

IN: 01:14:39;01 D

OUT: 01:15:04;23 D

DUR: 00:00:25;20 D

Comments:

G: Okay, well I'm Gertrude Stevens and, um, I've been around here for quite some time. I was born in 1918, in October and my mother said that I was a peace baby because I came along close to that time, from World War I. And so I'm living in West Seattle where I've always been, not very far from the birthplace.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks:

IN: 01:15:04;21 D

OUT: 01:15:35;18 D

DUR: 00:00:30;27 D

Comments: I: Would you please describe your parent's ancestry?

G: Well, both my parents were of Norwegian extraction. Um, my mother came from Wisconsin and it was just like little Norway, only flatter, I found out. And uh, my father came from Norway, and they met here in West Seattle. She had an uncle who was living here and he had become friendly with my father, they were working together, and thought very highly of each other and nothing pleased my, her uncle. (stop tape)

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks: A1A2

IN: 01:15:51;08 D

OUT: 01:16:21;02 D

DUR: 00:00:29;22 D

Comments:

Int: Would you please start with your name and when you were born, Gertrude?

G: I was, I'm Gertrude Stevens and I was born in 1918, in October, so my mother said I was a Peace Baby, just following along after World War I. And I think that was very important to them. That war had been quite something. So I was born here in West Seattle and I've lived here ever since. Have seen quite a few changes.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks: A1A2

IN: 01:16:20;11 D

OUT: 01:17:32;16 D

DUR: 00:01:12;05 D

Comments:

I: Would you describe your parents ancestry and their courtship?

G: Well my mother and father met here in West Seattle as a result of my mother coming out from Wisconsin with her sister to uh, visit their uncle who was living here. And, he was all, very, very happy to have my mother meet, uh, meet him. No wait a minute, now! Uh, the fact that he and my father got along so well, he was very anxious to have his niece meet my father, because he thought they would be uh, a nice couple. And it turned out that that was his wish and it worked out that he got his wishes. And so they married down in the hollow on Genesee and 47th. In about 1904. My father chose this area to live because it was so much like Norway. And really, after being there a couple of times, I've seen that there are so many similarities. Our vegetation is much the same and of course we don't have quite the ruggedness in this part that they had, but we have a lot of the hills and they have plenty of hills. And the salt water, so it really satisfied him. And its uh, I'm so thoroughly steeped in salt water and salt air I can't think of any other place I'd rather live.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks: A1A2

IN: 01:17:32;16 D

OUT: 01:19:07;28 D

DUR: 00:01:35;10 D

Comments:

I: Would you talk about your schools that you went to here in West Seattle and your school life and what that was like?

G: Well, I went to Jefferson, I was 5 blocks from home so it was an easy walk. And um, I always had to drag along a couple of friends to get them to school on time. I was much more prompt than I was today. In arriving. But maybe we had more of a threat if we didn't get there on time. But then went on to Madison and it was only a year old at the time I started up there and it was the first that they had had a Junior High in this area. And so that was really quite a thrill to begin up there. And we were very proud of the school and very careful not to scratch things or be abusive to any of the furniture or the walls and different things that way. And then from there I went up to West Seattle High School and uh, that was familiar to me to a certain extent because I'd had a sister who had gone through Jefferson and, of course, she didn't have Madison to have to go through, but had graduated from West Seattle 10 years before I did. Well, 8, I guess. So, I was well familiar with the schools.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 01:19:08;01 D

OUT: 01:22:46;04 D

DUR: 00:03:38;03 D

## Comments:

I: Would you tell about the Mama Bear and the cubs hanging out on Genessee Street and the coyotes?

