

Mapping Material Culture
Ballard Historical Society

Oral History of Louise Wylie

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MM: This is January 24, [1988]. This is the voice of Morris Moen. Lynn and I are interviewing my Aunt, Louise Wylie, about the early days in Ballard. Um, you marched up and down and marched to the classes?

LW: Well, when we came to school, we'd marched up the steps instead of running up and down stairs. What did you mean? What did you want to know about the...?

LM: How did you get together? I mean, how did this marching go?

LW: Well, in the 7th and 8th grade, I... my chum played the piano, and we marched, and I beat the triangle, so they marched up the steps, and marched down. When it was time to leave, we played. Every day we did that.

MM: At Webster?

LW: For the... at the Webster school.

LM: Why did they do that, do you know?

LW: Hmmm?

LM: What did they do it that way?

LW: (Laughs) I don't know why we did that. I don't know whose idea that was, I don't know, but that's what we did. That was when I was in the 8th grade and I think Matilda was in the 7th grade or something. See she started later in the school so she was a little behind me classes, you know. But, that's what we did and we marched out the school. Why? I don't know, just one of those things.

MM: Were most of your teachers men teachers or women teachers?

LW: No, I had all women teachers except the principal. He was a man. And another thing, we

didn't have facilities at the Webster school for taking cooking. And that was included in the 8th grade, so I had to walk from the Webster school down to Adams, to take a cooking class, once a week.

LM: What did you learn to cook? Do you remember?

LW: Not really, I just don't even remember what we cooked. But they a room down there, where they had, cooking facilities.

LM: I remember when I learned to cook when I was going to school.

LW: Chicken? I don't...

LM: We learned to make cream sauce and—

LW: It was just one period you know that we went down there once a week. I just don't remember. That's, something I...

MM: That was a girl's class for cooking, I assume? Any boys take cooking or...?

LW: I think they did. It was our 8th grade.

MM: Both boys and girls?

LW: So I think we all went down there, as far as I can remember.

LM: Now, when I went to school, the girls took cooking and sewing, and at the same time we were taking that, they were taking shop.

LW: But in high school, we took cooking if we wanted to. I think it was... you didn't have to take cooking, but you could if you wanted to.

LM: Yeah it was the same.

LW: I think that was in high school. We had a little building alongside of the high school, that we had, it was rigged up for cooking.

MM: So all the classes were the same for both boys and girls in the early years?

LW: I think that was voluntary, whether you wanted to take cooking or not. My partner I had, was a Freshman and I was a Senior. So just to take cooking for a subject, I guess.

MM: Yeah.

LW: Yeah.

LM: Now to go back to grade school. What did you do at recess? Do you remember recess?

LW: Yeah, we always had recess. We went out, usually. If it was raining, of course we'd stay in the basement and bounce balls, or jump rope or something like that, but if it was nice weather, we'd be outside running. I was always running anyway because I can remember my mother said, "walk once in a while, not run, walk." (laughs) So I guess I was always running (laughs). I played basketball, but they didn't have the facilities down at Ballard High School, so I had, I went up to the Ballard playfield and played basketball there.

LM: Mm-hmm. The Ballard High School you're talking about was the one that was where the hospital is.

LW: That was when I was in Ballard High School, yes.

LM: And where was the Ballard playfield?

LW: Yes, down to Ballard playfield.

LM: Where was that?

LW: That was when I was going to school, you know. That was on the side you know, we could do that if we wanted, and we played basketball down there.

LM: Where was the Ballard playfield? Was that where it is now? Near Adams?

LW: By the Adams School, yes, and it's still there.

LM: Yes, some things change and I just gotta check it out.

MM: Did the teachers seat you in any way in the class? Any special way? Did they make you sit in certain order or anything or how did they arrange the kids in the class?

LW: For what?

MM: For any of your school classes, did they put you in alphabetical order, or the good students in the back or front or—?

LW: Oh, in school, oh no, that gets the teachers did that. I don't think we... If you were good at your subjects, you'd get to work in the office. Every so often, they'd put you one whole day in the office. But if your grades weren't good, they wouldn't call on you, but you'd get a chance to be in the office and answer the phone and run errands to the rooms, to the teachers, that was big stuff (laughs).

MM: Yeah. Did you have much homework in school?

LW: Not at grammar school, no homework, but at high school though, there you'd get the

homework, Algebra, hours and hours and hours of Algebra at home. And I only took Geometry 1, because, that was enough. Geometry, I didn't care much for, but I had to have so many credits for mathematics (laughs), so I took Algebra.

MM: Yeah.

LW: But boy, it takes a lot of figuring in Algebra. You took Algebra, didn't you?

MM: Oh yeah. What were the other things they had that were not electives, but other things than the subjects at the school? Like debate or drama or other things like that?

LM: What were the extra things at school?

MM: Extracurricular things they had at school? Wasn't my mother in the debating team or something one time?

LW: Oh you mean they had plays. Wait no, that wasn't at high school, was it, where she was in plays and things?

MM: I think so. Yeah, I think so.

LW: Unless it was in debates and orations. We that, but I don't remember any plays put on in high school. Maybe so.

