Interviewee: Robert Allen Garland
Interviewer: Alicia Sell
Transcriber: Andrew Sterling

AS: My name is Alicia Sell and today is June 12, 2007, and I am interviewing Mr. Robert Allen Garland at his home on Lakewood Drive. Thank you for joining us today Mr. Garland.
RG: A pleasure to be here with you.
AS: I'm going to start out by asking you some background questions about yourself, just some biographical information.
RG: OK.
AS: Can you tell us when and where were you born?
RG: I was born on February 3, 1923, at 373 Walnut Avenue Southwest in Roanoke, Virginia.
AS: So you were born on Walnut Avenue, at home?
RG: Correct. At home.
AS: What were your parents' names?
RG: My father was Walter Berman Garland and my mother was Minnie Allen Garland.
AS: Did you have brothers and sisters?
RG: I had an older brother, he was a junior, Walter B. Garland, Jr. He was 4 years older than me. He was born in 1919 and my younger brother, Ray Lucian Garland was born on May 20, 1934.
AS: So just the three boys?
RG: Correct.
AS: Did you have any extended family living nearby to you here in Roanoke?
RG: My uncle and his – He had one child. Yes, several of my father's siblings lived here. He was the youngest of that family which I think was about 8. But I know he had several brothers that lived here from time to time and 2 or 3, I believe 3 of his sisters. So, his family grew up in Buchanan and they kinda migrated to Roanoke and some of 'em lived here from the time they arrived here probably in the early 1900s until they died.
AS: So your father was born in Buchanan, Virginia?
RG: Yes, yes.
AS: Where was your mother from?
RG: My mother was born in Goochland County, which is out in the country, approximately 50 miles I guess from Richmond at that time.
AS: What did your mother and father do for a living?
RG: My father, after they were married, when they were married on October 25, 1915, and they moved to Roanoke. My father went to work for a drug store which was then on the corner of Campbell Avenue and Randolph Street. Randolph Street is now Williamson Road. He went to work there behind the soda fountain and then finally bought half interest in the store from a Mr. Clore. The store was originally known as Clore's Pharmacy and then Clore and Garland. And then my father bought out Mr. Clore, I believe in the early 20's and then he owned that store until it was closed in 1950 or early 1950s.
AS: Did your father have any trouble with business during the depression?
RG: Oh yes. That story that I gave you about the market area tells much about the Depression Era and yes, it was very difficult and it was a little drug store compared to the ones today. During the Depression, he was able to make it but it was difficult and I can remember going down there as a child, a young child and later as a teenager, and it wasn't downtown Roanoke at that time. It was not very brisk. There was not much business downtown but most of the business that people did in those days was done downtown. The marketing and the purchasing because there was no shopping centers. The Grandin Road area was about the only shop – and the Crystal Spring area – they were small business areas at that time. But no massive business like shopping malls that you have today.

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AS: Can you describe your house that you grew up in on Walnut Avenue? For instance, was it one story or two? Was it brick?
RG: Of course, I only lived there for 2 years, my first 2 years. I think it must've been a duplex because my father's brother and his wife and they had one child, they lived there along with my older brother and my mother and father. So, I think it was a 2 story house. It has since been torn down so I can't really tell you much about it because I, of course, was only 2 when we moved from there.
AS: What street did you grow up on most of your childhood?
RG: Bellville Road.
AS: What was your house like on Bellville?
RG: Bellville Road was a very nice – It was a new house when we moved in. I lived there from 1925 until I went to school. I went to Fork Union Military Academy in 1939. I lived there during that period which would've been 14 years. It was a very pleasant neighborhood and still is. In fact, that home is still in the Garland family. My older brother, Dickey, who became a physician and his wife and 3 children lived there and the widow, Eloise, still lives there. So the house has been in the Garland family from 1925 until the present.
AS: And is that a 2 story house?
RG: Its a 2 story house. It had only one bathroom. It had 3 bedrooms on the second floor and a sleeping porch. In those days, and my mother and father were great believers in sleeping porches even in the wintertime and cold time. We slept out there because they had the feeling that fresh air and cold was a healthy environment.
AS: Would you and your brothers all sleep out there on the sleeping porch?
RG: Oh yeah. I can remember sleeping there and the temperature in the dead of winter would be probably in the 20s or even below sometimes. We would always sleep out there and my mother would fix a hot water bottle for our feet. It would get cold during the night of course but we slept there, I imagine we had the stacks, as I remember, stacks of blankets on us in the cold weather.
AS: Did you enjoy it?
RG: Oh yeah. We slept there, as I remember, all during my childhood. There of course was no air conditioning. We slept out there. There was no heat on the sleeping porch. But that was the way people lived. I would imagine that most homes built during that period probably all had sleeping porches on them. This house doesn't but I think those houses built from 1900 to the 30's, probably most of 'em had sleeping porches.
AS: Was that on the first floor?
RG: No. The sleeping porch was on the second floor and on the back of the house. Your hallway and then a bathroom, then the 3 bedrooms came off the hallway and the sleeping porch was in the rear of the house. There was a door from the hallway to the sleeping porch. During the wintertime, of course, they would shut the doors so the cold air wouldn't come into the rest of the house. And the house was originally heated as I remember by coal and then, in the early 30s when oil furnaces first came out, my father had an oil furnace installed. That was really an innovation at that time because when you had coal, somebody had to shovel coal into the furnace and you had to order coal from the coal company and you had to have a big bin to keep the coal in in the basement. So the oil furnace was a very convenient utility for that period, during that period. Most of the homes in Roanoke up until the '30s, I would imagine most of 'em had coal.
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AS: What kind of chores did you have around your house?
RG: Well, I can't say that I had any regulated number of chores but my mother – We had a colored maid that – live in maid – that stayed there and so she helped my mother with the – her name was Katie. She came to work for us when she was only 12 years old. In those days, Roanoke City would

