

**Transcript from CHRS's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration  
January 28, 2015**

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As Lisa said, my husband and I bought our house in 1963. But I lived in our first house on the Hill in 1958 before we were married, so we go back a long time, but what really got us interested in the Restoration Society – or involved with the Restoration Society – was in the mid-1960s. There was a group called Town Homes of Capitol Hill or something like that. And they were aggressively trying to get people, homeowners, to install aluminum siding on homes – you remember that! – but we couldn't understand why we needed aluminum siding on a brick or a stone house. And so we were concerned and as one of the speakers mentioned, we did have local newspapers and there was this article in a newspaper that said if you're worried about this, call this telephone number. So I called the phone number and I got one Austin Beale and I don't know how many of you remember Austin Beale who was very, very active in the Society. And he invited Bob and me to his house for a meeting to meet some other people who were interested in joining the Society.

So we went to the meeting and Austin was a real salesman. And he convinced us we should join, so we did. And at that time, the Restoration Society only had about 200 members. By the time I was on the board, we were up to 700 members – that was a big number. But anyway, we joined the Society but I want to step back a little bit, because we did know, vaguely, about the existence of this organization. We were friends of Peter and Betty Glickert and there have been references to the east leg of the freeway. But I want to tell – Lisa had said to keep this not too formal. So I want to tell my Peter Glickert story. Peter was very involved in opposing that east leg of the freeway. He lived on Philadelphia Row. So he went out to the intersection at Independence Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street and he hung one of the DC commissioners in effigy, so that was before we had the type of government we have now with the city council and the mayor.

Well, Peter got arrested and it was because not because he was opposing the freeway, but it's illegal to hang somebody in effigy in the District of Columbia. We got to know Peter and Betty after that and they sort of became our mentors on the Hill. And it was some time after that that they mentioned to us that this organization that we didn't know much about – the Restoration Society – was going to hold a house tour. It was always on Mother's Day. Either 1960 or '61 we went on that first house tour and in those days, as I said it was Mother's Day – everybody dressed up in their Sunday going to meeting clothes. It was not a casual event and even by the time I was – well into the 60's it was still a pretty more formal event.

So Bob and I hiked around the Hill and looked at all the houses and each house we went to they gave us a piece a paper; an 8 and a half by 11 piece of paper that described the house as somebody else mentioned, I think John mentioned in his talk about how they described the houses. By the time we got to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Street NE, we had this whole pile of paper which we were trying to shuffle around and fortunately the Society got real smart and decided to do brochures after that. But we went on house tours for many, many years and we participated in it – Bob was on the selection committee for quite a few years and he really enjoyed that because he

got to go in all in these houses on the Hill; many of which never got on the tour, but he saw them so he'd been in almost every house on the Hill, I think.

We did things like docents and the regular things, and one of the things that we did – as Mimi mentioned, we didn't have much money; everything was volunteer. The food that was provided for these had to be made by the members. And I spent many Mother's Days making cream puffs to be served at the Restoration Society tea. I never really got to enjoy Mother's Day till I was about 75 years old! At any rate, it was quite an event – the tea was very formal, it was held sort of at the end of the day in late afternoon after people had been to the houses. And one of the first ones – I've got a couple of Folger stories to tell.

Initially, in the great hall of the Folger, there would be this long table set up with beautiful flowers and tablecloths and ladies serving tea and coffee from silver pots. Because you didn't get just a bottle of water and cookies – it was quite an elegant affair. One of the last teas that I was involved with was later on and the chair – as you know, Mother's Day can be really hot here in Washington – so the chair decided we would have, instead of having hot tea or hot drinks, we would have iced tea. That turned out to be one of the few cold Mother's Days. And again, we were at the Folger, and she had her two big punch bowls at either end of the table with some cookies and things in the middle. And as she came to set the bowl down, all the iced tea flowed right down the great hall of the Folger. They're still friendly with us, I hope.

We went to a lot of meetings and a lot of the meetings were very controversial. Remember we didn't have any ANCs or other groups like that. So the Restoration Society really spoke for the community back in those days, and we got some very controversial meetings and most of the controversy was around the zoning questions, because neighbors were opposing things that their next-door neighbors were doing. We had turnouts like this at almost every single meeting and they were pretty much once a month, except for in the summer. We argued with one another, but we got along.

And what made us really get along was one of the things that Mimi addressed – the proposal to tear down this block of A Street and this entire block, it happened that Peter Powers just lived down the street from here, which shows why he had a real personal interest in all of this.

But anyway, the next thing that happened was – and many of you have heard the story about Mary's Blue Room, which was located at 5<sup>th</sup> and East Capitol Street. The Baptist Church at 6<sup>th</sup> and A Street North East, not the current group of people, wanted to tear down several properties on East Capitol Street to build a parking lot. And that really brought all of us together, however we thought about zoning. So we went – it went on for a period of time – we went usually on Sunday when the church was having services and we marched around. Mimi did this with her kids, and I did this with my kids and one of those kids is sitting in this room tonight and we walked around and we protested the demolition of these properties. It went on for a long time.

This was in the early 70s. One morning, it was probably in August – Bob and I received a phone call and this was not a weekend, it was a weekday morning that the bulldozers are here and they're going to bulldoze Mary's Blue Room. And get down here, we need to do something! We rushed down – it was early in the morning – we got there at about 6:30 in the morning, there

were a handful of neighbors there protesting and what should we do? And it was decided that what we should do is stand in front of the bulldozers. Well my very gracious husband said ‘You can stand in front of the bulldozers – but I can’t! Because if I stand in front of the bulldozer and I get arrested, I’ll lose my job! So it’s alright for you to stand.’