G: Well, my folks would tell us about, my boys and me, about the life that they had when they were first married and living down on 47th and Genessee in the hollow. And it was pretty wild. And the streets really were not much as you could say for streets, they were trails, uh there were a few horses and buggies that went up the road in front of them, and, I presume, uh, it was just woods across the, what that was a street, uh, directly across from them. And the way the, the undergrowth was there were animals that had gone through the underbrush and made their little ways, you know, and doorways to go through. And so one day as my mother told, the, I think she and my sister were watching out the window and the horse and buggy came up the street to take the children on up to Lafayette School, which was up in the Admiral district. So it was uh, uh a crowd of probably 4 or 5 children, I don't know how many and she didn't ever say. But any amount in the buggy would be enough to make it exciting. And when they were heading on up, a mother bear came out from the undergrowth and saw the horse and startled him. And she had two little cubs with her, so naturally she was all protective, and the horse was shocked. I guess they don't care to have too much to do with bears. And it reared up on it's hind legs and dumped the kids out of the cart and they were sprawled all over the ground and the mother bear was so excited with all this commotion, she cuffed her bears and made them go back into the woods again. So she was protecting them, and the men dragging the rig had to go and collect all the kids and put them back into the, uh, cart. And on they went. But this was really something. And when my kids would listen to this and we were at that time living at the top of the hill, looking down on this area and it was almost hard to believe that there were bears around at that time. 'Cause it hadn't seemed like so many years back. It had been quite a number, but uh, there were the evidences of the bears with these little holes in the, in the bushes where they came through. Just as there had been the coyotes. My mother had told about those and apparently, their house at first was not filled in around the bottom, it was more or less on stilts. And I don't know whether they had a basememt, probably not, but whether or not they did makes little difference to the story. But at night they would hear the bands of coyotes up on California Avenue, howling away. And then there'd be another band over on our hill on, up on 51st that would answer them. And as she said, they had probably found some rabbit or soemthing to eat, so they would let the other band know that they had something coming. And they would hear this rush of feet and the one band would run down the hill and run right under their house and then right up to the other side to meet up with the other um, coyotes who had the food apparently.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 01:22:48;11 D

OUT: 01:24:02;12 D

DUR: 00:01:13;29 D

Comments:

I: Would you please tell about your father's business?

G: Well he was a carpenter and a builder. He had been a, uh, doing that, I presume he must have learned it in the old country. (Interviewer asks her to re-state the sentence several times) My father was a contractor and a builder and I presume he learned the trade in Norway, but um, that was uh, an, a type of work that he enjoyed and he worked hard at it. Built a lot of houses around West Seattle and buildings elsewhere. I always laughed at him when he told me uh, when we took a trip over to Eastern Washington where I was teaching and, uh, at that point, when he came to take me over, or to bring me back or something, he said, I think we'll have to stop by Granger to see whether or not that school building is still standing that I built. 'Cause he was afraid the sand wasn't much good. I don't know too much about the technical end, there, but anyway. We thought that was quite something. Because most of his places didn't fall down.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks: A1A2

IN: 01:24:02;21 D

OUT: 01:25:20;17 D

DUR: 00:01:17;26 D

Comments:

I: Can you describe the early streetcars and the ride over the water to downtown Seattle?

G: Oh, yes, those streetcars were really something. Um, of course the number 3 streetcar ran right in front of my home up on California Avenue. And it wasn't so often that I got to town when I was quite young. I think my mother didn't have the, the, she didn't get much pleasure out of taking me to town. Because those streetcars wiggled and wobbled so much that I would get car sick every time. And you know when you get car sick what happens. The minute I get off the streetcar, I'd be ill. And the same thing when I came home. But they wiggled like Tunerville Trolley. It was really something. The trestles were, seemed so high and we could look down on the streets below and the waterway and everything. And then it got to the point when they had to give that up and they put in a freeway, or put in a, a raised road. And they improved the bridge and everything and that was really a blessing because that was getting awfully rickety.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 01:25:20;18 D

OUT: 01:27:30;04 D

DUR: 00:02:09;16 D

Comments:

I: Can you please tell about the early streetlights?

