

MARGARET SPARROW, M.A.T.'58

October 8, 1999

Mame Warren,
interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is the eighth of October, 1999. I'm with Margaret Sparrow, but what's your maiden name?

Sparrow: Willis.

Warren: Willis Sparrow. In Baltimore, Maryland. And you started out by saying that you're a Johns Hopkins family. What does that mean?

Sparrow: Well, many people in the family have been active in Hopkins, one way or another. Shall I start with one at a time?

Warren: In general.

Sparrow: In general?

Warren: Give me a feeling for what makes a Hopkins family.

Sparrow: Well, you know, I played over there and I went to summer school there twice. My sister went one year, and we played when we were there.

Warren: Did you grow up in this neighborhood?

Sparrow: Well, my grandmother lived there.

Warren: Where did she live?

Sparrow: St. Paul Street, 3000 block. And we lived there. My father was an engineer at sea. I was born when he was in England, so that's why we were at my grandmother's. Eventually my parents moved out to the suburbs. But my father went there, my uncle went there, my uncle-in-law went there, my cousin's husband went there, my cousin went there. Another cousin married two men who went there, and I dated there. Lots of activities. I always felt it was my second home.

Warren: I think Johns Hopkins is Baltimore, and Baltimore is Johns Hopkins, is the feeling that I have. So tell me what it was like to play on the campus. I haven't talked to anybody who did that.

Sparrow: When we would come home—we went in the summertime, of course, to this demonstration class, and I don't know if they have that or not anymore, but they had demonstration teachers.

Warren: Tell me what that means.

Sparrow: They were demonstrating to teachers, or prospective teachers, how to run a class, so children were selected for every elementary school grade. Oh, and also junior high school. I don't know how far it went. But I went in the 7B and the 8A, and my sister went in the fourth grade, so we went together and went home together. We would come down in front of Homewood House, and we would throw our book bags and, you know, it was summertime, and we would roll down on the grass, before we got to the bus that would take us home. So that was one way of playing.

When I lived at my grandmother's, we went sledding there in Wyman Park, and we went to the park all the time anyway. I remember a friend of my grandmother's said she was going—this was when I was four—she was going to take me on a double-decker bus. We had double-decker buses in Baltimore until the war. So we were quite excited, you know, seeing these

big buses go by, so I was so excited at seeing them, so she said she would take me on one.

So it was a big day, and she came over and we all said goodbye to my family and so forth, and we went out and waited for the bus on Charles Street. And when the double-decker came, I was so frightened I couldn't get on, and she had to take me home. [Laughter]

Warren: That's great. Now, Charles Street looked different then. I've seen pictures of a big circle that used to be there.

Sparrow: That's right. Hopkins' statue was right in the middle of that circle.

Warren: Describe that to me.

Sparrow: Henry Barnes got rid of it.

Warren: Describe the whole thing to me.

Sparrow: Well, people called Charles Street—oh, what's the name of that famous street in Paris?

Warren: Champs de l'Elysée?

Sparrow: Yes, they called that America's Champs de l'Elysée, because it was a beautiful street with all those trees and roads going up on each side, and Henry Barnes got rid of it because he said it was a traffic hazard, so he pushed the statue over to the side, and that's where it is now.

Warren: But describe what it used to be like.

Sparrow: Well, there was an Easter parade on Charles Street every year, and I don't know if they had—they probably had Easter parades in other places, too, but that's the one we went to. When I was just a little child, my parents took me over to see the Easter parade, and I expected elephants and things like that. Of course, it wasn't. It was just people driving by and walking home after church. So it wasn't a parade to a child. But when I was a teenager and started dating,

we always went to the Easter parade. We were driving in it or walking in it and saw everybody we knew.

Warren: That must have been quite an event.

Sparrow: It was. Everybody dressed up in their finest. Girls had white gloves and hats on, and the boy always gave a corsage.

Warren: But describe the circle and the whole—because it's changed so differently—

Sparrow: It was a two-way street. There wasn't as much traffic in those days. We didn't have as many traffic lights, either, and there was even a big—I forget what you call it—but a big thing where the policeman was up high. They still have them in China. That's the only place I've ever seen them. But he could see all the traffic, and he would change the lights according to how much traffic was coming each direction. There was one at North Avenue, I think at Charles, and one at St. Paul. Everything was very different. More people drive along buses, and there wasn't as much of a population then anyway.

Warren: You know, I've heard a lot of people say that they used to come, but they weren't from around here, they would say that they came to school at Hopkins on streetcars.

Sparrow: That's right.

Warren: Where did the streetcar run? What line? What street was on—

Sparrow: They ran up and down every street.

Warren: Charles?

Sparrow: Every street was two ways. Henry Barnes is the one that made them one way. And there wasn't as much traffic, and so there weren't as many lights, but there was one that went up St. Paul Street, and turned at 31st, and went over to the York Road, and there were some that

child held the flag, so I complimented him on it, and I think it's the first compliment he ever got in his whole life. He was a different child from then on. So she really taught us a very good thing.

And then the other was somebody who had taught during the Depression in West Virginia, and he told us about some of the terrible children that he had had and what he had done about them. Well, he had also been a coach, so he said, the worse children he would put on one team, and he would be on the other team, and he'd bump into them on purpose. [Laughter]

Warren: When we were talking on the telephone, you told me about your very special graduation from Johns Hopkins. Tell me that story.

Sparrow: Well, as a retread, you know, I had children who were in school, and I found out that Milton Eisenhower was president and Dwight was President of the United States, and Dwight was having Harold McMillan to be the speaker. Dwight was going to have a conference, but Milton invited him to be the speaker and he accepted, so they had it in the quadrangle, because they used to have them in Shriver Hall, and they knew that there would be a lot of interest.

I had already invited everybody I knew, because you could have as many tickets as you wanted. So I got permission from the schools to let my children go to it. They decided to hold it out in the quadrangle because there would be so many people, and they had helicopters flying all around, and Secret Service men with machine guns standing on the tops of apartment houses, and so forth. Nobody ever shot at Eisenhower; he was too popular.

