

**Marie Wood**  
**Tape: 8.24.01.1**  
**Starts: 1:00:00**

Interviewer: Kathy Hersh

Recorded: 8/24/01

Location: 6735 S.W. 92 St., Pinecrest

Q: We are in the living room of Marie Wood in Pinecrest and today is August 24th, 2001. We're doing an oral history about Marie's experiences in Pinecrest and this is for the Pinecrest Oral History Project, and the interviewer is Kathy Hersh.

Let's start with...Describe when you first arrived in Pinecrest and what brought you here?

A: I was living with my young family in South Miami, just off Red Road, and the house was a bit small for us and furthermore we had never intended that it be long term house, but we had wonderful neighbors in the area and one of them said "we saw a house that looks like you. Why don't you go and see it." And it was this house. So we went to see it and indeed we thought it was tailor made for us. It had just been finished and we bought it and then the...

Q: What year was that?

A: That was 1959, and then the adjacent lot to the corner was not sold, was empty, and so Jack, my husband, said "let's buy that too and that way we'll assure ourselves of privacy and so we ended up with 2 acres on 92nd Street and we've been here ever since.

Q: Describe what the neighborhood looked like then?

A: 92nd Street was just opened. It was a new street and it was half-lane. the only house was on the southwest corner of 67th and 92 Street and that belonged to the Self Family, Merl Self and his wife, and then there was this new house across the street, the one we're in now, and then a little further on to 68th Avenue was the Ireland House, and the Ireland House is a cottage -- a wood frame cottage that is absolutely charming and still standing, and we hope it remains forever in the area. And then further

down 92nd Street the Greenberg family had just built a home and...But those were about the only houses on 92nd Street, at the time.

Q: What kind of activities went on in the neighborhood if it was so sparsely settled compared to now?

A: Well, everybody knew each other and we would visit each other and...help each other in various ways -- talking about plants or trees to install or puppies that might have gotten lost, or whatever. And a unifying factor was that all our children in the neighborhood went to Pinecrest, so we all became good Pinecrest friends in that. Pinecrest Elementary friends. And we would form car pools because there was no bus service at the time. And we would car pool our children to school. And, ah, there were very few fences between properties, so that neighbors would come and go unannounced, really, from one house to the other in a very, typical neighborly fashion. And it was just a delightful place to live. We used well water, we had no air conditioning and life was, ah, wonderful. Oh, um, at that time, Fantastic Gardens was just down the street on 67th Avenue and we became close friends of, ah, I'm trying to recall...Their name has slipped my mind at the moment. But, anyhow, they were plant collectors and very knowledgeable person -- Bob Wilson. Bob and Catherine Wilson they were pioneers in this area also, and were known to have a really remarkable collection of exotic plants. So we became very good friends with them and the result was our establishing a tropical garden here, and developing interest in tropical plants that continues to today.

Q: You said you came here in 1959. Was there not a major hurricane the following year, 1960?

A: I don't remember a major one although I am sure there was. I, myself, have gone through three hurricanes in this house -- remained in this house, including Hurricane Andrew. I don't remember the years, ah, none of them particularly frightened me or caused any damage except Hurricane Andrew which was, indeed, more powerful and impressive than the other two. And, ah, did cause our patio to fall and cause some damage so that we did have considerable repair after that. But...so I've been a little more wary of hurricanes since number three.

Q: What about the way neighbors reacted and helped each other. Was that similar with Andrew to the two previous ones you experienced?

A: Um, the neighborhood was marvelously helpful everyone to each other. Jerry Greenberg who lives down the street and is a well known underwater photographer and diver would go around this neighborhood with his diving equipment and go into people's pools and clean out the debris. He would...he would, you know, fish out all kinds of furniture and everything else that had blown into pools, and do everything he could to help. Our neighbor in the house to the East of us, the adjacent property, had a gas barbecue, ah, grill and so they would feed a good many of the neighbors -- ourselves, the Greenbergs, and a few others and so, yes, the neighbors were helping each other.

Q: And in the previous hurricanes?