G: Well, the streetlights uh, we felt we were pretty lucky because we had them on the main street of course, and I, uh, believe they probably had about 4 or 5 uh, above each block from corner to corner. I'm not too sure. But they were like a single light with an aluminium reflector above them to spread the light as much as possible. And uh, finally they decided that they better have some better lights. And they decided to put in these beautiful double, what would you call them? It was a twin light and very, very attractive, very nice and they were beautifully designed and the uh, the stems or the bases of them were very attractive, and so we were very excited when we knew they were going to put them in and they arranged to have a parade following the lighting ceremony and everything. So living on the avenue we had a bulkhead around our property. In fact all down our block, they had bulkheads and terraces beacuse we were up probably about 5 or 6 feet above the sidewalk, or the street level. And people came from all around, as they still do when we have Hi-You(?) parades. And that, at that time of course, they came from other parts of the city, too, in order to see these new lights that were going to be lighted and it was really exciting. Uh, I don't recall which year it was but I might have been in Junior High by then. It's hard to say. But as the lights came on, we thought that street was just a glow, it was just beautiful. And then after it was all lighted all the way then the parade started and the local merchants had made up their, fixed up trucks and all sorts of floats. Not any extent like we have now, but it was a lot for that time. It was really very exciting to us.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks: A1A2

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IN: 01:27:31;01 D

OUT: 01:29:51;01 D

DUR: 00:02:20;00 D

## Comments:

I: Could you please tell about the time you went roller skating with your friend down Genessee hill and the sidewalks were plank?

G: A lot of the streets didn't have any paving as far as that was concerned and on the sidewalks they had to do something to make it a little easier for the people to walk. And so on a lot of the streets they had probably 4x12 planks next to each other so it made a sidewalk about 24 inches wide or 25. And those were nice sturdy planks. Maybe they were 2x12's. You can tell I'm a carpenter's daughter. I can really spiel off the technical words. Anyway, my friend and I went up to the top of Genessee, up on, around 51st, and we had our roller skates and we put them on, and it was on a nice Saturday morning. Crisp and clear, just so nice. And not much traffic, of course, at that time. But we started down the hill on this plank road and the, there was frost on the wood and that made it just like greased lightening. We went so fast and, of course, at the alleys, the planks stopped and it was just dirt where the alley came through, and when we hit that, I went flying. Just like head over heels. Got skinned to the Nth degree. But uh, they improved the streets and the sidewalks later.

I: I need to know what year this was.

G: That year might have been, oh, say 1930, oh yeah, it could've been about that time. '28 or '30.

G: This roller skating event was probably in the late '20's or around 1930.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 1

Audio Tracks: A1A2

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IN: 01:30:41;07 D

OUT: 01:33:49;11 D

DUR: 00:03:08;04 D

## Comments:

I: Would you please tell about your early memories of Alki Avenue and Harbor Avneue?

G: Um, as far as my memory goes I would say that about the first that I remember about Alki and Harbor Avenue uh, would have been probably in the, middle 20's or a little later. About when I started to read, I think. So that would have been 1928, oh no, it would've been before that. But, my father and mother would take us for a Sunday ride around the beach. Because that was entertainment to us, we didn't go, we would go elsewhere at times you know, take a ride to see friends up in Everett, and that was a full long day ride up that way. We'd have to take breakfast and lunch to have en route. And in this case, uh, the Sunday ride was usually after lunch which maybe was our big meal for the day. But we would take a ride around and going along Harbor Avenue there were a lot of little houses along there that uh, were summer homes to a lot of the people from Seattle. And I found out later on, my mother-in-law had rented a house down there on the beach and used it several years and enjoyed it. But these little cabins were so intriguing to my sister and me because they had names on them and we thoguht that was just terrific. And we'd read the names and fight over who got which house. Oh! That's mine! No, I saw it first! You know, and it might be Bide-A-Wee or Dew-Drop-Inn. Some of those names that were so cute. But as we went around, it became more attractive as far as the activities were concerned, because the people on the beaches. And Alki Beach had one of the finest sand beaches you could find, and of course, as years progressed I liked that even more because we had beach fires and barbeques down there. Well they didn't know about barbeques. It was a beach fire and hot dogs on a stick. So we had many, many happy memories about that area. And the water was always cold, but we'd play in it all day long and it wouldn't bother, we'd be so numb I guess that we didn't know the difference. Of course, there were also Luna Park, uh, the pool, uh down closer, well on Harbor Avenue and then the Natatorium came in later on and that was uh, on Alki Beach taking up part of our beautiful sand, that area. And then, there was the activity along the promenade, the remnants of the earlier days when they had the bandstand built out over the water. And uh, I know that my folks would enjoy that, hearing the music down there when a band would come and entertain.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2

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IN: 01:33:56;06 D

OUT: 01:36:23;11 D

DUR: 00:02:27;03 D

## Comments:

I: Tell about swimming at Luna Park and your kangaroo dive.