But anyway, it was quite a ceremony. Hopkins used to have commencements that nobody went to. People would just say, "Mail me the diploma." But not for this one. And my children went back to school the next day and their teachers asked them to report on it, so my younger child said, "Oh, yes. The President of the United States and the Prime Minister of England both

the First World War, and Homewood was started in the '20s, so these were all suburbs. And when my uncle was a child, in the 3000 block of St. Paul Street, he went fishing in a little stream cattycorner from his house, and you wouldn't think of that now when you look at all these stores and everything. But it was all beautiful country.

Warren: It's hard to imagine, isn't it. So the Homewood campus really was in the middle of nowhere once upon a time.

Sparrow: Well, it was an estate out in the county, just like when Goucher bought 421 acres, it seemed like a long distance to us to go all the way out there. And we used to sing songs about "We're headed toward Towson." [Laughter]

Warren: Now, something that I'll bet you remember, I hope you remember, is the old villa, the Wyman Villa.

Sparrow: Oh, yes.

Warren: Do you remember that?

Sparrow: It was beautiful. I was there when they knocked it down.

Warren: Tell me all about that.

Sparrow: I don't know too much about it, except it was always there, and all of a sudden, they knocked it down. And my uncle, who went there, he was Nancy's father. You know, Nancy is the one that told you about me. Well, her father was voted the most popular freshman at Hopkins, and his picture was in the paper, on the back page, which was the best part of the paper. That was all the local news. With his big megaphone. He had a big megaphone like this. And it said he was voted the most popular freshman, so Hopkins was a big place in Baltimore even then. Gosh, what was I going to tell you?

Warren: About the Wyman Villa.

Sparrow: Oh, yes. He was a member of the Barnstormers. Now, they have the Hopkins Playhouse—is that what they call it now? But it's really the Barnstormers. And they were in the barn. It was a barn. Then it was quiet for a long time, years and years and years, they didn't do anything, so it was really wonderful when Lurlene Pratt revived it, and now her daughter, Suzanne, who was in my daughter's class in school, she's the director now and they do have wonderful plays.

Warren: What's her name?

Sparrow: Suzanne Pratt.

Warren: And what was her mother's name?

Sparrow: Lurlene Pratt.

Warren: Lurlene. How do you spell that?

Sparrow: L-U-R-L-E-N-E. So John was active in everything, and he was active his whole life. He was the fundraiser for his class, and they raised more money except for, you know, millionaires giving a million dollars or whatever, but they raised more money on the class fund drive than any other class, and yet they graduated in 1929. So that's quite a record. But they did it because John had plenty of friends and they didn't have a reunion just once every five years. They went on trips, they went down the Amazon, and everything you can imagine. Every year, all of them, the whole class did, I think. And all the wives, and they all knew each other.

Warren: So before we started, you were mentioning that you were here all through the Depression. How do you think Hopkins was different at that time than it was a little later?

Sparrow: Well, they didn't have any dormitories. The boys either were city students, or they

lived in boarding houses around there, so Calvert Street and Guilford Avenue were full of boarding houses. So the boys would walk to school, you know, instead of being in dorms. It was a small school, too. They really emphasized the graduate schools much more than the undergraduate, but the undergraduate was still good.

Warren: So tell me what you mean, they emphasized the graduate schools.

Sparrow: Well, when Hopkins started, you know, left the money for a school and a hospital, they selected Dr. Gilman to be the first president, and they selected four famous doctors to be the first people for the school and the hospital—I mean, the medical school and the hospital, and they chose the right people. They were all really wonderful people. From the very beginning, they emphasized—they had an undergraduate school, but they always emphasized the graduate. They acted as if every student was an adult, so Hopkins took absolutely no responsibility for anything that the students did.

Warren: Meaning?

Sparrow: Well, they got into problems, because some of them were eighteen, the first time away from home, they lived in boarding houses, so the boarding house owners didn't necessarily tell them what to do. Well, they get into problems these days, too. I mean, they're not adults, and Hopkins is still treating them like adults.

Warren: So you were around as an eighteen-year-old, too. Let's switch to that. Let's talk about dating at Hopkins.

Sparrow: Of course, I was a city girl, too, but I knew the dorm girls and they would have deadlines.

Warren: You were at Goucher?

Sparrow: Yes. They would have deadlines, and when they would go to a Hopkins dance, they wouldn't have to go out afterward, which is what the city girls did. The city girls really had a better time of it, because we only had to answer to our parents. But we heard stories about the dorm girls, and sometimes they would go in to meet the deadline, and then their date would go out and buy something, some food, because they'd be hungry after all that dancing and everything, and then they would have a fishing line, the girl would, out the window, and fish it up from where the boy was. [Laughter]

Warren: So this was at the downtown campus?

Sparrow: Right.

Warren: So talk to me about the proximity of Hopkins and Goucher and how that worked.

Sparrow: Well, they were just a few blocks apart, very easy walking. As a M.A.T.ter of fact, when I took a class in public speaking at Goucher, we were supposed to interview somebody and talk about our interview, so I thought about what celebrities we had. I called up Glenn L. Martin. He was out of town. I forget who else I called. But anyway, I called up Yardley. Do you know about Yardley?

Warren: No.

Sparrow: He was the best cartoonist that ever was. He knew what the facts were in politics and sometimes politics was quite raw, but he always had a picture of himself. He was a big man, but he always had a picture of himself as a little man, and always had a Scottish tam on. I interviewed him and he was really wonderful to interview. No place at all to sit in his place. He had to take things off of chairs for me to sit. And he said one of the things that he just loved about Goucher was when he'd be riding the Charles Street bus, seeing those girls walking by. [Laughter] So we

were close enough that the Hopkins boys saw us walking by, too, and we would see them, too.

Warren: So what years are we talking about now?

Sparrow: I would say from '36 to '40.

Warren: Okay. Take me on a date with a Johns Hopkins man.

Sparrow: Well, hardly anybody had any money, so we did a lot of things that the kids don't do these days. Dates are big money for kids these days, but we had neighborhood movie houses where you could go in the daytime for ten cents, go at night for a quarter, and the downtown movie theaters would be like fifty cents—the Century, the Valencia—no, that was the second one. Century, Stanley, the New Theater, the [unclear]. We had lots of them.

