ:** On North Capitol Street. North Capitol and I, actually they don't say it's on North Capitol, it's always on I Street, the boys on I Street.

**GRAHAM:** I had heard that Gonzaga was largely an Irish Catholic school up until about mid-century, was that the case?

**SCHWARTZ:** Gee, it wasn't that I would notice that. I guess there would a large Irish Catholic population there because, because there were Jesuits and the Irish Catholic would gravitate towards that. But...I wouldn't think that they—I have a directory, we could look it up...

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** And see, but...I wouldn't, I don't think there was a majority there, I think it—unless that's the majority of Catholic boys in Washington were Irish Catholic...

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** that would have been the case then. Patrick Buchanan's older brother Bill was a classmate of mine there.

**GRAHAM:** Oh really?

**SCHWARTZ:** Patrick was, Pat Buchanan, was two years behind me.

**GRAHAM:** And he went to Gonzaga too?

**SCHWARTZ:** At Gonzaga, yes.

**GRAHAM:** Oh wow. And...did they all live on the Hill too? And a private school...

**SCHWARTZ:** No...Pat lived out in Bethesda/Chevy Chase area.

**GRAHAM:** Sure. I mean the other students at the school in general.

**SCHWARTZ:** Oh, they lived all over town, and in Virginia, and in Maryland. Some kids commuted from Southern Maryland.

**GRAHAM:** Wow.

**SCHWARTZ:** We had boys from all over. And...I—from Southern Maryland I remember a couple and...I know several of my classmates were from Arlington and a couple—and then they were from all over Washington, but they would have been primarily, I guess, the Washington area's—my neighborhood always sent two or three kids on to Gonzaga. A lot of them came from over in Southeast, Washington, over in Anacostia, which was not what it is now.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** Anacostia was a white suburb type community at that, in those days. And a lot of them would have been from the upper Northwest area, what we call now, I guess, ‘west of the [Rock Creek] park’ area in Washington.

**GRAHAM:** And when you were in school do you remember where you bought school supplies and clothes and books, things like that?

**SCHWARTZ:** No I don’t. I really because...I guess I—probably my mom...[laughter]

**GRAHAM:** Well, she did it.

**SCHWARTZ:** would go out and buy them.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** And I didn’t get all that much involved in it, but we had pencils and papers—in those days there were a lot of five and dimes. There was Murphy’s and Neisner’s and, I think, a store named Magruder’s. And there were lots of those places around where you could buy school supplies and things like that. The Bread and Chocolate up at Pennsylvania and Seventh Street [SE] near Eastern Market was a five and ten cent store in that property in those days.

**GRAHAM:** So while you were at Gonzaga, what kind of activities were you involved in?

**SCHWARTZ:** I involved mostly in the drama group. The—we would put on the plays. We did one or two plays a year. We did usually a one-act contest during one part of the year and a major production at the end of the year. And we were, I was in that every year. I was active for awhile in the radio guild. It was an all boys school so I was a cheerleader for awhile. I worked on the yearbook. I was a photographer. And I worked on the yearbook. And, that was about it.

**GRAHAM:** And while you were at Gonzaga you actually became sick, is that right?

**SCHWARTZ:** In my senior year...I came down with spinal meningitis right after we had a Jesuit Province one-act play contest, which we won by the way. And then the day after the contest the headmaster gave us the day off and we showed the students from the other schools in the Maryland Province, we showed them around Washington. And the day after that, I don’t remember...for about three weeks.

**GRAHAM:** Wow.

**SCHWARTZ:** It was in December of 1953. And I got meningitis and went into a coma and luckily survived. I was in, at Providence Hospital, which was on the Hill, it was in Southeast Washington, it's a vacant lot now. It's a park now. And it's between Second and Third Street and...what is that, C, D, E, E and F. And it's...after Providence built that new hospital in north, in far Northeast, up in Brookland, the National Oceanic [and Atmospheric] Administration took it over. [NOAA] ran it for, had the building for several years and then, and then they got rid of it. And the building was torn down and they've got a park there now.

**GRAHAM:** So after you recovered when you went back to school, were you involved—it was an all boys school...

**SCHWARTZ:** Right.

**GRAHAM:** Did you have a chance at all to go on dates, or...

**SCHWARTZ:** Oh sure. There was a—Notre Dame High School, which was run by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, was right across the courtyard from us. We generally, even though the sisters insisted that start and end times differ—we didn't get off at the same time as the girls did and the girls didn't get off at the same time we did—there was considerable inaction between the boys at Gonzaga and the girls at Notre Dame. And there were youth clubs around town that we also participated in. I was very active in the Buckley club, which was out at St. Francis Xavier...Church and School. Again, it's on Pennsylvania Avenue just over the Sousa Bridge.

**GRAHAM:** And what's the Buckley Club?

**SCHWARTZ:** It was named after Monsignor Buckley, who had been an earlier pastor of the club. It was a Catholic youth organization...club for young people and what we did, we mostly put on dances, there was a Saturday night dance every week. We put on variety shows...I think I was in two or three variety shows there at St. Francis at the Buckley Club. In those days it was very politically incorrect because they were almost always based on minstrel show type...

**GRAHAM:** Really?

**SCHWARTZ:** Well there was not that sensitivity and I mean nobody got upset about it in those days. Well and, of course, we were all white bread. There was no...even though there were black Catholics, and obviously black children, there were...none, I cannot remember if there were any black, I don't think there were any black students, and black kids in the Buckley Club.

