

99-Plus Years of Looking Back, Part 2

Ninety-Plus Years of Looking Back and Counting: Part 2

by Francesca Skelton

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“My sister Virginia was the assistant principal of Woodrow Wilson High School,” Marian Ronsaville told me, as we sat in the beautiful Kensington Victorian that has been her home for more than 88 years. Marian’s career was also in education. She taught elementary school for more than 40 years.

“Before that, she had been a French teacher,” Marian continued. “We had that nice long vacation in the summer and took lots of trips. We went to Europe, South America, and Alaska. I really didn’t want to retire; I would have taught longer, but Virginia said: that’s enough!”

“Pop had an office at 15th Street and New York Avenue,” she added, pulling out a map with an X on the site. “When we were kids, we would sit on this wide window sill in his office and look out that window; we’d get the thrill of our lives because over the years we saw several different presidents as they would drive by and turn the corner to go to the White House.”

“In the summer we’d go to a “shack” we owned at Point Lookout, where the Potomac River flows into the Chesapeake Bay, and I could see the lighthouse from there. The government wanted the property back during World War II because it was a strategic approach to Washington, so my pop gave it back to them. I guess they must have paid him for it. I used to go swimming in the river, because the bay was a couple of blocks away from the house. We’d also go to Ocean City during the summer. We’d rent 509 Boardwalk.”

Marian hinted of a poignant story of romance: “I was engaged once, to the boy who lived next door,” she said, pointing to a photograph of a handsome young man on the wall. “His name was Albert. But I wasn’t in love with him and broke it off. I was in love with my cousin,” she said as she pointed to a second young man’s picture beside the first one, “but Mom said you couldn’t marry your cousin, so that was that.”

This article continues.