



Anne Wilson Rowe

Interviewed 10 years ago in the first year of the Oral History project, Anne Wilson Rowe was a Fredericksburg native and well-known civic leader. Committee members had always planned to revisit some of the early participants to update and expand their observations, and Mrs. Rowe was asked to be the first in the revisiting series. Debra Nidel did the 1997 interview, and Jane Rasmussen is the February 5, 2008 interviewer.

Interviewer: Mrs. Rowe, good morning. Today is February 5, 2008, and we're here to have you bring us up to date on what's been happening to you in the last ten years since your initial meeting with the Oral History group, and I think we should just begin with your telling us where you were born and something about your family.

Mrs. Rowe: Well, I was born here in Fredericksburg the last day of 1934 in the old Mary Washington Hospital which was at the corner of Fauquier and Sophia Streets. My parents were both from Fredericksburg; they had grown up in Fredericksburg and they had met at the Presbyterian Church and we lived in the home with my grandmother at 607 Hawke Street.

Interviewer: In the 1997 interview you talked briefly about your brother, Lewis, living at Marlborough Point. Where is Marlborough Point?

Mrs. Rowe: Marlborough Point is on the Potomac in Stafford County. Because of the swampy area around – I think it's really Potomac Creek making its way to the Potomac, I think it's between Aquia Creek and Potomac Creek, but to get there you have to go to Brooke. It's like funneling through those marshy areas and there are a lot of homes out there now. I was amazed the last time I was out there how it had built up. This is a picture of my brother taken last summer at Senator Chichester's 70th birthday party. They are contemporaries, but Senator John Chichester's father, Henry Chichester, was commonwealth attorney in Stafford County, as John's brother, Daniel, is now. Henry and my father were boyhood friends and were in each other's weddings – and that was what we used to do on Sunday afternoon – frequently – was to go out to the Chichesters in Falmouth. We have pictures of us as babies on blankets while our fathers played tennis. Our mothers – Mrs. Chichester kept a horse or two – rode horse back.

So, Lewis just grew up in town but turned into a countryman. He worked at Fort Belvoir doing something that the more you tried to explain the less you know, so I do know that when the first Iraq war broke out he had to go to Germany to help pack up some equipment he had worked on that was being shipped to the front. But he loves to farm, he loves to fish, he loves to hunt. He keeps crab pots and lives off the land as much as he can, but he gets to town sometimes.

Interviewer: You indicated that he lived in the Mercer House?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh no, but I think – is it John Mercer who had a place at Marlborough Point which no longer stands? No, he (Lewis Wilson) built this house himself – he and friends – next to his wife’s uncle, Alvin Biscoe, who had a place out there. ...at least on the creek side I think they mostly were summer homes or part time homes, but Alvin Biscoe gave them, or sold them, some land adjacent to his and most of the building Lewis and his friends did. He had a friend,



Joe Hicks, whom you may know, taught in Stafford schools and was an administrator there, and one of my friends – Joe’s father was a plumber – and Joe had grown up helping his father, so he could help a lot with that. And, one of my friends once said, “That’s my idea of just what you need, is a plumber with a master’s degree.”

Anne and Lewis

Interviewer: In the first interview, you indicated that he had found some interesting things out there. Do you remember what they were?

Mrs. Rowe: Well, I know he has some seals from Mercer’s wine bottles. The bottles evidently were made specifically for him. But, the Smithsonian has done more than one dig on Marlborough Point, which is probably good because it’s so built up now. Lewis knew when he found these things that he could go to the Smithsonian records and they published papers on that dig and he knew he could identify them that way.

Interviewer: And your parents, they both grew up in Fredericksburg?

Mrs. Rowe: They both grew up here. My mother was born here; my father (Dr. Fielding Lewis Wilson) was born in Sandy Creek, NC, near Gastonia. His father had died six weeks before his birth and he had been a Presbyterian minister, so they were living in a manse, the Presbyterian word for a parsonage or a rectory. They had to give up that and they came here because his older brother had already been one year in the Fredericksburg College, which was a Presbyterian institution which I think I talked about in the other interview. Daddy always insisted he was a “Tar heel” though I think he was six months old when he left North Carolina. (Dr. Wilson was a well known dentist in Fredericksburg for many years.)

Interviewer: What was your mother’s name?

Mrs. Rowe: Her name was (Katherine) Stoffregen – which is “S-T-O-F-F-R-E-G-E-N”. Her father’s families were German and had settled here after the Civil War. Her great aunts had for a while run a German school here and whether it was a whole curriculum in German or whether it was simply a German language school that German children may have attended after going to

the public school, I do not know. Well, I guess they didn't have public schools that early for my grandfather, but to another school that other English-speaking children may have attended. My grandfather and all his brothers spoke English but they evidently had spoken German at home because in her last years my great-grandmother was very deaf and she could read lips in German but she could not read lips in English. Of course, we're sort of "lazy mouthed" when we speak English and the Germans do a lot more things with their mouth as they're speaking. But that was her first language. Both my great-grandparents were born in Germany but they came to Baltimore as children and they met and married in Baltimore.

Interviewer: And then they came to Fredericksburg?

Mrs. Rowe: By the steamship lines, you know. (Baltimore) that was the city Fredericksburg was familiar with, but I don't really know how they ended up here, but I do know that at one time during the Civil War they were living in Frederick, MD --and whether they then went back to Baltimore and then ended up here -- and how they ended up here -- I do not know. A cousin, Roy Martin who now lives in Florida and is a Presbyterian minister -- his mother is a Stoffregen cousin Frieda Stoffregen Martin. He is doing some family research right now. My great-grandmother's father had died and her mother had remarried and the family name was Fisher. Roy has found that the Fishers -- Mr. Fisher would have been her stepfather and another sibling lived here in Fredericksburg. They're in one of the censuses with the Stoffregen family. Mr. Fisher was a tailor. But my great-grandmother's father had been Protestant and you know Germany was so divided, some states were Catholic and some were Protestant, and he made his wife make a death bed promise that the child would be raised a Protestant. So, all her sisters -- the mother did remarry and remarried a Catholic -- Mr. Fisher was a Catholic -- so, all the sisters were Catholic and went to school to the nuns in Baltimore where they were taught a lot of handwork and evidently my Grandmother Stoffregen loved to do handwork and she was not allowed to go to the Catholic school for fear she would convert. So, she had to learn from her sisters. I do have a bedspread that she did some crocheted strips in, and it may be from her that I did inherit my love of doing handwork. I do knit in the German style, what they call Continental, because I learned from my aunt who learned from that grandmother.

Interviewer: So, she was the only Protestant with all the other Catholics in the family?

Mrs. Rowe: Yes, I don't know how many Fisher sisters there were, but that's the story.

Interviewer: There was just the two of you in your family -- your brother and you, and you were the oldest?

Mrs. Rowe: Yes.



Interviewer: And you grew up in Fredericksburg?

Mrs. Rowe: Yes.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about that and how it went?