**GRAHAM:** Do you know when, when those types of shows continued until?

**SCHWARTZ:** You know I lost track after I got out of high school. I went to college and heard about them for a couple of years more, but...I'm sure that as everybody became more sensitive they changed more into a variety show and less of a minstrel show. The minstrel show was the easiest vehicle to use because of its format. It was a very freewheeling thing, and you didn't need to do a lot of...didn't have to write a lot of continuity for it.

**GRAHAM:** Right. Yes, so when you did go on dates, where would you go?

**SCHWARTZ:** Well, now Gonzaga had purple and white dances. The Gonzaga colors are purple and white. So, once a month there would be a purple and white. And that would be—it wasn't a formal dance, it was a semiformal dance, where of course you wore a coat. At Gonzaga we always wore a jacket and tie, so to the dances we also wore a jacket and tie. And the girls would dress up, but they wouldn't dress up in formal gowns or anything...

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** like that, but they would be dressed nicely. And we had those once a month and there were shows and movies, plays that we could go to.

**GRAHAM:** Do you remember where you went to see the movies?

**SCHWARTZ:** I went to a couple of plays at Catholic University. I think I, I don't know if I took my dates, but I went to the old Arena Stage which was in the old Hippodrome Theater at the time. But since there were weekly activities at the Buckley Club and then the regular dances at school, at high school, there was always some place to go, so. And then there were other CYO [Catholic Youth Organization] clubs in town, like there was one at St. Martin's up on North Capitol Street where we used to go also on Friday or Saturday nights.

**GRAHAM:** And what about during the summer when you didn't have school, what would you do?

**SCHWARTZ:** Well, in the first two years I was a summer counselor, a junior counselor, at Merrick Boys Camp, which was down on the Potomac in Nanjemoy, Maryland. That's, I think that's south of Indian Head, just down in that direction. I did that for two summers and then that following, after those two summers, I went—a friend of mine's father was a contractor, a construction contractor, so I worked construction one summer with the Pastines. And that was tough.

**GRAHAM:** Oh yes? [laughter]

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes. I slept well those nights. And then another—I guess in my last year I did a variety of jobs, but I mostly...I took a job as a hotel desk clerk. My friend of my father's gave me a job as a desk clerk for awhile.

**GRAHAM:** Do you remember what you were building when you were working for the construction company?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes, it was a, it was on Prospect Avenue in Georgetown. And we were rehabilitating a house there, and I worked mostly in the basement, I remember that.

**GRAHAM:** Where do you think the major construction was going on in the city at the time? Was it in Georgetown?

**SCHWARTZ:** You know that was not something that I noticed. I knew that we had this particular job and that was the only one I was concerned about. It was just, as far as I was concerned something to do during the day, and a way to make some money and that was it.

**GRAHAM:** Sure. How did you get around when you were traveling around the city? Did you...

**SCHWARTZ:** After, well early on dad would drive me. Later on, I got, I guess when I was, after I was 16, dad bought me a car. So I had a car. I drove, but we had—transportation wasn't a big problem in DC, because we did have streetcars and the buses. I didn't like buses at that, I still don't like buses all that much, but we did have streetcars that went places I needed to go. There was a major line that went, three major lines went right in front of the hotels where I lived.

**GRAHAM:** Oh really?

**SCHWARTZ:** Now, when I was in high school I lived at the, mostly at the, Carroll Arms Hotel, which was at First and C Streets NE. And there was three major lines that went right in front of the hotel there, one that went to the Union Station, one that went, wound up in Brookland, and one that went out to Glen Echo. And the other terminus of the line was Barney Circle which was 17<sup>th</sup> and Pennsylvania Avenue SE. And the other one was the car barns here at, right across the street from where we are now on East Capitol Street.

**GRAHAM:** Great.

**SCHWARTZ:** So...

**GRAHAM:** Did you go to Glen Echo at all?

**SCHWARTZ:** Oh yes. Yes. The school I went to, St. Joseph's Parochial School, we would have a class day every, at the end of the year and we would all go out. We would get on—we would walk from the school, and the nuns would put us, take us on the streetcar. You could charter a whole streetcar so they would arrange for the streetcars to come at a certain time and we would...

**GRAHAM:** Oh really?

**SCHWARTZ:** be there and get on. There wouldn't be any civilians on there, on the streetcar. We'd be the only the only ones on the car, which would be a good thing because adults wouldn't have enjoyed being on the streetcar...

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** with that many kids. But our class would go out and we would—I think all of us went, maybe, maybe it was only the eighth graders, the seventh or eighth graders that went, but I remember going at least twice. So it was at least the seventh and eighth graders. We would go out...and it was after the swimming pools opened the first of May. Now was it the first of May? No, it was Memorial Day they opened I think. But school lasted until around the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, so we would go out, we'd have a day where the, there'd be a field day sort of thing and we'd go out....