assign these orphans to homes like ours and they got a small salary but they lived there, room and board and all. So Katie was there. She was kind of a nanny for me from the late 20s up until my brother came, my younger brother. Then, she was kind of a nanny for him. That's what they would call 'em now. I don't remember us calling her because she was just like a member of the family at that time. She took care of my younger brother until she left us which was probably around 1937. She would take him down to Grandin Road in the baby carriage. That's when all the maids where the families had babies, they would gather there on Grandin Road, approximately where my drug store was later. They would, I guess, compare babies and talk and all right there on the corner. Sometimes, I can remember, there would 8 or 10 baby carriages lined up there on the corner and Katie would take Petie – his nickname was Petie – and they would all gather there particularly on summer afternoons when the weather was good.
AS: OK.
RG: She lived there with us from the late, sometime in the 20s. I can barely remember her coming there and she left there in about '37 or '38, right along in that period. So she lived there all during that time. She had her own room and I know what my father paid her was very small because there wasn't a lot of money then in those days. But, she lived well there with us because we furnished all her clothing and room and board, everything.
AS: Did she keep in contact with your family after she had left or?
RG: No. She died. She died shortly after she left us. She had some relatives out in West Virginia and she wanted to go out there. I think she was pregnant was the reason she left us. Because she would've been probably in her early 20s at that time. I believe she was pregnant and she went out there to have the baby and she died during childbirth. Yeah, that's the way it happened. Am I going into too much detail?
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AS: No, you're fine. Let's talk about your education a little bit. Where did you go to Elementary school and high school?
RG: The first 2 years, and it was changed shortly thereafter, Woodrow Wilson had just opened. So the first 2 years, the 1st and 2nd grade, I went to Woodrow Wilson. That was a junior high school. Now I can't explain why because the other students were all junior high school and why they would mix – evidently it had something to do with the crowded conditions at Virginia Heights. But anyway, the first 2 years was at Woodrow Wilson, the 1st and 2nd grades. And then, the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade was at Virginia Heights Elementary School. And then, we went back to Woodrow for the 7th. In those years, and I think it must have something to do with the Depression or trying to get kids out so they could work, they eliminated the 8th grade. They didn't have an 8th grade. So, Woodrow Wilson, I spent the 7th, skipped to the 8th, then the 9th and the 10th was at Woodrow and then to Jefferson High School for the 11th grade. Then I went to Fork Union Military Academy for a year and a half and graduated there in 1940.
AS: During 8th grade, what did you do since you were not in school?
RG: We were in school, we just went from the 7th to the 9th grade. They just eliminated it. Just like it wasn't there. We weren't out of school. I didn't mean that. In other words, instead of going 12 years, we only went 11. So actually, that meant like today, you'd be getting out of school a year sooner in those days as opposed to now. In other words, you would graduate at 17 rather than 18 like it is today.
AS: And you said you went to Jefferson and then to - ?
RG: I went to Jefferson for probably a year or so and then I went to Fork Union Military Academy. I was there for about a year and a half.
AS: Where is that located?
RG: Its near or towards Richmond. Its about 60-some miles from Richmond. Its in Fluvanna County. It was like a prep school. I graduated there in 1940.

AS: Did you go to college after that?
RG: I went to college, medical college school of pharmacy in September, 1940 and was there from September of '40 until I went in the Army in March, 1943. Then I returned and I was in the Army from March of '43 'til March of 1946, then went back to the medical college in September of 1946 and then graduated in June of 1949.
AS: And what was your degree in?
RG: Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy.
AS: Did both your brothers go to college as well.
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RG: Oh yes. My older brother, he went to VMI from 1936 to 1940 when he graduated. He went to the University of Virginia Medical School for a year and then he dropped out I believe and taught at Staunton Military Academy. He got married after he went to college and he taught at Staunon Military Academy for a year and then he was called into the Army and served in the Army Air Corps. He was a meteorologist and then went on the flight school and he was in the Army I think until 1946 and then he returned to the University of Virginia Medical School in '46 and graduated in 1950 from the medical school, University of Virginia Medical School. And then he came back here and he interned over here at what was then Roanoke Memorial and Crippled Children's Hospital is what they called it in those days because that's where all the polio patients came. In fact, his year of internship, they had a polio epidemic. They called it "infantile paralysis" at that time. He was an intern over there during that period and they wouldn't let him go home or anything so he was there on duty, tending to – what they did was they shipped from all Southwestern Virginia and they had an epidemic up in I think Wytheville and up in that area. They transferred all of those patients to the Roanoke Memorial and Crippled Children's Hospital. That's what it was know as at that time. That was because of the fact that all the cases of polio were transferred there and in those days, they put them in what they call an iron lung. That's how they could continue breathing. So he interned there and then later opened a practice in Southeast and he practiced there for maybe 10 years and then it was just too much for him and he finally had to give it up.
AS: Was education important to your family? Was it expected that you would go to school?
RG: Oh yeah. All of us, all three of us – I got one degree on me but my brother, the older brother, he got a degree from VMI and then a medical degree. Then, while he was in the service, he got a degree in meteorology and he became a pilot. He was a very smart boy. After he came back and was practicing and then he gave up his practice – I think he got a Master's degree – but he had about 3 or 4 degrees. Then, my younger brother, he went to Roanoke College and University of Virginia. I believe he has 2 degrees. So I'm the one with only 1 degree. (chuckling) But we were all expected to go to college.
AS: Let's see. What was your home life like? For instance, what did you do in the evenings? Did you listen to the radio a lot?
RG: We did. Of course there was no television. But, we were very active there on Bellville Road. It was a lovely neighborhood. The neighbors were all nice and a lot of children were in that neighborhood. It was the type of neighborhood that you wouldn't lock your doors or anything like that. In the summers, we would play baseball, softball, either there in the street there on Bellville Road or in the backyard of our house. We had a ping-pong table in our basement. We'd have ping-pong tournaments. I remember during probably '35 approximately, that was when the game Monopoly came out. One of the neighbors got the game and we would spend literally all hours, all day – we would go down there early in the morning, play Monopoly all day long. We'd go home for lunch and go home for supper and we would play it until, oh, late at night. You see, you got to remember that was during the Depression and you were handling this toy money so it made 'em feel like powerful because nobody had any money to speak of.