Mrs. Rowe: Well, I lived just two blocks from where we are now, right over on Hawke Street, just a half block off Washington Avenue. Washington Avenue was – that end of Washington Avenue – was a playground mostly for boys. You could always tell what season it was because if it was football season the grass was gone in the middle of the mall, and if it was baseball season, the lack of grass formed a diamond, so children from all over town came and played. The girls didn't play on that area so much. We played a lot of sidewalk games and I think I knew people from about two or three blocks in each direction. I didn't know people as far away, except for people in my class at school, but people as far away as Hanover Street where my husband lived.

Interviewer: And where did you go to school in your early years?

Mrs. Rowe: I went to Lafayette School – now we have a new Lafayette. That was the building which is now the Central Rappahannock Regional Library headquarters building down at Lewis and Caroline Streets.

Interviewer: Did you walk to school everyday?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, yes. Mostly I ran because I've always been a late starter. It was difficult sometimes during the war because they did have a policeman at Lewis and Princess Anne – Princess Anne was Route 1 – the main highway from Maine to Florida. So, we needed a policeman to help us at that crosswalk. But, if there were a convoy going through during the war, nothing interrupted a convoy and if you got there and Mr. Smith -- Mr. Smith was the policeman who was always there – and, if Mr. Smith had to keep you there till the whole convoy got through, that was an excusable tardy if you were held up by a convoy. If you just started late, and ran all the way down the hill and still were late, that was an inexcusable tardy.

Interviewer: And this was first grade that you started there?

Mrs. Rowe: Yes. We had no public school kindergarten at that time. But I went from grades one through five at that building. And, at that time they also had James Monroe Elementary in one wing of what is now the Maury Commons – the Maury Building over here at Barton Street. And, so they had grades one through three at that school as well as Lafayette and then for grades four and five, everyone went to Lafayette and for grade six and seven and then eight when they added it, we all went to James Monroe and then James Monroe for High School. I think they

thought the younger children could walk to either James Monroe or Lafayette. There was no bus system run by the schools. So, I think that's why they kept the smaller children in two locations, so they were within walking distance for everyone. Then, of course, there was the parallel system for the African-American students, where they had Walker-Grant Elementary and Walker-Grant High. So, there were people criss-crossing in town on their way to school.

Interviewer: And that was always there, the separation between the African Americans and the white children?

Mrs. Rowe: Yes, until my children – my girls were in grades three, five, and seven when they put into place the Princeton Plan, which is what Fredericksburg had – which was that everyone went to one elementary, one middle school and one high school. And it's doable with a population this size, we don't have to have two elementary schools and divide people up.

Mrs. Rowe: We always knew African-American children who lived near us because their housing in Fredericksburg was always intermingled sort of block by block, but the school systems were separate.

Interviewer: But you played with African-American children?

Mrs. Rowe: Yes. You tended to until you got to school, I guess, and then you had school friends. I think the boys did more than the girls because they ranged farther. My brother had a very good friend, whose name was Junior Kay, and they were on their bikes all over town, but I think the girls didn't range as far. It's interesting that Douglas Street where we are right now was always black owner-occupied homes and I've always thought it possible that Douglas Street was named for Frederick Douglass, which means that we're not spelling it correctly.

Interviewer: When you were in elementary school was kindergarten included?

Mrs. Rowe: No. I went to kindergarten to a private – I think it may have been called a nursery school, but my neighbor here on Lewis Street, at 612 Lewis, was where Mary Van Rawlings Purks and her husband, Walter Purks, lived. And Mary Van's mother, Mrs. Rawlings, taught school. Mary Van had taught school, but she had a nursery school in the basement of her home, right next door here, and so I walked from Hawke Street through an alley that ran through that lot to Fauquier Street and then through the gate and across the long walk behind Kenmore. There was no gate at Mrs. Lacey's house across the street and so I walked down Mrs. Lacey's driveway, crossed Lewis Street and up a few houses and went to nursery school right next door to where I live right now.

The Purks were still living in that house, though she was not running the school, when we moved here and when my girls were little, I think maybe Mary Van had died by then and Walter

Purks gave us some of the little brightly painted chairs that they had for the nursery school, painted bright red, yellow and blue.



Interviewer: Now, in this school did you actually learn ABC's?

Mrs. Rowe: I don't really know. I know that they had sort of a concluding exercise where we were in costume and sang songs and recited nursery rhymes, but I don't think that she taught the alphabet or reading. I did read before I went to school, but I've become convinced as I go through life that some people read just like we expect everyone to walk and most of my children and grandchildren have been early readers, not that they have been taught, but they have been read to a lot and I think that when there is a lot of reading in the home, some people just learn to read.

Interviewer: So you were read to a lot by your parents?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, yes. There was another school in town. Miss Ann Lee Cunningham had a nursery school. Hers I think was a kindergarten on Charles Street right next to where Mac and Barbara Willis live now and that home is no longer standing. But you could go to Miss Ann Lee and you would have enough training that you could enter second grade and a lot of my friends did that, and then they were sort of a year younger than – I was always one of the oldest people in my class because I had a December birthday. At that time you could start school in February, second semester. You could start then. They would always say you were in 1A or 1B. You were always sort of a half semester off, and my mother thought it was a better to be a little older than younger in your class, so she kept me out until September when I was just a few months before I was seven. I can still tell you the people in my class who had those birthdays. We were the oldest ones in the class.

Interviewer: Who were they?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, well, I just saw somebody not long ago. It's interesting; we met in Dr. Leroy Essig's waiting room. We're both cancer survivors and I had come in from bright light outside and couldn't see very well in the waiting room and heard someone say, "Anne", and I still couldn't see, but I went over and it was Patsy Ann Young Harker, and she and I were in first

grade together. She's one of the ones, and James Carter Rowe, who turns out to be a second cousin to my husband, and Jack Apperson and John Willis, who's Mac Willis' brother, and we were the ones who had birthdays before February in that class. Most of the people had birthdays after February.

Interviewer: So, you were pretty close to these people in school?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, yes, we had two home rooms in first grade, and though I think they were larger, we had two home rooms senior year. So, that meant that you really knew the people who were in your class, and people didn't move as much as they do now. So, we had people in school with me whose parents had been to school with my parents. Though they might not have known them before school and our parents may not have been social friends, they certainly knew each other and so, I always feel that when we have a reunion we're so happy to see each other because for twelve years we spent most of our time in class together.

And Patsy Ann lived down – of course, she's now Pat – she lived on Amelia Street, just off Sophia. There's a brick building built at the corner and then there's a duplex house, and I think their business is in there now. But those are spacious duplexes; that house was big. And my aunt lived at 1100 Caroline, right on Amelia and Caroline. So, often after school I'd go to my aunt's and Patsy would come there or we'd go to her house and so we had the best time waiting in Dr. Essig's waiting room. (Laughing)

And she told me a story I had not known, or it was not in my memory bank. She said in the storm in '42, when the waters were rising – of course, they were right close to the river – and she was sent to her grandmother's on Charles Street, and I think her grandmother was on the part of Charles Street up past the community center, past Canal Street. That was a nice residential section, but then the canal got a flood and all that area was flooded and she said she ended up at Miss Belle Covert's which is a house at the corner of Fauquier and Winchester, facing Fauquier. And she said it was some time before her mother found her, but her mother wasn't panicked because she knew she would be with someone who knew her. But Patsy was there with only the clothes she had on and that was about a block and half from us; and she said she remembered that her mother went around and asked my mother if she had a dress she could borrow for Patsy so she could launder the things she had on (laughing). And she said she gave her underwear and a dress. We didn't have dungarees yet, we had leggings. If it was cold we wore leggings to school with our dresses, but, anyway, I think Patsy remembered it because she said she was embarrassed to borrow someone else's clothes. I didn't remember it – probably didn't know anything about it (laughing).