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

**GRAHAM:** This is Adam Graham interviewing Walter Schwartz, this is tape 1 side 2. We were just talking about...how you'd mentioned during WWII the top levels of the hotel your father worked in were being used by the military. Did you notice any other type of changes to the city during this period in terms of...rationing, or blackouts, or drills that you had to be a part of?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes. My—of course everybody was subjected to rationing which we didn't feel all that much because we were in the hotel and we didn't have our own, didn't have to...we just ordered from the kitchen. And the hotels for some reason were not under rationing. We did notice...that there was, butter was rationed. We noticed about margarine came onto the shelves then and it was a new thing and...sometimes the...when margarine, oleo margarine first came out there was a, it was in a kneadable plastic bag that had a little capsule within in of red coloring. The margarine itself looked like lard...and what you would do is you would knead the bag and break the little capsule within and thereby color the margarine so it looked more like butter and was more, a little bit more palatable at least to the eye.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes. And...gasoline was rationed so we didn't have so much of...so there wasn't as much local travel. But then automobiles got a lot more gas, miles to the gallon in those days as they did, than they do now. The—my dad was a—I was thinking about this the other night and I remembered that dad was an air raid warden in town. And I remember it as being at the New Colonial Hotel, but, and I find that somehow I don't understand how that happened because during that time I thought we were at The Plaza. But he was at both hotels in different capacities, so I guess he was a warden and it was a—he had to enforce blackouts. One incident I remember is that he was out on the street enforcing the, you know, checking around and all that. He had to call upstairs to, to my mother, who had put a reading lamp down on the floor so that she could continue to read [surprised laughter] her magazines and all that. He had seen it from the street and told her to turn out the light. I remember I was always very proud of my dad being a blackout warden. I thought that was really cool...which was a term we didn't use in those days.

**GRAHAM:** Right. Well how did he get that position?

**SCHWARTZ:** It was because he was the hotel manager and it was—and he, they knew he would be there and he was, somewhat a figure of authority and he would be responsible for the hotel anyway, so he was also responsible for that. There's a book, and it shows Washington in wartime. It's a, I don't know if you've seen it, it's a small book, I have a copy of it upstairs...

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** I think I still have the—there are several different ones, one is Washington in wartime, Georgetown and stuff like that, and Capitol Hill with some neat pictures of the...car barns and stuff. One of the photographs is of an anti-aircraft gun emplacement that is on the top of the still existing Government Printing Office. And the view is to the southeast, so from the roof of the...over the shoulders of the guys manning the anti-aircraft battery you can see The Plaza and the Carroll Arms hotels...[Ed: this book was never located.]

**GRAHAM:** Oh boy.

**SCHWARTZ:** in the distance, which is cool. In the park that was between The Plaza and Union Station, which is now a parking lot for Congressional—another parking lot for government employees, was sort of a long triangle park, so a block long park. But it goes in a triangle because Massachusetts Avenue cuts it off at Second Street. There was an anti-aircraft searchlight battery and I remember the soldiers being out there and I remember in the summertime, when I was very small, going out and talking to the soldiers who were manning the searchlights. I remember that.

**GRAHAM:** And what was your relationship to them? Do you think that...

**SCHWARTZ:** Just that I was a kid from the neighborhood and they were probably young men far away from home and they, they probably...had left little brothers or nephews at home and they were happy to have someone to talk to. [laughter]

**GRAHAM:** Yes. Sure. So after the war...was there a lot of construction going on in the city? Was it growing? How did it change once the war ended?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes, it wasn't as perceptible, I think as the—the reconstruction—the, Washington had been described, rightfully so I think, by many, many writers, as being a small sleepy Southern town prior to World War II. And it just never quite got back to that. The pace that built up in Washington, I don't think, diminished much after. At least I don't recall it and I was here in...in the hotels, and I don't remember it being, going back to being a slow small sleepy Southern town. I think it just continued to grow and grow. The real change in Washington came after, I think, my own view is after Kennedy was elected in 1960. And it just...the whole, not the whole, nature of the place, but the, a lot of it changed and it started to become a boomtown. And started to become... cosmopolitan, which it hadn't been before.

**GRAHAM:** Why do you think that is?

**SCHWARTZ:** Part of—I blamed it on the Kennedys... [laughter]

**SCHWARTZ:** And the Massachusetts mafia. Because it...government kept growing, government didn't slow down, it just...kept on expanding. Now, during that period of time I was in the service. And I went, I had been away and came back and went away again. And I went away in 19—I was stationed here from 1960 to 1962, and I went away in December of '62. I came back in January of '66 and...just the amount of change that had taken place in Washington in those years—they had torn down a number of buildings on the [National] Mall, they had torn down old Main Navy Building on Constitution Avenue, they had torn down the Munitions Building on Constitution Avenue, they had torn down the...temporary buildings that were around, near where the [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt Memorial is now. Up where—the Botanical Gardens [United States Botanic Garden] was always there, but there was a string of temporary buildings in that first several blocks after Fourth Street SW that were all torn down. The...the Army Medical Museum [and Library] had been on Independence Avenue...Southwest, right—you, we would go to the Smithsonian, to the old castle building [The Smithsonian Institution Building] there. And then right out the back of that was a temporary, a long string of temporary buildings where the—and the Army Medical Museum was one of them. Which everybody wanted to go there because they wanted to see the really ugly and bizarre things that they had in jars there, like supposedly the testicles [laughter] of John Dillinger. Things like that. But that's when I, I feel that the city changed, physically. And because it

changed physically, because there was so much building going on, and such an influx of people...into the District [of Columbia], that, into Washington area, not just the District, but...it began to change a lot.

**GRAHAM:** Sure. Now, you graduated in...high school in the mid-50s...

**SCHWARTZ:** '54.

**GRAHAM:** And what did you do after graduation?

**SCHWARTZ:** I went to Catholic University [of America]...

**GRAHAM:** Catholic University.

**SCHWARTZ:** also in Washington, out in Brookland. And I was a drama major.

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** Under the notorious Father Hartke, Gilbert Hartke.