A: There was no need for that kind of help because we really didn't sustain that much damage in either of those. There was debris, but nothing that called for neighborly supplying water and paper towels, food, and...There was no need in those previous storms, in this area.

Q: What kind of changes do you see as being most notable in Pinecrest, since you've lived here?

A: Traffic would be number one. 92nd Street is now two-lane and it is a stream of traffic in the morning because cars are going to at least for different schools that are East of here, including Pinecrest Elementary and a number of others, so that parents come through 92nd Street to get their children to school plus, of course, all the people that are connecting to U.S. 1 to go to their offices. So traffic is the main change that I see. Of course, the up-grading, if you choose to call it that, of housing and properties has changed a lot too. The houses were typically one-story and much more modest and now they've become much larger and more elaborate and there's much more fencing and, ah... Another thing when I think back I realize that in the earlier days people did their own work. They did their own yard work and, ah, cared for their homes themselves and so forth, and now I see a parade of maids arriving and going down the street to various homes. So that's another major change.

Q: It just struck me that if people are not out in their yards doing yard work, it cuts down on a lot of, sort of, impromptu neighbor communication?

A: That's true, it does. It does. The only thing that makes up for that is...uh, my husband and I walk every morning in the neighborhood, ah, for about three or four miles and we wander on various streets looking for areas with not too much traffic. And,ah, we seem to have become acquainted with the whole neighborhood in that manner. They know they're going to see Jack and Marie Wood out their walking in the morning and we know their dogs and, uh, so...so that has created a different kind of friendliness.

Q: What were your experiences with your children going to Pinecrest Elementary. What, um...were you active in the school?

A: I was fair...moderately active in the school. There was a marvelous principle at the time who had been there for years, Miss Isabel, and all of us who knew here were devoted to her. And...for good reason. She was an exceptional administrator and, ah, really brought the standards of that school to the highest level. Ah, but anyhow, I volunteered, um, as a...They would have, I guess they called it professional days, or something like that, where persons of various professions would come to the school and talk to several different classrooms about what it is they did, and, um, my talks would be about photography. I'm very much involved with photography and I would describe the basics of camera work and even bring the sun sensitive paper in to the classroom so that the children could develop their own images with paper themselves. And they were thrilled with that.

Q: What size were the classes in those days and what were the children like?

A: I can't really tell you what the sizes were. I would guess twenty to thirty in a classroom. And, I can't tell you what the children were like except they were as friendly and, ah, wonderful and close in friendship with each other as children always are, I believe. I think children naturally gravitate to...to groups they especially enjoy and then there was Girl Scouts -- since I have girls -- after school and so we have friends...friends in this family both to...that are friends to my children and friends, still, to my husband and myself, who come to visit us from the days at Pinecrest and they'll come and they'll say "you're house hasn't changed a bit." And, ah, so those...those youngsters of Pinecrest have remained out friends though the years.

Q: That's wonderful. So your profession was photography?

A: Yes and it still is, and my husbands too. I'm also a trained writer and editor and I combine writing and photography and my husband combines those skills with art direction. And, ah, he does a lot of lay-out work and things of that sort for ad preparation.

Q: So you were, ah, working professionally back in those days when a lot of mothers tended to stay at home?

A: Yeah, I've always worked, but when my children were small I stayed home and I was able to work at home. I was a freelancer and, uh, then when the children were older I joined, ah, a banking corporation and did their internal communications. It was a statewide -- Southeast Banking Corporation, it was. And they had statewide facilities and I would do their communication.

Q: And so, did you go to their office?

A: Their office downtown. Yeah, I commuted. And would leave at...before seven every morning -- this must have been in the '70s -- to get downtown by a reasonable, early hour without heavy traffic. But I...

Q: So you worried about traffic in the '70s?

A: Even...even then, but it is no match to what it would be today.

Q: How long did it take you to get downtown?

A: Not more than a half-hour if I left at that early, which is why I did leave early.

Q: So, did you find any prejudice against women in the photography field in those days?

A: No. None at all. None at all. I think if you can produce creative work it doesn't matter.

