

Frances A. Goodhue (1886-1983)

Copyright Wilmette Public Library.
All rights reserved.

Transcribed by Karen Miller, June 2009

How long have you been in Wilmette?

FG: We came here in 1914. My father had retired at that time, and he already owned this property and so it was decided it was best for us to [indistinct]

And where was your property?

FG: It was down at Fourth Third at Linden.

And was there a house on it?

FG: Yes there was a house on it.

Was it a new house?

FG: No it was an old house that was built over on Laurel Ave. and had to be moved because of the cutting of the drainage canal.

I see. And so you moved it over there.

FG: We moved it.

How big was your family

FG: Well there were three of us daughters in the home and my parents.

Five of you

FG: Yes. Another sister was already living in Wilmette, Mrs. James Crossley.

That would be

FG: At Fourth and Washington

Oh, you were close

FG: Um hum.

And what was Wilmette like when you came.

FG: Well when we came one thing one thing of interest the elevated was already operating to Fourth and Linden. There were no houses across the street from us. It was just a meadow. And the fisherman loved to come. Evidently around 2 and 3 in the morning was the good time to catch and they would go [indistinct] across that field to a little shack that was owned by a man who sold bait. And they would get their bait there and then go on over to the harbor to do their fishing. And evidently they were a little afraid of the dark because they talked at the top of their lungs. The other thing I remember was that there seemed to be so many sick wives at the time when the lilacs were in blossom. We had two large lilac bushes on the front lawn and so many of these men would come to the door and say, %dhave a sick wife may I please have some lilacs?+

[Laughter] The fishermen?

FG: Yes, the fishermen, on their way home again.

[Laughter] From the jetty. Interesting. And have you any idea how many people were in Wilmette at that time.

FG: I don't think I have any good idea of that. But of course it was growing down in this section by the time we were out here, and there were many houses. Now there were some that were over here on Laurel to the rear of our house. Those were older houses that were built at the time that ours was, the one that was bought and moved.

Was this a part of Lewellen Park?

FG: I don't think that Linden Ave. was but Laurel was I believe. And I know that some of our neighbors, the Farrell family, had their two girls... **three** girls in that family, and they were all in the Evanston School District because they were in Lewellen Park

In Lewellen Park then was Evanston School District

FG: They went to the Evanston Orrington School. When they were ready for high school they went to New Trier.

I see. This is very interesting. Rodney Allen who is now gone lived over here in Lewellen, the old Lewellen Park, I believe he was born in that town, and that is at Fourth St. near Maple. You didn't know him?

FG: No I didn't

He was a member of the Congregational Church

FG: Um Hum. I think I had met him

My husband and I met him in later years, but he and his brother were bachelors and lived there. And he was in a bank downtown for his career. So umõ Then you didn't go to school here in Wilmette?

FG: No no I didn't

You were from [indistinct]

FG: I graduated from the University of Chicago

Yes

Track 2

Now tell me about your sister, Mary.

FG: Mary was registrar at Northwestern Law School for twenty-five years. She decided that it was well to go while [indistinct] stay, but she went very quietly just at her regular vacation time. And in the fall, I like to tell this story, I think it was November perhaps, she and I were invited to meet someõ two men, graduates of the law school, down at the Union League Club. We were going to meet them for luncheon. And we went to the ladies parlors and met them, and then went up in the elevator up to the banquet hall. And when we stepped off the elevator there were about 400 men rose to their feet and they were all singing %for Sheç A Jolly Good Fellow.+And they had this wonderful display of friendship from all those students in the years that she had served there, the 25 years. She wanted to go without making any fuss but she had to accept that joy of theirs in tribute to her.

Wonderful! And I had the good fortune to meet many of her former students or even their children. The girl from Hawaii. I remember who came and lived with you did she?

FG: [indistinct] We got her started on the winter, umõ winter dress, sheç never had anything that [indistinct] and we were very cautious in mentioning Fields and Carson Pririeç, because we knew sheç want to go to all the dress shops in town. She heard there were a good many of them. She had to be very careful in her [indistinct]

Oh yes.

FG: And she now is a professor at the University of Hawaii, Honolulu

She was a charming girl

FG: Yes she was

I know how fond of the family Mary was. Did she ever visit them?

FG: We never – no we never got over there, but they did come here. Her two sisters came and were with us. And we got a great deal joy out of them.

I remember Dan Clinton I believe was in school at this time. Many of the lawyers that we have known here in Wilmette in years past. And then Abby lived with you too in the later years. She raised your family here, and then left and went away?

FG: After her husband had passed away. She was living with us at that time and she stayed until her [indistinct] passed away

She and I were great friends

FG: She was very active in the Woman's Club and in the Congregational Church

Yes she was, and I enjoyed knowing her immensely. Was there any business district around Fourth and Linden when you first came?