**GRAHAM:** He was the drama....

**SCHWARTZ:** He was, he was Mr. Theater in Washington.

**GRAHAM:** Oh really?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes. He...kept theater going, he was one of the...the leading lights of theater in Washington, and in the United States. His biography is on my shelf there. He was quite a character and quite a...quite a man. A Dominican priest who...whose main thrust in life was to develop Catholic theater, develop artists, Catholic artists for theater. And it was a really wonderful experience, knowing and working for him. I was his chauffer for about a year.

**GRAHAM:** Oh really?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes. He had this baby blue—he always said it was Blessed Mother blue, Cadillac, that was, had been given—now of course he was a Dominican and he couldn't own anything of his own, but it was given to his use, donated by a Cadillac dealer in Washington and had the license plates '8:30,' because that's the time, that was curtain time. And I used to drive him to his meetings downtown where he would go and have lunch with the different social groups, the different clubs and societies that...were the movers and shakers in Washington.

**GRAHAM:** What types of groups? Can you think....

**SCHWARTZ:** I'm thinking, like the Lions Club or the Downtown Businessmen's Group, whoever it was that would get things moving...

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** And I can't think of the names of them now. I just said, 'oh, Father's got a meeting down at the...Statler [Hotel]. OK, here we go.' [laughter] Or you're going to be at the Willard [Hotel] today, alright well I'd take him down and then...drive the Cadillac back to Catholic University and park it.

**GRAHAM:** And you did that while you were in college...

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes

**GRAHAM:** or afterwards?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes, while I was in college.

**GRAHAM:** Now you had a couple years between the time you finished college and you started the service, right?

**SCHWARTZ:** I had started graduate school at, and decided I didn't like graduate school and left in the middle, I withdrew, luckily, because otherwise it would have really messed up getting back in. But I withdrew, and went to Florida where my parents had moved... Those were the days of the draft. And Washington Draft Board was very unfriendly at the time. I said, well where can I—I had a job lined up in...The Bahamas. They told me I couldn't leave the country. So... [laughter]

**GRAHAM:** What was the job?

**SCHWARTZ:** It was working in a hotel, as a bellman or something like that, a desk clerk, but it was in The Bahamas.

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** I mean, hey. So, but I said alright the heck with it then and I went out and enlisted.

**GRAHAM:** Why did your parents decide to move to Florida?

**SCHWARTZ:** I'm not sure, I think they were just ready to get ready for retirement. And I think the business—I really don't know, I was thinking about it and wondering why the other day and—because dad supposedly had had a really great relationship with Mr. Blackstone, and it was supposed to pay him a whole lot of money and I think it turned out that it wasn't going to happen that way, and he said 'the heck

with it, I'm going to leave.' So he and mom went—after I graduated from college, he and mom went to Miami [Florida]. And he went to work for the, at the Everglades, Hotel Everglades. And then he, later, after that he moved to Milwaukee [Wisconsin] for a year or so, and then back to Miami. I never really figured out just why, I just figured he was tired of Washington and wanted to go someplace else.

**GRAHAM:** Sure. And then after your time in the service, you decided to come back to Washington...

**SCHWARTZ:** Well, actually...a long time after. After I retired from the military in 1985 and I taught in a private Catholic school in Fairfax [Virginia] for three years and then I moved to Florida too. And I started off in Punta Gorda, at a public high school in Charlotte, Charlotte High School, didn't like that at all, so then I left and I went and I joined my parents in Satellite Beach, Florida, where they had retired. Then I moved there for awhile and I decided to do the actor thing and I was going to work in the movie industry in Orlando [Florida] and that never panned out. But I did do theater, and I did a lot of theater, and I did some teaching and I taught high school. I taught in two different high schools. And I taught at an elementary school, I taught ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] for...kindergarten, second and fifth grades, which was really strange. [laughter] And then finally I was working pretty regularly in Brevard County. And I was—I really decided that I was really going to retire and I put in for my social security and I said 'OK I'm retired now.' And I started to get work all the time as an adjunct instructor at Brevard Community College, which I loved. That was really great. I enjoyed that a lot. And then my wife got a, my new wife, got a job up here in DC working for the...Schools Office of the Archdiocese of Washington. So we came back to Washington. And I wanted—she wanted to live in the city and I was tired of suburbs too...so we, I said, 'start off on the Hill.'

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** Start off at St. Joseph's and work your way out. We spent about a year and a half at, on Third Street, on A Street between Third and Fourth. And then we bought, saw, found this house here and we bought it. And we've been here about three, three and a half years now.

**GRAHAM:** Great.

**SCHWARTZ:** Well three years, I mean three years now.

**GRAHAM:** So you had married once before...

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes.

**GRAHAM:** When—before you joined the military?

**SCHWARTZ:** No, I got married when I was stationed back here in Washington.

**GRAHAM:** OK. And when were you stationed here in Washington?

**SCHWARTZ:** Well I went to—I joined the Army in 1959.

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** And I went to...basic training and I went to Fort Slocum, New York, to the Army Information School. And then I was assigned to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, which for an East Coast boy was not a fun thing. [laughter] It wasn't anything I liked at all. Oklahoma's beautiful, but I, it wasn't for me. Too far from salt water. So I...reenlisted for the Army Intelligence School and I got...training as a counter-intelligence agent and then I spent, decided that I liked it, and I spent my career... 27 years in various assignments. My first assignment out the...school at Fort Holabird [Maryland] was back here to Washington, DC. I was here for about two years and then I got assigned to Germany...during those two years I got married. And I was assigned to Germany, took my family with me, we were in Frankfurt and Stuttgart and then came back and lived in Maryland instead of moving back into the District, because the District was a little...well those were bad years. Sixties were not great years to be in DC.

