

PHILIP STONE

- o Resident since 1907
- o Eaton student from 1913-1921
- o 76 years old

I have been living in Cleveland Park all of my life and that's seventy-six years. For the most part, the neighborhood hasn't changed very much and that's one of the things I like about it. We've been able to conserve the character of the neighborhood. Sometimes we've had to fight against zoning changes which would have altered the nature of the neighborhood, but so far we've won most of those fights. It's a very livable neighborhood.... convenient....attractive.... houses in a variety of styles of architecture.... beautiful trees and open space still left in several estates like Tregaron and Twin Oaks, the Cathedral grounds, and Rosedale. It's not too far from downtown, so you can get to work and home rather quickly. We have shopping facilities on Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues where you can get many of the things that you need without going downtown. These were built about the time I finished college (1920's). Cleveland Park's special to me simply because it's my home. I've developed loyalty and affection for the community.

Even as children, we had considerable esprit de corps. We played baseball, soccer, touch football on vacant lots around here. We played other group games which I would call games of low organization. They didn't have very many rules and they didn't require a lot of equipmentgames like hide and seek, and red rover, run sheep run, duck on the rock....group games that we could play in the front yards and back yards of houses. In the case of Ross Place, we just played in the street, because there was almost no traffic there.

We had a tennis court at Connecticut Avenue and Macomb Street (SW corner). The Lynhams lived in the house where the Holens are now. The father was a tennis player and built a tennis court where the apartment house now stands. And we spent a lot of time in the warmer part of the year playing tennis on their court.

We did a lot of sledding....coasting on the hill after snows. We didn't have automobiles to get in the way and that made a lot of difference. All the kids had small sleds and there were a couple of big bobsleds on the hill for the older boys which would seat maybe six people. And we would start halfway between 35th Street and 36th Street, just at the top of Macomb Street hill. And in any halfway decent snow we could come down to about 200 feet below our house. If conditions were good, we could go all the way to Connecticut Avenue. In fact, the bobsleds would go all the way across Connecticut Avenue. We had to station people down there to stop the street car when the bobsled was coming. I remember we were very resentful of the automobile when it came. One of our kids was run over and had to have his leg amputated because he was trying to hitch a ride on the back of a car. The automobiles have ruined coasting.

I got around on foot and on a bike as far as Cleveland Park was concerned. All the kids had bikes and we ranged over quite a lot of territory. We got out to Tenleytown, Chevy Chase, and down to Woodley Park. We took a streetcar downtown. We had streetcars on both Connecticut Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue and the fare was pretty low in those days, so we got around without any problems.

I entered John Eaton School in September 1913, went through all eight grades, and graduated in June 1921. I can't help but remember John Eaton with considerable affection, partly because I was there throughout my entire elementary school career, partly because I got such a good education. I remember it especially because we had fine teachers....teachers who knew their stuff, taught us a lot, and gave us a good preparation for what we needed to know when we went on to high school....and teachers who were attractive persons. We couldn't help but like them. I can tell you who my teachers were. My first grade teacher was Miss Miller. My second grade teacher was Miss Arnold, third grade teacher was Miss Hellman. My teacher in the fourth grade and last half of the fifth was Miss Offut. My teacher in the first half of the fifth was Miss Scott. My teacher in the sixth grade was Miss Holland, and in the seventh and eighth grades was Miss Teel. I had her for two years. And our Principal was Miss Burke. It's interesting that of those eight teachers four of them went on to become school principals. They had careers in the D.C. Public School System. The other four teachers got married and left the school system shortly thereafter. Those were the days when not many married women tried to combine homemaking with a career.

The Cleveland Park stable was on Reno Road. Now, Reno Road came off of Kingle Road and came up behind the houses on the south side of Macomb Street, went west for a few hundred yards and then veered off to the right and crossed Newark Street (which had a wooden bridge at that point) and passed where the Cleveland Park Club is and followed the present alignment of Reno Road out to Chevy Chase. But it was not all on the permanent highway plan. That's why part of it has disappeared. The stable was probably about three or four hundred yards west of Connecticut Avenue. They had horses that one could rent and a couple of children in the neighborhood had ponies they kept there. But because of the odor and flies, people objected and pressures were put on, so they phased it out when I was probably not more than four or five years old (1912).

We did have the horses and wagons. We had the huckster who would load up a horse-drawn wagon downtown at the wholesale markets in the morning and bring fruits and vegetables and sell them to the housewives on Macomb Street and other streets in this part of the city. We had the bakery, laundry, the dairy, all of whom delivered here with horses and wagons. We had the iceman. And the fire engines were horse-drawn. Our nearest engine house at that time was Wisconsin Avenue and Warren Street.

I can remember a serious fire when I was about five years old.... probably February 1912. My parents were awakened during the night. My father looked out toward the east and he saw flames going high in the sky over Connecticut Avenue. He thought at first it was a garage because one of our neighbors had gotten an automobile....the first one on the block. He built a wooden garage for it and everyone thought that was dangerous because gasoline could catch fire. So we all thought this was Mr. de Vilbiss' garage. But it turned out to be the Cleveland Park Community Club building, right down on Connecticut Avenue. It was very cold and the horse-drawn fire engines came down from Tenleytown, but they were not able to save it. I remember going down in the morning to look at the situation. The clubhouse was just charred remains. The engines and the horses were still there, waiting for more horses to help them up the hill. I'm not sure Macomb Street was cut through in 1912. I think that came a little after that. Newark Street hill has always been steep. The horses probably came across Peirce Mill Road which is on the present line of Van Ness Street. It was not paved. It was just cinders. But it was pretty level coming across from Wisconsin to Connecticut on Peirce Mill Road.

That was the Community Club House provided by the developers, the Cleveland Park Company, and groups could have meetings there. There had been a boys' club which had met there the previous night. Apparently they hadn't stacked the fireplace and stove right. The stove got overheated and the building was ignited. After that was burned down they left the foundations there and cemented them over so that you had a platform. Then the community erected a little waiting room for the streetcars. It was enclosed on three sides with glass on parts of the sides. It had a light so you could see in the evening. My brother and I had a community good turn, which we performed for many years, of going down there every Saturday and sweeping the place out. That remained for years, until finally it got so decrepit that it was torn down. And then, in 1952 of course, we got the branch library in that space.