Track 3

FG: There was a drug store. Oh, there were quite a number of shops. A hardware store was here. Grocery

Well I often have wondered when that area started, so it is quite old.

FG: Yes it's quite old, um hum. Adams Electric shop. It was one that was

Early?

FG: Yes it was quite early

From time to time the businesses have changed. I know we visited the Jewel that used to be there. That was the neighborhood gathering place for everybody.

FG: Of course for a long time that property opposite us on Linden, as I mentioned before, was an open meadow. And the boys used to play games so much and we just so wished it could have been turned into a park. It would have been very fine. But that didn't happen, and of course a pair of good neighbors built over there and some of them are still occupied by the original builders.

Yes the [indistinct] Oberts? Are the original owners of those two houses. When did they start building houses on that block? [pause] You don't remember?

FG: I don't remember. Well the ones you just mentioned.

The Oberts?

FG: The Oberts. And Mrs. Oberts's parents had one of the houses and the Oberts the other. Those were two of the earliest ones

When did the McCalfs build?

FG: They were there a long time too?

Yes? And then Grampa Drucker and Gramma Drucker built that house

FG: We were so fond of her. A very dear neighbor

They lived there a very long time. And what about the houses on your side of the street, on the south side? Were there many?

FG: There were two anyway that were built. And there was a little house at the rear of the lot next to us, Mr. Benson [Bentson?], had been living there, and we were very fond of them. They were very nice neighbors. And they had a dog, which they called Scratch. He was a huge thing. And we had a cat. And the cat would go up the tree, but never so far but what Scratch could catch him by the tail. It just seemed to be part of their game, and that they had to do every day.

A little exercise [laughter]

FG: I was thinking the other day about umm. Father had the same birthday, I mean the day of the month, I think it was the 20th of April, as Mr. S. A. Wheelock and I think Mr. Alonzo Coburn. The three of them had the same date. And they used to exchange birthday cards as fun. They'd find something kind of humorous.

Now there were two Wheelocks, I believe, at that time. And which one was S. A.? Was that Edith Burgess's father or was it Miss Margaret and Allen

FG: It was the first, Mrs. Burgess's father

Mrs. Burgess's father. They had rather large families, did they? I didn't know any of her generation but her.

FG: Just this minute I can't think of her sister's name. She was so very active in the Congregational Church. In the Sunday School. I think there's a memorial room to her there.

And I can't think of her name.

FG: Bertha! Bertha Wheelock

I see. Tell me, ah, Mr. Burge was one of the very early refrigeration men I believe. Do you know anything about the history of that company

FG: No I don't know about that

He's I understand [track ends]

Track 4

His company was the first company to manufacture electrical refrigeration of some kind. The McCalf family too, I believe, was in wholesale refrigeration.

FG: I wonder if they were connected with Central Cold Storage? It's just a name to me but I know it was something to do with my father's interests.

I don't know, and unfortunately Mrs. Burgess is gone, but at one time she did tell me much about the refrigeration business. And in reading Colleen Kilburn's book on Joseph Sears of Kenilworth, she mentions the fact that there was a man let's see there was a connection there somehow, but I'm not too clear about this. But umm...the Scheidenhelm's you knew of course. And Mrs. Scheidenhelm told wonderful stories about... Tell me what the celebrations were like in the village at that time... Fourth of July celebrations. Was there a celebration?

FG: Oh yes they had one over in the park. Of course, the park wasn't as big in those early days. You know there were some houses that faced

The lake?

FG: South... it would have been south. Well some of those facing the lake are still there, but the ones that were facing south were all taken out and the part of the park that would be just to the south of their country club

They're south of Lake Ave. Right.

FG: I mean south of Fourth street. [indistinct]

South of Lake Ave. It runs into the water works, I believe. There was a row of houses that is now park where you go into the parking lot. I remember those. And there were oh, about six or seven of them all along in there.

FG: Quite a number

And then they bought them for the park. And by that time the back yards of most of those houses were gouged out

FG: Yes going down

And people could see the handwriting on the wall if something wasn't done. But when the Park Board took over they started letting the sand take over and the dredging of the canal for the harbor helped too and they built it I believe someone told me

FG: It was a long process making that harbor

Dredged

FG: Dredged. It needs it quite often now I understand

They do do it.

FG: Oh I remember once, this was when my sister Abby and her husband Jim Crossley were already in their home out here and I had gone with them and some man and we'd gone to the theater in the city. And we got to Central St. and thought we were going to get a little trolley that ran up to Wilmette, I remember. Well anyway, the canal was already dug, the water was not in it. But the bus had stopped running. It was midnight. And there was nothing for us to do but to walk across that tressel all the way across that cut. We had a great time. Getting home.

Then when, in the beginning, the EI did not come all the way to Fourth and Linden. It came to Central Street.