**GRAHAM:** The mid-sixties?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes...And then after that I was...then I got assigned to Vietnam, did my year in Vietnam, came back and went to Fort Holabird for another year and then...came back again and I was assigned to DC, but this time we decided to live on the Virginia side. So I lived in Virginia, in Fairfax and Arlington and Alexandria. And that's where I was when I decided to move to...to Florida.

**GRAHAM:** And then from Florida back to Washington.

**SCHWARTZ:** And then back to Washington. See you can come home again. I love Washington, I just think it's so neat. It's a great city, I, when I first came back I would be so amazed, I would walk around and I would see things that...how much they had changed, like sidewalk cafes, we never had sidewalk cafes. You couldn't do anything on the sidewalks...

**GRAHAM:** No, really?

**SCHWARTZ:** in Washington. And...especially cafes. Washington was federal territory. We had what was called the Mann Act.

**GRAHAM:** What was the Mann Act?

**SCHWARTZ:** The Mann Act was a federal act against the...if you look at an old movie you'll hear, you may sometimes hear about somebody taking someone across the state line, for immoral purposes. Well that's a violation of the Mann Act, it's an anti-prostitution act.

**GRAHAM:** Oh.

**SCHWARTZ:** Since Washington was federal territory...it was considered that one step in any direction was movement for improper, or immoral, purposes. And you could go to jail for it. So...you can just imagine the networking time in a local bar now, if kinds of laws were still—I think the Mann Act's off the books now, I think, but...there was that. In a bar, or in a restaurant, or a cocktail lounge you could not take your drink from the bar and move it to a table. You couldn't pick up your drink and move from one table to another. You had to get the waiter or the waitress to do it for you. And that was all part of, tied into the...so that part, that kind of thing...changed Washington a lot. When the people from other parts of the country came in and said 'this is crazy, you can't do that,' you know...

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** And...

**GRAHAM:** It's interesting that you mention—it seems like such a conservative society and yet I heard after World War II there was...many of the soldiers stayed on in the city and there was...a lot of problems with police corruption, and there was problems with...gambling institutions in the city and that there was a lot of underground saloons, you think that's, that's more of a stereotype or...

**SCHWARTZ:** I don't know...there was, I guess all of that. There was...the biggest problem in DC was Jim Crow, was segregation.

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** And that was...and it caused another problem because in the school desegregation, the *Brown v. The Board of Education*, 1954, which was the year I graduated from high school. We had already desegregated Gonzaga. We had, well the first one was in the year bef—the first black student was in the year before me. There were two in my class, one actually graduated with me, and... so, as a matter of fact we couldn't play local teams because of it, because none of the teams in Virginia or nearby Maryland would play us. We had to go to Delaware and...

**GRAHAM:** Really?

**SCHWARTZ:** and Pennsylvania in order to find teams to play. So we were always on the road. But that was the big problem and then... in 1954 the school board decision, where the schools had to be desegregated, caused white flight. And neighborhoods clean—that and blockbusting, where realtors would get one house...would manage to insert a black family into one house in a neighborhood.

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** And everybody was so afraid that their values would go down, that their housing values, that they would depart, sell their house for any price and get out. Well, you know, the real estate people liked that because they got commissions out of it.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** And a lot of the African Americans liked it because they got housing out of it in...but that...a lot of that took place...people who really couldn't support the housing that they were getting into. And some of the neighborhoods started to deteriorate. And then in...I guess in...in about...in the early sixties there was a regentrification. Where people—'Hey, living in the inner-city is really neat let's move back in.' So they found some of these properties that had become depressed and they went into them and they rehabilitated them. Well in 1968 that all changed, because after the riots in 1968 after the death of Martin Luther King [Jr.].

**GRAHAM:** flight...

**SCHWARTZ:** People fled [laughter] fled the city again. And...and now there's a change, I mean there were blocks of the city—I came back to the city, well I came back to Virginia—wait a minute where did I come after, now after...in 1970 I went to Fort Meade, so I, I saw the city...

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** I think. From Fort Meade I went to Newark [New Jersey] and then from there I went to Italy for four years. So I came back in...I came back in seventy, 1976. And in spite of that having been the centennial, the bicentennial year you could still see the scars...of...the riots in Washington. That—parts of 14<sup>th</sup> Street are still boarded up. That area around, I mean I'm really happy to see that the area around U Street, the U Street corridor, is...rebuilding because that was disaster area for years...

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** and years, because of it. There's still parts of Capitol Hill that are a little depressed, because of...because of all, you know, all of that, the white flight, the regentrification, and the riots and

all that. But it's—I love the neighborhood, it's so great. It's a...very diverse neighborhood, this neighborhood is very diverse.

**GRAHAM:** Well, those are the questions that I had...

**SCHWARTZ:** Really? Is that all?

**GRAHAM:** That's it. And...I just wanted to know if there were anything that you had wanted to talk about or you thought were important...

**SCHWARTZ:** Well you mentioned about gambling...

**GRAHAM:** Yes.

**SCHWARTZ:** And I thought...there was a numbers racket in Washington and I don't, I never knew how it worked exactly except that it had something to do with the pari-mutuel betting and there were three, you wound up with three numbers...it's like Lotto, and you wind up with three numbers and it came from the results of three different races or something like that, and anyway. But there was a numbers taker in one of the places I was going to show you on...if we took the tour.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** And it's right on Capitol Hill. And there was this big enormous black lady who used to sit in her window...and there was a bay window and she would take the numbers through the window and...you could bet for a nickel.