And the movie would stay there as long as people would be paying that awful fifty cents, and then they would go to second-run theater, which would be like the Valencia or the Parkway, and that would be like thirty-five cents. And then they would end up at the neighborhood theater, and that would be a quarter.

So, many times we went to the quarter date, and then if the boy had a lot of money, we might go to the Parkway. Once in a while, we'd end up downtown. Now, when the dorm students wanted to go out and not be followed, not checked up on—and some of the housemothers did check up on them—they would always say they went to the Stanley, because the Stanley was so big that nobody could ever tell if they were there or not. [Laughter]

And then Hopkins had these wonderful dances. All the big-name bands came, so I danced to all of them, and they were all wonderful.

Warren: Who were they?

Sparrow: Well, the ones that I wrote down that I remembered, Glenn Miller, he was the best of

all. We didn't sit out a single dance. We danced every one. He really was made for dancing. Kay Kaiser, he was wonderful, too. Paul Whiteman, he was terrible. He didn't really conduct the orchestra, he had somebody else doing it, and it was on the radio, so the only thing he did was to come over and talk on the radio, but we were very bored with that dance. Woody Herman, Jimmy Dorsey, and I can't remember how many others. But they were really wonderful and we just loved them. They would have the dances at the Alcazar, and the place would be full every time.

Warren: Where was the Alcazar?

Sparrow: Well, I think it's the School for Arts and Sciences or something now. It's down on Cathedral Street, near Mt. Vernon Square.

Warren: So the building still stands?

Sparrow: Yes, the building is still there, but it's a school now, and I think it's a School for Arts or something. Is there a School for Arts in the city?

Warren: I don't know. I don't know. I didn't know the Alcazar still stood.

Sparrow: Well, they just don't call it that.

Warren: Oh, because I've seen pictures of events in the Alcazar. So was it a hotel?

Sparrow: No, it was run by the Catholic Church. I think the Knights of Columbus owned it, and they had a lot of activities going on there, but it was for rent, so Hopkins would always rent the building for their big dances.

Warren: So it was like a big hall?

Sparrow: Oh, tremendous. It was a big stage. I mean, Paul Whiteman had an orchestra of a hundred pieces, so that took up the big stage. All these big bands, they were big. A lot of people in those orchestras.

Warren: Good grief. A hundred pieces. Oh, my gosh.

Sparrow: It was really a symphony orchestra.

Warren: Take me on a date, from start to finish. The guy comes, picks you up. Tell me the whole thing.

Sparrow: Many times, on the streetcar.

Warren: Tell me the whole thing.

Sparrow: Well, we'd go on the streetcar and come home on the streetcar, and when we went to dances, sometimes we wore our evening dresses on the streetcar, long dresses. Very common. Nobody ever thought anything of wearing a long dress on a streetcar, because everybody did it. And once in a while the boy would borrow his father's car. Hardly any students had their own at that time.

My brother had one when he was sixteen. The day he was sixteen, he got his license, because he'd learned to drive by driving my father's car up and down the driveway. So the day he was sixteen, he got the license. So then when he had ten dollars saved up, he bought a car, a Model T, and he fixed it up. Naturally, it needed fixing up, and then he sold that for twenty dollars, and he kept on going till he finally got a brand new car. And that's the way a lot of boys did it. But a brand new car was not as expensive as they are now. You could get a brand-new car for under a thousand dollars.

So anyway, you might go in the father's car, and there was one date that the father drove us. [Laughter] So it just depended. All of us had parties in our own houses, and the girls who really had more money would rent a jukebox and that was really marvelous, that we would play our own pieces and all, but everybody had a phonograph.

And we would dance, or we would dance to the music on the radio, and these big bands were all on the radio, so we could dance all night long. Oh, we were annoyed when [Franklin D.] Roosevelt would come and make a speech because we couldn't dance then. We'd just roll the rugs up and dance. We had a wonderful time. And we would wear long dresses even to somebody else's house.

Warren: Really?

Sparrow: Wore long dresses all the time.

Warren: So what years were you at Goucher, '36 to '40?

Sparrow: '36 to '40.

Warren: So was there a sense that the war was coming? Could you tell?

Sparrow: I think we knew it was coming. When I was in high school, we had Dr. Becker as a principal, and he was really wonderful, and he had wonderful speakers come, you know, even for high school. We had the Baltimore Symphony come to do their practice for us once a year. So we had lots of opportunities. I remember the year that Hitler had the prime minister of Austria killed. I can't remember his name now. But it was a shock heard around the world.

I don't remember when Hitler got power, because I was too little then, but my father was very much aware of the news, and so everybody in our family talked about everything that was going on. I'll never forget when the Duchess of Windsor, she was Mrs. Simpson, Erna Simpson, and, of course, a Baltimorean. We were all talking about that before the king retired, because we all knew about it before England did.

My grandmother was very much aware of everything. In fact, in the '30s, she said, "Congress doesn't have its head on straight, because they had said they would not fortify Wake."

Now, most people had never heard of Wake. What was Wake? Some kind of a dot in the ocean. But Wake turned out to be very important in the war, so Grandmother was right. And anybody who knew what was going on knew that the war was coming. We were shocked, but not surprised, when England went to war, because people were saying they should never have let Hitler go into the Rheinland, and that was the beginning. When Hitler told his generals that he would retire if France and Britain objected to his going into the Rheinland, they never said a word. So from then on, he kept moving to one country after another.

And we also met refugees coming in here. Baltimore was a big port then.

Warren: And a lot of them came to Johns Hopkins, on the faculty.

Sparrow: Right.

Warren: Did you know any of them?

Sparrow: I didn't really know the faculty in those days, except for my father, but lots of students came, too, high school students and college students, and we had them speaking at all the different functions that we went to.