G: Oh yes. Luna Park was very important, because of the swimming lessons that I continued down there after starting in at Lincoln Park. Lincoln had a, Lincoln Park was the south end of West Seattle and it had a nice pool for us too. But it was just a hole in the ground. And we went swimming there and had our lessons when the tide was in, because it just came through the ground and when it filled up that area, we could have our lesson. But if the tide were at a different time than the lesson was scheduled, we didn't have any lesson that day. But after we had completed our training there and had received our badges for dog paddle we were able to go, go down to Luna Park and continue taking lessons there. And that was a big thrill. The first thing they asked us, if we could swim and trying to decide which place we should be starting out. Because they were limited, they didn't have this sloping ground that we had worked on before. Where it was just nothing but mud. But uh, the shallow end of the pool might have been a little bit deep for some of the younger ones that were just starting to learn. They couldn't put their hands on the ground and kick their feet as we did. They would have had their chins under water. So when we got there, when they asked me if I could swim, I said, Oh yes! Thinking, you know, I was right in there with dog paddle. And we, they marched us out to the deep end of the pool where the diving board was. I had only looked at a diving board, never stood on one. But they had us all walk out in a single file, take our turn out on to the diving board and dive in, I mean jump in feet first. And this was the kangaroo dive. Well I did it. I surely wasn't happy about doing it, but I went in and I think they should've said, kick your feet when you get down there and you'll come up faster. But I just came up like a poker and before I had arrived at the top, another kid came and lit on my head and shoved me down again so I managed to hold my breath long enough and I came up but, that was stupidity on my part I guess, or ignorance.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2

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IN: 01:36:23;06 D

OUT: 01:37:47;01 D

DUR: 00:01:23;25 D

## Comments:

I: You talked about other beaches that you went to as a child...would you describe those and give the names?

G: Well, actually, I didn't get into Aroyo(?) beach until high school days when our friends had cars and would take us down there. Because I had no car and um, so we were victims of circumstance. You went when the opportunity came. And that was a wonderful beach because, they had, the sand, that we called the Sand Pit. And the, that had been what it actually was, and barges came in and took out sand from there. It was such a nice place to swim 'cause the tide would go out and when it came back in over that warm sand it was just perfect for swimming. You know, several degrees warmer than Alki. I'm sure and so we we had a lot of fun down there. Loman(?) Park was a little further north, it was north of Fauntleroy Cove. And we would go there, but that was more for taking children for riding on the swings or poking around in the water a little bit. But it was not for us in our league. You know, we who swam.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2

IN: 01:37:47;07 D

OUT: 01:39:33;07 D

DUR: 00:01:45;28 D

## Comments:

I: I wanted to ask you, how did your family live during the Depression?

G: Well, we were probably, we were very fortunate, we had all the square meals that we needed or wanted. But it was uh, frugal in, at times. We didn't get the fanciest foods that, that you could procure. Nobody did. Uh, my mother was a good cook and could make things taste very good. And we didn't have ice cream every time we wanted to have it, or other things that, you know, that a lot of children seem to think would be part of life. It wasn't at that time. It was a thrill when we got ice cream. Uh, we would go to the store, you know, and have them dish it up in a carton. Because it, it still wasn't packaged, uh, as we find, found it in quarts or containers like we do now. But it was a big thrill to go out and pick out a flavor. Uh, as far as uh, my father was, was, um, a good hard worker and the fact that he uh, put in a hard day's work, he managed to make ends meet and saw to it that the bills were paid and everything. Although it wasn't easy. And we saw evidences among friends that were having a real hard time making the taxes, paying, I mean paying the taxes was one of the biggest things as far as my father was concerned. Dealing in property and everything and he didn't want to lose it. So, you know it was a matter of borrowing money or making a little extra wherever you could.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2

IN: 01:39:34;06 D

OUT: 01:41:18;24 D

DUR: 00:01:44;16 D

## Comments:

I: Could you please describe your banty chicken chapter of life?