Interviewer: What a great story.

Mrs. Rowe: You know, it's wonderful to meet people like this who have known you. They know all your faults; they know that you had a bad temper and they love you in spite of it.

Interviewer: And your husband also grew up here.

Mrs. Rowe: Yes.

Interviewer: How old were you when you two met?

Mrs. Rowe: Well, I think we met. . . Well, I knew his sister; she was a couple of years, maybe three years older than me. She was three years ahead of me in school, and she was a part of a group of girls I thought were very glamorous. They were cheerleaders, older – you can imagine. And, I knew that Diana had two brothers, and I knew that one looked like her and one didn't, but I didn't know which name went with which one. One summer, Diana and I were in a group of girls who were all dating marines. There was this group of seven marines who rented a house in Falmouth and they were at basic school. One time my cousin was coming up to visit. She had been at Randolph-Macon Women's College with Diana. They were both in college at this time, and I said, "well, we're going to need another boy for a date for Kate," and Diana said, "Oh, that's all right, I'll bring my brother." ... then I learned which name went with him (laughing). He's the one I think looks like his sister, and so I learned that he was Joe and the other one was Charles, who by that time was married, I think, or about to be, to Diana's college roommate. But, then I applied for a job, a summer job, maybe I had that year after my freshman year at college I applied for a job at *The Free Lance-Star*, and they said, you'll have to talk to Joe Rowe, and he said, "Do you type?" and I said, "No". And he said, "Well we can't use you," and that was the end of that and I worked at the Nabisco Plant that summer. I'm pretty sure that was the summer we were dating those marines.

The next year I started talking to Charles in about February for a summer job because I knew that I could write, but I had to hunt, peck and cuss to try to type. Well, he said come in as close to the time when you know you'll be home from college and we'll see if we can use you. And, so, when I came in, when I knew when I would be home, they said Charles Rowe was not in, you'll have to talk to Joe. And, you know what he said? "Can you type?" (Laughing) I said, "No." He said, "Then we can't use you." But he did call up and ask if I'd like to go to the circus in Washington.

Interviewer: Let's go back to when you were in elementary school and you were at what is now the library (Central Rappahannock Regional Library). At that time was that an elementary school only or was it a middle school, too?

Mrs. Rowe: No, it was only grades one to five. Later, when I was at Mary Washington I was taking education courses and we studied a lot of different plans for organizing school systems. Middle schools were just coming in then; they were something they had in California maybe, and like California had junior colleges, you know. But, they talked about the advantages of keeping this age and that age together. Three-year high schools versus four-year high schools

and I learned subsequently that I think the way the school system is divided depends on how many people fit in the building they have. (Laughing.)

Interviewer: So, you went there through fifth grade. From there you went to James Monroe?

Mrs. Rowe: Yes, James Monroe Elementary, for sixth and seventh grade. When I was in sixth grade they did not have eighth grade in Virginia. They were putting that in. Before that, there were seven grades and four years of high school. So, the class ahead of us were the first ones to have eighth grade and then we had eighth grade and we did sort of feel we were being held back because we knew that everyone ahead of that class – one year ahead of us – had gone right into high school. But when we went up there in sixth grade I don't think there was – you know people worry about younger children being exposed to high school influences which may not be the best or girls dating boys who are too old, or something. But, what we did do was start going to football games. We became a part of James Monroe early. That was good. We liked that.

Interviewer: What was the curriculum like? Reading, writing arithmetic...?

Mrs. Rowe: Yes, reading, writing, arithmetic, but we had some wonderful teachers. We had Cora Vaughn Abrams for English. She was marvelous, and we learned things we hadn't learned before that I don't think they teach a lot now. We learned to diagram sentences, for instance, in English and it was so fun to puzzle out those things, and it helps you to understand sentence structure, and it stays with you forever. And, we never had a lot of grammar after Ms. Abrams, but we had her. I can't remember if we had her for sixth and seventh or whether she also taught us in eighth grade, but she gave us such a firm foundation in parts of speech and how sentences are constructed. Alma Goldman Keel taught us our last – I think it was still arithmetic. Now, my grandchildren start algebra in something like sixth grade, but we didn't get algebra until high school, but she gave us such a good foundation. It did seem like when we moved to James Monroe there was more content to what we were studying though – well, that was the first time we had separate teachers for separate classes. Before that we had one classroom.

Interviewer: How many students were there?

Mrs. Rowe: I've never been good with numbers, but I think there were still only two home rooms for each class, each grade. And see, I walked to school from Hawke Street – actually, it's funny, I walk on Washington Avenue more now, but to get to Maury School, I walked down Hawke to Winchester, down Winchester, up Lewis and down Douglas Street, right down here. So, I remember these houses down Douglas Street and, of course, when there were houses in the next block where *The Free Lance-Star* is now. I remember some of the gardens and the plants that were there.

Interviewer: What do you think now of Maury Commons?

Mrs. Rowe: Well, I was on the committee from the Fredericksburg Area Museum when we asked if we could study the use of Maury to expand the museum, and we started studying, and it was a big committee. We started that study. We visited Roanoke where they had converted a high school to community use – a big high school, and we visited Williamsburg where Colonial Williamsburg has converted an old high school to their uses. I think both of those may have been overnight trips because we met with people who worked on them and didn't just look at them. We studied how they had done it, how they had funded it and everything, and we met -- it may have been almost a year – and it was interesting because we came up with the idea how that would be a wonderful place for the library. What we proposed was that if the headquarters of the library would move there, the museum might have as an adjunct building the old Lafayette School.

Interviewer: The present library.

Mrs. Rowe: The present library. We presented that plan to City Council.... ...We had civic representatives, for instance, from HFFI. George Van Zandt was on it. He had been on the library board as well as chairman of the Board of the Museum. We had a lot of people who had worked on things in town. It started from the museum idea but ended up saying someone else could use it better, and I thought that was a recommendation in and of itself. Anyway, it was a great disappointment to me that we had worked on parking, we had worked on street access and we felt that the library, because they have the auditorium there, they were already doing a lot of things. With the expansion of the museum to what it would staff, to what it would take to run Maury would have been such a big increase for the museum. It would not have been that large a percentage increase on staff for the library, and they were in need of space, and I think they still are. But, the City Council did not think we could raise that much money. The museum has since raised that much money to put into the bank, which I think is wonderful expansion for the museum, but I think that the use of Maury for the library would have been, as they say, the highest and best use. It would have given us a community auditorium or theater, however they develop that space. I think one of the things that discouraged them was that the proposal was to make that auditorium wing a – more of a theater – with a lot of light boards and big lights and things, and whether that would have gone and whether it would have been more of an auditorium, anyway, it would have been a space that was usable.