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AS: Would adults play it also?
RG: No. It was the children. We would have 4 or 5 children playing all day long practically. And that summer, there's no telling how many hours we spent just playing Monopoly. At night, I remember, summer nights we would play a game called "Capture the Flag". That was the name of it. The idea of the game – I can't remember exactly – The idea of the game was, at the end of each block a person was supposed to be guarding the flag. You would choose up sides. The object was to try to capture the flag from the other teams. And then we played that many nights 'cause you could hide in the bushes and so forth. Then, there was a game called "Kick the Can". I can't remember exactly how that was played but it had something to do with you would run and try to kick the can from the others and keep them from getting it and that sort of thing. We played a lot of softball and we usually ended up playing in the street 'cause there wasn't much traffic. The trees that lined Bellville there, they were kinda the bases and then you'd have something there for second base and home plate. But we'd play a lot of baseball. Also in our backyard, we played baseball. Then we had on our garage, we had a basketball hoop and we played basketball there. We'd choose up sides and teams and we'd play basketball. We had very active summers. We had a cousin on my mother's side, my first cousin, her sister's boy, would come up here every summer and spend the summer with us from Richmond and live there with us during the summer. He would play the games with us. It was a very nice neighborhood to grow up in. When it snowed, I remember – Of course, in those days, the streets, particularly the side streets would not be cleared. If you had a big snow, we would have sleds and we kept at the far end, the upper end of Bellville Road and we could sleigh ride all the way down to approximately our house. It was a nice neighborhood to grow up in. The neighbor's children were all well-behaved children. I can't remember any problems. Drugs would've been unheard of in those days.
AS: What kind of businesses did your family shop at?
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RG: I mentioned some of that in one of those articles that I got, one on the market. But, all the meat, mostly – see you didn't have these supermarkets – and the city market building, there were butchers lined up on both sides. What you have today is those retail lunch outlets in there. Well, in those days, there were butchers lined up on both sides. I would say, oh, probably 12 or 15 butchers. My mother would go in there and buy whatever meat we needed for the week I believe. Then the produce, the produce was purchased there on the market. The vendors were on each side of the market on the sidewalk. And the vendors were all lined up on both sides. I think there was one that had seafood, sold seafood, Kelly's I believe it was or Parker's maybe too. My mother would buy her fresh vegetables and fruits from those vendors on the outside of the market. They were covered but they were on the walkway where you could just walk down and buy your – see all your vegetables and fruits and all. She would buy the fruits and vegetables from them. Then there was a little mom and pop store, that's what it would be considered today, down in that block where my father had his drug store and that's where she bought her staples like coffee and sugar and stuff like that.
AS: Were there clothing retailers downtown or did you go to those?
RG: Oh yeah. At one time, I would say downtown Roanoke had 10 or 12 men's stores, sold nothing but men's clothing and more than that sold women's clothing. They had these shops, Lerner's had shops but I can remember like Davidson's which was down there then. There was John Norman and all. I counted them one day. It seemed like to me it was about 12. That's all they sold was men's clothes. They had one men's shop that sold nothing but hats but Lerner's and some of the other – Oh, they had Spiegel's, Foreman's and of course, Heironimus, there were 2 department stores, Heironimus and another one an independent – Well, Heironimus was independent then – N.W. Pugh. They were on the corner of – you know where the old Grand Piano building was?
AS: Yes.

RG: N.W. Pugh was in that building. That was a department store that was locally owned. And the Heironimus originally was on the other corner and then Heironimus later moved from there up to the corner of Church and Jefferson, you know where that still has the Heironimus -
AS: Still has the title on it.
RG: During the 30s and I think on up into the 40s and maybe into the 50s, their store was on the corner of Campbell Avenue and Henry Street or 1st Street. That was Heironimus. And across the street was N. W. Pugh and they were very well-run department stores. And they were both locally owned. The Pugh family, they owned that. And they operated that up until probably into the 60s and they closed that. And when Heironimus moved, then – Were you here when Miller & Rhodes was here?
AS: Mm mm.
RG: OK. When Heironimus moved to Jefferson Street, then Miller & Rhodes, that's the department store that had headquarters in Richmond, they, uh, it seemed like they tore that building down and built a new building right there on the corner of Campbell and Henry Street. That was Miller & Rhodes and when the shopping centers opened, both Heironimus and Miller & Rhodes would have stores like on Melrose Avenue, Towers, Crossroads, they'd have stores in those shopping centers.
AS: So it kinda put Pugh's out of business.
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RG: Yeah. It was just – But Pugh's, during the time I was growing up, they did a very good business. My mother shopped there a lot I know. And at Christmastime, they would have a Santa Claus and, what they called "Pugh's Toyland". It seems like it was on the 2nd or 3rd floor and they had a big toy department during Christmas. But when Christmas was over, they took that space for something else. I mean, in those days, toys weren't like they are today, kinda a year-round business. In those days, most toys were bought in December for Christmas and Santa Claus. I know when we were growing up, we would go to Pugh's Toyland and look at all the toys.
AS: How did you travel about in Roanoke? How did you get to the stores? Did your family have a car?
RG: Oh yeah. We had one car. Like on Bellville Road, I don't think anybody had over one car but some of those families had no cars in those days. Roanoke had, was very fortunate to have a very good streetcar system and then after that buses. They integrated the streetcars first and then buses and streetcars. The streetcars were discontinued and then they had nothing but buses. When I was growing up, I used the streetcar a lot if I went down to my father's drug store or went to a movie. See, the Grandin Theater was the only theater that was outside of the business district. All the other – There were 4 or – Let's see, there was Riralto, the American, the Park, the Roanoke and the Jefferson. There were 5 that I can remember and I'm sure before that, there were probably more. There were 5 movie theaters all during the 30s and 40s. Then, they started closing 'em in the 50s and now, there are none. The last one, I remember I attended the last movie show, I took my parents, the American. They were there – I don't guess you would've been here then. - The American Theater, you know where the First National Exchange Bank is, right on the corner?
AS: Mm mm.
RG: The American Theater they tore that down and they built that 12 story building where the American Theater was. The American Theater, and the Rialto which showed basically nothing but Western movies, that's where we went, as a child we went to a lot of the Western movies. Then there was the Park Theater. Jefferson was up on Jefferson, Park and Jefferson. Then there was the Roanoke Theater. At one time, there were 5 that I can remember in downtown Roanoke.
AS: Did they just show movies or did they do plays too?
RG: During my time, I don't think – No, the Roanoke Theater did show some. They did have some Vaudeville acts and magicians would come to Roanoke and they would appear on the stage. But Roanoke had the Academy of Music. Have you heard of that?