G: Oh yes. That's one thing, that every child has to have pets. We believe in that thoroughly. But it has its certain ramifications. I don't know who was so generous to offer me the banty chickens. But, uh, I thought that was something I really needed to have. Oh, heavens. It must have been a very important thing to my life. And my mother was not too enthusiastic about it. I think she probably said No, and I said, Oh! Please! But, we continued on the argument until I won out. And my father built a lovely chicken coop. It was almost big enough for me to play in. But uh, we had that out in the backyard and I had promised so faithfully I would feed those chickens and I'd keep the little coop clean and everything. And I have a hunch that I didn't. And so one day, I came home from school and my mother always would have something out for me for a snack after school. And that particular day I came home and here she gave me a plate of fried chicken. And I didn't think about it too much at the time. I was probably so hungry I started devouring it. And it was just delicious but awfully small bones. That is about the time I caught on. And I went out and there were no chickens and that was the best way to learn. So I didn't ask for too many pets. I did have a canary, though, later on. But I didn't have fried chicken when it disappeared.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 01:41:19;25 D

OUT: 01:47:41;21 D

DUR: 00:06:21;26 D

## Comments:

I: Could you please describe your college years and, because you went to local universities.

G: Yes, I went to the University of Washington for 5 years. Got a teaching certificate after graduating and uh, went over to Eastern Washington to uh, Spokane when they had the, uh, uh, what do they call it? I'm beginning to forget. Inland Empire, was a meeting of all the principals and superintendents from out around the state. And prior to our going to this meeting, which was in the spring, uh, we began to uh, check in the uh, hiring office at the Univeristy of, to see about what schools were going to need certain subjects filled. And um, I've, really felt I would never go beyond Seattle to teach. I didn't want to be that far away from home. But uh, there was a superintendent that came into Seattle from Sunnyside, Washington and I think that he was a pretty sharp man. He was jumping the gun a little bit before the meeting at Inland Empire. And so he was interviewing a lot of prospective teachers, that they thought might be suitable or hoped might be. And I got to be among them. And at that point they were losing their art teacher, the, oh, not, they didn't have an official art teacher. That was one thing that they would want, but they had had had no luck in getting one. And the only one they could find was the town photographer and he'd come over uh, every few days, I suppose, take time off from his business. And bring some pictures and pass them to the kids and say, Okay, now draw these. So they were scraping the bottom of the barrel when they were looking, talking to me, because I was not an art major. I was a lover of art and had enjoyed doing as much as I could. And I took every extra class that I could, every elective that pertained to art. And so I'd had a good deal of costume design and uh, scenery design and things of that sort. And that kind of played in because they did get a good dramatics teacher, uh, over there in the English Department and then they needed someone for, someone in the art department to do the scenery for their plays, asnd of course activities like that were very important in a school of that size, becuae the whole town turned out for every performance that you put on. They really enjoyed having the entertainment. So I got more experience with the scenery. We painted the flats and did all of that and, and that was real fine. And I was given all of the big farm boys, because they had to have something to do with their big hands and their big feet and, they could wield the tools and handle the boards and everything and put up flats, so it was good experience for me. But that was my first experience in Sunnyside where I stayed for 4 years. And that was from 1941 to '44. 3 years there, I should say. When I returned to Seattle and uh, decided that um, I would like to be on this side for a change. And at that point I decided uh, to marry Brooks, whom I had met in college and had been going with. And so we planned on a wedidng in the Fall and one thing that was of great importance was to, he had to have a war time job. But it was a little difficult because of his height. I mean he couldn't be in the service, he was 2 inches too tall. He was 6 feet 8. And that was 2 inches over the limit. And of course, he wouldn't be any good in the submarines, he wouldn't be any good in the trenches, his head would be up above the top.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 01:41:19;25 D