Q: And so your children grew up with the role model of a working mom and was that compatible with what other mothers were doing at the time, here?

A: I never really thought about that.

Q: They never commented?

A: I've always been self-directed and, ah, just went my own course and I never thought about what others were doing. Ah...one of my dear friends in the neighborhood is a very creative artist and we share a great deal in common and, ah...But many mothers did stay home but that was...we each went our own course. I think every parent contributes in one way or another -- there were volunteers in Girl Scouts. I didn't volunteer in Girl Scouts as much as other mothers did, and so there are different ways that parents participate.

Q: You were acquainted with Carl Wilden and Mary Wilden who lived adjacent to you. Would you describe Carl Wilden for the camera, please?

A: I will with a smile because Carl brings to mind a man who was always the same. He was short of stature, wiry, always upbeat and positive in his attitude, very, very friendly, loved to tell jokes, had a big hearty laugh, wore a straw hat, roamed the neighborhood, felt at home and welcome wherever he went and he was, indeed, welcome anywhere he went. And he made an effort to help anyone with their garden because he had been at Fairchild Garden, and when I first met him he was retired. So he had all his knowledge and skill of plants and what they needed and, for example, he drew...grew tropical raspberries in his garden so he thought we should have some, too. So he put in a batch of them which are still growing in our garden. And, ah, he and my husband went out and selected a Royal Palm tree and installed that in the ground. And, um, I...we had a friend down on 68th Avenue who wanted to establish a rose garden. And roses take a great deal of special preparation of the soil, etcetera, etcetera. And he spent days over there installing her rose garden. He grafted a tree for a neighbor just to the East of us. Ah, that neighbor had an avocado tree that didn't bear well, but another neighbor had one that did bear well and so Carl said "well we'll graft some of the good tree onto your tree and you'll...and that tree is still bearing fruit. So, Carl was wonderful in every way. And, ah, he...he...he just was welcome everywhere. His wife Mary we saw much more seldom because she stayed at home. She had arthritis rather severely and so that didn't allow her to be too active but, also, I think she was a homebody -- she liked to cook, she like to crochet, do sewing and needle work and she was very content in her home.

Q: Did you ever visit their house?

A: Oh, yes. Very often.

Q: could you describe the first time you saw it, or the early memories you have of it?

A: Well, one went...I went into the back door, because that faces towards our property, so I went up two or three steps and I'd be in their kitchen and it was a very tiny kitchen, and I think it had a linoleum floor and, ah, we would usually go into the next room which was the living room and there were several rocking chairs and I would be invited to sit in a rocking chair and Mary would sit in her chair and Carl very seldom sat down. He...he was always out roaming around the neighborhood. He was not an indoor person except at mealtime, probably. And, um, Mary loved to have people visit, um. She would, ah, occasionally invite me to lunch and, ah, I was not a person that especially liked taking time out to go to lunch but I would with Mary because it meant a lot to her. And sometimes I'd take her grocery shopping which she appreciated, and...

Q: What did she...?

A: ...She was a very lovely woman.

Q: Do you remember any of the dishes she served?

A: No, I don't. I did not sample her cooking. Um, I can't tell you what her favorite foods were. I'm sure she was a good cook, but, um...

Q: She made a salmon pie, apparently, that was an old Canadian recipe? Her mother was part Huron, native American and she made a salmon pie the family still makes which is a mixture of mashed potatoes and canned salmon and onions baked in a pie shell. Which is delicious.

A: Yes. I wish...wish I sampled it.

Q: So you would go over to...once in a while to visit with Mary who was pretty much more housebound then?

A: Correct, correct.

Q: And what kind of...we've heard stories about Carl Wilden's landscaping around the cottage. Can you recall any plantings there that caught your eye?

A: Well, he had magnificent oak trees, of course. He wasn't actively landscaping his own property when I knew him. Perhaps he had done that in earlier years, but he was very proud of his raspberries and, ah, watered those and tended those and even invited us to come and pick them because they are laborious to pick. Um, but he wasn't actively working on his landscape he was out helping everybody else.

Q: He was that kind of guy?