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** And I forget what you—I never won, but you could win a lot of money for a nickel, I mean you could win ten, fifteen bucks for a nickel...so it was a pretty good deal...if you hit the numbers.

**GRAHAM:** And those were the early '50s, late '40s?

**SCHWARTZ:** That would have been the '50s, yes. Late 40s, early fif—middle '50s, yes. Of course I, I lost track of it in, I guess—well after I graduated high school I didn't spend that much time in the neighborhood anymore. When I was going to college. But that was...something, something that was kind of cool.

**GRAHAM:** Yes.

**SCHWARTZ:** Interesting to note that it happened.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** And let's see...if that's all that you're interested—I can point out some of the...some of the folks that...that I knew that were, whose parents were business owners in neighborhood.

**GRAHAM:** Sure, that'd be a help.

**SCHWARTZ:** And some of them still live in the area. Let me see, what do we have here, there are two pictures that I have here. This is my graduation from...from eighth grade at St. Joseph's.

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** And this is Monsignor McAdams and Father Malloy and Father...Connor, Father Connor. And I'm right here. So...

**GRAHAM:** And it's about equally split between boys and girls.

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes. Well we had, let's see, yes, but one, two, three, four, five. I think half of the, well five of the girls were from suburban Maryland.

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** Because there wasn't a school out there and they were bused in...

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** to there, from their parish out there. Yes. This...parish house still exists next to the church there—are you familiar with St. Joseph's? It's cattycorner from the Senate Building there...

**GRAHAM:** Which...

**SCHWARTZ:** It's Second and C [Streets NE].

**GRAHAM:** Second and C.

**SCHWARTZ:** Just right across from that big vacant parking lot.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** The school has been long torn down...

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** and is now a...

**GRAHAM:** but the parish is still there.

**SCHWARTZ:** parking lot...

**GRAHAM:** Is the tree still there?

**SCHWARTZ:** I think so. I think so. Let me see what the other [unintelligible]

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

**GRAHAM:** This is tape 2 side 1. This is Adam Graham interview with Walter Schwartz. We're just looking at some pictures now. And you were saying this is of your father.

**SCHWARTZ:** My father is here and I'm in there somewhere. Yes, there's me. This is our intermediate basket—CYO basketball champions...

**GRAHAM:** Oh, wow.

**SCHWARTZ:** in 19—oh lord, would have been 1955 I guess. No, no, no, no it would have been 1953.

**GRAHAM:** 1953.

**SCHWARTZ:** I think, no '52, here we go.

**GRAHAM:** So this is at Gonzaga?

**SCHWARTZ:** No, this is St. Joseph's.

**GRAHAM:** St. Joe's.

**SCHWARTZ:** St. Joseph's.

**SCHWARTZ:** I have a picture of us at...at St. Joseph's and it's the altar boys and that's the picture in which I have all the...guys who were, whose parents were owners of, or some of them, whose parents were owners of businesses.

[Walter Schwartz walks around the room]

**GRAHAM:** OK. And so which one, which one are you?

**SCHWARTZ:** That's me right here. OK.

**GRAHAM:** All the way...bottom right.

**SCHWARTZ:** Bottom right. And this is Rodger Pompeii. Now Rodger ...went onto Gonzaga and...Catholic University, he became an architect. And he's...he's now retired an architect. He lives in the area, I have his address, I can show it to you in my...

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** in my Gonzaga directory. This is Dave Smith, he...his mother...his mother and father owned the house at Fifth Street, Fifth and A Streets NE, which is, which is now right across, and I think owned by, I think a Baptist church. OK. Well when I got back to Washington it was the...Bullfeathers, no not Bullfeathers, but it was a Bull Moose bed and breakfast. But when Dave was there, when Dave was still there and I got to know them, she was the House Mother for the Senate pages.

**GRAHAM:** Oh, really?

**SCHWARTZ:** And the pages lived in that building under her tutelage. I mean she was the one that looked after them.

**GRAHAM:** All of the pages would live in the same building?

**SCHWARTZ:** Right. Ah, well I don't know if all of them, but I think, I know a good number, they probably have more of them now than they did then so maybe all of them did live in her building. The building that they're in now, these pages, the Senate pages, used to Lee's Funeral Home.

**GRAHAM:** Oh.

**SCHWARTZ:** And the building that the House pages are in used to be the...and that's also on Capitol Hill, it used to be the residence for the nursing students from Catholic University who were doing their internships at Providence Hospital there in Southeast. So that's kind of interesting. So...Rodger's father owned the...a laundry, a dry cleaning between Second and Third Streets NE, on C. And so he...was a businessman. This is...Lenny Fanagletti.

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** His parents owned the Italian restaurant that was between First and Second on C Street [NE], it's now where the Senate Building is now.

**GRAHAM:** Do you remember the name of the restaurant?

**SCHWARTZ:** It wasn't a restaurant, I'm sorry, it was a grocery store.

**GRAHAM:** Oh, OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** Now Lenny's brother...Eugene, Gene Fanagletti, was, for years, an editor and a writer for *Army Times*. And he passed away several years ago, but I think, I think Lenny is still around. I don't know otherwise. And let's see, who else do I know? [unintelligible] Lewis in there? No. No, I don't know of anybody else who had a business. Yes.