FG: That's right

I though I had remembered coming to the end of the EI at Central St. when I was in high school and had come to a Northwestern football game. And that that was as far as it went.

FG: That's right

But then there was some kind of a little trolley

FG: Yeah there was

.. that ran? But not at night?

FG: No. That's right. Not after midnight. We figured that out

I see. And when Frances, then did it come all the way through?

FG: [pause] I'm entirely vague on the year. But it did come through, and we were all very grateful to have it.

Yes..but it took quite a while didn't it?

FG: Yes it took quite a little while. Because, of course, the town didn't like it at all. It was going to turn us into a second Wilson avenue. We were quite sure of that. We were just as sure of that when the Linden Crest was built at Fifth and Linden. Having an apartment building there, you know, o .

A highrise!

FG: It was just going to spoil the whole town

Track 5

They felt that about No Man's Land too didn't they

FG: Um hum. Oh, and another thing that crossed my mind. We were very interested in watching the development of the Bahai Temple. And they never ask for any funds outside of their faith, and so it dragged on for a good many years. We had what we called a sheep barn

Tar paper over it level with the ground

FG: And finally the structure went up, and there was a lot of scaffolding all around it. And I had a front room. And I was conscious since I was little and I could just feel at first and then I realized when my eyes opened there was this flare going up and down seemingly across **the Meta's** [not clear] house which was built by that time. So I jumped out of bed and the whole scaffolding around the temple was on fire.

[Audible gasp]

FG: It was quite something

I never heard about that. For heaven's sake. And how did they o ? Did they get o

FG: Well they got our fire department and put it out. That was quite a picture.

RA: Can you remember other exciting things that happened in the town?

FG: Well, I don't think they're very exciting. We used to have a lot of kind of irritated fun you might say, occasionally, by having the men from the, ah..., I guess they call them guards, do their something or other at the elevated, would come over and see that house standing there at the corner of Third and Linden and there were fruit trees in the yard, and why not make use of it. And we had quite a little trouble. I know once our next-door neighbor, Mrs. [inaudible] looked out and saw our crabapple tree jiggling in such a queer way, and then she saw a blue leg coming down. And here a man had a large carton down below and he was picking the crabapples off our tree as fast as he could. And sometimes little boys would come and I remember once Louise looking out and seeing this little boy pulling up beets out of father's garden. Oh, he said, the man at the elevated told us to come and get them.

RA: [inaudible] They were city people who came out to the country.

FG: [chuckling] That was it. Free

RA: No Fence around. No building on the corner. Just clean sweep.

FG: I'd mention one thing we're speaking about my sister, Mary. Of course she was very much loved. But my sister, Louise, was equally loved.

RA: I didn't have

FG: She was a Kindergartner, and her work was all in Chicago. And when we first came to Wilmette she had to find a room somewhere on the South Side. She was working over in the stockyard district. She loved the work with those little Polish children. They had so little in their homes. And, ah, so she stayed on for a little while, and finally she got transferred to Rogers Park. And then of course [inaudible]. She was very active in the Kindergarten work in the city, and the president of a Kindergarten well, I misremember what they call that one. And was very much loved. And then was so active with young, high-school kids in the Congregational Church.

RA: Didn't she do a yes I had understood

FG: and she left a little fund for a room for the high-school age young folk and left quite a number of her books to them, and I imagine that her name is still on the door there. But she was very much loved.

RA: [inaudible]

TRACK 6

FG: She isn't remembered so well now, but she passed away very suddenly. In those days people did have funerals sometimes in the home. And to that one was held there. And people were out on our sidewalk out in the front of our house, they couldn't get in, and also at the back door. They had come many of them from Chicago because she had been so active down there in educational [inaudible]

RA: This is most interesting. I've heard many interesting stories about Louise. And knew she had, had contributed a great deal to the community at large. Tell me about your own particular interests. I've heard stories about you about how you used to rush from school to the symphony

FG: Oh yes

TRACK 7

FG: I started going to orchestra concerts when I was I think in the sixth grade and lived in Chicago on the South Side. I took a streetcar down, and had my concert season ticket. And then when I went to the University, I had been away for one year, and when I went back again I couldn't get a season ticket again I had to rely on what I could get when I got down there. And I had my last class of the day was in the third floor of a building on the far west edge of the campus at the University and I'd take an apple with me that morning and on the way to the Illinois Central which was a six block trot, I would munch my apple and get down to the concert and had go up to the gallery. And I always went singing mentally the Aida march so I took a good stately tread you see instead of a hasty one and oftentimes I would get ahead, would pass, many people that were stopping to catch their breath. So that was a great joy to me and I continued it for a good many years after we lived in Wilmette. I still have a great interest in [inaudible]

RA: I think we all do. And we're very proud of it. It's considered one of the world's great orchestras. And it really is and we should all

FG: I'm so glad they can have their concerts out here at Ravinia

RA: Yes, it really means a great deal to many people for Ravinia. I understand this year [inaudible] any other sales year. And then we will hope the weather cooperates. We have that problem sometimes.