A: Yes...

Q: Very outgoing?

A: ...that kind of guy. One amusing story about Carl. We had horses on our second acre. When the kids were small that was a gathering place for the kids of the neighborhood to come and ride and every once in a while a horse would get loose and parade down the street and I would call Carl and Carl, who said he was a Florida "cracker" would come and talk to the horse, sometimes carry a rope, and he would somehow be able to walk up to the horse, calm the horse with conversation and then put a halter or a bridle on the horse, whatever was needed, and bring the horse home.

Q: I'm going to ask you, um...We have a few more, sort of, sights around the neighborhood I'd like to talk about, and then another issue and I think we'll be finished. Unless you think of something else. The Ireland Cottage, you mentioned, what I've been told, because we called the number when the for sale went up, is, it's going to be moved to North Carolina?

A: Oh, I hadn't heard it would move to North Carolina. I will be happy if it survives because it's a charming house and through the years many people have lived in it since the Irelands died and everybody who has lived there has loved it. And...

Q: Have you ever been inside it?

A: Oh, yes. I have indeed.

Q: What's it like inside?

A: Well, it has a wonderful porch with easy chairs for sitting and rocking and screened to look out to the street, um, comfortable chairs inside. It's small. Very, very nice. Hugh and June Ireland built that house and lived there and were living there when we first moved in and I would say they were fairly well-to-do couple so the house did not lack for...it wasn't spartan, by any means, but it was comfortable and they were very content in that house.

Q: Now, I know that house was built in the '30s so they built it, you said?

A: I believe so. When we moved in they lived there and I understood that they built it, but I didn't specifically ask that question.

Q: Were they an older couple?

A: Oh, yes. Very much so. In fact, Hugh Ireland died shortly after we moved here, so we knew him only for a short time. His wife, however, June Ireland, lived for probably fifteen, twenty years after her husband died. And she was a very feisty, independent woman. Very attractive, well groomed and had worked professionally -- I'm not sure in what capacity, it may have been real estate -- but in any event, they had a summer home in North Carolina and she continued to go up to North Carolina every summer and then come back here every winter and she continued her life all by herself and was not especially gregarious. She was quite, quite an independent woman. Very nice.

Q: They were from North Carolina originally?

A: That I don't know.

Q: You don't know?

A: No.

Q: Inside the cottage, you said they were fairly well to do, so what kind of...wood furnishings. Was it tongue in groove ceiling. What kind of construction?

A: I don't remember that, specifically.

Q: You remember more the furnishings?

A: Yes. And I wasn't in the house very many times. They weren't particularly, ah, social. They didn't through parties or...or anything of the sort, but we were friendly neighbors.

Q: The Rare Bird Farm, did you ever visit that place?

A: No, and I didn't know it. I can't supply information on that.

Q: That was closed down, I think, the year after you moved here, or it might already have been on the way out. But they sold out to the Howard Johnson's in 1960 and it was located on 102nd Street. The Serpentarium, did you ever go there?

A: No, I didn't go there, either. No, I can't say that I have any information on the Serpentarium.

Q: Was the Brown's Airfield still in operation when you arrived?

A: I think it was. I heard of it, but, again, I wasn't involved in small plane aviation so that I really don't know anything about that.

Q: Where did most of the people in the neighborhood...did they do their shopping mainly in one place?

A: Well, Suniland Shopping Center was very popular and...ah, still is, but at that time that was where almost everyone shopped.

Q: Was there any meeting place where you went to bump into neighbors, or you saw people from the neighborhood? Any handout places? what were the popular spots?

A: No, I guess we were not handout people and we had lots of friends and lots of parties in our home and were friendly with the neighborhood but we didn't frequent neighborhood places, particularly. I know Shorty's was always popular with young kids and, ah...but I can't say that we had any hangouts.

Q: Parrot Jungle, you must have gone there?

A: Yes, and Parrot Jungle was and still is a favorite. It is fascinating and beautiful and I have very good memories of it.

Q: Did your children like to go there?