And, so I think that having people live there is good. I did speak to one of the hearings at council saying that because the school has maintained the use of the field for games, I hoped that they would record that the games were there first, and if people started, “Oh, we can't have all this noise on Friday nights”, that (the record would show) the games were there first. I hope that they won't prevail and they'll say we need this and have the field turn into a parking lot. I think it's great that the school uses that. I think that more townspeople go to it than they would to the usual football stadium with bleachers near the school, which makes it more of a school thing. Having Maury Field right in the center of the town makes it a town thing. I think it's used for more Bluemont concerts than football games. It is a nice facility for the town to have.

Interviewer: You finished at Maury – but it was not called Maury at that time.

Mrs. Rowe: No, it was James Monroe High School and we finished right there in the new wing. We finished eighth grade; we had an eighth grade graduation. I may have been valedictorian of eighth grade, I think. I forget. We wore white dresses and had a little graduation. And, the next year we went right back to the same building, and we were freshman at James Monroe High School.

Interviewer: What year was this?

Mrs. Rowe: I finished high school in 1953, and we were the first class to graduate from the new James Monroe, which is no longer standing, but in the same place on Washington Ave. We marched up there – that school was supposed to be finished – you know how schools are – for our senior year. We actually picked up our books and marched in November of '52, so we were a little over one semester in that building, and it's interesting because right now they are trying to form an alumnae association for James Monroe High School at the old location, which would be people from 1937. That was when the name was changed – that's when the wing was put on - - from Fredericksburg High School to James Monroe High School – not certain about the date – '37 or '39. From that time until they moved to the building on Washington Avenue, they're starting this alumnae association, and I'm wondering if we will be eligible. We were three years in the old one, but we graduated from the new one.

Interviewer: You graduated from there in 1953 and then you went to Sweet Briar? Where is Sweet Briar?

Mrs. Rowe: Yes. I went to Sweet Briar for two years. Sweet Briar is 14 miles north of Lynchburg on Route 29, about an hour south of Charlottesville, and it is – was – in a very rural situation. Like every place, Lynchburg is growing out to meet it, but they have a beautiful, huge campus on a lot of wooded mountain land that the riders enjoy. I had the privilege of serving on the board there for the last several years.

Interviewer: You went there for three years?

Mrs. Rowe: Two years. I came here. My aunt, my mother's sister, had no children, and she always had lived close by, and I was very close to her, and she was ill with Hodgkin's disease, and so, I thought that I'll go home and get education courses. At that time they did not have education courses at Sweet Briar. Now, they do, and I'm not sure they do at Mary Washington. I was taking what I needed to get a teaching certificate, and I thought I'd go back to Sweet Briar for my senior year and graduate, but that was the summer I started dating Joe Rowe. So, by mid-year we had figured out that if I stayed because I'd always taken more classes than the minimum; and so, I could pick up some extra things I needed for the Mary Washington degree

and we could be married at the end of my junior year, and I would have only one semester to go to Mary Washington. Or, I would go back to Sweet Briar and we would be married after my senior year, but you know years used to be so long, but now they're so short (laughing); they just go by blip, blip, blip.

Interviewer: So, you decided to stay.

Mrs. Rowe: And be married. I finished the February after we were married in June.

Interviewer: What did your parents think of that?

Mrs. Rowe: Of course they had known the Rowe family and they liked Joe a lot, but my father really had been raised to think that education was important; and they insisted that I get a degree. I promised them that I would finish at Mary Washington (laughing).

Interviewer: They were okay with the marriage and that was going to be fine but that was very unusual at that time to want children to finish, wasn't it, or maybe not?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, I don't know. Most of my friends, I think, finished and another of my friends had been married the year before. Betty Faye King had married Charles Taylor Lewis after our sophomore year; actually, that was a big contribution to our courtship I think. They were both local and their parents were in two different, very social sets and there were so many parties given for them, and I was Betty Faye's maid of honor, so I was invited to all of them. Joe was a friend of Charles Taylor so he was invited to all of the parties and he said that by the time they were married in July – we had had our first date in May – and I caught the bouquet, and everyone turned around and looked at him. So, everyone else in town must have known already (laughing), but we didn't.

When I said my parents knew Joe's family, we said that at our wedding reception we were almost a sideline because so many of his --- he came from a family – his father was from a family of eight, and my father from a family of nine, and our mothers each from a family of three, but they'd all grown up and gone to school in Fredericksburg, so we start with his uncles who dated my aunts and my aunts who dated his uncles and all this. They were all at school together. One time, my Uncle Edward who loved to tell stories was telling a story and he had one of Joe's uncles in the story, and Joe said, "Uncle Edward, how come you always have some of my family in the stories?" And he said, "Lawd, boy, when I was in school there was a Wilson, a Rowe, and a Freeman for every class in school." So, all these people were walking around saying how they hadn't seen each other in so long, hugging each other. And so, it was a great reunion when we were married.

Interviewer: It must have been a really big wedding, just having the family there.

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, yes. The church was full. And we were married at the Presbyterian Church. We were there for a wedding this past Saturday and that was a young woman whose family goes to St. George's but they're working on their sanctuary, doing some renovations. So, they have to find someplace else, and her bridegroom was a Presbyterian from the Valley of Virginia, so they were married in the Presbyterian Church. So, we were telling people that we were married there; my parents were married there; my grandparents were married there; our three daughters were married there. So, we know how it works. That church is meeting house style; it has two aisles, so people are sort of puzzled sometimes if they're not familiar with that, but we say it's a great advantage, twice as many people get to see your dress up close. (Laughing).

Interviewer: Tell me about your dress, what was that like?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, there's a story about my dress. It was a time when we were wearing fitted bodices and full skirts. It was 1956, and that style had come in as the new look in about '49, so growing up we wore waist pinchers and crinolines under our skirts if they were short, for dressy things. But, I had this dress from my high school graduation; we had class night and we all had long dresses, long, white dresses. Actually, mine had been bought in the bridal section of Miller and Rhoads. It was embroidered organdy with three tiers, sort of over a hoop skirt, and little cap sleeves. It had come with little gloves that were sort of knit that fit over your hand and up your arm, but I hadn't used those. But I had used that for class night and I had taken it off to college and I'd used it for some dances at college, and then we started looking for a wedding dress. Well, styles hadn't changed that much, and of course there were a lot of other styles – satin and various things. We were being married in June and the things that seemed most appropriate looked very much like the dress I had, and I said, you know, I could use the dress we have. So, we took it to a cleaners; it was considered a very fine dry cleaners in Richmond, Spitzers. If you had something very special, you took it to Spitzers, and it's a funny story about having that dress cleaned, because we put it up on the counter and Mama said something about this wedding dress. And they said, oh it costs so much to have a wedding dress cleaned. She said, well, you know she's just worn it to a couple of dances. And, they said, oh, well, if it's an evening dress, the price came down. Anyway, she kept talking and the price came down about three times, and it was still the same dress; they were looking right at it. (Laughing) It was what you called it that determined how much it cost to clean it. (Laughing)

So, we did have the dress cleaned and Kemper Gibson who was Mrs. – I can't remember her husband's name, what Gibson – anyway, Jonathan Gibson, JoJo Gibson is her son. She had a beautiful Brussels' lace veil which I think had not been in her family. I think she bought it on a trip to Europe because she had a daughter and her daughter had not used it. I mean her daughter was not old enough at that time to use it. She offered it to us, so I had this beautiful, absolutely exquisite veil which her daughter-in-law, Janet Nelson Gibson, now has, which Janet used when she married JoJo. So, we had this beautiful veil and this used, cleaned dress (laughing) and, of course, we were married in June before air conditioning in the church and people told me for years after how hot it was. They told me you were married on the hottest day of the year, but even though I had on all these crinolines and hoop skirts, I did not remember it being so hot, but

Mama said the men wore morning clothes; I think we were married at 4 in the afternoon; I'm not even sure. They had separable collars and Mama said Daddy came home, took off the collar of that outfit, put it on the dining room table. She said it splashed with perspiration; she said she moved it so it wouldn't leave a ring on the table (laughing).

