

Florence Yeoman (Farnsworth House)

Interviewed by Sayra Alvarez and Elizabeth Vega (2002)

My name is Florence Ruth Yeoman. I was born in Roxbury, MA on April 30, 1926. I grew up on Bismark St. in Jamaica Plain, and have lived here all my life. I went to school here, got married, and taught Sunday school, here. My nickname is Flossy — they use to call me that years ago —in my family. I had an aunt named Florence, too.

Well, I lived with my parents, and I was an only child, but I had cousins who lived near me. When I was a child I played outside, did errands for people in my neighborhood, and went to church. I played tennis, and I also use to play baseball with the other kids in my neighborhood. At one time we had two dogs . One was Spotty, and the other was Teddy. Then later, we had another one called Midnight after those two died.

There was a brewery near my house, and we use to play baseball in the lot there. One day they were putting in new concrete floors, and we were playing baseball outside. I hit the baseball, and it landed in between two of the slabs. When I went inside and tried to get it out, I fell and broke my arm. So I had to go to the hospital.

I went to a regular public schools growing up. I had a lot of friends, and we would go roller skating, bicycle riding and to the movies. We would walk places, or take the elevated train. My parents were strict ... I always had to be in by a certain time. I liked all kinds of music, and I did play the player piano, but I couldn't dance because of my legs. See I had rheumatic fever and it affected my legs. Then, later, I was in an accident.

When I was fourteen years old, I started teaching Sunday School. When I was 17, after I got out of school I started working. I went on a lot of trips with my cousin in her car. She took me on trips to New Jersey, then to

Florida, I also went to New York and California! Then, when I was 21, I got rheumatic fever ... that put me out of commission for a whole year. At that time, the hospital was full, so the doctor came to my house every day.

I got married when I was 27, and I didn't have any children. After the rheumatic fever. I had other illnesses in my thirties, and almost died during surgery when I was 45. But the Lord brought me out of it. Now, my biggest problem is that I have very bad glaucoma, so I don't see much at all. I don't play games like cards because I can't see very well. But, I'm grateful to be here. I go to church every Sunday, and I'm doing very well, thank goodness.

One of the worst things that ever happened to me was later in my life. Three years ago, my husband died at Thanksgiving, then, at New Year's, we had a flood in our house ... it was just my mother and I there. The pipes on the top floor broke, and the water came pouring down all three floors. It was 10 o'clock at night! So I called the firemen, and

they came took the pipe outthen, about 10 or 15 minutes after they left, I had to call again because the other pipe broke. They declared the house a disaster, so they took my mother and I out of the house and put us in a shelter for a night. After that they found us a temporary place in Dorchester, and we were there for just five days, when my mother died— she was 96 years old. After that, they let me stay there for two years until I got in here at Farnsworth House. Now, in my free time, I go to church and I help out by volunteering in the cafeteria here.