At that point, Phil – and I want to give credit to Phil because Phil really late in the 60s began publishing almost singlehandedly a Capitol Hill business directory which he did for several years and was later taken over by the *Hill Rag*. But anyway, Phil was there and he took me by the hand and we climbed up on top of a pile of dirt and stood in front of this bulldozer, and of course the man’s eyes got like this, like who are these people and am I going to run them down? It was kind of like a Mexican standoff. We stood there for about half an hour, and what do we do now? And of course the construction crew – the demolition team – wasn’t going to do anything either. So there we stood and finally somebody realized that in order to demolish these buildings, they had to have a permit to disconnect the gas lines that went into the buildings. And that had not been done. Fortunately, we weren’t all blown up there while we were facing the bulldozers.

Anyway, so that stopped it for that day. But about 3-4 days later they did get the permit to tear it down. And as many said, we were at the point – and I will say, in defense of my husband, that when we were marching around the block there protesting, one of the members of the church came out and punched in the stomach a pregnant neighbor. And my husband did run to her defense. So he wasn’t totally useless! But anyway – that sort of precipitated discussion about we should have a historic district.

Now, Peter Powers was the president of Restoration – became the president of the Restoration Society. He also happened to be the general counsel at the Smithsonian, so he knew a lot of people in the city who were interested in preservation, history, this sort of thing. And he began talking to them and somehow or another, Peter was able to make arrangements with the joint committee on landmarks of the Federal City. Now this was before we had the Historic Preservation Board we have today. It was a joint committee between the district and the Federal Government. So he talked them into proposing, and this proposal, application for the historic district was not made by the Restoration Society – it was made by the joint committee itself to itself, which was kind of strange, but we didn’t argue about it. And the deal was that the Restoration Society would provide people to do research.

I was asked if I would help with this research. And we had a joint committee staff liaison person – Suzanne [?] who is now retired living in Virginia Beach and we met her at the Martin Luther King Library, she told us how we were to proceed on this. The area that we studied was from the Capitol and the office buildings on the West side, up to about H Street, south to where the South-East freeway is, because that freeway was already there, the Navy Yard, and then on the eastern side the Anacostia River. We did not include the area between 15<sup>th</sup> Street and C Street North East because it was not part of the original city of Washington. We were given these maps, instructed how to use old maps, real estate maps and we were to color code when houses were built on these maps, which we did. And then we had two teams, Ruth Ann Overbeck, and I think the lady’s name was Pat Ferguson – were to survey between the Capitol and 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Jeanie Mendel and I surveyed between 8<sup>th</sup> Street and the river.

When Jeanie and I finished our part of the mapping all this stuff at the Martin Luther King Library, we actually went out and we went block to block, house to house to make sure those houses were still standing, they were of the era that we thought they were and then we returned all this material in to the committee. In the meantime, many of you remember the late Linda Gallagher who was so influential in the development of Barracks Row. Well, Linda was taking photographs of houses, as was Suzanne, and they were putting together this slide story so that they could make a presentation and they were doing singles groups, groups of houses, groups of representatives – different periods of building on the Hill. So I went down to the National Archives every couple of days a week, a couple of days a week and researched houses for a couple of years so we could put this whole project together.

Then Suzanne wrote the nomination form along with her colleagues on the joint committee staff and the joint committee staff made this proposal to the whole committee for the Capitol Hill historic district. And Peter Powers and I were there, and I want you to know that there was not a single person in that room who opposed the creation of the historic district. But Peter did his bit as president of the Restoration Society and then he introduced me and I was to tell what I had done, what I had learned and in his introduction he finished by saying ‘And Hazel learned everything she knows about Capitol Hill by walking the streets!’

That sort of broke the ice and going forward we didn’t have much trouble – we had proven our point. And the last thing I want to mention, and Doug is going to go into a little bit more about how we actually got the historic district, the legislation that was involved and all those kinds of things because he became involved at that point. But during the course of this, we did oral histories with people that had lived on the Hill. And one of the people we interviewed – the idea was to get what should be the boundaries of the historic district, what was the Hill like when you were growing up – this kind of thing. And one of the people we interviewed was Elsie Yost Leukhart.

Elsie and her family had moved into their family home at 1002 Pennsylvania Avenue South East. That address should mean something to some people in this room. And she had a couple of concerns – she was getting elderly and she was thinking of selling her home and she said she’d really like the Restoration Society to have her home. Her second concern was that they had a telephone in that house since they had moved in the 1890’s. Her father built the house. And she wanted the phone number, which was the longest continually in service phone number in the District of Columbia in one residence, and she wanted it to stay with the house.

So a couple of things happened here. I mentioned to Dick Wolf, who as you know, gets things done – who was by this time the President of the Restoration Society, about Elsie’s concern that she wanted the Restoration Society to have the house and the other concern was about this telephone. So Dick went over with me and I introduced them and he began to make arrangements for the Restoration Society, see if we could buy the house and Doug was very much involved in that. And Elsie and her neighbor who happened to work for the C&P telephone company which was our city telephone company, pulled a few strings and we were able to get the phone number: Lincoln 30425. Now, that stayed with the house and it is still the phone number for the Restoration Society which moved in that home.