AS: Mm mm.
RG: That was located there on Salem Avenue about 4th Street, below 5th Street. It was on the – It was a shame the City Council allowed that to be torn down because it was built in the 1890s and that's where the Vaudeville, the operas, the plays and those sort of things.
AS: Would your parents go out in the evening to those kinds of shows?
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RG: They would on occasion. I can remember attending the – It was torn down in '53. I don't know why the preservationists and the historians allowed it to happen but the City Council claimed that the building was unsafe. So, the City Council voted and they tore it down. They say it had one of the best acoustics of any of those theaters that were built during that period. I can remember going there. My brother was at VMI during '36 and '40 and they came out with a play about VMI. It was written by a former student of VMI. It was called "Brother Rat". It was a play originally. I remember going to the Academy of Music. They had a performance there at the Academy of Music. That was later converted to a movie and Ronald Reagan was in that movie.
AS: Oh, OK.
RG: Ronald Reagan was in that movie. In fact, my brother was at VMI when they were filming there. So, it was in '38 or '39. In fact, that's where Reagan met his first wife during that movie. They did a lot of the filming there at VMI and Reagan was of course a young actor at that time. But he – Eddie Albert was in it. Rackin (??) was in it. I remember it was a very popular movie of course around here because of VMI. It was a shame. That would've been a real landmark if they had kept it because it had those box seats. It reminded you of like the Ford's Theater up in Washington where Lincoln – That's what it reminded you of, kinda built like that.
AS: Let's talk a little bit about once you came back from college. What kind of work you did throughout your life?
RG: OK. I graduated in June, 1949. At that time, my father had I think about 10 small drug stores throughout the city. Two of the stores were downtown. One on Campbell which is in this article that you've got. There was another one on the corner of Jefferson Street and Salem. Then the others were scattered throughout the city and the residential areas. One was on Grandin Road there in that business area. So, when I got out of college, I went to the store on Grandin Road and opened up a prescription department. At that time, it was just a kinda patent medicine store. So, at that time, when I came back we opened a prescription department in that store. That would've been in September of '49. I operated at that location until '52. Then we built – we purchased the land across the street. There was a home on it. We had to tear down the home and we built the store what is now Independent Pharmacy. Are you familiar with Grandin Road?
AS: Yeah.
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RG: It was across the street from the old store, that building where the bank is. Originally there was a bank and then the drug store. That's where we were and then there was a flower shop on the corner. We moved there from across the street in 1952. In fact, Valentine's Day. We opened on Valentine's Day in 1953, excuse me, yeah, Valentine's Day in 1953. I operated that store. We enlarged it several times, extended it back. Built a restaurant upstairs and operated that store until March 1, 1969, when I sold that store to a drug chain. And then I went to work for – Well, I worked some at People's Drug Store but I finally settled I think it was in 1970 or '71, I went to Friendship Manor and became the Director of Pharmacy out there and remained there until I retired in 1989 I guess. And since then, I've just helped out at various places. I worked some at the Health Department. Some at Wonder Drug in Southeast and Free Clinic I've worked since then.
AS: Did you just run the one store on Grandin?
RG: Yes.

AS: You didn't ever run the rest of your father's stores?
RG: No. As these big chains started coming in, he just closed 'em one by one. Two of the stores, one there on Jefferson Street, the viaduct came in so they had to tear that building down. That was one of the stores. And then another one was there on Jefferson and Walnut and the expressway came in. That building had to be torn down. So, one by one, they closed. So we had no drug store – I think the last one was closed in the 70s sometime.
AS: Through the whole time you ran your drug store on Grandin, was it just a pharmacy? You had mentioned that it was a restaurant and soda fountain.
RG: Oh yeah. It was a restaurant. We had a soda fountain downstairs. From the beginning, it was a soda fountain downstairs. Then, we enlarged that. We took in the area that was occupied by the flower shop. That was all converted into a restaurant and soda fountain. And then upstairs, we took in that space, all of that space and converted that into a restaurant. It was called the Gaslight. It was more of an upscale type. Where the soda fountain was all sit down booths and tables and the kitchen was at one end of it.
AS: So did you have someone run the restaurant for you?
RG: Oh yes. We had a manager upstairs and downstairs.
AS: So you did good business?
RG: Oh yeah. At one time, we probably served at least 1,000 people a day there because we served, we opened at 6:00 and we started serving breakfast. We would serve – That was downstairs. - We would serve about 300 breakfasts every day.
AS: Wow.
RG: And then we had 3 meals. We had cooks. We made our own pastry bread. Southern women made all that stuff. Today - even then, we were doing about $1,000 a day in food business but today, that wouldn't be probably about 8 or 10,000 more. You know with today's prices?
AS: Mm mm.
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RG: We had a real good reputation of serving very good food. You've got to remember too, this was before McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's and all of those. We served hamburgers and hot dogs and sandwiches. Then we had full meals, blue-plate specials. Breakfast, we'd serve, in other words, you could come in there and get eggs cooked any way that you wanted, sausage, bacon, ham and so forth. It was a gathering place for that area. But you had no 7-11 stores and all that sort of thing like you do today. We probably wouldn't be able to do that much business today. You could come in there and get a Coca-Cola if that's all you wanted or an ice cream cone or a hamburger or a hot dog or a full plate or salad plate. We employed in the restaurant, we probably had about 50 people, dishwashers, busboys, cooks.
AS: That's a big business.
RG: Oh yeah. Waitresses. We could seat, altogether, upstairs and downstairs, around 225 people. But the advantage of that, in other words, like if we were filled up upstairs, a lot of times during the dinner hours, we would have people waiting to get in. If they had some vacancies downstairs, we could send people downstairs or vice versa, we could send them up and down. We had an elevator up there in the store where they could go up and down. But it was quite an experience. But it was taking, I probably averaged about 100 hours a week working.
AS: Wow.
RG: But I managed. I never had any illness to speak of other than maybe a cold or something like that. So I managed very well.
AS: You were also very active in the community. Would you tell us a little bit about the boards you served on and stuff like that?
RG: The one evening I think it was, the chairman of the Republican Committee happened to come into