We had a reception at Seacobeck Hall, the dining hall at Mary Washington and then, that was a big summer for weddings. The next week Picky Payne married Pat Hester. They have lived in Richmond; well, they lived in Oklahoma for part of their married life. They're back in Richmond and two weeks after we were married, the big wedding of the summer was the Willis-Pratt double wedding. That was Mac Willis; he's retired as a judge. He married Barbara Pratt and his brother John Willis married Robin Pratt – brothers marrying sisters down at Camden. So that was a big event, for social Fredericksburg (laughing).

Interviewer: So, did you go on a honeymoon?

Mrs. Rowe: We went on a honeymoon. We went to the British Isles. My husband was there for Wimbledon. He loves tennis, so he was off to Wimbledon and I just went shopping in the Burlington Arcade. We were in London and we planned it so we would be in London at the time of Wimbledon and, of course, that was before – you know now all these celebrities go and it's a big thing. It used to be that only those who were interested in tennis would go. So, he got a ticket from, I guess you would say a "scalper", but he thought the price was reasonable and it was from someone on the grounds. And he was right on Centre Court and it was a wonderful location and that was the semi-finals. He came out and the same man found him and asked him if he wanted to see the finals and told him to meet him there the next day and he would sell him a ticket. So, he went back and saw the finals – Lew Hoad and Ken Rosewall – and so, he got to see Wimbledon. He's now done that. A few years ago we talked about shall we go back and see Wimbledon and he sees it so much better now on television and the crowds have grown so much.

Interviewer: So, you took a ship over or you flew over?

Mrs. Rowe: We flew. That was funny because, of course, it was before jets, so there were four motors. You always stopped in Gander, Newfoundland, to refuel and we were flying to Shannon. So, we got off in Shannon and toured around Ireland a little bit before going to Scotland and then down to England. But, one motor wasn't working right so when we got to Gander they said we would spend the night and you know, in those days if they couldn't fly you out they put you up in hotel. Well, the only hotel in Gander was army barracks. It did say "Hotel Jupiter" but it was obviously army barracks, and the toilet and facilities were down the hall, but we had been in college dorms, so that was fine, we were young.

And, so the next day we flew on to Shannon. But, my mother-in-law was very worried about us flying over the ocean, so we had to call, which in those days was a big undertaking, to call to let

her know we had arrived safely. But we did come back by ship from Southampton to New York on the *Ile de France* and she thought that was all right, big ships cross the ocean all the time. Well, the *Ile de France* turned around in New York when we disembarked and off Cape Cod picked up survivors of the *Andrea Doria*.

Interviewer: And then you came back here and what was next?

Mrs. Rowe: We moved into the basement apartment at 801 Hanover, my husband's family home. His mother, who had been widowed, was living there and we lived in that apartment for three years. The next year, one year after we were married, our first child was born and we lived there till our second child was imminent, and the apartment did not have room for two babies and so we were able to rent a house at 409 Hanover. And we thought we would be there and settled in for a number of years. We had been there for one year when the Spratts, who owned it, had sold their farm, Wig Hill, in Spotsylvania, and wanted to move back. So, we had to look for a house. And this was the one we found. It had been on the market for five years. That was when they were developing, like Westmont was new; Ferry Farm was not that old, Argyle Heights; and traffic was not that bad. People knew they could build just what they wanted and still be convenient to town and town was the only thing you needed to be convenient to, because there wasn't a mall. It was all central Fredericksburg. I just had this sort of thing in my head, and my husband teases me about it, because one day one of the realtors called me and said, "Mrs. Rowe we have something we'd like to show you, think you might like. It's in College Heights." I said, "I thought I told you I wanted to be in town." I think that was before Braehead was developed, too.

Interviewer: Where's Braehead?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, Braehead Woods, out near the Battlefield Park, off Lafayette Boulevard.

Mrs. Rowe: And, when we were looking... as I said this had been on the market for five years. For years after that, any number of people who would come here for various things would say, "Oh, we looked at this house, but then we built in Argyle Heights; we looked at this house, but then we built in ..." I do think because this was a small lot, and people with children probably thought there was not much yard, but I knew there was Washington Avenue. I knew there were plenty of places for children to play. And I think it may have discouraged people that all down Douglas Street were black owner-occupied homes, but I knew those families and they were families who had been here longer than mine and so that didn't bother us.

Interviewer: So when did you move into this house?

Mrs. Rowe: 1960; August 1, 1960.

Interviewer: And you have three children, two girls and a boy?

Mrs. Rowe: No, we have four children. At that time, when we moved we had the two girls and then Sallie was born in '61, and our son was born in '72. So, those two were born after we moved here.

Interviewer: So, you have four children, three girls and a boy.

Mrs. Rowe: As my husband likes to say, we have three daughters and each one has a brother. They all grew up very protective; very helpful with that last baby. We raised our own babysitters, you know, three girls who loved to play with their little brother and take care of him. So there were lots of hands. Rose Levy a lady who ran a dress shop downtown, Carley's, we were often in there with three teenage girls, and she would say, "I feel sorry for his wife already – four mothers-in-law." All his sisters were very protective.

Interviewer: I bet he was tired of all this protection sometimes.

Mrs. Rowe: I think he enjoyed all the attention.

Interviewer: What are your children's names?

Mrs. Rowe: Our oldest daughter is Jeanette. She was named Jeanette McDonald Rowe for my mother's sister, the one I mentioned who had Hodgkin's disease. She was Jeanette McDonald Stoffregen. The next daughter, Florence Chancellor Rowe, is named for my husband's aunt, who was Florence Chancellor Bailey, his mother's sister. And then, Sallie Ashlin Rowe is named for my Grandmother Wilson, who was Sallie Ann Ashlin, her maiden name, and then she married McLean and then Wilson.