Warren: So it was very cosmopolitan. You had a real strong sense of—

Sparrow: Right, right. And we belonged to the College Club, which met at First Methodist Church, right next to Goucher, but Hopkins boys came down there, too. We had wonderful speakers there, and we had some of these students there. You know, some of the foreign students, and sometimes they would speak about their experiences, so we were quite aware of what was going on. And we knew that Lindbergh and Father Coughlin and a few people like that were talking about "America First" and all, but we knew that we should be defending ourselves and getting ready. It was really terrible what happened.

My brother was the first person wounded December seventh. He was not at Pearl Harbor. He was at Kaneohe Field, and they attacked there before they got to Pearl Harbor, but Pearl Harbor just gets all the name for it. And his best friend was killed right next to him. So we were quite aware of everything, and he went in the navy because he knew the war was coming. Everybody knew it.

Warren: Well, one thing I've found references to recently is that there were some peace marches in the '30s at Hopkins.

Sparrow: Well, there were peace marches everywhere. One time I was in class— [Interruption] ...and I took it in my sophomore and junior year.

Warren: A class in Spanish.

Sparrow: Yes. And I think it was November the seventh when there was a peace march on Goucher campus. Of course, Hopkins students came down to the Goucher campus, and Goucher students went up the Hopkins campus, so it didn't really make too much difference. But the peace march started at ten minutes after eleven, so somebody rang a bell, and the professor said, "There's the bell." And we said, "Yes." And she said, "Aren't you going to the peace march?" and we all said no. We knew there was a war coming. We knew that the ROTC at Hopkins was full. We dated people at the Naval Academy. We all knew it. Maybe the Midwest didn't know about, but we certainly knew about it.

The professor was furious that we wouldn't go on the peace march. She wanted to go on the peace march, so she canceled the class, so we just went out, but we didn't go to the peace march. It's not that we didn't want peace, but we didn't want Hitler taking over anything more.

Then the Spanish Civil War started when I was a counselor at camp, and when you're at

camp, you don't find out what the news is. You know, you're not listening to the radio or anything. Some people went off and fought in that, because they knew it was the beginning of the war. So it was quite obvious that we were going to be at war, and, of course, it was Hitler and Hirohito who decided when we were going to be at war. But the Roosevelts were not surprised. Mrs. [Eleanor] Roosevelt was asked later on, "What happened at the White House on December seventh?" She said, "Nothing." They weren't surprised at all. It was really terrible that they let those ships be exploded and all those thousands of men killed because they didn't want to notify them.

Anyway, my aunt's husband was killed in the war, and she was very bitter about Roosevelt for some time because of it, because people said he was a great leader. He was great in a lot of ways. He was greater in getting us out of the Depression, and he appointed good people during the war, but he should not have kow-towed to the America Firsters.

In 1933, we had a Maryland tercentenary, and we had a big pageant down at the war memorial. I was a Girl Scout, so I was one of the people in the pageant. You know, we had the Girl Scouts marching, we had the Boy Scouts marching, we had people from other countries marching. Of course, Baltimore was a big port, so we had people from almost every country.

So the people from Germany wanted to carry the Nazi flag, and they had a big debate about whether that flag should be carried as a national symbol for Germany. The people who were running the pageant finally said it could not be, so the German contingent withdrew. They were not in the pageant. And that was back in 1933, so, yes, we were aware of what was going on. And I majored in political science. [Laughter]

Warren: I can tell you're very aware. I'm glad I have the opportunity to ask these questions.

Well, speaking of political science, something else that happened here that you probably were tuned into, was the whole Owen Lattimore drama.

Sparrow: Yes, well, we didn't like [Joseph] McCarthy. Well, that was back in the '50s. I mean, this was before the war.

Warren: Yes, I'm scooting ahead to Owen Lattimore.

Sparrow: Owen Lattimore was a very highly respected professor at Hopkins. He didn't have a Ph.D., but he was highly respected anyway. He made people aware of Mongolia. Of course, the Japanese invaded China in 1933 and ever after that, so we knew what Japan was doing, too. The people on the West Coast were more worried about Japan, and rightfully so. People on the East Coast were more worried about Europe. And here we were, caught in the middle, and the people in the Midwest were the ones who were the America Firsters.

But there were some people here who were that way, and we had some big debates in these groups that I was in. I can't remember. My brother and my aunt's husband and other people we knew were in the ROTC. There weren't women in the military at that time. But we knew that we might lose them. Actually, my family lost five men in the war, so when we would have these meetings and some of these people who were going on peace marches and everything would stand up and shout forth, they lost our friendship. I mean, it was really a very strong feeling, and we believed in the Bundles for Britain, when the war started and did everything possible to help refugees and so forth.

Warren: So was ROTC a very—

Sparrow: Very strong at that time.

Warren: Tell me about that. Your family members were in ROTC?

Sparrow: No. No, they were not in ROTC. They all joined the navy. [Laughter] My sister's husband joined the army. Well, my cousin's cousins, they were in the ROTC, but I didn't know them at that time. But I knew boys who were in the ROTC and I dated down at Camp Meade, too, because they had summer programs down there and all the college students went.

Warren: So were there fellows in uniform on campus on a regular basis?

Sparrow: Sure, sure. They wore a blue uniform. I don't know why it was blue. We knew all of them. So the peace marches made a lot of noise, but they were always in a minority. As a M.A.T.er of fact, the reason I majored in political science, I didn't know what I wanted to major in. I took one course in every department until I found what I liked, and the first course I took in political science was on comparative government. We started with the British Empire, which was a good place to start. We did Nazism, Communism, everything possible. And I got so excited about it that I majored in it, just from that one course.

Warren: So you went on in your career to be a teacher?

Sparrow: No. [Laughter]

Warren: But you were in the M.A.T. program.

Sparrow: Yes.

Warren: Okay, help me out.

Sparrow: That was back in the '50s. I mean, we're jumping ahead a few years here. I had been a volunteer. I had an operation, and while I was recovering, I was reading the paper, and it talked about this program that Hopkins was going to have because they had a shortage of teachers, and they thought if they got liberal arts graduates to take a special program with education courses, which we had all avoided like poison when we were in college, because we heard how deadly they

were—what did you major in?

Warren: Not that.