the drug store and he was drinking coffee up there at the restaurant and I walked in. I knew him and I sat down. He said, "You know you ought to" - This was probably about 1961. - He said, "You ought to run for City Council.". Of course I had never been in politics. I didn't know anything about it because I had spent all of my time working. I said, "Well, I don't know anything about City Government.". And he kept on. He came back I think once or twice and finally, I said, "Well, I'll run.". The Republican Party nominated me and I did win. Mayor Stoller, he ran and Jimmy Jones. They were in it. But I was the only Republican that won. So I took a seat on City Council and would've been September of 1962. I had a 4 year term. And when the 4 years were up, I was just so busy at the drug store and all, I had all I could do plus City Council at that time. I decided I would not run in '66. So, then I sold the store in '69. So after I sold the store, then I ran again in 1970. Then, I stayed there from 1970 until 1990. So I was on City Council for a total of 24 years.
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AS: Wow.
RG: It was a good experience for me. I learned a lot about city government and, of course, went to a lot of banquets and political meetings and all this sort of thing during this period.
AS: And you also served on the Library Advisory Board, is that correct?
RG: When we built the – this would've been in my first term, in fact, I have some pictures here somewhere and the program – Raleigh Court did not have many people and petitioned the City Council to build a library in Raleigh Court. So they presented that petition to City Council and I was appointed since I was living here, at that time I was here. I was living in this area as was most of the Council. In those days, practically all of the Council members lived in Southwest. In fact, I think all 7 of us lived in Southwest at that time. Anyway, I was appointed chairman of the committee to study about the Raleigh Court location library. And so, I have forgotten exactly the details but anyway, we decided on the location that is the present location of the library. Julian Hurst was the City Manager at that time. He was on the committee and I think Mayor Stoller, about 4 people on the committee and I was chairman of the committee. So, of course we got the land. The land belonged to the city at that time, all that. That was before – I can't remember whether Patrick Henry was built at that time or not. Anyway, if it was built, it was very new. Maybe it was built already. Anyway, the city owned the land so we didn't have to worry about the land. We put the bid out for the library. Plans were drawn by an architect and so forth and we accepted the bid and built the library. Gosh, we were able to do all of that - you wouldn't be able to do it now in such a short period of time. I think the whole process took less than a year from the beginning to the time it was finished.
AS: Wow.
RG: We only had one stumbling block. The matter of the floor. I wanted carpet on the floor and the reason I wanted carpet is because I thought it would reduce the sound of people walking. The City Manager, he said, "Oh, its going to be too hard to clean and people will be spilling stuff and walking through there and mud and so forth.". He wanted tile. So we had a big to-do over that. I was voted down. He won that argument which I always regretted. So they had tile. What is it now? Is it tile now?
AS: I think its still tile.
RG: Is it still tile? But I was in favor of the carpet but I couldn't – It seemed like I had one other person but he had 2 others as I recall that were in favor of going with his logic that it was much easier to clean the tile than would be the carpet. That's how I was involved in that. But I always regretted that we didn't get the carpet. (chuckle)
AS: I think they'll get the carpet when they redo it.
0.59.51.6
RG: When they redo it. I expect they will in those days. Of course in those days, they didn't have carpet like they have now like outdoor carpet and all kinds of carpet now and I guess Julian Hurst he

was thinking they were going to be spending too much time cleaning that carpet which may've been the case. But I was thinking of the serenity and the quietness of the library. That's the reason I wanted the carpet.
AS: I think I would've voted with you. Your house here on Lakewood, did you build this house or did you have it built.
RG: No. Actually, we are the 3rd owners.
AS: When was it built?
RG: It was built in 1930, approximately during that period. It was built by Dr. - Its in that thing that I gave you. It was built by Dr. Harry B. Stone, Sr. They had 6 children but they were all – the youngest was probably 7 or 8. Most of 'em were teenagers. I think maybe 2 of them were in college at the time. And they lived here from 1930 until I believe 1951. It was bought then by a business man, Gretin Lyndsey and his wife and they lived here and they had one child. And they lived here until we bought it in April – We moved in here April 1, 1961 with our 4 children. The oldest at that time would've been 16, Bobby would've been 16. And Teresa would've been 6.
AS: And you have a special name for the house. Can you explain why you gave it the name you did?
RG: It was taken from the name of the 4th and the 3rd child. T-e-r-Teresa and A-n-i-t-a Anita, Teranita. They lived here the longest not that we thought any less of the 2 older children. But, as I said, Teresa would've been 6 and Anita would've been 8. 1961, she would've been 8. But I named it after them. It sounded good, Teranita.
AS: I like it.
RG: Of course, Terra, T-e-r-r-a that's Latin for land isn't it. Isn't that Latin for land?
AS: I think so.
RG: Her name is T-e-r, then Ter-Anita, so it went together well.
AS: Those are basically the questions I have to ask you. Do you have more that you would like to share with us.
RG: I was going over some of the things that I – I was just thinking of things as I was going – Here's some trivia. I remember in that block of Campbell Avenue from Jefferson Street to 1st Street or Henry Street, in the 30s, there were five 5 and 10 cents stores in that one block. It was Woolworth's, S.H. Kress, McClellans, W.T. Grant, and another one called Shulty United. I remember things, things that come to you. I don't know whether – You wouldn't remember – I'm sure you had a yo-yo. Well this was when they first came out, it was really a fad. I can remember S.H. Kress had this Filipino demonstrating a yo-yo down in the basement of S.H. Kress. There was a mob of people. This was really a fad during that period. It would've been sometime probably about '33 or '34. I was just a small child but I remember going there and I could hardly see because there were so many people. This guy was there demonstrating, throwing the yo-yo around. That sort of thing just came into my mind.
1.05.10.6
AS: Did you get a yo-yo?
RG: Oh yeah, I got a yo-yo for 10 cents.
AS: Were you good at it?
RG: No, I don't think I would be considered good at it. But this guy, he could – I can remember him throwing that thing around, throwing it in all kinds of directions and there must've been 100 people there in the basement. See, they had 2 floors. They had the basement and I think they had a few toys down there and they had a lunch counter upstairs. And that was something that came to my mind. Another thing that came to my mind was the Woolworth's Store which was across the street. In fact, you may've been here when it finally closed. It closed about 10 years ago. Were you here then?
AS: No. My husband was here though.
RG: It was on the south side of Campbell Avenue. It was approximately in the middle of the block. It was up from the bank there, 5 or 6 stores up from the bank. I remember in the summer, it must've been

