

RUTH MERWIN

- o Resident since 1918
- o Started Eaton School 1922
- o 67 years old

I've always loved Cleveland Park and when I go any other place, I always think, "Oh! I'm glad I live in a place like Cleveland Park." I've lived here all my life except the years I was away in school.

When I was little, where those shops on Connecticut Avenue are was just a great big wild tangle of small trees and vines and grapevinesThere was a quarry right here on the corner where the theater is....We had to go to Mt. Pleasant for a library. On weekends my father would take us to Cathedral Mansions down here (corner of Connecticut & Macomb)....that big apartment house....which was just being built when I was little. We'd go through there and watch to see how it was progressing. He'd also take us to the zoo.

There was no Macomb Playground. We used to have vacant lots. The area was wonderful for hide and go seek. However, high fences to keep dogs in have cut off the running around quite so much. There was a group of us, both boys and girls. Oh, we played hop scotch, red light and jump rope. We had nice big sidewalks to do that on. We were outdoors practically all the time.

Of course when I was little there were trolley cars here ('20s). The little boy next door....the youngest in the family....was just crazy about cars. He used to go down to Connecticut Avenue and sit there. He could watch for many out-of-town license plates. We didn't have a car until my brother and I got old enough to get one, when we were in high school. I learned to drive in a little Tin Lizzie.

In 1918 there was a Flu epidemic that hit my brother hard. My mother got heart trouble from it. But I was small and didn't get it so badly. My father had to go all the way down to the nearest drug store, at 18th and Columbia Road, to get medicine for us. Later we did have a drug-store over on Porter and Connecticut.

There was an iceman who came around in a horse-drawn cart. It was fun for the children to try to hop on the back of the wagon and get some ice. We would leave a sign, saying how many pounds of ice we wanted and the iceman would bring the ice around to the back door and put it inside the house right into the ice box through a hole in the wall. He didn't have to come inside the house. The milkman left the milk on the back porch and, or course, you'd wake up in the morning in the winter and the cream would be frozen above the top of the glass bottle.

My father, the man next door, and the man across the street, all worked at the Geophysical. I know there were an awful lot of fathers who walked up and down the street every day. They could go down the hill and cut across to the Geophysical Laboratory on a path through the woods....pleasant walk. And for a while there were quite a lot of older men going up and down the hill and now it's younger men....the young lawyers. They walk to the subway.