Sparrow: Okay. We heard they were deadly, so we wouldn't take them. In fact, my first job was at Montgomery Ward, and I used to say that I majored in political science and I right away became a dictator, because that's what I was called there. It was all mail order, and I'd answer some letters that were too difficult to answer with a form letter. I had a stenographer and I would dictate into the whatever they called that little round thing, and then she would type it up for me.

But I was lucky to get a job. I was the first person in my class to get a job, because we had a vocational guidance counselor who was supposed to help us with job finding. She didn't have one place to tell us even to go. Some of my friends took graduate work, but I was engaged, and I wasn't interested in graduate work at that time. So I was really thrilled. After two weeks, two whole weeks, of looking around, you know, going to one place after another, then I was able to get a job, and they were doing a special thing then. Montgomery Ward had people who didn't know how to write and so forth, so they decided to get college graduates. At that time they could get college graduates. So we were a special group there. And we had to be there at seven o'clock in the morning.

Warren: Ooh.

Sparrow: Right. But anyway, my husband went in the navy, like a lot of other people. He was at the Glenn L. Martin Company. He could have been deferred through the war, but he wanted action, so he went in the navy and we traveled around the country and had two children. I wasn't working in all that time, so it was when my children were older that I saw this thing in the paper, and I thought, "Well, that would be interesting." We had a lot of teachers in the family, and I

thought it would be interesting.

So I called up and they sent me an application or something, and I was the oldest one in the class. Most of them were fresh out of college. There were a few others who were a little bit older. Maybe they were like thirty or something. But it was an interesting class, men and women from all over the country, and every college you can imagine.

And that's when I appreciated my Goucher education a lot more than I had before, because every class that I had in high school and college I had a paper to write, so writing was very natural. Some of them had never written a paper, and here they ended up in graduate school and they were supposed to write papers. And some of the exams were essay, so you had to know how to write to be able to pass the course.

Well, there was one class on Russian history that I said I wanted to take, and we had an internship. It wasn't practice teaching; it was different. The internship meant that we had five courses at a time, plus teaching full time. And we had supervisors, but we didn't have any practice teachers. You know, practice teachers have these students right under them, so it's very different from the experience we had. They were trying to do it fast for us, just like when they speeded up the college classes to get the men into war sooner.

So this girl from Wellesley, very attractive, very intelligent, she took this course on Russian history in the summertime, and it was my turn to take it in the wintertime, and the advisor said, "I wouldn't take that if I were you," and I said, "Why not?" He said, "Well, what's-her-name could hardly pass it, it was so difficult for her." And he said, "Why do you want to take it?" And I said, "Well, if I'm going to teach social studies, I want to know as much about Russia as possible. I took political science, but we didn't study the history." So he said, "Well, okay, if you want to."

But I took more courses than I was supposed to, because every one of them was so wonderful. And I had no problem at all, because the professor would write one sentence on the blackboard, and the whole three hours of your exam, you were writing on that one question. So when this girl who had it in the summertime said that's what she would have for the semifinal and the final, she said, "What one question would you think that could be asked?" And I said, "Well, what would have been the difference if Trotsky had won instead of Stalin? What would have been the difference?" And there would have been a lot of differences. But that wasn't one of the questions that was asked, but that was a kind of question, and you really had to know your subject to be able to write for three hours on it.

Well, anybody who had never done any real writing—and I couldn't believe that this girl from Wellesley—because I always heard Wellesley was such a great—you know, one of the Seven Sisters and all that. But some of the men had some problems, too, because they came from some very small Midwestern colleges and they had never written anything either. So I really appreciated what I had at Goucher and Hopkins both, because they were both wonderful teachers and really prepared us for life. Dr. Robertson said he didn't want us to memorize things; he wanted us to know how to think.

Warren: Dr. Robertson was the president?

Sparrow: He was the president of Goucher.

Warren: I need to turn the tape over.

Sparrow: Okay.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Warren: I'd like to hear more about the M.A.T. program. What kind of teachers did you have?

Who were your faculty?

Sparrow: Well, we had faculty in what our own field was. My field was social studies. I always loved history and always loved, well, political science, of course, but social studies. I think it's a terrible thing that they did to the American school children, just like when they took phonics out of the classroom, and when they did numbers facts—I mean, oh, what do they call them? They taught children how to count on their fingers and toes and, of course, we couldn't do that. That's one thing you do have to memorize, what four fours mean.

Anyway, they put social studies in, so now the kids don't learn any history, they don't learn any geography, they don't learn anything. It's just wasted time. But anyway, because I wanted to teach social studies, I took history, sociology, political science. I had Mac Moos. Have you heard of him?

Warren: Tell me about him.

Sparrow: Did you know about him?

Warren: Tell me about him. I've heard about him, but I'd like to hear more.

Sparrow: He was the head of the Baltimore Republican City Central Committee, and he was also a professor at Hopkins and he wrote several books. The course I took from him was practical politics, and it was very interesting, because before I went to Hopkins, I had run for city council. The reason I ran was because I was trying to work on redistricting. We had five organizations working on it, and we almost made it, but it was a very difficult thing to explain to people, and the politicians were against it because they wanted things the way they did them, and we have worse districting now than we had even then. So it hasn't been changed at all. [Ben] Cardin, for example, who's a congressman, has his district in three different counties and part of Baltimore

City. It's disgusting. He has to have an office in each place. Why do we have government so expensive? Because of things like that.

So anyway, practical politics, I wrote up the whole thing about redistricting and why it failed, so that was really interesting for me to write it, you know, after having been through it. Am I getting an echo?

Warren: No. I have an earphone here. You might be hearing that. You have very good hearing.

Sparrow: So sociology, the course was given, and I don't know what this man's qualifications were, but it was on social disorganization, which I had never even heard of before, and it was absolutely marvelous. He worked in the prisons, and I forget what his job was in the prison. What would a sociologist be doing in prison?