FG: I remember when we were still living in the city we used to bring a lunch out on Saturday and go to the afternoon program, and we were given a pass somewhere or other and we used to go over to the lake and have our picnic and then back again.

RA: Oh?

FG: uh huhō and then stay for the opera in the evening. That made it pretty late by the time we got back to the South Side of Chicago. But it was worth it.

RA: Well that was when Ravinia first began in very early years. This is very interesting. And I knew they had opera there. In Murray Hall? Right?

FG: No in those days it was right on the stage

RA: On the stageō .And then later did they have itō take it inside?

FG: I donđ remember that it was ever inside.

RA: I see

FG: I think as long as they had opera at all it was on the main stage. Thatđ the way I seem to remember it.

RA: They seem to be wanting to bring it back and I believe that in this yearđ program they are incorporating some opera into the program with the symphony

FG: Um hum

RA: And this I think this would mean a great deal to many people. We do have a fairly active opera group now that started from nothing and become a real institution. And a few shortō well it isnđ as few eitherō I guess itđ over twenty years that theyđ been a going concern.

FG: And then I think our institute [Art Institute of Chicago] is a wonderful organization.

RA: Well itđ really been progressing greatly, ahō

FG: Well I used to go sometimes in the morning to the institute, and get my lunch there, and then go over to the concert. It made a pretty full day.

RA: It does make a full day. Were you fortunate enough to see the Monet show this year?

FG: No I didnđ get down

RA: It was a very difficult, ahō I went twice very early, and was there when they opened and it was wall-to-wall people. And of course it outnumbered any other show they have ever had, but I understand too that it may be the last show they will ever have because people do not like to loan their pictures for shows and the

insurance expense has become almost prohibitive. I noticed with the Monet no other museum cooperated. It was Art Institute only, because, um, many of the other museums they couldn't afford it, and it has been said that it probably would be the last year.

TRACK 8

RA: There was also a beautiful Chinese show in Kansas City that many local senior citizens flew down for that

FG: I've heard some of the reports from that

RA: I have too, and they enjoyed it thoroughly I hear

TRACK 9

RA: Well, it's um. Chicago has been a very exciting area to spend a life time in and I think you will agree. We have been many places, but we always feel

FG: I'm glad to be home

RA: I'm willing to be home

FG: I'm so much activity here

RA: That's right. And I heard another man in the Jewel this winter. That a man asked him if he'd gone away and he said no, his wife had been going away with him to Florida for the past three years. But she belonged to so many clubs, and had so many friends here, that he thought it was only fair to her to stay here this year and let her have the fun. And he said she really did. And in the meanwhile he joined a swim club somewhere and he had become quite an avid swimmer. And he told how many miles an hour he could swim, er, at once, and he was really feeling he had accomplished something by staying home this winter. This is the way many of us feel. People will go away for a while, but I

FG: They like to come home again.

RA: This is home. It has been for many generations, so east or the west, it's a nice place to visit

FG: A nice place to be, but I'm thinking of one thing I've never talked about. At the time of Dr. Frederick Stock passed away it was just before the opera the orchestra hall had been completed. I went down to a memorial concert that they were having at the Auditorium Theater. I stood, went around onto Harrison Street?

RA: Van Buren Street

FG: Van Buren that street north of Congress isn't it? The concert was in the Auditorium Theater. And the people were lined up four abreast on the sidewalk. And we inched and inched and inched and inched our way around to the Auditorium Theater. And then I climbed and climbed and climbed and I think I did get to about the last row in the gallery. Now I was just a little girl and I went by myself because I just had loved going to my concerts so much and I wanted to

RA: Now are you talking about Dr. Stock or Theodore Thomas?

FG: I meant to say Theodore Thomas

TRACK 10

RA: I never had the pleasure of hearing him, but when you said you were a little girl I thought it had to be Theodore Thomas

FG: It was Theodore Thomas of course [inaudible] orchestra hall after that.

RA: Well I've had the pleasure of attending concerts through all regimes but Dr. Theodore Thomas. But Frederick Stock introduced me to symphonic music

FG: Yes I've enjoyed his work very much

RA: He was a great conductor, but I'm very fond of both of the present conductors, both Giulini and Solti, ah

FG: Well I don't get down to the concerts now and I miss it very much.

RA: Yes well um

FG: [inaudible] television

RA: That's right. I listen on FM radio to the older records of the Chicago symphony that they replay on WEFM. And I enjoy it a great deal but ah

TRACK 11

[Track empty]