OUT: 01:47:41:21

DUR: 22:18:40;01 D

Comments: G: (continued) And, and always, the government was, I think, real smart in saying that he better take a war time job. So having been up in Alaska working, in a gold mine. And also working on the Alcan(?) Highway, he'd learned how to run bulldozers, uh, and drag lines and all these heavy duty machines. And um, he, had had his college degree and everything, but this was one place where he could fit in and do something towards the war. And so after we were married, uh, he decided to take a job up there because he could just get, earn lots of money and there would be no place to spend it. So this would be to our advantage. We'd have a little nest egg. And so while he was gone up there, I took a job at West Seattle High School, substituting at first. And then the principal, whom I'd known since school days, said, um, I should take a full time job. And they were losing their art teacher. As well as their director for plays. And so I sort of fit in there again, because of my experience in Sunnyside. And uh, my drama training and so forth at school. So I got a job there, then Brooks came back and um, I had started my session in teaching and he was settled down here. He was washed, well I should go back to this job of, for the war effort. He took a job, job with one of the construction companies with whom he had worked before And so, he was uh, to run dozers and uh, bulldozers and graders and things like that. On this place, on the Yukon at Galena, where they were going, the army wanted to put in an airfield and so, this was just fine. Except that place on the Yukon overflowed ever year in the Spring thaw and sure enough it did again. So in the Spring he was washed out and back he came. So we didn't make any great killing financially. But it had experience.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2

IN: 01:47:42;05 D

OUT: 01:48:04;13 D

DUR: 00:00:22;06 D

Comments:

I: Could you please describe your religious upbringing?

G: Well, I was raised uh, in Christian Science. My mother uh, and father had both been Lutherans and uh, then, that came along and she took a fancy to it, felt that it had a lot of possibilites and it suited her and so we followed that. For many years.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 01:48:04;28 D

OUT: 01:49:21;05 D

DUR: 00:01:16;07 D

Comments:

I: Um, this is the place Gerturde. Do you remember what you said about the cherry blossoms trees at tthe Hiawatha Playfield?

G: Oh yes.

I: I just loved that quote. I quoted it, but I wondered if you'd paraphrase it for the--

G: I don't know what I said, t--

I: What you said was, "I used to walk through the park, Hiawatha Park as a kid in the Springtime. When those cherry blossom trees would be in bloom. Those pink ones. I loved that so much. I could have stood there and ate it up. It was so beautiful." Would you, if you remember that, 'cause it was close to your church, your Christian Science Church.

G: Yes, uh, in going up to Sunday School, uh, I think that the, the greatest impression that I had on my walk up there was going through the park, Hiawatha Park. And I don't know if they still, I think they still have some of those beautiful pink trees, but the cherry blossoms would be in bloom. And they had so many of the trees. It was like out at the University with all their beautiful cherry blossoms. And, uh, I think that pink was almost like pink cotton candy. I could almost eat it, it was so, uh, so pretty. And if I could just stand under that and stay there I think the rest of the day, I would have had my religious experience. It was just gorgeous.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 01:49:21;05 D

OUT: 01:53:16;01 D

DUR: 00:03:54;24 D

## Comments:

I: Gertrude, you were really talented, and you still are very active in drama. What do you remember about your Scandinavian dialect reading to your father. Would you tell a little about that?