'34 or '35, they were the first store to have air conditioning. I walked in that store in the hot summer, it was like going into a refrigerator. I mean it was the first time I had been in an air conditioned building. Here you went from 90 degrees outside to inside and it felt like you were in heaven almost. The Woolworth's Store. That was the first air conditioning I can remember.
AS: So was it popular because it had air conditioning?
RG: Oh yeah. They had a lunch counter in there. And each counter – In those days, each counter had a sales clerk, each counter. Then they had this big lunch counter. I think it occupied the entire side of it. They had a lot of business there. But each counter, they had a whole big display of this loose candy. You could go in there and buy a nickels-worth of candy. They'd dip it out of the display case. So that – I remember that because it was was something that you couldn't believe almost. You're used to going – like all my father's drug stores, all they had were these ceiling fans. (chuckling) You'd go in and it'd be 85 or 90 degrees in the summertime. I remember, and you may've had this come up, President Roosevelt – have you had it to come up?
AS: Uh uh. No.
RG: He took office in March of '33. They had built the Veterans Administration Hospital up here and he came. I believe it was in the fall, I'm not sure, of '34. But anyway, he was going to dedicate the building up there, the new hospital. So they even let the schools out. His schedule called for him to come up Grandin Road but we lived just one block over on Bellville. So, when he came in, he had this open car and they drove right up Grandin Road and we were out on the corner of Grandin and Shirley, right there. We waved at him. That was the first President I had ever seen in my life.
AS: Was it a big procession?
1.09.14.1
RG: As I remember, it was a group of cars and he was going up to the Veteran's. But then, my parents took us and I think my older brother up to the Veteran's Administration where he gave the speech and dedication. Oh, it was thousands of people up there. And we were below where he was speaking and he was speaking from a platform. All the crowd was out below there. And we went there and saw him speak. But that was the first President I had ever seen. I was – In my lifetime, I was counting them last night, there have been 15 presidents since I was born. He was – I've only seen, let's see, Roosevelt and I saw Nixon, I saw Carter, Reagan but I think that's all I've ever seen of the presidents. But I know Kennedy came here but I didn't get to see him and Eisenhower came here. Both of them. And Reagan came to the Civic Center. I saw him there. He spoke. I saw Carter in Norfolk. Oh, I've seen George Bush, the father. In fact, I was on Council at the time he was Vice-President. And I presented the key to the city to – He was Vice-President then. He may've been running for Vice-President with Reagan. He wasn't President. Have you talked to anybody about the Thanksgiving celebrations here in Roanoke?
AS: No.
RG: You haven't. In those days, Thanksgiving was the outstanding holiday in Roanoke. I would say more-so even than Christmas and the reason for that was VMI and VPI met here for a football game on Thanksgiving Day. You weren't aware of this?
AS: I actually had read an article about that, only by doing other research.
RG: Every year up until VPI got so they were – VMI could not be competitive with them. I think up until about '71 or '72, every year, when my brother was at VMI those 4 years, that's when we really got interested in it. But anyway, the cadets – In other words, they got no Thanksgiving holiday because of that. Because of what they called the Thanksgiving Day Classic. Victory Stadium was not there. They had wooden stands. They called it the “Splinter Bowl”. The cadets would arrive here on Thanksgiving in the morning.
AS: Would they take the train down from Rockbridge?
RG: The cadets from VPI came on the train and I think the VMI cadets either came by bus or train, I've

forgotten now. But I'm sure that the VPI cadets came by – and they assembled there at what is now the Link Museum. It was an old railroad station in those days. They would assemble there and in formation and at that time, VMI probably had less than a thousand cadets and VPI, they were much bigger. I would estimate they had between 2 and 3 thousand cadets. Of course, this was before VPI, that was called Virginia Polytechnic Institute and it was basically an agricultural school. Nothing like it is today. In fact, of course no female cadets and I don't think it had any female students at that time. It may've been just the cadets. Anyway, they would assemble there at the station. Then, they would march up Jefferson Street. They would usually start around noon and march straight up Jefferson Street, all the way across the Jefferson Street Bridge on out to where the Victory Stadium is. That's where the game was played in those days. And of course they had their band and then the VMI cadets or vice versa, they would march up Jefferson Street. Of course, the streets were lined up with people and they had their bands playing all during that period. Oh, it was quite a – On every corner, these vendors were selling VPI/VMI colors where people put the team that they were – on their coat.
1.15.37.5
AS: So you voted, you were rooting for VMI?
RG: VMI, yeah right. My brother - then the game was 2 or 2:30 and VPI usually won. After the game, because my brother was a student, he would usually invite 3 or 4 of his best friends and their girlfriends after the game to come to our house where my mother would serve 'em a turkey dinner. We would have the whole house full of cadets and their girlfriends for Thanksgiving dinner.
AS: Did you go to the games?
RG: Oh yeah. I always went to the games.
AS: I've seen pictures where the women would get dressed in their fur coats and gloves. So it was a fancy event. You got dressed up in your best clothes.
RG: It was a tremendous event. I would say they had to put up special bleachers. In other words, that was before Victory Stadium. See the Victory Stadium didn't come in until after '41 as I remember. Oh, it was a tremendous event. I remember we would gather there at the Patrick Henry Hotel under that marquis 'cause it was a little warmer there. I can remember one Thanksgiving, it snowed and they played in the snow out there. That was tremendous. Then that night, they would have dances at the cotillion - the German club would have dances at the Hotel Roanoke or the Hotel Patrick Henry. Oh, it was a tremendous event. A lot of out of town people would come to Roanoke during that period. That holiday, that was, I think in those days it was considered more of a holiday than Christmas was.
AS: Was that your favorite holiday then?
RG: Well, I guess it probably was but we always had a good Christmas. Christmas in those days – Fireworks was one of the main things during Christmas. They had skyrockets and Roman candles. I can remember sleeping there on the sleeping porch on Christmas Eve nights and oh, you'd hear fireworks going off all night long throughout. You could hear 'em. Of course you were anxious to get up and go downstairs for Christmas. That was – Thanksgiving was a very big holiday for Roanoke. It was because of the game and so many of the alumni of VPI and VMI both lived in Roanoke. (long pause) Am I boring you too much?
AS: No, I am enjoying it. I hope you're doing OK.
1.19.38.3
RG: Oh yeah. We were talking about streetcars. I remember the last streetcar in Roanoke. As I told you our store was on the corner of – one of the downtown stores – was on the corner of Jefferson and Salem Avenue. The last streetcar in Roanoke that night around 11 o'clock, our store stayed open late. The last streetcar – it was during the summer 'cause I was home from college - left there right – the end of the streetcar line was right where the railroad tracks are now. Right there at Jefferson Street, right beyond Salem Avenue. So all of the city officials, being the last streetcars in Roanoke – This would've been I think in '48, the summer of '48. So we were open at the drug store and I remember going out