Anyway, it's one of the best courses I ever had anywhere. He talked about all the kinds of social disorganization, and I kept the textbook and it's still great. Suicide, divorce, war, everything that disorganizes a society, and we went through all of that, right after I got out of Hopkins. The Vietnam war, the divorce rate has gone up, marriages have fallen apart, suicides are going up, and drugs. I mean, everything is horrible. We've got social disorganization all around us, and that man taught us every single thing there was to know about it.

So when there were parades against the Vietnamese War, I was with the Girl Scouts. The younger ones were saying things like, "You old people don't understand," and I said, "We certainly do understand. We've already been through everything." So some of the things that I learned in that course really helped me understand.

When I was working in New York, we had riots all the time. One day I was on a bus, I forgot the name of the bus, but it went down Broadway and then down to Grand Central. There

were people rioting all the time, and one time there was a riot right at the Grand Central terminal, and the bus driver stopped. He couldn't go because of all these people in the street. So we said, "Open the doors. Let us out," and he said, "This is not a stop." And we said, "You are stopped. You're going to make us miss our train." All we cared about was getting to our train. Of course, it was really ridiculous, but he finally let us out because we were screaming at him so much. We walked right through that mob, got in the station, and went on the train. [Laughter]

But anyway, it was a time of terrible torment, and of course there were riots all over the country. The *New York Times*, on the second page, said something like 375 cities were burning. Horrible time to go through.

Anyway, these courses were really marvelous that I had. And of course, we had to take some education courses. Now, I had taken one psychology course in college, because I thought I was going to be interested in psychology. I thought I'd learn about people. Our professor was teaching us nonsense syllables, to see how fast we could learn. Well, of course, we didn't learn them very fast, because we knew they were nonsense.

Anyway, years later, I took educational psychology at Hopkins and we got the results of this survey, learning the nonsense syllables, and I had to laugh, and the professor said the whole problem with psychology is, the only people we can experiment on are rats and college students. [Laughter]

Warren: Serious problem.

Sparrow: Yes, that was psychology. Now, we had two professors of education who were very, very good.

Warren: And who were they?

Sparrow: They had both been teachers. I don't remember their names. One of them was named Lund [phonetic], and I knew her from the College Club. She was really marvelous in teaching us kinds of things to do to control a class. And I'll always think that some child—every child has some good quality. Well, you know, when I was teaching, I got the worst classes, because this is what they do to new teachers. Five classes of forty-nine children each.

I was a floating teacher. I had twenty-four different classrooms I was floating in, on four different floors, and I was teaching two different subjects. The whole thing is impossible. It's illegal, but I didn't know this. Anyway, she taught us things like "Every child has a good quality." Well, I really had some terrible children, but I found out in a way that the teachers can't nowadays.

We had an opening ceremony every day for my home room. And floating teachers are not supposed to have home rooms, either. Anyway, I was a floating teacher with a home room, so I had an opening ceremony, because that's the way I had always had it every day in school. And I had a reading from the Bible. I always chose the passages, so it would not reflect on anybody's religion, and we saluted the flag, and I forget what else we did.

But it really quieted the class down, and if you don't have an opening ceremony for any other reason, that's the only reason you should have it. Children are having such problems with discipline these days, they really need something. Anyway, I had different children do each part of it each day.

So this one little boy, he was about this tall, and his hair stuck straight up, and he was just a terrible, terrible demon. But anyway, one day I picked him to hold the flag, and he held the flag like the best soldier you have ever seen. I have never seen anything so beautiful as the way that

child held the flag, so I complimented him on it, and I think it's the first compliment he ever got in his whole life. He was a different child from then on. So she really taught us a very good thing.

And then the other was somebody who had taught during the Depression in West Virginia, and he told us about some of the terrible children that he had had and what he had done about them. Well, he had also been a coach, so he said, the worse children he would put on one team, and he would be on the other team, and he'd bump into them on purpose. [Laughter]

Warren: When we were talking on the telephone, you told me about your very special graduation from Johns Hopkins. Tell me that story.

Sparrow: Well, as a retread, you know, I had children who were in school, and I found out that Milton Eisenhower was president and Dwight was President of the United States, and Dwight was having Harold Macmillan to be the speaker. Dwight was going to have a conference, but Milton invited him to be the speaker and he accepted, so they had it in the quadrangle, because they used to have them in Shriver Hall, and they knew that there would be a lot of interest.

I had already invited everybody I knew, because you could have as many tickets as you wanted. So I got permission from the schools to let my children go to it. They decided to hold it out in the quadrangle because there would be so many people, and they had helicopters flying all around, and Secret Service men with machine guns standing on the tops of apartment houses, and so forth. Nobody ever shot at Eisenhower; he was too popular.

But anyway, it was quite a ceremony. Hopkins used to have commencements that nobody went to. People would just say, "Mail me the diploma." But not for this one. And my children went back to school the next day and their teachers asked them to report on it, so my younger child said, "Oh, yes. The President of the United States and the Prime Minister of England both

came to see my mother graduate.” [Laughter]

Warren: That’s a wonderful story. I love that.

Sparrow: We were right behind the medical students, and it was really wonderful to see them shake each other’s hands and say, “Hello, Doctor,” for the first time.

Warren: So Hopkins graduation is a huge event.

Sparrow: Well, it was then.

Warren: I’ve never been to one. Everybody comes together?

Sparrow: Yes, we used to have it down at the Lyric before they had Shriver Hall, and I went to some of them, you know, when boys that I knew were graduating. There were lots of empty spaces.

Warren: They just didn’t bother to come.

Sparrow: They were too sophisticated.

Warren: After all that effort. You know, something you mentioned to me that I almost forgot, you said that your father was president of the Hopkins Club. Tell me about the club.

Sparrow: Well, the club was very small. It was the Hopkins faculty club. They didn’t let alumnae in. I think they have a few extra people there now. Well, they have alumnae’s children now. My children are both members now. It was about one-fifth of the size it is now. They had a billiard table in what is now the library, and the Eisenhower Room wasn’t called that at that time, it was the ladies’ dining room. The ladies could not eat lunch in the regular dining room, because that was only for men. It was a men’s school.

It was really funny, after I got my degree, I joined the Hopkins Club, and my husband, who had taken a couple of courses there, but he was not an alum, he went to Drexel, he could go

in and have his Boy Scout meetings in the men's dining room, but I couldn't.

Anyway, it was a very small club and everybody knew everybody. When I was going to get married, my mother said she thought it would be nice to have the reception there. So my father said, well, he'd ask the board. He didn't know of any. The board said, "We've never done anything like this before." So they had quite a discussion about it, and finally decided to do it as an experiment.

Well, it went so well that they've been doing it ever since, and people now make their wedding dates when they can get the club. The last time they built an addition, they built it so the bride could throw her bouquet over the balcony and all the rest of it. So it's a very popular thing to do now.

Warren: And yours was the very first.

Sparrow: Yes.

Warren: So tell me more about what that felt like to be an alumna of the school and not be able to go into the dining room.

Sparrow: I thought it was hysterical. I mean, there are lots of things that are funny in life, and that's one of the funniest of all. You had to walk through the kitchen to get to the ladies' room.

Warren: Really?

Sparrow: Yes. At night you could have dinner with the men, but you could not eat in the main dining room for lunch, because that was supposed to be for faculty, and the faculty were all men.

Warren: Do you remember when the club was at Homewood House? I'm not sure what year that was, but there was some time that it was at Homewood House.

Sparrow: Well, that was before my time. I only remember it in the building that it's in now, but,

of course, that building is so much bigger that you wouldn't recognize it.

Warren: Really? So it was quite small at first?

Sparrow: Oh, yes. They've had several expansions.

Warren: I'm still learning all this. There's an awful lot I don't know. And Shriver Hall wasn't there for all that long.

Sparrow: It wasn't there, no.

Warren: So you've probably seen a lot of buildings constructed.

Sparrow: Oh, yes. Just like when the tennis courts aren't there anymore. I don't think they are.

Warren: No, no, no, no. They're a building.

Sparrow: They're a parking lot.

Warren: No, I think they're—well, I don't know where you remember. I know I've seen pictures of tennis courts where there are buildings now, the tennis courts that were up by Gilman Hall. That's where Ames Hall is now.

Sparrow: Well, it was very countrified-looking at that time. Hardly any parking lots, because people did go on the streetcar, and you could park out on Charles Street, which the students are now doing again.

Warren: So tell me what we haven't talked about that we should.

Sparrow: Well, about my other relatives. My father was also president of the—did I mention the Hopkins Y?

Warren: Not since we've had the tape recorder on. The Y that was in Levering Hall.

Sparrow: Yes. They had a supper club and it was open to everybody, so we went every month, and that's where I met Ted Schad, whom I've referred to you.

Warren: Ted who?

Sparrow: Ted Schad. He was the one who was editor of *The Hullabaloo*, and he got that award from Hopkins two years ago. He had his sixtieth reunion in June a year ago.

Warren: So what were these supper clubs about at Levering Hall?

Sparrow: The supper club was dinner and discussion, and they had famous leaders from all over the world. I wouldn't have missed them for anything. Very stimulating, lots of room for questions and all. Do you know who Dorothy Thompson was?

Warren: Yes, the writer.

Sparrow: Yes. A famous political science writer, woman. Very unusual. And she was married to Sinclair Lewis, so they had people like that all the way through. I can't remember the name of the Japanese man who came, but he was famous, too. I don't remember all the others. They had a Jewish man to speak on Jewish humor, one of the funniest evenings I've ever been through. So, you know, very versatile. And that's where I met Ted Schad, and I dated other boys that I met there, too.

Warren: So people from the community—now, were you there because you were a faculty daughter, or did all kinds of people come in from the community?

Sparrow: All kinds of people came because—sometimes Morgan College students came, so I don't know how Hopkins arranged it, whether they invited people from otherwise or other colleges, or what, and I don't remember how I got there, but I went for four years. [Laughter]

Warren: So there were a lot of Goucher students there?

Sparrow: Well, maybe ten. Not a lot.

Warren: The really smart ones went, right?

Sparrow: [Laughter] The ones who were interested. The ones who didn't go to—well, they had—the Japanese, I think, spoke on peace, so they did have things on peace, too. It's just that we didn't want to go out and have a strike for peace. You know, what good would that have done? It didn't do any good. It just made Hitler happy. He thought we would never fight, even after he declared war.

Warren: Something that I've learned about that interests me a lot. Did you ever have anything to do with the History of Ideas Club? Did you know about that?

Sparrow: No. I took a course at Goucher on—I forget what it was called, but it was on political ideas.

Warren: You're probably a little too young for that, but there were a number of people from the community, but I think they were probably your parents' age, were attending that.

Sparrow: My parents were young. They got married at nineteen and they had us right away, so they were young parents.

Warren: How about lacrosse? Did you go to lacrosse games? Sports games?

Sparrow: Sure, we went to lacrosse games, football games, everything, even though Hopkins never had a great football team, because they declassified, de-emphasized athletics, and I think it was a very good decision because college athletics have gotten so professional and taken all the fun out of it. So that's why Hopkins has been great in lacrosse, because they were one of the few colleges that had it. A lot more of them have it now. In fact, when we lived in White Plains, my husband gave a lacrosse stick to the boy next door, because he said every boy needs to have one for strength. [Laughter]

Well, lacrosse—my father's brother married a Norris girl, and the Norrises ran the Mount

Washington Club. Rip Hewitt, who married my cousin, was the first director of the Lacrosse Foundation. Three people over there have gotten lacrosse—what do they call it? Man of the Year? No. Hall of Fame. Three of them have gotten the Hall of Fame because of all their shots and puts and things. I'm really not very good in sports, but I went to all the games anyway. I went to the Naval Academy games, too. Baltimore used to have Naval Academy and Princeton games here, too, at the stadium.

Warren: Right. Out at Memorial Stadium. Yes, I remember that. I went to a couple of those myself.

Sparrow: We'd go out and watch the midshipmen marching in before we went to the seats. And we sat through rain and snow and everything.

Warren: So who else should we be talking about here?

Sparrow: Well, I don't think we talked about John. Maybe Nancy has told you enough about John.