G: I don't remember even mentioning that to you. Did somebody else tell me about that, tell you about that? Well, I guess this has to go back to, um, the earlier days. My uh, I had a sister and she was given piano training and she had a very, very fine ear for music. And did exceptionally job, and had majored in college in music and so. They were more than grateful all the years that she played. And they felt that I should have some sort of training too. So, uh, she gave me some piano lessons and that was terrible. It's not good to have your sister teach you piano. When you hit a bad note and she yells from the other room, No! So there was too much of that. And I suppose I didn't want to practice or something, I don't know. But, that wasn't my forte. I don't know really what was. But they decided that uh, about that time there were classes given to some children, uh, tha, these classes were called elocution. But they found a teacher that uh, was a little more progressive and she felt that she was a step ahead of elocution. It was not, uh, "I see the moo cow moo." Uh, it was much more like stand up comedy in a way, the forerunner I think to it. But anyway, she taught what she called Oral Expression. And she had a great following. In fact several of my friends from, from uh, high school or junior high at that time, I suppose, and into grade school, were taking lessons from her too. And, it all went along with my interest in speech and and drama as time went on. So it worked out just fine. But this Scandinavian dialect, uh, I mean she would provide readings for us that we would memorize and and then give on request at various functions. Like at, for Rainbow Parties or sometimes we'd be called to Eastern Star Parties, or Masonic out, efforts and school was a very good place. They always wanted to have somebody perform on the stage, so this fit right in. And um, my father, being from Norway had a real good accent and I didn't know it, but at one time I had too, as I was growing up. Uh, talking about my "brodder, down at the yunction" And I didn't have any brothers. But uh, the imagination work played in on that, I guess. But, uh he found something in a book at one time that uh, was a real cute thing written in a Scandinavian dialect. And it was awfully funny. So he thought that might work out. And they gave it to me and, and with her looking it over and working with me on it. It, it was a lot of fun. And the Scandinavian dialect at that time went over big, uh, I had been thinking about this recently. We had to learn a lot of differnt dialects. But maybe I liked that one or it worked beter because I, it was so much a part of my heritage. But um, the, it was, as I think now, it was just like the beginning of stand up comedy. We'd give our readings and people just ate it up. The entertainment was there.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 01:53:15;25 D

OUT: 02:00:01;00 D

DUR: 00:06:45;03 D

## Comments:

I: In that same vein, you and Brooks were very active in the Queen City Yacht Club, and you continue to be. Would you tell about your continuing involvement in drama and scenery design for the Queen City Yacht Club.

G: Oh, well, how nice. Uh, the Yacht Club became a very important part of our lives because we both enjoyed the water so much and finally decided to buy a boat. We started out with about a 10 foot uh, dingy, you might say. Maybe I should go back. We had another boat that he bought the frame work for, to finish off. And that sat in the backyard and he bought some beautiful cedar to finish it. But somehow or other he got sidetracked he didn't ever that, get that completed. I think he sold it to a neighbor boy and Brooks bought another boat that was finished. And we had that and took the kids uh, down in the bay and all around with the motor and so forth and so we got our feet wet on that. That I think we bought from a friend who was moving to the East Coast and he didn't want to move it along. Was a ski boat and so we bought that and enjoyed that. But, like with many people, we decided we had to go to a little larger one. And so we began to look, and from a, I think that was uh, that was a 15 foot, we went to an 18 and we really enjoyed that and the boys were getting to be big enough that they could take it alone at times. You know the older boys. We had 4 sons. And, uh, the two eldest could take it out alone when we would get it down to the beach and get it, get it going. Uh, then from there we decided to, it would be nice to have a stove. And it would be nice to have a bathroom on it, cause we were always looking for places to use the utilities, you know. Facilities. And so, from the we went to a 31, and my that seemed big. But, uh, wasn't too many years before we decided we'd have to look a little bit bigger, like maybe a 35 or 38. But uh, we wound up with a 45, and it we had it built to fit Brooks and the boys. They were all getting to be so big, too. And so, of course, he couldn't get on most boats without having to bend his head over to the side. And he'd say, Nice boat you've got there. But anyway, the, we had that boat built for West Port and ran it down there for 5 years as a charter boat. And Brooks was not much of a fisherman, but that was one way we could get a bigger boat that would fit him. By having it designed and built to, to order. So, during that time we decided it would be nice, we were seeing so many of our friends in the Yacht Clubs and decided that it would be nice to get into Queen City where there were so many of them. And uh, we just had, uh, a wonderful time, over the years and the activities that we were involved. Uh, lasted quite a while. Was about '6, uh, '67 I think when he joined the Yacht Club. And uh, all, he went through as Commodore, and, and uh, so we've had a very active time. Now as far a scenery is concerned. I did have the opportunity of doing some things there. Because we would put on skits for various ocaisions . Uh, you have to kill your time some way, when you might be visiting at some of these other Yacht Clubs.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 01:53:15;25 D