Our son is Josiah Peyton Rowe. The Rowes have done funny things with their middle initials. The Josiahs are not the only ones. They have tended to change the name and use the same initial and then use the numeral, but my husband's cousin, Ellen Gordon Mills, was the assistant clerk of the court, and she said, "now the etiquette books when we were married said that if when Junior grew up and the father had died you could drop the Junior and just use Josiah P. Rowe" and Ellen, who was used to dealing with all those land records and things, said "Please don't drop the numeral; you look at these things and you don't know who sold the land because it doesn't have the numeral and then you have to look up and see when so and so died". And so, she persuaded us to use the numeral, though my husband's great-grandfather, Absalom Rowe, married Almedia Gayle, whose father was Josiah Pitt Gayle. She named one of her sons, Josiah Porter Rowe, who named his son, Josiah Pollard Rowe. Now, my mother-in-law thought this was crazy, so she named her son, Josiah Pollard Rowe III. But we named our son, Josiah Peyton Rowe because I had gotten used to this queer thing and we have Peytons on both sides of my family as well as my husband's. Absalom P. Rowe was Absalom Peyton Rowe and his son, who used A. P. Rowe Jr. and was called Pres, Mr. Pres Rowe, was Absalom Prescott Rowe. His son is William Josiah, but his grandson was Ariel Prescott Rowe, AP Rowe. None of the original names of Absalom Peyton Rowe. And Alvin Tabb Rowe named his son Alvin

Thompson Rowe and in his high school annual he's Alvin T. Rowe, Jr. but he later evidently corrected this, maybe even legally and used Alvin Tabb Rowe, Jr.

Interviewer: Do you have grandchildren?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, yes, we have eight grandchildren.

Interviewer: Did they continue on with this way of naming?

Mrs. Rowe: Well, our son and his wife Erin have no children; Jeanette has three children and Jess Bradford Cadwallender is named for his Australian grandfather's father, Jess, and his Australian grandmother's maiden name, Bradford. Julia Frances is named for my husband's grandmother, Julia Taliaferro, and Mary is named for many Marys in both families and her middle name is Virginia. She was born in Australia as they all were because my son-in-law is from Australia and now they live in Virginia, down on Fauquier Street, one block away. Oh, people say you don't know how lucky you are, and I say, indeed I do. We went half way around the world. Every one of those children was born in Australia and I went out five times in six years they lived there. It was a long trip. And then, our daughter, Florence is married to Richard Barnick, and they have twin sons, Andrew John, named for Richard's uncle and Scott Wilson, named for my first cousin, and George Stanley, named for the George Rowes. There are several George Rowes and my uncle, who was later my father-in-law, George Lawrence Hunter Jr. – who is always called "George L." He likes George L. He was married to my mother's sister, my Aunt Jeanette, and after her death in '56 -- She died a month before we were married -- and he married my husband's widowed mother. The two couples had been great friends and after we were married they were thrown together again and in November after we were married in June they were married. So, my girls knew him as "G" which is what I called him and that's what they called him, so George is named primarily for him and Stanley for a grandfather on his father's side. And then Sallie has Harrison McHaney (and those names both come from her husband's family) and Katherine McDonald, named for my mother, Katherine McDonald Stoffregen, whose name was so long that when she had calling cards made they had to be extra long to get Katherine McDonald Stoffregen on. So Katherine McDonald Roberts is our granddaughter, who will be going off to college next year.

Interviewer: Is she the youngest?

Mrs. Rowe: No, George is the youngest. They sort of interleave and they stair step down to the twins and then there is a gap and there is George who is ten now. My son's wife is in medical school. Erin has been in medical school since they have been married and when there will be grandchildren remains to be seen.

Interviewer: It's amazing you can remember all of this. And how old is your son?

Mrs. Rowe: He is – he will be 36 this April. I've just been sending Chinese New Year cards to some Chinese friends we consider our foster children and Thursday is the beginning of Chinese New Year and this is the year of the Golden Dog and so my son is born in the year of the dog and every time it comes around, it is in multiples of 12, so that's when I realized it is 36.

This was interesting. When our oldest two daughters went to Sweet Briar and they were ... Florence didn't finish high school. She went off after her junior year and went to Sweet Briar, so instead of having a year between them, they were in successive classes. So, Jeanette called at Thanksgiving, Florence's first year at college and said, "There's a girl here from Malaysia and I asked her where she was going – she was in dance with Jeanette – for Thanksgiving and she said, her brother was at Rutgers and he was so homesick that she was going up there to spend Thanksgiving with him. And I said where will you stay? She said, I don't know, we'll find a motel; we'll just get a motel room. And, of course, Jeanette said, so I asked her to come home with me; that's all right, isn't it?" He's arriving on the train at such and such a time". (Laughing) And, I remember, we thought, here's this Chinese boy – he was going to get here first and we thought, what will we talk about or do or whatever. Well, he came in and he was just as relaxed and easygoing as can possibly be. My husband said, "I'm on my way to the grocery, would you like to go with me?" The Giant had this new thing. They scanned the items and that was an interesting thing to see, and off they went. And the girls arrived from Sweet Briar later. That Christmas, the younger brother who was living in Minnesota with another sister who was in school there came for Christmas. Then, the next year the sister who was finishing there at Winona was going on to graduate school and, you can imagine a college-age sister trying to oversee the behavior of a high school brother, so they were wondering what to do with him. And I said he could come live with us and go to James Monroe and it turned out that's what he did, so he was here for his senior year. He then went to Lynchburg College and we were home base. All this time they came for holidays. One year because Kheong was at Rutgers and needed a summer job that had to do with his civil engineering course and my husband knew someone in Richmond who hired him for the summer. Well, of course he was up here for the weekends. Chong, the boy who lived with us, worked at the paper--driving the trucks, delivering the papers out to the stores. So, that's our Eastern connection. We went out when the younger boy who lived with us longer, when he was married, Sallie and my husband and I went out to the wedding in Kuala Lumpur and we were served as parents in the tea ceremony, so that was very touching. But now, the older of the two boys, Kheong, works for Exxon ever since he went back to Malaysia and so, about four years ago, he was transferred to Houston, so his girls came east and went to camp in West Virginia with all the other granddaughters and so we've been in constant touch. They're all going to be here later this month for my husband's 80th birthday. He knows our children are coming, but not that a lot of other people are coming. And Kheong this year is working in Alaska but because his oldest daughter is in her last year of high school, they stayed in Houston until this summer when they'll be moving to Alaska. Anyway, we're all in touch; the daughter who went to Sweet Briar went back to Malaysia, but in Hong Kong, her sister worked for IBM next to this desk of an

American and she met him. They now live in Connecticut and they're going to be here, too, for the birthday.

This has really been an enriching thing to have them be a part of the family. Their parents came for Kheong's graduation from Rutgers and I was laid up with the flu; you know you want to have everything so ready when people are coming and so, it was one of those times when I was so sick. And Mrs. Wong just took over in the kitchen and fixed wonderful Chinese food for us.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your house, now? You bought it in 1960.

Mrs. Rowe: We moved in (in 1960). It was built by J.W. Masters who had a lumber yard here, and this was his second marriage and he had lived in what was called the Charles Dick House, which I think had come down from his wife's family. Anyway, his children of his first marriage were grown and he built this house for his second wife. She had a son by her first marriage. Though it looks sort of imposing from the street, I think a lot of it is because it's up on a retaining wall; it looks like it might fall over on you. It was a three bedroom house and had the living room, dining room, kitchen and three bedrooms upstairs with two baths and it had a sun porch behind the living room. We soon expanded that, made it larger and enclosed it as a room to be a den. And then we -- the next move we made was to make bedrooms in the unfinished attic. There was a nice stair going up -- it wasn't a pull down or anything, so it had a good entry. So, we made two bedrooms up there and an area with bookcases; I don't think there's a thing as enough bookcases in a house. We call that little area, the Library. So, we moved the two oldest girls up there and then we had the three bedrooms for Sallie, Josiah and for us. And then one year, Christmas, '86, that Jeanette and Nick came back from Australia with two babies, Julia was ten weeks old when she made her first trip from Australia; and, Nick had gone to a Normal School for teacher preparation and it was a three-year program and he had a Normal Certificate. So he came here to go to Mary Washington to get a Bachelor's Degree. He got the Bachelor of Liberal Studies and that was the year of 1987 that he was in school here and they lived with us with two children. And there really was enough room; we managed quite well, but we thought we needed to make more room. Well, it probably was a little late, but we put this addition on with the breakfast area and this room with so much light; I call it the "Garden Room", with a new master bedroom for us above. And, it's a wonderful space; James McGee designed it, and the bedroom is just marvelous with the amount of light that comes in, and we have high windows in there. And we can see the moon at all different times of the month. We love it, just love it. And we were able to use some doors up there, or windows, that my mother called "Jib" doors. They came from the old Presbyterian Manse which stood on George Street; it was a frame house built in 1850. When my mother was going by one day when they were really taking it down; really wrecking it; -- it's where the BB&T Bank is now -- and she knew that those doors went out on the front porch and she said, "What are you going to do with those?" and the workman said, "Do you want them, Mrs. Wilson?" She said, yes, and she tried to get a lot of people to use them; they were very tall, but she asked Kenneth Covert who was the contractor here, to store them for her. So, when we were doing this, we thought of using them

here on this level but, finally we used them in the bedroom and they are like big windows, but James McGee decided little balconies on each side of that room and so you raise the lower sash and open the panel below and it's a door and you walk out onto our little balconies. And I love having them from an older building in Fredericksburg.

Interviewer: And something that your mother saved.

Mrs. Rowe: Oh, yes, she saved them, and by the time we were ready to do this she had been dead for some time and Kenneth Covert was dead. So, I called his son-in-law, Juan Chavez, an architect, and said, this is a strange question, but would you know anything about these. He did and within two days they were on my front porch.

Interviewer: He was probably wondering where they came from and who they belonged to.

Mrs. Rowe: It was wonderful that they were still available. Steve Spratt's people rehabbed them; there was still some of the original glass in them. They redid all of that and made them as airtight as they could so they don't let too much air in. They're probably not as energy efficient as some doors (laughing).

Interviewer: But they're still so special.

Interviewer: So, now your children are grown and gone.

Mrs. Rowe: Well, we still have two children in town.

Interviewer: But they no longer live with you, right?

Interviewer: Your days are probably very full, I would imagine. So, tell us about that.

Mrs. Rowe: We are fortunate to have this space, because my husband's aunt, Florence Chancellor Bailey Hill, who was the widow of Carl Trevor Hill, had lived in town and she had lived for some time down the street from here, at 504 Lewis St. in an apartment. And, she was becoming frail. We knew that by the time she had prepared a meal she wouldn't have the strength to eat it; she needed to be somewhere else. She and her sister, my mother-in-law, had this idea -- the old idea of nursing homes -- and it was a bad picture and they did not want to go into a nursing home, though I think she was very happy here, I think very late, late, late in their lives they were very lonely. I think that retirement communities now are good, where you can move into an apartment and when you need to, assisted living, but you still see other people. But we were really fortunate to have her here with us for the last five years of her life. She died at 101 in October, '03. She moved up from that apartment. We vacated -- well, some of the furniture was mine that was still in the front two rooms but we had moved to the new bedroom so she could have the bedroom we had previously which had a bath connected to it. That

upstairs hall over the doorway we fixed up with a studio couch, which was already there and that was a place her help could sleep when she finally had to have someone with her around the clock. We had a little refrigerator which one of our children had had at school; we put a microwave on top of it. She had a dining table there; she had another room with her living room furniture in it and she was able to have friends come to see her and visit there and they had use of another bath. So, she had a nice little apartment there for five years. We really enjoyed having her.

And when I got this little dog, it was really strange because I was thinking I would like a little dog. I was thinking, I cannot train another puppy; I was looking in all the ads for people who had dogs to sell, at the shelters. I saw this ad which said “mini-poodle” which I thought would be a miniature poodle, which my mother had had, and I thought this would be a nice breed of dog. Well, when I saw her, I saw that they really meant a toy poodle. She’s really a mini – she weighs five pounds when she’s at her fattest. So, at that time she went upstairs, which she doesn’t do now. She would go up and Flossie could pick her up and put her in the chair with her. If we had had a larger dog, she could not have done that. It was great.

And she had people to help her. At first she just had someone to help her dress in the morning and then as she became more and more frail – she had broken her hip at 94, and I did not know then the statistics for people who walk again after breaking a hip over age 90 are very discouraging, but she was up and at ‘em, a very vigorous person. And her sister, my mother-in-law, lived to 103. She died about six months after Flossie, I think that she just sort of gave up after that. She visited with people on the phone, but their friends were going on, so, and though they had a lot of other friends, neighbors and people from church who visited them, it just wasn’t quite the same and visits were fewer and fewer.

Interviewer: So, you took care of these ladies?

Mrs. Rowe: They both had help. My mother-in-law stayed in her home and had help, but keeping the help going is a job in itself. It was really nice, I still cook things and think that this was one of Flossie’s favorites, and, you know how difficult it is to cook for one or two, so when you fix something, it was easy to take some over to Hanover Street and to have the three of us here. And I’ve always liked to cook.

Interviewer: What are the other activities you’re really involved in?

Mrs. Rowe: I’ve gotten out of a lot of things. I’ve been involved in a lot of things over the years. You know I was one of the first members of the Junior Board of HFFI, and that was a really wonderful thing and I know Lillian Reed was one of the people who thought of that idea, but Lou Silvey was another one who was very active in getting that started and I think it was not only the things we did as a Junior Board – for instance, we started the Candlelight Tour – but it got a lot of young women interested in Historic Preservation, and that’s important. Gail Braxton, who’s been so wonderful as head of the APVA, was very active on the Junior Board,

and Barbara Willis, who went on to start the Virginiana Collection at the Library. They may have been interested in history anyway, but that was a very important thing, so I was the first treasurer of the Junior Board and then later I was secretary of the HFFI Board. I had served on the HFFI Board earlier; I know when Alfred Garnett was president I had served on that board, but after we had the Junior Board and Barbara Willis and I were on that was when they published Miss Sally Macy's reminiscences and also Jane Beale's diary, and we tried to say that this money will go into a book fund for other publications. I don't know if that's been maintained. At that time the board was meeting at 5 pm after the men got off work, and they would go in and have a cocktail and here I am as secretary, trying to write, trying to write, and it's the busiest hour in the world at home with your children. So, once I got out of that I didn't go back on that board. You know I've been on the Board of APVA; for awhile I was their vice-directress for the St. James House and now I've just been asked to join the Board of the Virginia Historical Society. I have yet to go to a meeting as they meet every other month and their January meeting was cancelled. In March I should go to the first meeting of that. I think one of the wonderful things we have now is the Heritage Center. And I'm on the board of that now in my second year. I was not a founder but that's a wonderful addition. I am happy that has a home in the old gym at the Maury School, but I personally don't think that that's going to be sufficient space for very long (laughing). And I don't think it's excellent space; it has certain advantages, it's more visible than the industrial park where it was before. It has too much light which makes them have to protect things more. So, I think they'll be looking for another home.

I was happy to be asked to be one of the charter members of the CVBT Board, (Central Virginia Battlefields Trust). I think that's very important work that they are doing – to try to buy up battlefields. I'm sure I was asked because they wanted a woman on the board. And all those men knew exactly whose right flank was where, when and I knew none of that. But I did think it was important that we keep those battlefields for several reasons – just to keep the open space, to keep it green is important, but when you walk over battlefields and they explain to you whose right flank was where and you can see what they could and could not see. This Slaughter Pen Farm that they bought down 2 and 17 (was) where we used to go when the Piersons lived there. Mrs. Pierson was a cousin of my mother and John Pierson would – he was farming – and he would go out when peas were ripe in the late spring, early summer and take up the vines. We would go out and sit in the backyard and it was such a nice way to pick peas instead of bending over breaking your back. You'd sit there, pulling your vine across your lap just taking the pea pods off the vine and visiting and talking together. That memory is very clear every time I drive by there, but when the historians walk you over the land and tell you, and you see that that land slopes down and what the troops could and could not see as they faced each other on that property, that's something you can't learn just in history books; you can't get your mind around it like you can when you walk over it. I think that's one of the really great additions to the community.

I was also a founding member of the Community Foundation.

Interviewer: What is that?

Mrs. Rowe: A community foundation is an organization that will take money and you can put it in special funds or a general fund. It is to do good works in the community. And they have committees that study, for instance, they have several scholarship funds that are maybe for specific schools or other schools, but maybe someone has lost a son to an automobile accident and they would like a scholarship to be continued at that school with his name to perpetuate his memory. They have committees to study the candidates for these scholarships and award them. It's a great addition to the whole area and people can, instead of starting a family foundation, they can do that through the community foundation. They handle the money and invest it and it grows and pays the salary of the director and other staff as they need it, but we hope it continues to grow in a way that the corpus is there but the interest is used for the betterment of the community.

Interviewer: You mentioned St. James House earlier. For those people who will be reading this, can you explain what this is?

Mrs. Rowe: St. James House is an eighteenth-century story and-a-half house located at the corner of Fauquier and Charles Streets, one block from Mary Washington House. It was bought in – probably the 50's -- by two men who had an antique store, and they restored the house beautifully and furnished it with their lovely antiques and left it to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) with an endowment. It has a resident custodian – this is the way the APVA has managed to manage it, and it is opened for two weeks a year and by appointment. It is always open during Historic Garden Week in Virginia and it is open for one week in October. If a group is coming to town and wants to contact the APVA and say we'd like to see – if you have guests coming, you can contact the APVA; however, often they'll have a bus tour and will arrange tours of the St. James House or Mary Washington House. It's open by appointment. St. James House is one of four properties owned by APVA in Fredericksburg. They're called the Mary Washington Branch, which was their first property. They own the Rising Sun Tavern, the Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop and the St. James House.

Interviewer: So, were you instrumental in getting the Garden Week started?

Mrs. Rowe: Oh no, the Garden Week Tours started in 1928. They were started in order to make money for the Kenmore restoration, and I did serve on the Kenmore Board a couple of times as secretary. They were started by the Garden Club of Virginia, of which I've been active. It's one of my favorite organizations. They are about to have the first ever Symposium, the Garden Club of Virginia. It's held here in Fredericksburg, next Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (February 2008) to celebrate whatever Garden Week anniversary this is – I forget because they were suspended during World War II for a few years. It was 1928 and this is '08, so I guess this is the anniversary. People come from all over, both members and non-members are invited to this two-day symposium about gardens, plants and restoration of grounds, because

we've gone on to raise lots of money. At the time it started it took several years – for several years the money went to Kenmore and then for several years it went to the grounds at Monticello and then the grounds at Stratford. As the success of the tour grew, they have been able to do numerous restorations around the state and they now will revisit older restorations, and if they've not been kept up they will do some more work. In those early years they did not have contracts. Now they have a contract with the owner of the property, saying it will be kept up. The Mary Washington Monument Grounds are being revisited right now and next Monday, the February 11 they will be re-dedicated – or something like that – because they had a presentation at one time. Now, the brick has been repointed on the wall; they have replanted the grounds because they really needed a lot of work and that was owned by the Mary Washington Monument Association which no longer exists, but they gave the property to the City of Fredericksburg when my husband was mayor, and so the City owns that property. They rent the house on the grounds, called “the Lodge” to Kenmore, something like a \$1 a year and Kenmore did a lot of work to bring that building up; it had become really rundown. That is now a residence for one of the employees, the director of development at Kenmore.

Interviewer: Tell me, what was it like being a mayor's wife?

Mrs. Rowe: Well, it was very nice, and as far as the wife, he's the one who went to a lot of meetings, but I went to a lot of parties and events, and every year we would install the new officers of the fire department and the police. And you would go to the policeman's dinner and the fireman's dinner and various things like that. One time I remember Senator Byrd was coming – this was Harry Byrd Jr. Of course, the Byrd political machine was weakened by that point because I think by that time Harry Byrd had been elected as an Independent, but it was a very snowy night. There was some event at the Elks but we had people here for cocktails beforehand and Harry Byrd was coming through the snowstorm from Winchester. He finally got here and he said, “This just shows that the Byrd machine did get through the storm.” It was interesting. Both my husband and I had grown up (here) and we knew so many people and at that time the people we knew were the people who were active in all the organizations in town, so it was fun. You saw a lot of friends and made new friends.

Interviewer: How did he like it?

Mrs. Rowe: I think he liked it. He was very fortunate to be working with Freeman Funk who was city manager at the time and they worked very well together, and Duvall Hicks was the city attorney and they enjoyed working together. I think they understood the Council Manager form of government a little more than now. I think the people who are elected try to do too much of the hands on instead of leaving it to the city manager, but I think he enjoyed his years in office. ----- (tape ran out).

(Joe Rowe has been publisher of the *The Free Lance-Star* since 1998 and previously was co-publisher with his brother, Charles S. Rowe. They had begun working together about 1949 upon

the death of their father Josiah Rowe. A seasoned newsman, Josiah had come to the newspaper to work for his uncle, A.P. Rowe, about 1925.)

Note: Mrs. Rowe and the interviewer had planned to resume interviewing after this first session, but Mrs. Rowe was unable to continue because of illness. She did read the interview and liked it. Anne Wilson Rowe died Jan. 24, 2009, at her home. Her obituary noted that she had “lived a full, satisfying life centered around family and her beloved hometown.” Her daughter Florence assisted in editing this oral history.