**GRAHAM:** And these were, this is at...the school at well?

**SCHWARTZ:** Right, we were all students at St. Joseph's...Elementary School, which was the school I showed you...in the other pictures.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes. And I guess...that must have been about the fifth or, the fifth or sixth grade. Because I'm pretty young there. [laughter] I hadn't grown yet.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** Hadn't had my growth spurt. Now the other...fellow that I mentioned to you was a...the Pavlos, they were, they had another store which they owned and it was on the corner of Second and C right across from the...which is across from where the Senate Building is now, but they were on the south side of C Street. And...later on they owned a restaurant in the Turkey Thicket area, which was, it was a diner, and I ate there one time years and years afterwards, but it was the Pavlos family, it was the same family that had owned that store at the corner of Second and C.

**GRAHAM:** What was the name of that store?

**SCHWARTZ:** I don't know, because it wasn't a store that I ever went to, like I say, I didn't go to the grocery store. Cattycorner across the street on what would have been the northwest corner of Second and C...

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** there were, there were two stores. There was a grocery store and there was a drug store. And I'm pretty sure that the drug store was a regular...pharmacy because they, well we called the guy Doc, so I am assuming [laughter]

**GRAHAM:** Doc's pharmacy?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes. But they had the...regular patent medicines and all that kind of—a couple of pinball machines and a...news rack, a magazine rack. And they sold, we'd get cherry cokes there and stuff like

that. But that was...you know, it was like it the old days I mean that's the kind of, neighborhood, and that was the, and the corner was , you know, standing on the corner watching all the girls go by, this is the kind of thing it was, that's where the kids hung out and...sometimes I drive around and I look and I see the kids, see young men standing on a corner today and because of 70 years old, I'm a little tense about that, but I think, hey you know when I was 16, when I was 15 and 14, that's what I did... You know, that's what we did. That's where we met our friends and we hung out and in the summer evening, that's what we would do. Ah, summer evening, remind me of something I did want to tell you.

**GRAHAM:** Sure, please.

**SCHWARTZ:** Living in the hotel, this is before the days of air conditioning, so the hotel wasn't even air conditioned...even at that. So, I remember, so clearly that on hot summer nights in the hotel we would go out and...lay down a blanket or a sheet on the grass of the park across the street. Now, are you familiar with First Street?

**GRAHAM:** Yes, I know First Street.

**SCHWARTZ:** OK, well there's a park...as you're facing Union Station there's a park on the left and a parking lot on the right. Well, you know, the hotels were where that parking lot is, the park is where we would go out and sleep on hot summer nights. And everybody from the whole block would go out because nobody had air conditioning.

**GRAHAM:** Nobody slept in the...

**SCHWARTZ:** People from the hotel even would go out...

**GRAHAM:** Really.

**SCHWARTZ:** because the hotel didn't have air conditioning to speak of. It was a...

**GRAHAM:** Do you think this was, it was normal just for this hotel or do you think across the city people are sleeping outside?

**SCHWARTZ:** I think that it was probably across the city. There's a series of movies about Baltimore, one of them is *Avalon*, and I can't remember the writer's name [Barry Levinson], but he's a well-known writer from Baltimore—it's a trilogy, there's three...movies about Baltimore, and it's about this same era and they did the same kind of thing. It's so hot they couldn't sleep in the house, they would go out on the front yard or whatever

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** And get some air, because it was so hot inside.

**GRAHAM:** But even if they were staying in the hotel...

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes, yes, yes.

**GRAHAM:** they would still sleep outside.

**SCHWARTZ:** I remember that very clearly. I remember going to the...service band concerts at the Capitol. Now in those days, the East front of the Capitol was considered the ceremonial front. That's the part that's all torn up now with the...to build the Visitor's Center...but the band, including with Colonel Glenn Miller [laughter] of the US Army Air Force Band, Air Corps band, would meet and they would have their bandstand there on the, right in front of the Capitol steps...

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** and people would sit all around on the grass and the walls and everything and would listen to the, to Glenn Miller and the Air Force Band. And then we would go down to Watergate to, you know in those days, there was a showboat down there...

**GRAHAM:** Oh, really? No, I didn't know that.

**SCHWARTZ:** It was just a shell, it was a float and on it was a...a stage and the...steps as you go down from Lincoln Memorial there's a step of marble steps, or limestone or sandstone or whatever they are. That's where the people would sit and they'd watch the bands down there as well and...that was really cool. That was, what we would do in the summertime, we would go to the service bands and would watch them.

**GRAHAM:** And you would have, of the service bands, each...

**SCHWARTZ:** There was the Army, the Navy, the Army Air Corps and the Marine Corps band also.

**GRAHAM:** And each night of the week...

**SCHWARTZ:** It would be a different night. Now I forget exactly how often they played, but it was a fairly regular schedule, and it was something we always looked forward to.

**GRAHAM:** Now did you have a favorite though?

**SCHWARTZ:** When I think back on it, Glenn Miller was something else.

**GRAHAM:** Yeah. [laughter]

**SCHWARTZ:** He really was...

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** He was famous besides, but he was the, he ran the Air Force, the Air Corps Band. But, yes, he would have been the best. Yes. Now let me see, what else was there peculiar about DC. There was...oh there was, there were a number of movie theaters...

**GRAHAM:** Right.

**SCHWARTZ:** On the Hill. One was The Stanton, which was at Stanton Park. It's two other things now, it was—my dad used to call it the 'stompin' Stanton,' and in the men's room there was a dirt floor.

**GRAHAM:** A dirt floor?

**SCHWARTZ:** A dirt floor.

**GRAHAM:** On purpose?

**SCHWARTZ:** Well, who knows? [laughter] And then, because I used to go to, I would take my fif—take my quarter and I would go and spend the afternoon there. So you spent fifteen cents to get in, and five cents for candy, and five cents for popcorn, and you'd be there for all, for the whole afternoon. And you'd watch...serials, and cowboy westerners and B westerns with Gene Autry and Roy Rogers and...Steel and all those guys. It was really great.

