

VIRGINIA STEPHENSON

- o Resident from 1912 to 1924
- o Eaton Student from 1916-24
- o 73 years old

When I was very young, we lived on Macomb Street near Connecticut. My father bought our house, at 2941, I think about 1910. I guess it was about six or eight houses up from Connecticut Avenue. Then we moved in 1924 up to Lowell Street to the house where the Mondales live now. My parents owned that house until 1945.

Macomb Street wasn't paved in those days. We had trouble getting to school when it rained because it was so muddy. One of the greatest changes from the very early days is the fact that the streets are all paved. Of course, there were many more vacant lots then. While I was going to John Eaton, they built those houses on the north side of Macomb, from a little above Ross Place to about 33rd Place. Of course, Twin Oaks and Tregaron were there.

At that time Eaton was just the one original building at 34th and Lowell Streets. It became very much overcrowded and they put portable buildings up around the outskirts, one classroom to a building, each with a pot belly stove. After I left they built the other end of it down by 33rd Place. The gymnasium part that connects the two came some years later. The children in my classes at Eaton came from as far as Rockville and down in Georgetown. The kids came in on the Wisconsin Avenue trolley. We had to walk to school. But in the winter, when it snowed, we'd take our sleds and just zip home down the hill.

I thought Cleveland Park was a wonderful place in which to grow up. We played a lot together and we did play simple little games, like hide and seek, cops and robbers. One lot we used to play on was where the library is now at Connecticut and Macomb. It had a big tree and a big rock that were wonderful for climbing. During the First World War, they had gasolineless Sundays. One day this old lady was driving an electric "runabout" on Connecticut Avenue and she lost control and came up on that lot and knocked my brother off his bicycle.

Many of the people who lived in this area were transients, really -- the government and what not. Down there on Macomb Street we had several congressmen and senators. We lived next door to a congressman from Nebraska. And a senator from South Dakota was across the street. But there are some families who are still living here. I know one over on Macomb Street. They're grandparents now and his father built that house. They must have been in that same house since about 1900.

There was a street car that ran out Connecticut Avenue, if you wanted to go shopping. We didn't have any grocery stores. We had to go to the end of the Calvert Street Bridge to get our groceries. Not everybody had cars then. Nobody had more than one car.

The shops started coming in the middle of the late '20s. There was a shop or two up on Wisconsin Avenue. There was a little shop on Macomb Street near Wisconsin, about where the shoe store is now, called Fads and Fancies where you could get most anything you wanted. As I recall, the shopping center down on Connecticut came first, but there were already a few odds and ends of stores on Wisconsin.