OUT: 02:00:01;00 D

DUR: 00:06:45;03 D

Comments: G: (continued) And we would go over to Bremerton, in, uh, in the Springtime in February, they would have what they call the heavy weather race. It was a predicted log race where the men would uh, chart their courses, they have a route to follow coming out from Bremerton and out into the, the bay and back in again. And they'd have certain check points along the way that they would have to mark their time. And uh, predict what time they would hit at each of these points and have that marked down when they would arrive there and try to get back on their predicted time. And it was supposed to be usually pretty poor weather, and it was usually lovely. We had fog a few times. But um, uh, it was never really heavy weather like they had thought it would be, for which the race was named. But when you would get back it would really be too late to go back home. Go through the locks and everything. So you could stay there all night tied up. But then they would serve dinner and they would generally provide entertainment for the evening. Well, I should say, we provided the entertainment. Each Yacht Club that was participating in the race, had to come up with a skit. And they would give us a theme around which the skit would be performed and there would be competition among the clubs to see which one was the, the best. Well, the prize was a rubber handled clam gun. And if you know what that is, it's a shovel, but it was rubber handled so you don't dig many clams with it. But that was the the prize for the entertainment. And we had some real good ones. And we had a lot of fun doing it. And I was uh, I would very often, if I would help on the scenery. And that I enjoyed doing. So, oh, I don't even remember all of the different things that we painted. Very often it would be around boats, uh, something pertaining to boats. And probably the best one was the one, the ferry boat that we did, and uh, and the people lip-synched all of the song, like the Andrews Sisters uh singing, uh, I love to, uh, I love to Ride a Ferry. Or was that Bing Crosby? But all of these various singers that had songs about boating. And there was the one, "Elwah on the Rocks". And that was the theme of our part of the program. And so this ferry boat that I made was the back end and it looked like you could actually drive onto the ferry and it really worked out well. And the people could walk in front of this apron for the ferry and it looked as if they were right on it. And up above was the captain's quarters and a shadow up there that looked almost like the captain, and of course the song just fit in perfectly. So we had a lot of fun with that one. They liked it.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 2

Audio Tracks: A1A2

IN: 02:00:52;15 D

OUT: 02:01:32;15 D

DUR: 00:00:39;28 D

Comments:

I: A question very dear to my heart: What's the most important thing you've learned about life and what would you pass on to the children of your children? What's really essential? What have you learned?

G: Well, I think probably one of the very best things, and I think my folks pushed this quite a bit, too, to follow the Golden Rule. Do unto others as you want them to do you. And it seems to bounce back, that, the best way. I, I think that's probably about the summary of it.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 3

Audio Tracks: A1A2



IN: 02:01:32;11 D

OUT: 02:03:11;24 D

DUR: 00:01:39;11 D

## Comments:

I: One more question. What kept you going in hard times? Both with your family that you were born into and then the family that married Brooks and had your children. Do you have an inner faith that kept you going?

G: Oh yes. And we, I think that honesty and following through on any commitments and following your obligations. We had our, um, that was very important in my being reared. Whatever you committed yourself to do, you followed through, to do, and uh, as far as the Depression was concerned, we were not wasteful, and we learned how to do things, to um, create or recreate, or whatever, because uh, we couldn't always have new, we'd have to make do. And don't cry in the bucket about it, because it was just as important to make the best of it and go on. You don't accomplish anything by sitting around and stewing. And, as far as raising our family, we had adversity a couple of times that we had to live with and it didn't make things, uh, better by crying about it. It's a matter of going on ahead. Whatever happens, happens, and you just have to, well, I suppose you could say, grin and bear it. But it was always an answer, everything. We had faith in God and, everything uh, we knew was handled properly.

Tape: Gertrude Stevens 3

Audio Tracks: A1A2

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# ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1998-99

Interview Subject: GERTRUDE STEVENS  
Archival Acession Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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