A: Every child likes to go there. I don't know of one that doesn't, and we would enjoy taking out-of-towners there too. They would always be fascinated with having parrots on their shoulders and seeing the show. Yes, that was always an enjoyable spot.

Q: Did you ever have visits in the neighborhood here from exotic birds or unusual animals or...what kind of animal population have you seen here?

A: Well I'm probably making a confession because we had a parade of exotic animals right here on this property. On one of our early trips to Brazil, we brought back a woolly monkey from Manaus. And that came about because we were traveling with our children. The children fell in love with this little monkey and a vendor persuaded us to buy the monkey for the children. And, ah, one of our children was an infant at the time so I was certainly hoping we wouldn't acquire a monkey. However, my husband is a bit of a daredevil and he thought, "sure. let's do it." So, we bought, for a pittance, a woolly monkey and continued our trip in Brazil to Rio, Brasilia, Sao Paulo and wherever we went we carried this monkey with us and we ended being a bigger tourist attraction with the monkey than...than the city would...was for us, because here we were a family with three children and a monkey and a husband and a wife and cameras. And, ah...anyhow...

**Marie Wood**

**Tape: 8.24.01.2**

**Starts: 2:00:00**

Q: Talk about your traveling around South America with the monkey.

A: Attracting too much attention because we were such a peculiar family with the monkey. We would be in cities...that we had picked up the monkey in a more or less a rural area of a part of Manaus and now we were in Rio and then in Sao Paulo and we still had the monkey. So, they were quite fascinated. But anyhow, my hope was that when we got...in fact my confident hope was that when we got to Miami and the U.S. Customs got a hold of us with a monkey, they would take the monkey from us and say "you can't bring it in." And that was my salvation. That didn't happen. This was 1959 and perhaps laws were more lax at the time, I'm not sure. However, the monkey was in a zippered airline carry-on bag with holes punched in it. We go through customs. They say "what's in this bag." We say, "a monkey." They say, "let's see it." So we undid the zipper, they looked inside the bag. The bag had an odorous smell and they zipped the bag shut and they said "Okay go ahead." And so, there we were back on 92nd Street with a monkey. So, then Jack built a little house in the garden for the monkey, however, the monkey would manage to open the gate and get out fairly often and would go visiting the neighbors and one neighbor had a...a large Doberman dog and this monkey would irritate the Doberman no end and we would get telephone calls on a Sunday morning saying "come and get your monkey, it's irritating my dog" and so forth and so on. And, we had other animal stories, ah...Jack brought in a large iguana from Central America and, um, that slithered into the pool and was quite an alarming looking creature. But we had that for quite a while and then discovered that that animal was pregnant, which we didn't know. And, she produced eggs and so then we did call the Serpentarium -- I do remember that about the Serpentarium asking them what to do with these iguana eggs. And they told us to them on a closet shelf with sawdust and wait for several weeks. So we did this and nothing ever happened to those eggs - they never hatched, they were infertile, but that was another animal episode. We brought in a Cotamundi, which is a small a...animal with claws. The claws are designed for digging and this Cotamundi would climb up on -- it was an adorable creature, only about a foot long, and very appealing to look at -- but it had these claws that were designed for digging and it would climb up onto the patio screens and unzip the screens and drop them into the pool. So that was quite an adventure. Then we had a...a nocturnal animal...a kinkachoo. A kinkachoo. And a kinkachoo looks like a small bear. It's very appealing with large eyes because it's nocturnal and...So he lived in the garden and he would roam a night and we would

hear him CLUMP, CLUMP, CLUMP on the roof at night when he was active. And we put out bananas for him. So...but anyhow, we had many, many animals in this neighborhood and its all our fault.

Q: Did this kinkachoo pretty much stay on the property?

A: All the animals stayed pretty much on the property because there is so much foliage and a...we would supply them with plenty of fruit. Although the garden has a lot of fruit. So they were content and they...they seemed to be satisfied with having attention. Um, they were a bit of a problem for baby sitters, however. If we had a...a babysitter come in while we went out for the evening the animals posed a bit of a problem.