**GRAHAM:** And why was it the 'stompin' Stanton?'

**SCHWARTZ:** Because it was so noisy and it was full of kids all the time.

**GRAHAM:** Oh, really?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes, we, dad—but they had regular movies there at night and during the week, but...the floors were always sticky and stuff like that, they didn't clean it very well and then later on it became an art theater, for when I was in college, it was an art theater. They played things like *The Seventh Spring* and...I think I saw *Hamlet* there, and then there were a couple of other—but and there were restaurants around Stanton Park. And mom and pop, what you would call [unintelligible] 7-11 type stores, but just convenience stores.

**GRAHAM:** Did you have a favorite restaurant?

**SCHWARTZ:** Did I?

**GRAHAM:** Yes.

**SCHWARTZ:** Well in those day I ate in the...

**GRAHAM:** In the hotel...

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes. Now when I was a teenager now I went out places, and the places that we liked were like the Hot Shoppes, and now the Hot Shoppes aren't here anymore. There was a Hot Shoppe at 14<sup>th</sup> and Rhode Island [Avenue] NE and that's gone.

**GRAHAM:** You're going to have to forgive me, what are the Hot Shoppes?

**SCHWARTZ:** A&W

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** It's a predecessor to Marriott, to Marriott. The Hot Shoppes became Marriott, there was a—there used to be a Hot Shoppes right between—it was called the Twin Bridges [laughter], and then it was being called the Twin Bridges Marriott. There was a Hot Shoppe there first and then Marriott built a hotel on it. And then it, it became what it is, well the hotel is gone now. And the predecessor to the Big Mac was the Mighty Moe.

**GRAHAM:** The Mighty Moe?

**SCHWARTZ:** The Mighty Moe. Yes, it was a giant hamburger with some kind of sauce and salad in it and all that.

**GRAHAM:** You say this was only in Washington...

**SCHWARTZ:** I don't know if they had it any place else or not, but it was a very...very useful thing here.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** And there was...Eddie Leonard's Sandwich Shops around town. Now I think there's an Eddie Leonard's Sandwich Shop in Baltimore and I don't know if it's part of the original chain, but they were all over Washington and you get foot long subs, and the one I liked the best was the Polish ham with lettuce and tomato. [laughter] It was good. It got me through many an all-nighter at Catholic University when I had to run out and get a sub and go back [laughter] and stoke my fire and eat. And let me see what else, well, I can't think of anything now.

**GRAHAM:** OK.

**SCHWARTZ:** But...

**GRAHAM:** Well, I'm going to going to make sure we get a copy of the pictures you mentioned just so that we have a reference and then if you come up with any more points please let me know and I'll definitely include that. And let me just say, thank you very much for...

**SCHWARTZ:** You're welcome, I hope it's useful to you.

**GRAHAM:** for agreeing to participate. It is, it is. I'm very glad that we were able to sit down and record this.

**SCHWARTZ:** Oh this is, this is Robert D. Blackstone, he was the owner...

**GRAHAM:** Oh, the owner of the hotel...

**SCHWARTZ:** Of the hotel, yes.

**GRAHAM:** And your father?

**SCHWARTZ:** Yes, that's my father.

**GRAHAM:** Do you think they were friends as well?

**SCHWARTZ:** I think they were, because they worked together, Blackstone had been a clerk or a manager at the New Colonial when dad had started there, he knew dad from there. And he brought him over, and when he went to...The Plaza, when Blackstone went to The Plaza he asked dad to come with him. And then he asked to get dad to come back. And then later on, after dad had worked at the Carlyle and the New Colonial again and the Carroll Arms, he made dad an offer to, because that whole block was going to go, he knew that the whole block was going to go to the government and they were going to sell the hotel building to the government, and dad was supposed to share in that, and I don't know what happened on that, if he ever did or not, but I think they were friends.

**GRAHAM:** How did Blackstone end up—he owned the hotel? How did he go from being the manager of the one hotel...

**SCHWARTZ:** He had money.

**GRAHAM:** Yeah.

**SCHWARTZ:** Money, there's a town in Blackstone, Virginia and it's his family.

**GRAHAM:** Oh, really.

**SCHWARTZ:** And another name, if you're interested in the businesses in Washington is Pete Parish and it's...G.H. Parish is the way it goes, but everyone called him Pete. And he started a small conglomerate here in DC of hotels, at one point he owned the Carroll Arms, the New Colonial, The Carlyle, The Chastleton and the, I don't know if it's the Green Parrot or the Golden Parrot, also in Northwest. He owned a bunch of hotels, and dad was his right hand man. So, but then, I guess the chains moved in and took over because you don't see any small hotels anymore.

**GRAHAM:** Sure. We still have the Willard, but that's about...

**SCHWARTZ:** I would bet that somebody owns the Willard.

**GRAHAM:** Right, I know.

**SCHWARTZ:** One of the big ones probably owns the Willard.

**GRAHAM:** Sure.

**SCHWARTZ:** but that's....yes.

**GRAHAM:** Well...

**SCHWARTZ:** OK.

**GRAHAM:** Thanks again very much...

**SCHWARTZ:** Thank you.

**GRAHAM:** and Overbeck Project thanks you as well. I will make sure to send you a transcript very, very soon.

**SCHWARTZ:** OK

**GRAHAM:** Great. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW