

Mary Stewart Barry Townes (1903-1997)

Copyright owned by Wilmette Public Library District

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage, or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Wilmette Public Library District.

The pages that follow constitute the transcript of an interview conducted as part of the Wilmette Public Library District's Oral History program, started in 1975 by a committee of the Friends of the Wilmette Public Library which has been chaired since its inception by Rhea Adler, a resident of the Village of Wilmette since 1932.

A copy of the tape on which this transcript is based is available for circulation, and may be obtained by checking with a Reference Librarian concerning circulation procedures.

This program would not have been possible without the cooperation of the many long—time residents of the Village interested in helping to preserve particulars of a fascinating past, and the patience, energy and effort of a small but dedicated group Of interviewers, transcribers and typists who share the belief that the past is too important to be forgotten.

Richard E. Thompson
Director

Transcription prepared by Amanda Barnett

BM: Today is November 17th [year not provided], and my name is Briggs Maselli. Now, uh, Mrs. Townes, would you please give me your name and your father's name?

MSBT: Well, my whole name is Mary Stewart Barry Townes. I'm Mrs. John Townes and live at 310 Cumnor Road in Kenilworth.

BM: And your father's name?

MSBT: My father's name was Dr. George Fravel Barry. He was, for almost sixty years, a physician residing in Evanston.

BM: Okay, it's going.

Track 2

MSBT: Dad was the son of Kitty Stewart and George Barry, who were early residents of Wilmette.

BM: Where did they live in Wilmette?

MSBT: He lived, they built a house at 913 Central Avenue--Central Street, whatever you call it--which they called the Big House. And later on, a few years later, after the family had scattered, they built another house, which they called the Little House at 912 Greenleaf.

BM: Which backed up to the . . .

MSBT: Which backed up to the Big House with the ballroom. It also had a tennis court. 909, I think, sits on the old tennis court.

BM: Oh, mmm hmm.

MSBT: And this was easily done because they, my grandmother owned the entire block, from 9th to 10th and Greenleaf to Central. The entire block was hers, which came to her through her parents who were early residents of Chicago. And this brings us to a little background, if you want it. Which is interesting in that her father, Thomas A. Stewart, came with his family from Maryland and settled in La Porte. And at the time of her birth--Kitty, Kitty Stewart was born at La Porte--and at the time of her birth, he was editor, publisher, and owner of *The Gem of the Prairie*, forerunner of the *Tribune*. He also, earlier than that and I believe possibly at the same time, at least surely in 1849, we knew that he was one of three who had bought into the *Tribune*. It is my understanding that he came with his family to Chicago at the time that he and Forrest and Wheeler

established the *Daily Tribune*. This was about 1847. I should have brought, I have some bill heads of his, and this would probably be of interest. I also have a Chicago directory. I can't remember what year it was, but it shows the Tribune was being put out then and it gives him as publisher. Now, let's see, this gets pretty complicated. . .

Track 3

MSBT: They lived down in Chicago, and he, Thomas Stewart, began to fail in health. So he wanted to leave Chicago and go back to where his family and his wife's family were in La Porte and see if he could regain his health down there. This was about 1855. So, at that point, Kitty Stewart, who was a little girl, was no longer a resident of Chicago. But her parents, apparently at this early date, had bought into Wilmette property as an investment. At some time along the line, somewhere along the line, her mother remarried a physician whom she had known in her early girlhood by the name of Theophilus Fravel. They were mostly in Westville and La Porte but apparently came to Chicago now and then and were definitely associated with the Church of the New Jerusalem, called Swedenborgian sometimes, or New Church. And George Barry was one of the early signers of membership, along with Joseph Sears, who was about his age and a pal of his. In fact, they both were members of the umm . . . now, let's see . . . Company A, 134th Illinois Regiment of the Volunteer Infantry. I think Uncle Joe was in the commissary department. I'm not just too sure what Grandpa Barry was but he was a second lieutenant, and he was in 'til the end of the war. In 1867, he married Kitty Stewart.

BM: Will you give her full name, please? Will you give Kitty Stewart's full name?

MSBT: Oh yes. Kitty Stewart. Her name was Mary Burton Stewart. And I was always intrigued with the fact, probably because I was named for her, intrigued with the fact that she insisted, said her father insisted, that the original and correct spelling of the "Stewart" was "Stuart". And for this reason, one of her daughters Florence Stuart Barry always spelled her name Stuart, S-t-u-a-r-t. So, for a good number of years, I spelled my name "Stuart" and so registered at Smith College when I entered. However, later on, since I was baptized "Stewart", I went back to that. And one of my interesting bits of information in high school, in college, when I went there to register, was in meeting my faculty advisor, who was a Mr. Brady, head of the Greek department. And he asked me if I was any relation to a Florence Stuart Barry, who had majored in Greek and who was a very brilliant young lady. Well, it turned out that she was my aunt. And after her graduation from Smith, she taught literature and whatever else was essential in a grade school in Milwaukee, also taught in the Lincoln school for a few years in Evanston and then wound up teaching literature for five years in New Trier.

BM: Do you know approximately when that was?

Track 4

BM: Approximately what date that was when she was at New Trier?

MSBT: It must have been. . . well, I would say it was approximately. . . uhhh, let's see, so she went into medicine in about 1906 or 7, it must have been about 1901 or 2 to 6 or 7, right in there. And I have, I was very young when she went into medicine, and in the fall of 1907, in November in fact, she had a cerebral hemorrhage. And the story was that she simply was overworking. She had enrolled at the Hahnemann Medical College in Chicago to study the homeopathic school of medicine, which was the same branch of medicine that my father had studied. He went to Philadelphia, graduated in Hahnemann in Philadelphia, but he felt that she overdid, and she had always been one who was very energetic and gave a great deal of herself. From everything I've ever heard about her, she was very, very popular and very well liked. And her students at New Trier, I understand, were very devoted to her, very fond of her. So, that brings us back to what? [Laughs].

BM: To Kitty Stewart . . .

Track 5

MSBT: Kitty Stewart Barry. Oh, Kitty Stewart was, well. . .

BM: You say she was born in 1884 in La Porte?

MSBT: No. No, no, no, no.

BM: Oh.

MSBT: Uh, where'd we? No. Let's see, George Barry was born in Lake County, which would be, which was really actually at Milburn, where they, his parents, S.S. Barry and Abigail Corbin Abbott Barry, who came out here from Salem in 1837 and settled in Milburn. There were several members of the family came out at that time with them, and he built a log cabin up there. And that's where George Barry was born in 1841, and his older sister Helen was also born there. I think she was. . . I don't know whether she was the eldest or not. I'd have to look that up. At any rate, his father S.S. Barry had been in paint contracting business back east in New York, and he himself was an artist. So he, having gotten everybody established in Milburn, decided to go into Chicago and see what was happening there in the way of a business possibility. He walked into Chicago and decided to establish a business which became known as Barry and Cushing, using contracting of all sorts of painting needs at that time. He also continued to paint. I've never been able to find anything but little things of his. We don't seem to know what happened to them.

BM: Awww.

MSBT: There are some little things around, but not too many [laughs].

BM: Awww. That's too bad.

MSBT: Now then, so they came, he came in with his children and family on a fairly permanent basis in 1843. So that would make George Barry about 2 years old. In the meantime, Kitty Stewart's father had died back down in . . . that is Mary Stewart . . . in La Porte or Westville. It seems hard to separate those two towns or villages from each other in this, my understanding of the family background. And her mother had remarried this doctor Theophilus Fravle, and she grew up pretty much down there in La Porte and Westville but came up to Chicago at some point along the line and stayed here for long visits of some sort. At any rate, by 1867, she had met George Barry, and in 1867 they were married. She must have been here, and I didn't look this up, she must have been here herself, even if the rest of the family weren't, for a fair number of years around the Civil War because she was educated at the Female Seminary, which was the forerunner of Northwestern.

Track 6

MSBT: In the meantime, let's see, she was here early while her father was the first editor of the *Tribune*. The first edition of the *Tribune*, I believe, was put out in 1847. He had an office at Lake and LaSalle. And, as I understand it, Thomas A. Stewart, the father of Mary Stewart Barry, was the first editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*. He had been owner and editor of *The Gem of the Prairie*, and when he wanted to expand . . . this is such a long, mixed-up tale that it's best to just skip over it. There were two gentlemen, Forrest and Wheeler, who came in with him, and Kelly, and I believe Kelly sold out to him. And then Forrest and Wheeler came in and J.Y. Scammon helped finance, I think it was Forrest, I had it written down here . . .

Track 7

MSBT: So now, but she, Kitty was not here in Chicago after her family, father and mother went back to La Porte to their parents, her grandparents. That was the Cobbs [?], as I recall. [Pause]. Now, let's see. Do you want to keep on going on this tack of background? Now, we could . . . I know that my father . . .

Track 8

MSBT: . . . was born and raised on the South Side of Chicago. He was born in 1875 and went to the Chicago Manual Training School. He was, you might say, just barely into it, he was about 14, when his father George Barry, who had gone into business to help his father in this paint business. He gave up his job with

N.K. Fairbanks. I think he was . . . well, anyway, he went out to Hutchinson to establish a branch out there but was only out there about a year or year-and-a-half. However, they went out, the whole family went out, except for my father who was, at 14, left to finish school that year and pack up all the family *lares and penates*, ship them out to Hutchinson, and then come out himself.

BM: This was Hutchinson, Kansas, you said?

MSBT: Hutchinson, Kansas.

BM: And a 14 year-old was expected to do that?

MSBT: He was 14 years-old.

BM: That's an awful lot. [Laughs].

MSBT: Well, I think it probably accounted for the fact that all of his life he was a remarkable packer-upper.

BM: I'm sure [laughs].

MSBT: [Laughs]. We took various and sundry trips, and he was always the one who knew how to make an icebox out of a battery box and hang it on the side of the car so that we could have a supply of ice and be able to pick berries by the side of the road, get cream from some farmer, and not have anything go sour. We had some very remarkable trips. And [laughs] he was, I guess he had a few remarkable trips himself. He was about the same age as Phil Sears, who was his first cousin and one of the sons of Joseph Sears. The Sears, Joseph Sears, wanted my father's family to come out and build in Kenilworth when he formed his Kenilworth Company, but in as much as they had this block in Wilmette, they felt that they would prefer to build in Wilmette. At that time, apparently, according to what my father, he said: "We lived in Wilmette in the midst of the woods, so all of our social was in Kenilworth."

BM: I see.

MSBT: And they had, apparently, in spite of . . . they apparently all enjoyed woods and one thing and other. They were all, well, they went camping, for instance. They got together, there were four boys, including my father and cousin Phil. I think, I don't know who the fourth one was, but I'm pretty sure the third one was Will Gates. The Gates were an old Wilmette family. They got a wagon and horse, and they went up to camp, they went up to Michigan. And they handled things with no trouble at all. They had a tent, and they had a kitty into which they each put \$5.00, and whatever was necessary they bought out of the kitty, and when that kitty was gone, they put another \$5.00. And so it went, and they were gone two weeks, and they had a really remarkable time. Fishing, living off the

land as much as they could, and like I said, they were gone two weeks, and it cost him almost \$15.00.

BM: Ohhh.

MSBT: And it was quite an expensive trip.

BM: [Laughs].

MSBT: So then [laughs], the other thing they used to do was to go fishing in the Des Plaines River. And when Kenilworth was being built after my father came back from Hutchinson, it was about 188?. . . well, I guess it was 1889. Late in '89.

Track 9

MSBT: He went with, he and Phil Sears lived in the barn which was the first thing, there was a barn put up by the Kenilworth Company, and they lived in the barn and hired themselves out to the Kenilworth Company. And my father at that time was about 19 and worked with the surveyor. So he learned to survey, and he surveyed the largest part of Kenilworth. When my cousin Peggy McClaine who also, she grew up here in Kenilworth--she lives in Ohio now. She said to me one day, "You know, whoever laid out these streets in Kenilworth must have been drunk." And I said, "Well, you just be careful, that was your uncle, that was my father". [Laughs].

BM: [Laughs].

MSBT: But it was true. I remember going up to Kenilworth from Evanston, and those roads were mighty dirty. And mighty muddy. Full of holes, full of chuck holes. And as we went down one road leading maybe over to the station or going down to visit some family that he'd known years ago, we were always going around a tree that was sitting in the middle of a road. And it's true, Uncle Joe was very fond of trees, and he was determined to save all the trees he could. So, if they possibly could, if there was a way to get around going east on the right and [laughs] west on the left, that sort of thing, he insisted that the tree be kept.

BM: That that tree be saved. Yeah.

MSBT: Of course, through the years now, as they began paving and one thing and another, there were, of course, people who came along who didn't have that regard for trees, and they [laughs]. . .

BM: They were cut down.

MSBT: They took them out.

Track 10

MSBT: . . . starting of the *Tribune* because I don't want to get into, I don't think you want me to get into J.Y. Scammon.

BM: No, no. What I would like to know is if you would like to repeat the piece of information about J.Y. Scammon and the money that he advanced the two . . .

MSBT: The financing, mmm hmm.

BM: . . . Forrest and Wheeler.

MSBT: Mmm hmm. Yes.

BM: Would you do that then, Mrs. Townes? It's on.

MSBT: Oh, it's on. All right. Well, I think it's rather interesting. It is to me, anyway, that my great-grandfather Thomas Alexander Stewart on my father's side, and my great-grandfather Jonathan Young Scammon on my mother's side were connected in the beginnings of the *Tribune* in this way. Thomas A. Stewart who had owned, or who owned *The Gem of the Prairie*, and Forrest and Wheeler and Kelly wanted to start a new paper which, I believe it was Wheeler who says he takes the credit for naming it the *Tribune*, but they did not have enough funds to back themselves in this. Did I mention Kelly was in on this?

BM: Yes, you mentioned him.

MSBT: But he didn't stay with the situation too long. At any rate, they needed backing, and Jonathan Young Scammon came to the rescue and financed Forrest and Wheeler so that they might buy into the *Tribune* operation. And so it was that all of these early founders of the *Tribune* were all members of the New Church in Chicago which was started in 1837 by Jonathan Young Scammon with his wife and one friend. And well, that's the tale of that.

BM: [Laughs].

Track 11

MSBT: Yes, it might be interesting to note that--it's on, right?

BM: Mmm hmm.

MSBT: It might be interesting to note that Jonathan Young Scammon's wife was Marianne Haven Dearborn of Bath, Maine, a cousin of General Henry Dearborn.

BM: Mmm hmm. Fine.

MSBT: S.S. Barry, Samuel Steadman Barry, left Salem with some of his brothers and sisters and came to the Chicago area in 1837, really landed in Chicago in 1837. He established a home in Millburn, which is Waukegan, I believe, and there his children were born. Having gotten everybody organized and, as I understand it, the garden in, he decided to walk, go into Chicago and see what the business situation was. This he set out to do by walking, and he walked into Chicago for . . . several times he walked in, and he walked out. And we often used to say what feeble people we were that we didn't walk to Chicago anymore from Waukegan.

BM: [Laughs].

MSBT: You know, my mother and dad did, they were pretty husky, too. Father used to get up and get the early train which would . . . and take it down to the South Side, with his bicycle on the train. And he spent the night there at my mother's house and the next morning, they would start out, and they bicycled from E. 66th Street clear out here to Wilmette.

BM: Oh.

MSBT: Then they would gather up the people they knew in Wilmette, and they would go up to the old cider mill, up here in Wheeling. On the bicycles.

BM: Mmm hmm.

MSBT: And I remember he said it would take, it took them about three hours to pedal from 66th Street out to Wilmette.

BM: The roads were not the way they are today.

MSBT: No, they were sandy and they were difficult [laughs], but this didn't stop them. And so they were pretty . . .

BM: Good healthy lot. [Laughs].

MSBT: Good healthy line, too. But anyway, about this . . . I was going to tell you something interesting. When he walked, when S.S. Barry walked into Chicago, he would stop and refresh himself at a tavern, the tavern as I understand, where he had a choice of eating brown bread and common doings or white bread and chicken fixin's.

BM: Ohhh. [Laughs.]

MSBT: And this seems to have been the accepted menu which was available.

BM: Now what was brown bread and common doings? [Laughs].

MSBT: [Laughs].

BM: Have you any idea?

MSBT: Yes, it was beans.

BM: Oh. . .

Track 12

BM: Really? That was beans. The other would have been chicken and . . .

MSBT: Dumplings. Mmm hmm.

BM: I see, that's interesting.

MSBT: [Laughs].

BM: Do you know what the name of the tavern was, where he stopped?

MSBT: At this moment, I don't know what the name of the tavern was. I'll make a note of some of these things if I can find it out. I should have it.

BM: Could it have been the one that was up, um, I'm thinking if he was walking down from Waukegan, Patterson's Tavern on. . . um, where Lloyd Beach is now, up in Winnetka?

MSBT: What would it be?

BM: Patterson's Tavern.

MSBT: That sounds a little familiar, and would it have been up near Gross Point?

BM: Well, no, Gross Point is south of here.

MSBT: South of here.

BM: It would have been just a little north of here, up along Sheridan Road, which sounds like it would have been a logical way for him to travel.

MSBT: Yes, some of the roads have changed so that I'm not too sure. But that could have been. Because that would have, I went up there, we had a number of

family picnics up there in the grounds of the old house, log cabin up there. And it seems to me, as I recall correctly, it was quite a direct route. We went up Sheridan Road. It wasn't any wandering around west. It was right near, in a direct line from here. So I wouldn't doubt but what that was Patterson's.

BM: Maybe it was.

MSBT: I'll try to look that up. I have quite a few notes from Father and Cousin Dorothy. I was, I must have been a strange child. I was always writing things down . . .

BM: Do you want this on the tape? Go ahead. I think it will be interesting.

MSBT: Whether it was a paper napkin or whatever. You know. I was always writing something down. And um . . .

BM: I see.

MSBT: This is how I happen to have some of these bits of information.

BM: I see, you've been collecting things all along then, apparently, on family history and family stories.

MSBT: I think so. I think I've always been interested. Strange thing, I think it started when I was about 12, and there was a memorial service for my great-grandfather Jonathan Young Scammon at Fullerton Hall. He'd been gone 25 years. And I was quite impressed. I didn't know I had any relations who were so important to the City of Chicago. As a child, it seemed to me, as though they simply . . . nothing was done, nothing was built, the schools, everything was necessary. His financing or his push or his ideas were all necessary. And I said to my Grandmother: "How did it happen that he just built all these things himself? Didn't he have any help?"

BM: [Laughs].

MSBT: [Laughs].

BM: I suppose at 12 that's the impression you have of your, the last generation.

MSBT: Yes, so. She said: "Well, yes," she said, "he had help. He always could get help from the Lord. And," she said, "he had an anchor. He anchored his thoughts and his guidance from the Church". And I said: "My," I said, "you mean he had a direct line in the telephone to the Lord?" Here I was, 12 years old. Well, children are certainly funny, but sometimes you [laughs] you get some interesting angles.

BM: Yes, mmm hmmm. Very interesting.

Track 13

MSBT: Not too long ago, I guess it was the early part of the summer, I was driving along Greenleaf and saw this man cutting the grass or doing something on the lawn there, so I stopped and got out and spoke to him.

BM: Uhh. You didn't mention which house.

MSBT: Oh yes, Grandma's house. It was the house at 912 Greenleaf. I had often had it in mind to stop and make myself known because the house has been changed considerably on the outside, and I couldn't put the, I couldn't put some of the windows and doors together in the right place at all.

BM: I see.

MSBT: So I wanted to ask him about this, if they had made it over and taken the porch off or if they had included the porch. What they had done.

BM: I see.

MSBT: So, he was most gracious and pleasant, and we walked around the house. I partly wanted to find out if he would be interested if I could locate early picture of the house if he'd be interested.

BM: Mmm.

MSBT: And he said yes he would, very much so. So we walked around the house, and I pointed out various and sundry changes on the outside. Which, one of the things, of course, that I simply couldn't get used to was the fact that there was no porch across the front.

BM: Mmm hmm.

MSBT: Now, Grandma had a porch, right across the front. In fact, it was built very much like the house next to it on the west. Which, incidentally, was the house . . . I think that was 916, and that was Aunt Florence's house. She built that when she was living and teaching at New Trier. Along about the turn of the century, I guess it was. It must have been built right after, or shortly after 912 was. You see, my father's father, George Barry, died very suddenly in 1904. I think it was in November somewhere in 1904. This is a little sidelight that's interesting. Up until the turn of the century, in fact even at that time, coronary thrombosis, which was the cause of his death, was practically unknown in this country. Now, of course, it's the number one heart problem or cause of death. Anyway, the thing that happened was that they were just beginning, about 1910 or 11, and most of the

physicians who graduated around that time had never heard of coronary thrombosis. Nobody ever had a coronary. But this all came as a result of refining the flour. And they finally figured it out. And the millers, even at that time, I think that started about '87 or . . . '87, I think, was when they began to get into this refining the flour and coming up with this white flour which was all starch, completely deadly, and no, all the heart of the wheat was taken out, and this is your wheat germ and your bran which they have now discovered is so vital. And I tell you, if the FDA and the AMA would just clamp down and have everybody take the trash out of the food, we'd be a whole lot healthier. And I, I know, it just makes me ill when I see people going around, picking up these big loaves of white bread, you know, for children. And I remember, see I was born in 1903, and I was pretty small, let's see, family bought their house about 1907 or 8, and so it wasn't too long after that you could buy white bread. There were bakeries around. You could buy white bread. We were only a block from the main street. My mother would give me an errand to do, to go down to the grocery store and buy two or three loaves of this white bread, and then we'd pull out the inside and squish it up and clean the wallpaper with it.

BM: [Laughs].

MSBT: Because it made real good squish.

BM: [Laughs].

MSBT: [Laughs]. I never had any paste. You know, when we were making Valentines or Christmas cards or whatever--and we made all these things, we didn't buy anything--Why, all we had to do was go down to the flour bin and get flour and mix it up with water, and that was real good paste. Yeah, real good. So, I'm always diverging. Anyway, to get back to the porch. . .

BM: Right, the porch.

MSBT: So Grandma . . .

Track 14

MSBT: Grandma had this big porch across the front with the main stairs went right straight up the middle of the house and there was a front door right square in front of me. So, each side of the stairs there was a considerable portion of porch which was . . . It was all screened in and had wicker furniture and some sort of a couch at one end and various and sundry small rugs and mats and lots of . . . well, all of her plants were out there during the summer. She raised roses. She had a real green thumb. And apparently, in this day and age, the big thing was to get together at porch parties. And I must have gone at a very early age because my brother is just a hair over three years younger than I, and I was up there first before he was around. And I remember that . . . some of the names.

There was a Joy, a Miss Joy, who was a good friend. And then there was somebody that was Scheidenhelm mixed in there, and I believe there was a Cochran and . . . now, was it Wheeler? or Wilcox? . . .

BM: Wheelock ?

MSBT: Wheelock. That's the name. Wheelock. And they all were not too far removed. And they would get together and bring their sewing and chit chat. I think they did not indulge in bridge. I don't ever remember seeing any card games. It could have been that at that point they weren't too far removed from this great idea that card playing was a great sin.

BM: Hmmm.

MSBT: You know, I . . . [laughs]. Not, you know. . . This is quite a . . . might be interesting. Charlotte Blake, who was the daughter of Bishop Blake of the Methodist Church, married Bishop McConnell's son. And they lived two doors back of us in Evanston, so we were pretty good friends, she and I. And she had a younger sister who was just my brother's age. And then there were some other boys, some boys who were older. And so one day we were all over there, I guess it was in the summer, and we were playing Old Maid, you know, a very innocuous game. But all of a sudden, Edgar and Everett said "Jiggers, here comes father. Sit on your cards!"

BM: [Laughs].

MSBT: And everyone, all [laughs] . . . they all . . . they all promptly sat on their cards except little me. And I said "I'm not going to sit on my cards. I'm not doing anything wrong". And Doctor Blake walked in . . . Bishop Blake, later on, at that point he was Doctor Blake, he walked in and he said "Everett, Edgar Sharpe, you're playing cards!"

BM: Oh dear.

MSBT: [Laughs]

Track 15

MSBT: So, he turned to me and said, "Why are you playing cards? You know that's wrong". And I said, "Doctor Blake, my mother and father say there's a right way and a wrong way of doing almost everything, and we are playing cards the right way."

BM: Oh dear. [Laughs].

MSBT: So this brought him to my family's home, and he tried to convince them that I really was quite . . . well, a disturbing factor, you might say . . ."

BM: Ohh.

MSBT: . . . with his teachings. And mother and father stuck to their guns about this. And years later when . . .there were a few other little incidents. Years later, when we visited them in Paris--he was then bishop of a Methodist Church, I don't know just what his job was, but anyway--his wife said, "You know, you really contributed quite a bit to his advancement, Mrs. Barry, because it broadened his thinking." And this was one of the reasons he was sent abroad. And we had . . . for instance, there were plays at the Evanston Women's Club, and they weren't allowed to go. And mother said there's nothing wrong about that, you know. And then, we had some funny incidents. One year, on my birthday, I was allowed to have two guests, in addition to my brother, to go to the theater. And I invited Charlotte and Rachel Blake. And by that time, they thought maybe this might be all right. And so we went. And Mrs. Blake told mother that she had instructed them to be sure and thank Dr. Barry for the nice time. So she asked them, she checked up on this, and she said, I said "Charlotte, did you and Rachel thank Dr. Barry?" And Charlotte said, "Yes, I did." And Rachel said, "I didn't." And she said, "Why not?". "Well," she said, "when Charlotte thanked him, he said 'Don't mention it,' so I didn't".

BM: [Laughs].

MSBT: All right. Let's get back to the porch.

Track 16

MSBT: Well now, these porch parties, invariably, were . . . they were ways of getting together and enjoying chit chat and neighborly conversation, catching up on what was going on in the family, and children, that sort of thing, children, grandchildren, reminiscing. But, as far as I recall, there never was any card playing. They used to sew some, but mostly it was just conversation. And refreshments. And I don't ever remember a card party, I mean a porch party, of any sort where my grandmother didn't have sardine sandwiches. There were other things, too, but the sardine sandwiches were always ever-present. And even when I was alone, she would produce sardine sandwiches. She always had them on hand. When I was ten, I received a bicycle, learned to ride, and I was allowed to ride from Evanston to Wilmette by myself and visit Grandma anytime I wanted to. And I suppose, like many older people, she wasn't always hungry now and then. But she always would feed me, whether it was at noon, or before noon or after noon, and it was invariably, it was sardine sandwiches. Well, I eventually learned to be quite fond of sardines, [laughs] due to the situation. And do you know, not too long ago, I read quite a remarkable piece of research, written by a physician, a Dr. Frank. I can't remember his first name, but anyway. He came up

with, what he feels is real proof, that one of the problems of today, and one of the reasons that people don't have the energy today, is because they don't, they're very short on nucleic acid, which is one of the . . . I guess, enzymes, is it? . . . anyway, we don't manufacture in our own body. There are eight of them. He points out, he has a small list, and he points out that one of the ways to get yourself back in running condition, you might say, is to eat sardines. . .

BM: Oh, really?

MSBT: . . . and canned sardines at that. And he says they don't know why, it's the only thing of the many things he recommends--and it's not so many, either, but there's salmon and other fish, shellfish and so forth, and chicken--but in every instance, the fresh is better, has more of this than the canned, except for sardines. And sardines are way up at the top of the list.

BM: So, your Grandmother was supplying your energy. . .

MSBT: [Laughs]. She was one of the most energetic people. And so I have wondered, since I read this, I have wondered if this was what really gave her all this energy.

BM: Well, it's as good a reason as any.

MSBT: Because she was out in the garden and did a great many things. She was very active, right up until the time when she had a stroke, and that laid her low. But by that time, I think she was about 83. But she was very energetic. And I think these simple, what shall I say, these simple pleasures of enjoying your friends and reminiscing and bringing your friends up to date on what was going on in each other's families, it was, sort of a different kind of a closeness and appreciation of friends and neighbors than we have today. And she was very fond of these people who came over, and she knew just what was going on. And she knew their family ramifications, as I suspect they knew hers. And we don't, we very seldom get that close today, I think, with any neighbors. In fact, we're more apt to know people here and then people there, miles away. And you know, it's not within walking distance. These people were all within walking distance.

BM: Yes, I think we've lost a lot.

Track 17

BM: All right, would you like to tell me about the Gates family?

MSBT: Well, I'll tell you what, I wish I had the little book here. I took copious notes one time when I went to visit Mrs. Gates. She was the one, the last Gates who lived in the coach house of the old Gates house, which was on the corner of, let's see, what was it? Sheridan and what's that first . . . was it Elmwood? What's

the first street? Well, you remember, at one point--or maybe you don't--it became, it was a chicken dinner place. It was taken over by some people who served chicken dinners. But in the coach house, and this was, hmmm . . . well, I don't know. At any rate, I had a long talk with her because Will Gates was a very good friend of my mother and father, especially my father. And I don't know too much about the Gates family except that they were very much old Wilmette. And they were quite a large family. And when I talked to Mrs. Gates, she said that they had been very, very distressed because they had decided. . . as a family they owned this property that we now call . .

2 Track 1 [Track is empty].

2 Track 2

MSBT: They owned this property on the lakefront. It was a beautiful grove of oak trees. We used to come up from Evanston, and at that point I had friends in Wilmette, Kenilworth, Winnetka, I think. Even as late as, let me see, in the '30s, we would come up and picnic in this oak grove. It was a beautiful place. And in talking to Mrs. Gates, she really bewailed the fact that they had offered this oak grove lakeside property to the Village of Wilmette for a park. She said, you know, we couldn't understand it. But they said no, they didn't want any part of it because they didn't want the kind of people who would come out to that kind of a lakeside park. So, she said, we let it out to various and sundry business things, and that's why we have had . . . there was a nightclub there, there was a theater there, there were various and sundry ice cream parlors. I think, at that time, there were no gas stations, but there was DeMets [?] was a big . . . Do you remember DeMets? DeMets was a big, very popular place there on the west side of the street where you stopped before and after this or that. It was a young people's haven. Older people enjoyed it, too. Mostly hamburgers and fried food, but you could get a fairly good meal put together. They had ice cream and so forth. But it was a well-known spot. And she was the last survivor of this particular branch. It was, as I said, it was a big family. I wish I had my father here. They certainly knew the ins and outs of the Gates family.

BM: You're referring to Mrs. Gates when you said she was the last one to live close to that.

MSBT: Yes, the oldest member there. She had made up her mind that she couldn't live in this house. This was the coachman's house, and it was a cute little place. But after her husband died, I believe he fell and broke a hip or some such. Anyway, he went down to Evanston hospital, was taken down there, and she felt that he died of pneumonia because he caught pneumonia waiting for somebody to pay attention to him. And she was quite bitter about it. At any rate, there seemed to be some family consultations to the effect that she was going to go and live with another member of the family and they would dispose of this last piece of property. I have a strange piece. You know, I should have that book.

Maybe I can find it, that I made notes in when I was talking to her about the Gates family and different ramifications.

BM: That would be great.

MSBT: They really were right in there . . . Somehow in the back of my mind, without my notes, it seems to me they were right in there with Ouilmette. They were very, very early. And they were very substantial people. I don't remember now what their business was, even Will Gates. And he and his wife came down after they were older, and they lived at the North Shore Hotel in Evanston, across from Mother and Dad, pretty much. So they used to see quite a bit of them. And there was another part of the family that went to Florida. And they used to have these reunions. But that big house, it was a beautiful Victorian, turreted, Rococco gem. You know, it really was . . .

BM: I've seen pictures of it. It must have been a beautiful house.

2 Track 3

MSBT: That was really old days. I don't know, there was one thing. Apparently, I don't know when the automobiles came in exactly. That would be interesting if I could give you something about that. But, I do know that my father started the practice of medicine in Evanston in 1902, and he made all of his calls on a bicycle.

BM: Ohhh, really?

MSBT: And about 1905--it was 1905--he was in a position to purchase Maude, the horse that my grandmother had. So, it must have been, maybe after that that barn burned. I have a dim recollection of a fire, but I can't put it together. But anyway, so he purchased Maude and the buggy from her, a buggy. And starting in, whatever it was, spring or whenever of 1905, he commenced making his calls with a horse and buggy. He stabled Maude and the buggy at the Evanston--whatever they called it--at the stable in Evanston which was on Sherman Avenue, just slightly south of Church Street. It was just sort of around the bend. I remember going there many times to wait for Maude to be harnessed up, and I often rode with him. Well, that was step number two.

BM: Mmm hmm.

MSBT: And then, in 1907, he bought his first car. And that car, let's see, by that time my brother had been born. And we had, I think it was a Corbin, and it had red leather upholstery. And as I recall, it had a collapsible hood that collapsed when you pulled it up. And then if it rained, it was very much like with a horse and buggy. You had sort of a lap robe in front that you, you know a rubber thing that you pulled up. . .

BM: Oh, I see. And the hood was the thing that covered the seat?

MSBT: Yeah. Yes, mmm hmm.

BM: Oh.

MSBT: And then he decided he needed . . . there was some kind of, I don't know whether it was storage or what in the rear, but he decided to enlarge the automobile so he could carry us children more comfortably in the back, the two of us. So, he built a seat. It had a back and arms and it was upholstered and red. And somehow he fastened this on to the back end of his . . .

BM: [Laughs].

MSBT: . . . of his car. This I remember very distinctly. When he had the horse and wagon, we were allowed to hitch our sleds to the back of the buggy, and he would trot his horse down, and we were there on our sleds. But with a car, he wouldn't permit it. He settled in Evanston because, although Uncle Joe wanted him to settle in Kenilworth, Dr. Rufus Stolp who grew up, I believe in Wilmette, was, at that point, I think, living in Kenilworth. Now, I could be wrong, but I believe this is so. At any rate, when father talked to him about establishing himself there, too, Rufus said that he thought it would be a great mistake because there were so few people in Kenilworth that it really wouldn't support two doctors. So then he talked to some--whoever they were, I never knew--but he talked to some doctors in Wilmette, and they felt the same way. And even in Evanston, they weren't too sure that there was room for another doctor. But he finally tackled Dr. Merritt C. Bragdon, who lived on Chicago Avenue, not too far from the Methodist Church and the Women's Club there. And he talked to him because he, too, was a homeopath. And Dr. Bragdon said yes, he was getting along, and he thought that it would be a good idea if he settled there because it would help him out. He could ask him to make his night calls and take over some of the emergencies and so forth. So, how many doctors today make night calls?

BM: [Laughs.]

2Track 4

BM: Very few. Oh dear.

MSBT: So, that was how he happened to land in Evanston. And he and mother found an apartment about on the corner of Church and Chicago Avenue, which was just one house, really, removed from Dr. Bragdon who was on Chicago Avenue north of Church Street. And so this was one of those things that I was able to see a good deal of change. And while I wasn't aware of people in Wilmette, I was very much aware that when I would take my bicycle and ride up

to Wilmette, at first when I would get up around Linden Avenue and all up in there and coming north, it was all woods. Every now and then, there'd be a house being built or Grandma would sell a lot and there'd be something built there. But you could always go out for a picnic somewhere. You could always take a walk through the woods. You could always find spring beauties and hepaticas and violets.

BM: I remember. Mmm hmm.

MSBT: Mother, I know, said that when Father proposed to her, she lived on the South Side, and he appeared on the early morning train, which I believe left around here around 6:00. And he had gotten up before breakfast, and from his yard, had picked an enormous bouquet of violets. Because she was born in February, and the violet was the month of February, so forth and so on. But life was considerably different in many respects. I think, in some ways, I think it was more humane. In his practice of medicine, really, along with practicing medicine, he offered, he gave friendship and concern and even prayers. He conducted baptisms, which he told us about. There was a very concerned family who had, they felt that this child was going to die, this baby, and they were very concerned that the child would be burned in hell. And Father said that he had been taught in the New Church that any person connected with a church, in an emergency, could offer baptism as a sacrament.

BM: Mmm hmm.

MSBT: And I don't know whether this was so or not. I don't know that it bothered him any, but he saved the minds of the parents.

BM: Yes.

MSBT: Because at this time, it was like those cards, you know.

BM: Yes. Yeah.

MSBT: It was still an ongoing problem.

2Track 5

MSBT: I must have been . . . well, I was less than 3, when I recall my father coming in, waking me up in the middle of the night, or whatever it was, anyway, I was asleep. My mother was in bed. And he carried me into the bedroom and said he wanted to tell me that he was going out to see a very sick person, and that he needed the Lord's help to be sure and do the right thing, to be guided to do the right thing for her. And that he was going to look after the medical part, but it was up to Mother and me to do some praying that he would be guided right. And for years this sort of thing went on. When I was a child, he would pick up my brother,

the two of us, and we'd be in there. And he literally practiced medicine with the Lord. Apparently, this was part of this background training in the New Church, was turning for guidance. There were lots of things that happened that were really very interesting. My parents felt very sorry for my two youngest sisters because both my father and mother grew up with wide open spaces around them. Father, when he lived on the South Side, he went duck hunting on the South Side. When he lived in Wilmette, there was skating on the lagoons, on the Skokie Ditch, and whatnot. And every winter, they went ice boating, just the other side of Ridge Avenue.

BM: Oh, really?

MSBT: Yeah. He said, oh he said, it was swampy over there, and it wasn't the smoothest sailing, but they went ice boating. And he usually said, where we lived, he said, you know, we used to put on hip boots and go out and pick cattails there, just by the dividing line of the subdivision, I guess, was right there at Woodstock. And, he said, the woods was all watery and swampy and all that. But, my Grandmother lived until 1927, and her husband died in . . . he had that coronary in 1906. He was in the Civil War and was a member of the Loyal Legion. And I understand any officer who was in the Civil War was eligible for membership in the Loyal Legion.

2Track 6

MSBT: And it was hereditary. I don't know whether it even exists now or not. These were all things that my father told me. He gave me quite a lot of papers, and I have them, but I don't think my brother ever was interested. Anyway, he gave them to me.

BM: Yeah. I have a question about your father's schooling. You said he went to the Chicago . . . ?

MSBT: . . . Manual Training School. Yes.

BM: Manual Training School on the South Side. Was that because there were no schools here or was he particularly interested in the school?

MSBT: Well, now I don't know just when the public schools. . . . There were public schools, they were established. But the thing was that they had a great time in Chicago establishing some organized procedure in handling the schooling. And they were constantly, as I understand it, up against the idea of the citizenry voting against spending any more money on putting up a school building. Because, after all, they had enough schools. J.Y. Scammon was determined that as Chicago grew that it wasn't enough to have one, two, or three schools anywhere. That the important thing was to have neighborhood schools so that children could walk to school, so that they could make friends of the . . .

so the families and the children in the schools, the neighborhoods, could stay de-contained and enjoy that area. After all, they were, you know, quite often far apart. And he fought quite, he was what they call, he was a Whig or a Republican. And he was approached by some of the men who were, what were they? What were the other ones? Not Democrats, something else. Anyway. . .

BM: Those were the Tories, weren't they?

MSBT: No, no. The Tories brought you in. You're thinking of the Revolution.

BM: Yeah.

MSBT: No. Anyway, they asked him. Apparently, he was a good organizer, and he had considerable money, and he was a clear thinker and very interested in education, and felt it was basically very important. So, somewhere along the line, and I have dates on that, he organized, he wrote the laws under which the Chicago schools were organized and established. And there is a school named for him, the Scammon School.

BM: Oh, mmm hmm.

MSBT: I don't even know now where it is. But the children of the professional class or the Industrialists--the bankers, the newspaper owners, and all that, the lawyers, doctors--in fact, I think they called it the elite of the . . . Chicago at that time, and I suppose what it meant was the children of those who had received education in the East or . . . mostly it was the East before they came to Chicago, were sent to, they either were tutored or they were sent to these schools. Now, the girls went to the Mrs. Lane and Baker School [?], and I think that's where both my grandmothers went. My mother went to a school called the Loring School. And father, the boys, all went to the Chicago Manual Training School, which developed after, or about the same time, anyway, as the old Chicago University.

2Track 7

MSBT: And this Chicago Manual Training School was specifically for boys. And they taught, among other things, they had mechanical drawing and all sorts of practical approaches to engineering. My father had many drawings, for instance, of bridges and even a flat iron. And they were supposed to know just how to put these things together. And then they had a class, or classes, in wood and woodworking and metal and forging and all that sort of thing. I have a lamp which he made of iron, forged iron, and it's twisted and turned, and it looks like the Eiffel Tower. And a base, and it curls like this on the legs. And my brother has the andirons he made for his mother. I think he said he was, at that point, twenty. Twenty when he made this thing. And it's made for a big fireplace, and it had two bars across that were twisted. The bar was this big, twisted like this and twisted at the end. And these things that came out here, they stood this high, and they

were twisted like this and then around like this and came down and then some more legs twisted. It was a masterpiece of . . .

BM: It sounds really complicated.

MSBT: Yes, very complicated. And then, now, I don't know whether . . . I think he was not . . . The Chicago Manual Training School was, as I understand it, started in high school. And I believe he entered that in 1890 because he graduated in 1894 from the Chicago Manual Training School. And before that, I don't know where he was, but I would suspect in some school in Chicago because that was a little too soon for him to have been out here in Wilmette or anywhere. '75, '12, '87 . . . Well, the thing is, he was an expert at jigsaw.

BM: Ohhh.

MSBT: And he made many . . . I have a couple of cabinets. He made these cabinets, they were decorative, and they were about so, oh about 10 inches across, about 12 inches high, and lots of scrollwork and so forth and so on. But he knew wood from A to Izzard, and he knew construction, and he had intended on going to Massachusetts Institute of Technology and becoming an engineer.

BM: Sure.

MSBT: But somewhere, I don't know what happened at that point, whether his father wasn't well, there was some reason why he didn't go, and he went into business instead. And worked for a Mr. Martin who was connected with one of the flour companies, I think it was . . . I should have that.

BM: Flour, when you say flour, it's f-l-o-u-r?

MSBT: Yes, not the . . . Yes, milling. I think it was Crosby. Crosby Flour Company. And he was there for about two years, and he and mother were engaged, they were going to be married, and he said one day that he wondered . . . Oh, he was planning, at that time, not to stay in the flour business but to go into the theater.

BM: Oh.

MSBT:
And he was studying under Roundtree, some of these famous people. Here it is, Washburn-Crosby. 1894-98 he was with Washburn-Crosby Company. And '96 and '97 . . .

[Tape ends at this point.]

Transcription by Amanda Barnett