And one of my neighbors came over who hadn't met me. She must have been new in the neighborhood and she came and rang my...the front doorbell, planning to invite us to a tea or some kind of an event at her house, and she...I opened the door and she said "I are you Mrs. Monkey."(LAUGHS) So apparently that was the only way she knew me.

Q: That sounds like some children had given you a nickname in the neighborhood...?

A: Probably, probably. Probably.

Q: Speaking of children and going back to the school, I understand that Pinecrest...there was some busing situation that occurred in...what, the '60s, during desegregation. There was some...a bit of upset. Do you recall that?

A: No, not at all and I can only Mrs. Isabel, the Principle, must have handled it most proficiently and graciously and fairly because I don't recall any static or any problem whatever. I do remember there were some Black teachers introduced when my youngest daughter was in, probably, first grade, so that would have been about the mid-'60s and there was no problem whatever. I think the school was gracious and fair. I don't recall any problem.

Q: What about the neighborhood, it wasn't at all mixed. It's a little more mixed now, but it wasn't at all mixed in terms of ethnic groups then, was it?

A: No, it wasn't. It wasn't. It still isn't to any great degree.

Q: But you lived in South Miami prior to moving here. That's a more diverse population.

A: Well, no. Our street was middle America street, Southwest 81st Street. Just west of Red Road and no it wasn't...wasn't diverse in those days. That would have been about 1958, '58. Along in there.

Q: Did you live near Dante Fascell Park?

A: Yes and near Epiphany School.

Q: But your children went to Pinecrest, they didn't go to Epiphany?

A: They went to Pinecrest.

Q: Pinecrest?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they go to Dante Fascell Park?

A: Sometimes. Not much because it was a little bit off the beaten path. We had so much in the neighborhood in the way of places to play. Just beyond this Ireland property that I mentioned, there were open fields where the children from the neighborhood would go and fly kites and they had free range to fly kites in these open fields. And they would at...in the evening and catch fireflies in that same field where the grasses would be tall. So they...I guess they didn't need parks because the neighborhood was...was quite open.

Q: Do you know the Vandells?

A: Yes I do.

Q: Because their daughters...they had ponies they kept...

A: Yes...

Q: And their daughters rode around the neighborhood...

A: Yes...

Q: ...about the same time as your daughters, probably.

A: Yes, uh huh.

Q: So you were aware of them?

A: Well yes because they advised us in some ways on the horses. We bought the first horse spontaneously without having shelter or a fence for it, which is typical of Jack Wood's antic approach to life and so the Vandells helped by advising us on what we could do to secure the horse and shelter it and...and they...they were very helpful.

Q: They're our next door neighbors.

A: Oh they are? Tell them hi for me.

Q: Is there anything that you can think of with fondness or with...that's a stand-out in your memories of living here?

A: What did you think about the incorporation of Pinecrest as its own village?

Q: I was a little bit apprehensive thinking, for example, that taxes would rise and at the same time willing to give it a chance. As it happens I've been very pleased -- taxes have not risen, the streets have been more cared for, they're paved better they're marked better, we have the new street signs, the attention to building codes has been enforced in a very good way, so I look upon it very positively. I do fee the city has become a little too precious but that, I suppose, is bound to happen in a desirable area because people of means move in and build the kind of houses they think they should have. But I love the area, I find it most convenient. Everything I need is within or near the Pinecrest area, so I really very seldom stray from this area. I don't go downtown as I used to. I don't go to Miami Beach. I just confine my activities here. It's all here.

Q: It sounds like you got here by way of an adventure. Would you like to tell us about that?