Warren: About John Norris?

Sparrow: Yes.

Warren: Yes, I have a good bit about him.

Sparrow: Well, my grandmother had a place on the Bay, and he used to have house parties down there all the time, so we knew all his friends, too.

Warren: Were there any particular hangouts in the neighborhood where Hopkins students and Goucher students would go?

Sparrow: Well, we had different ones, and I forgot the name of the place in that 3100 block of St. Paul Street, that was a place that we could always go. We went for sodas and things like that,

but we also went to places that served drinks. You know, I remember when prohibition was annulled. Saw people drinking in a restaurant for the first time in my life. Big surprise.

Anyway, we went to the Green Spring Inn, which is no more. We also went to the Valley Inn. It was a great place to dance. They had a jukebox and we could dance all Sunday afternoon for just one Coke. [Laughter] We also went to Knox's and Murray's. Did you know them?

Warren: No.

Sparrow: They were at Loch Raven and Taylor Avenue. There are shopping centers there now. But they were just ice cream places, and we'd go out there and we'd have a Coke and dance to their jukebox. We had lots of nice dances like that. But when we would go to the Valley Inn and Green Spring Inn, the boys would be drinking drinks. But I never drank, so, you know, it never occurred to me that they were breaking the law. [Laughter]

Also, a lot of the fraternities would have dances or things at Meadowbrook in Chesapeake Inn and I forget where else, and there would be drinks. But I never saw anybody drunk. I think there were fewer drunk people then than there are now. So when John had these house parties, of course, he didn't have any drinks. My grandmother was a member of the WCTU [Women's Christian Temperance Union]. Do you know what that is?

Warren: Believe it or not, one of my distant relatives was Carrie Nation.

Sparrow: Oh, really?

Warren: Yes.

Sparrow: Well, my grandmother was a very sensible person, and she had a brother—she had a lot of arthritis in her family and her brother had what they called ancolosing spondylitis [phonetic], which only hits young men in their twenties, and eventually he was bent over like this. It was

really horrible. He was in terrible pain all his life. So they didn't know much to do for arthritis in those days, and she would take him whiskey, which the doctor said would help, but she had to sneak it in past her sister, who was the president of the WCTU. [Laughter]

I wrote John down somewhere, but I don't where I wrote him. Probably another piece of paper somewhere else. Oh, yes. Okay. One of Mother's sisters married a Hopkins man, and he was in engineering, and he's the one that started the Senior Alumnae. Have you heard of them?

Warren: The Senior Alumnae?

Sparrow: Yes.

Warren: No.

Sparrow: He said there should be something for senior alums, and it would keep alums active and so forth, so they started it, and when I came back to Baltimore, he got me to join. They paid five dollars a year, and we would go to lunch at the Hopkins Club and then to the barn for whatever play was on, or go on trips. We did lots of wonderful things, and he even took them on a trip to Mexico. He and my aunt used to go down there every wintertime.

So they did a wonderful thing, and they had Betty—gosh, I forget Betty's last name—as executive secretary, and she was in the alumni association. And she did a wonderful job and she knew everybody and she had volunteers and so forth. Well, when she retired, they decided they wouldn't charge us anything, but we don't eat at the Hopkins Club anymore, we only have about three meetings a year, and they're at—what's John Garrett's estate's name?

Warren: Evergreen?

Sparrow: Evergreen. Which is very difficult for retired people. You think about how much walking up and down the steps or walking up and down those roads, and the food isn't as good,

and it's not as big. In fact, last week we had a meeting that was on health. It was on gerontology, and I thought nobody would want to go, because when the doctor tells me so and so that I've got is because of getting older, I don't want to hear that anymore.

Anyway, it was a very good program, and everybody was saying they'd never had a program on health before, and they should have more, and they should have a lot more programs. Well, the new people that they have working on it seem to be more interested in having more people come out. I think they finally realized what good it does for Hopkins to do it, and we've obviously outgrown Evergreen. The place was packed and jammed, no room for another seat in there. So it was my uncle who started it. Also, he's the one with the committee that got the engineering school put back into Hopkins. You know how they took it out?

Warren: The Whiting School?

Sparrow: Yes. So he was very proud of that. And then my cousin, Betty Childs, married a doctor, George Wells. She was an artist, she still is an artist, and George was a doctor, and she taught him art and they had many joint shows in the medical—let's see, what do they call the medical society? It's got a funny name. MedChirug. Medical and Chirurgical. That's it. Anyway, they had shows there, and so forth. And her sister Catherine married twice, and both her husbands went to Hopkins.

Warren: You are a Hopkins family.

Sparrow: Right. And of course, Nancy has always said it's her second love.

Warren: Well, I feel like I've got a real treasure here.

Sparrow: Oh, here's the thing I wrote about John. Oh, and my cousin. John had gone to Poly, and of course, Poly is an engineering school. When he graduated—you know, people didn't talk

about where to go for college until after they graduated, except I always knew I was going to Goucher because my mother had.

Anyway, my grandmother said, "John, you shouldn't go to an engineering school." He said, "Why not? You know Poly's engineering." And she said, "You always see both sides of every question. You should be a lawyer." So they went to Hopkins and said, "What would he have to do to get into school?" Because of course, he had taken some of the wrong classes to get into a liberal arts college. So they told him and he had to take the courses that summer.

So then he went to Hopkins and then he went to Harvard, and he was a very prominent lawyer. He was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court. My aunt's husband, who died in the war, they had one child and he grew up and he is also a lawyer, and he has been president of the Maryland Bar Association. He also went to Hopkins.

There's a picture over there that Betty did. Betty Wells. She was the artist for the NBC, and that's one of the ones she did, showing John introducing Cleveland to the Supreme Court to practice there. So we've got them every way you can look.

Warren: I think so. Well, I want to thank you Mrs. Sparrow. I'm going to turn off the machine now, but this has been wonderful. I've gotten some great things here.

Sparrow: Well, as you can see, I enjoy talking about it.

Warren: Well, I've gotten some real surprising things, that when we started I didn't know I would get, so I want to thank you. This is great.

[End of interview]