there on the curbside and they had all the city officials, the Mayor, City Manager, so they all left and went out to Jefferson Street to the car barn which was under the Walnut Street Bridge at that time. I can remember that because we were there and watched it, the last streetcar in Roanoke.
AS: Was it disappointing when the streetcar system stopped?
RG: I think it had a lot of nostalgia. But, the problem with streetcars is that they weren't as flexible as a bus. A bus can go like a car.
AS: So really the bus system replaced the streetcar system?
RG: Yeah. Gosh, we had an excellent streetcar and transportation system. It went all out thought south Roanoke, all out Grandin Road. The end of the line was there at Patrick Henry High School. Came on down Grandin Road, Memorial Avenue, Patterson Avenue, and to downtown. They had all down Southeast up to Northeast there where my father's drug store was. The streetcar turned there, went up that hill, oh, into where the Civic Center is now. That was – and they ran until midnight. They really had excellent service. You gotta remember that most of the transportation in those days was done on the streetcars because so few people had cars. If you were a person with no car that's the only way they could travel. If you wanted to go to a movie downtown or anything like that or shopping, you'd have to catch the streetcar.
AS: I've heard people talk about maybe bringing it back. Do you think it would do well or do you think it would be more of a - ?
RG: I just don't think it would be practical. I can remember when we had 'em, we would go down Campbell Avenue and there were cars parked on both sides. So if you got behind a streetcar, you just had to follow it until it turned or you turned. You would just have to follow it because you couldn't pass 'cause the streets are that narrow. In that period, they allowed parking on both sides of Campbell Avenue. So you had double streetcar tracks and parking on both sides, so you couldn't go around.
AS: It would hold up traffic?
RG: Yeah, if you got behind a streetcar, you just had to go with them. They did provide real good service like on Grandin Road, all out to, seem like it went to Avenham, all out through South Roanoke, Southeast, it went up Dale Avenue and – You live in Vinton don't you?
AS: I actually live on Reed Mountain. At the very tip of the city.
RG: Didn't you live in Vinton?
AS: My husband's from Vinton.
1.24.27.7
RG: Maybe that's what I was thinking. Oh yeah, I know exactly where Reed Mountain is. The streetcars were a life saver in those days because so few people had cars, particularly in the beginning when they first came here in Roanoke which I think was about 1912 along in there. So, the automobile didn't become popular until really the 30s and the 40s. When I had the drug store and we opened the Gaslight Restaurant which was on the second floor, we did, I think I was the first one that ever did this on TV. I did my own TV ad and this was the Gaslight Restaurant so the core was of that period. It had red velvet and it was a beautiful restaurant. So when we first opened it, we of course wanted to advertise, make it known. I got my – Anita played the piano and Teresa, the younger girl, she played the bass fiddle which is in the dining room there now. So I got a red - pink and white sport coat and one of those sailor's straw hats, flat. I think you call 'em sailor hats. So I wanted to do an ad to attract people to the Gaslight Restaurant. We, I think it opened in the summer is the way it happened. They played the piano and the bass fiddle and I sang (singing) “In the Good Old Summertime, In the good old summertime, Garland's is the place to dine in the good old summertime”. (laughing) The kids, of course they were just small, and they were on TV and all their playmates, they were so proud of that. But as far as I can remember, I think it was the first TV that was ever done by nonprofessionals.
AS: Did it help?
RG: Oh yeah. We had all the business we could take care of. They would line up. The Gaslight

would seat about 65 people but we would have to turn people away a lot of the meals. We couldn't – They would wait and the lines would be too long and they would go elsewhere. I can remember that. I wish I had gotten a tape of that but I didn't. I don't want to keep you too long here.
AS: No, you're fine. I'm fine as long as you're fine.
RG: Oh, I was telling you about the Rialto Theater. That was – You know where the Center In The Square is now?
AS: Mm mm.
RG: OK. The Rialto Theater, in fact that's in that article that you'll read about – The Rialto Theater seemed like it was a little further up toward Jefferson Street. Anyway, that was a Western movie. Of course, as a young boy in those days, those cowboy movie stars were very popular. They were our heroes you might say. We would go there, my brother or my friends would go there just about every Saturday and see the cowboy movie and then after we saw the movie, my mother would give us enough money to see the movie, gave us 2 tokens for the streetcar ride. Then, after the movie was over, we would go down to the Roanoke Weiner Stand which was 5 or 6 stores down from where the Rialto was.
AS: Where it still is now?
RG: Yeah, where it is now. And we would go in there and get a hot dog and Coca Cola and boy that was -
1.30.05.1
AS: A day out on the town.
RG: 10 cents for a Coca Cola and a hot dog. And, man, it was really good. Then, we would – Sometimes, we would go down to my father's drug store and maybe hang around down there some or we would ride on the streetcar and go back home. But that was almost every Saturday afternoon. We would see a cowboy movie and then go to the Roanoke Wiener Stand and we thought that was really something. Now, what does a hot dog cost down there?
AS: Oh gosh, for a hot dog, soda and I think fries.
RG: What is it? Two dollars?
AS: Now, I think its $5.25.
RG: You're kidding. (laughing) 10 cents in the 30s.
AS: And $5.25 is actually pretty good for that nowadays.
RG: Well, I think I've – In those days, any rain of one inch or more would almost always flood the downtown area. My father's drug store would invariably get flooded. As I pointed out in this picture of me in the Roanoke paper of us trying to keep the water out of the drug store with mops and all. But that was practically every summer. I remember one summer, the water had gotten up to where the windows of the streetcars were. The streetcars would be in the middle of Campbell Avenue and the water would get up to that point which would be at least 4 or 5 feet. But see, the sewage, the drainage system, they just didn't have any in those days to speak of. Any rain of several inches would flood the complete downtown area. My father took us – This wasn't in Roanoke. - Took us to the first all-star baseball game which was in Chicago.
AS: Oh.
RG: That was in 1933. That was – Babe Ruth hit a home run. I would've been 10 years old at the time and the American League won 4 to 2. My father was a great baseball fan and at the same time – that was in July of 1933 – the World's Fair was there at that time in Chicago. So we got to see the all star game, the first all star game, and then we went to the Chicago World's Fair several days after that. We also saw some baseball games at Wrigley Field. But that game was at Kaminski Park.
AS: Was Babe Ruth a big hero?
RG: Oh yeah. And he hit a home run in that game.
AS: Did you watch the local baseball team? Was there a local baseball team?
RG: There was a local baseball team and I went to some of the games.

AS: Where was that?
RG: It was at the – They called it the fair grounds then which is where Victory Stadium was. The baseball field, as I remember, was at this end of the Franklin Road area beyond that on Reserve Avenue but it was called the Roanoke Red Sox. That was the name of the team. Roanoke has never been, except for that Thanksgiving Day game, they've never been one to support sports very much. They've had failures of football teams, hockey, basketball teams. I don't know what it is. And the same thing happened to that. It just – It was part of the Piedmont League like Norfolk and Roanoke and I think Lynchburg was in it, Durham, North Carolina. It was the Piedmont League and they were in that particular league.
1.35.13.0
AS: Was it an integrated league?
RG: It was a minor league. It would be similar to what Salem has now. I would say it would be on the same par as the Avalanche. I think it would be on the same. And they had that – I know after the war, for I don't know how many years, 4 or 5 years I would think – the attendance was such that they just couldn't support it. It didn't have enough fans to support it.
AS: That's too bad.
RG: Let me take you down to the basement while you're here. I have some things that you might be interested in.
AS: OK.
RG: I think I covered all of this. I hope I haven't gone too long here.
AS: No, not at all. Thank you Mr. Garland for letting us interview you.

SECOND SEPARATE PART

AS: OK Mr. Garland, go ahead and tell me about when you met your wife.
RG: It was in the summer of 1942 and I was in Pharmacist School at the Medical College of Virginia and my wife was working as a secretary for the Colgate-Palmolive Peet Company. This was during World War II and the housing situation in Richmond was very acute because of the war and I moved to a boarding house on Monument Avenue in one of the old mansions that 2 old-maid sisters operated. And I lived on the 3rd floor with some students and the 3rd floor had a large room, the complete width of the house which I think the former owners probably used it as a playroom or a gymnasium or something like that. Anyway, they rented that to 6 girls. This was after I had moved in. I had been there for several weeks. She had just opened the house. She just rented it. It would accommodate approximately 40 people altogether. It was a tremendous home. Anyway, she rented it to 6 working girls. And the afternoon that they moved in, I heard this tap on the door and it was the land lady and she asked me, she said, “The girls are having trouble to get the water to drain out of the tub.”. We had to share the bathroom, which was between our room and this room that went across the front of the house. So we had to share the bathroom with 6 girls. Can you imagine that? She said, “They're having trouble getting the water to stay in the tub”, I've forgotten exactly. There was something wrong with the drain. But she said, “Do you know how it works?”. I said, “Yeah”. And she said, “Would you come in and explain to them how to work this tub?”. So, I did. And they had 3 or 4 of the girls in there. My wife happened to be one of them. She introduced me to all of 'em. So I showed 'em whatever it was. I can't remember. It had something to do with the drain. It wouldn't go down or the water wouldn't go out or it wouldn't stay in. I've forgotten exactly. Anyway, I explained it to 'em. I met her for the first time when they moved in that day. And, of course, we had 2 meals there at the boarding house. She furnished us with breakfast and dinner. And it was a very – She was very strict at running the house. When you came to dinner, you had to be dressed. Men had to have coat and tie and women either had to have a dress – I don't think there were any slacks or anything in those days.

Anyway, we ate there and one thing led to another and we – They had a parlor there after we ate. We'd go in and all of us would gather there in the parlor, go to a movie or something. Didn't have a car or anything. That was the summer of 1942 and we kept going pretty steadily until I went into the Army. She took me to her home and I brought her to Roanoke to meet my parents. Then, I went in the Army. Then, I would go on furlough and come to see her when I could. But then, we decided we would get married and so we married on October 2, 1943. That would've been approximately one year, a little over a year since we had met. We went to New York City on our honeymoon. My parents and my 9 year old brother and my older brother who, he and his wife and 1 year old daughter, he was stationed there in the Air Force there in Massachusetts and this was in October so my father being a baseball fan, he got tickets to the World Series. New York Yankees and the St. Louis Cardinals played in the World Series that year. We went to the World Series. My wife and I stayed at the Waldorf Astoria which in those days was probably the premiere hotel in New York and my parents and my brother and all of them stayed at the hotel across the street. So we were there for a week. Frank Sinatra was singing at the supper club at the Waldorf during that period but I was unable to get tickets to see him. That's how we met and that's our honeymoon. I couldn't find a place – Atlanta was like Richmond, you just couldn't find a place to stay. And Atlanta had many servicemen. A lot of Army bases and all were close by. She had to come back to Richmond, continuing her work and I went back to Atlanta. But in 6 weeks approximately, I was able to get a single room in a private home out in the country close to where I was stationed and so we stayed in Atlanta the entire war. That's where I -
AS: So she moved down to be with you?
RG: She moved down approximately 6 weeks after we were married. I was able to get this single room. And then, later, we were able to get an apartment and we had to move. I think we had 2 apartments and, as I said, our first child was born there at Fort McPherson Hospital there in Atlanta. East Point, Georgia, is where that was located. So that's how we met and so forth.
AS: Thank you for sharing that with us.
RG: Let me take you downstairs and let you look at that while you're here.