A: I would be happy to. My husband and I married in Milwaukee, Wisconsin which was my home town and it...the city that he happened to be in as art director for a large Midwestern agency. But neither one of us wanted to stay in Milwaukee. It was never my intention to stay there. I had lived in New York for a year and was a careerist and a journalist and...and went into television broadcasting in Milwaukee and so forth and so on. But the city didn't hold us. And, ah, we agreed we would move on to some other part of the U.S. and we thought it might be California. In the meantime we had our first child in Milwaukee and Jack said one day "what would you think of our going down the Mississippi River on a sailboat and we'll go across the Gulf of Mexico and over to Florida and then we'll eventually go through the Panama Canal and around and up to California that way. What do you think of that idea?" I said, "well that sounds great. Let's do it. I don't know how to sail, though. You do?" "Oh, I know how to sail I've been sailing since I was a kid on Lake Michigan. No problem." So I had utter confidence in Jack's nautical abilities and he set about finding and buying a 32 foot sloop in Chicago. It was in dry dock and he would go down on weekends and refurbish the boat. He would work on the hull, he would work on the inside, he would work on various parts of it. I in the meantime devised a crib up in the bow of the boat down below deck that was padded as a safe place for this infant. So that if the boat rocked around in a storm this infant would be protected with padding on all sides and would be secure. So that was the extent of my contribution to preparing the boat. Oh, I made duffel bags for each of us so that we each had a duffel bag with all our clothing in it, which wasn't much. But anyhow, I had no knowledge of how to sail and we proceeded to drive down to Chicago with an entourage of friends who would see us off. And these friends were crying as we got on the boat and went off. I think we were first on the Illinois River and then a couple of other rivers before we connected onto the Mississippi so it was a circuitous route. But anyhow, they were in Chicago seeing us off and we had the mast stepped down on...across the deck. Lengthwise. Because going down the Mississippi and under bridges and all of that you couldn't have a mast in the way. So we motored and these people waved us off knowing that we were going to get into some dire predicament and we continued this Huckleberry Finn adventure down the Mississippi and it was very wonderful. It took four months for us to arrive in Miami. We stopped at the end of each day we would pull in to whatever town was nearby and the big

barge operators on the Mississippi would be very nice to us -- they would toss us oranges and various other fruit as they'd see this little sailboat bobbing down the river. And sometimes they didn't see us at all and...in which case we were in danger, but somehow we managed to survive. And as we would go down the river and arrive in various cities the word got out and newspaper people would arrive at the dock to do photographs and a story about this strange family with an infant that were going down the river and so this happened in Vicksburg, it happened in Naches, it happened in New Orleans, it happened in Clearwater. Various...various points along the way. But anyhow, we got to New Orleans and stayed there for an entire month and during that month we worked on the boat some more and stepped the mast for the first time and practiced sailing on Lake Ponchartraine and made friends with other boating people in the area who remained friends for years thereafter. And, ah, then finally when we were ready to leave we went out onto the Gulf of Mexico and skirted the coast so that we were never really far out at sea. But we had several hazards. For example, the engine caught fire once and we went aground several times and Jack would have to rock us off a sandbar and so we had many rough experiences. Lots of rain. The cabin would leak. Things of that sort. Then when we got down to...there's a point where you can connect onto the...onto Lake Okechobee and go through an intercoastal route. I don't recall the...whether it's Punta Gorda or...I'm not sure. But, anyhow, so we crossed the State and crossed Lake Okechobee and then went down the intercoastal and arrived at Dinner Key and friends had advised us that was where we should go to dock, So we did and we docked there and made friends and were able to hook up to electricity and use showers on the shore and so forth. And then, I think, we began our story saying that we were at Dinner Key and that was when Jack got restless and ended up going into advertising here in Miami. So, ah, we had not planned to stay. We were just going to stay for a while and then move on to California, continue our journey. And, ah, Florida grew on us, Miami grew on us. And particularly the plant life grew on us. We became enamored of tropical gardens and so we've never left.

Q: You never got to Panama?

A: We did go to Panama but that was by flying and, ah, but not on our boat. We've taken that same boat to the Bahamas. We spent one summer on it in Nassau. Another summer in Bimini. So we did sail it in the...short distances, but gradually we decided it was, ah, really a lot of trouble

because it always needed attention and we were busy with a family and...and so we eventually...I think we gave it away. I think we gave it to a friend.

Q: What was the name of the boat?

A: The "Driftwood"...Logically enough.

Q: That's a great story.

A: Well, it's true. It's true.

Q: So then you had your other two daughters herein Miami?

A: Yes, two girls were born both at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

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