

MARGARET ROOD LENZNER
and TONY ROOD

- o Siblings and residents since 1950
- o M.L. 38 years old
- o T.R. 39 years old

ML--We moved to Cleveland Park from the Foxhall Village area in 1950. I remember when Murphy's and the Giant and all those things were built. They were terribly exciting at the time. From Moon Palace north to McLean Gardens....all that was new and was built around '53-54. The buildings on Wisconsin where Charles' and the University Pastry Shop are, are the oldest buildings. The Charles of Capitol Hill building used to be Stark's. That's where we went for cherry cokes after Sunday School at St. Albans.

This was not a chic neighborhood when we moved here in the fifties. It was fairly intellectual. And families who lived here were varied.

We spent a lot of time in our alley. We had Flexies, like sleds on wheels, on which we used to go down the alley between Ordway and Porter. In the alley there was a fence and on it was a piece of pipe on which we could do acrobatics and swing. I used to play there and it never occurred to me that I was invading someone else's territory. We never thought anything about going into other people's yards and crashing over their flowers. I don't understand it to this day.

There was a very sweet lady who lived across the street from us, Mrs. Rittenauer, who had a television and we didn't. So in the '50s we'd go over there for an hour and a half every night. Poor Mrs. Rittenauer. She'd offer us cookies. Her grandchildren came to live with her when their father was killed in a plane crash in Japan. They became our best friends and we used to play wonderful games, at night, catching fireflies, and running all over.

It wasn't until about 1968 that the red brick National Cathedral School dormitories were built at Rosedale. Until about 1965 the yellow frame house at the top of the hill was lived in by Mrs. Coonley, who had lived there since 1917. She used to sit on her front porch in her rocking chair. I walked to school (National Cathedral) right through her property, from Ordway to Newark, and I never felt as if I were trespassing. I remember horses on the property. The boys always played ball in the triangle at the corner of Newark and 36th, where the three new houses are now. The children in the neighborhood always appreciated Rosedale.

The stone house at the corner of Ordway and 36th was where the "sheep man" lived. There were two big white woolly munching sheep. All they did was eat grass. They were his lawnmower. Once they got out and went up to the Cathedral and there was a photograph in the paper the next day of the sheep wandering up the north steps to the Cathedral.

When John Kennedy became President in 1960, all these terribly elegant, chic, intellectual people....Democrats....came to Washington. Many lived in Georgetown. There was a style of family living that became very popular. If living in Georgetown was too difficult for them, because it wasn't close enough to the schools for their children to go to, the houses weren't big enough, or they didn't have enough play space, they tended to look here. That's when it became a much more "in" place to be.

Cleveland Park is comfortable....shabbily chic. We used to say that in Cleveland Park you were more valued according to the less time you put into the exterior appearance of your property. It's like a village in the city. My children can grow up here without life seeming too different from the way it was when I was growing up here. They can go to the same stores, and relate to the community in a full way....all generations.

I depend upon Modern Shoe Shop. We have two dry cleaners that we like....The Empire, up on Macomb, and the Cleveland Park Valet, down across from the library. We also go to the library a lot. And Young Playways....Mr. G. was nice. But the man who always says hello to me, and it always amazes me that I could look so much the same today as I did when I was little, is Mr. Sullivan....up at the toy store. He knows all the kids in the neighborhood, and he always has.

TR--Peoples Drug Store was the place to hang out. They had a great soda fountain. You could get a root beer milk shake and tuna fish sandwich on white toast for a total of about seventy cents.

We had a little route that my friends and I would walk down to go to the Uptown Theatre to spend the day. We'd go down Porter and cut into an alley behind some apartment buildings with a whole lot of garages together. If you follow that alley, it meets the alley behind the Uptown and Yenching Restaurant on Connecticut Avenue. Up at the far end of the alley....you can't really get out onto Connecticut from there....there's a hill behind some houses and an apartment building....a great hill for Cowboys and Indians. It had trees and roots that would stick out so you could climb up....very steep. We would climb up over the fence of the fire escape of the Uptown.

The Calvert Theater was where we really went, though. They had double features on Saturdays for 25 cents and we took our bikes or walked all the way down Wisconsin Avenue, over the hill....it's now a parking lot. It had the same entrance that the parking lot has now. You could buy popcorn for ten cents and the boxes, when you were through with them, you could fold flat and toss like frisbees during westerns when they had the obligatory love scene. They also had yo-yo contests at the Calvert....on stage between the shows. Everybody had different Duncan yo-yos that could do dog-walking, loop-the-loops, and round the world.