

99-Plus Years of Looking Back, Part 1

Ninety-Plus Years of Looking Back and Counting

by Francesca Skelton. Written for this newsletter in late 1998. Part 1.

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“The Lord’s been really good to me. I’ve just been lucky, I guess.”

The cheery, lively woman uttering these words is Marian Ronsaville, a diminutive 91-year-old who has lived in her family’s Kensington home for the last 88 years. The home, one of Kensington’s grand old Victorians, was built in 1895. Her parents purchased it in 1910, when Marian was three years old. According to Marian, there was once a tennis court on the street, but today, stately, majestic Victorians line up along both sides.

“Pop bought the lot in back of this house too, just so Mom could cut through it and catch the streetcar that ran on the street behind us. And I bought the side lot a while back,” she informed me. Marian’s mother was Virginia Waugh, who, as a young girl, attended school at 33rd and O Streets Northwest in the District of Columbia.

Marian is the last survivor of her immediate family. Her older sister, Virginia, who shared the family home with her, died in 1989. A brother died many years ago. Her closest living relatives are two grown nephews, her late brother’s children.

“My brother died when my nephews were very young, about 3 and 4. Virginia and I wanted to adopt them, but we never got around to the technicalities. They lived with us for a while after my brother died. My nephews will inherit the house. I hope they keep it in the family. My nephew Bud says his daughter might want to live in it.”

Marian put her energies into teaching elementary school in the Washington area for over 40 years, mostly in Georgetown. Her last 20 years were devoted to teaching “special needs” classes.

“One boy in my class scored only a 70 on an IQ test but after I taught him how to read, his IQ rose 50 points to 120” she proudly informed me. Indeed, some former students still keep in touch and come around to visit.

This article continues.