MM: Yeah.

LW: I have the *Shingle* at home. I'll look sometime and see

MM: Yeah, because we have some play programs and things from my mother's, but...

LW: Yeah, cause I have the annual, the annual *Shingle*.

MM: Yeah.

LW: I'll look.

MM: When did school start in the fall? After Labor Day, or was it...

LW: The first Monday after the Labor Day.

LM: And how late did it go in the spring?

LW: They'd always figure it that way. In September, you know when Labor Day came, that was the first Monday after Labor Day.

LM: And how late did it go in the spring? When did it close?

LW: Always closed... let's see how did they figure that? They figured so many weeks that you're in school and sometimes it'll go longer in June than other times. So many weeks that the semesters lasted, you know.

MM: Yeah.

LW: Yeah, I think that's the way they figured it out.

LM: It isn't much that different.

MM: Same as we did, yeah. Did the teachers ever used punishment for, on the kids, did they use ruler or anything?

LW: I never saw anything like that. I've never known. One thing that you'd have to do is stand in the cloakroom. I did have to do that once myself.

LM: [Laughs]

LW: They said I was running up the steps when I was supposed to be walking. I told you I was running. And that was the punishment. I had to stand in the hall. That's as bad as I would think I'd had done, yeah. Teachers standing up above on the railing, up above and standing there watching us. We were marching up and I run, going around the curve. (laughs)

LM: Oh what did you kids do for fun when you were going to high school?

LW: High school you didn't... We just went down there, had classes and come home. That's about all we do.

LM: What did you do at night? What did you do on weekends?

LW: Then it's work at home when you have 7, 9 in the family. And then if you have any homework, you have to do that, sit and work on Algebra problems. When I went to high school.

MM: By lantern?

LW: Didn't you have Algebra?

MM: Oh yeah.

LW: Yeah

MM: Were you still using a lantern then or did you have electric lights by that time, in high school?

LW: Huh?

MM: Did you have electricity when you were in high school?

LW: Well, and then what about the debates and, or when you had debates and had to learn all that? I had to stay in my room and recite it to, out loud to myself you know, to learn. I had an awful time, shaking my knees, I'd get up in front of the class, I couldn't... it was awful for me. I was so self conscious and I would just. I could recite it all, when I was doing it myself, but when I get in front of the people, I'd forget it. That was bad. We had sometimes 6 pages of the things to learn, didn't you have that too?

MM: I didn't.

LW: Didn't you? Huh?

MM: I didn't have any debates, no. I was not involved with that, no.

LW: I remember we had as much as 5 pages in high school. You know, big pages, 5 and 6 pages to learn, in a debate or an oration, yes, and we have to learn that and recite it in class, in front of the class. That was always the worst part for me.

MM: I have a thing from my mother, a *Ballard Bee*, let me get it and see if that's a debate letter. Go ahead and ask grandma about something else.

LM: Okay. Well, while we're waiting for that, tell me about old Ballard, what was it like. Downtown Ballard, I mean what was there?

LW: Downtown Ballard?

LM: Yeah, when you were in high school.

LW: I don't go down there anymore now myself, so I don't know much about it.

LM: Well I don't want to know about what's there now; I want to know what was there when you were in high school.

LW: Yeah, when I was in high school, it was Market Street and Ballard Avenue and the corner there where... It used to be Ballard Avenue and Market Street, that corner. That was a big store there, and it was a variety store. That was there when I was going to school, called Holston's. Holston's. And they had everything in there pertaining to school. Books and papers and tablets and pencils, everything for school, right in that corner, great big store there. That was in Ballard before Bartell took over. I think Bartell got it after that I think, but that was on that corner.

LM: That sort of pointy corner?

LW: Sort of what?

LM: It's sort of a pointed building.

LW: Yeah, the one that has the odds and ends now out there.

LM: Yeah.

LW: But they changed the shape of it. It used to be just a square, but they cut it down, you know, on that corner. Yeah.

MM: Was that a Ballard letter for debate?

LW: Oh, gee, isn't that nice? 15. Does it say "D?"

MM: Yeah.

LW: Is that debate?

MM: I don't know.

LW: Because the '15 is when she graduated, you know.

MM: Yeah.

LW: And D. She won this, huh? Maybe in debate?

MM: I don't know. I just found this in her stuff.

LW: Oh, did you?

MM: I'd never seen it.

LW: Well, isn't this nice. I guess she had it on her sweater. Huh, gee, that's nice. She must have won that or something.

MM: I would guess it must have been debate. I don't think it was drama. It wouldn't be drama would it, for school plays?

LW: Your mother, you mean, for... Yeah, she must have won that for something. You think it'd be debate, you mean?

MM: Either debate or drama, I don't know what else D would stand for.

LW: Oh, gee. I didn't know her well enough to associate with her when she went to school, cause I didn't know her until later.

MM: Yeah

LW: But I knew her up in the playfield. That's when I knew her, your mother. She was in the same club that I was in.

MM: Mm-hmmm. Was that after high school?

No, it was during high school.

LM: You'd go there after school?

After school. Yes.

LM: What kind of a club was it?

Well, we formed... There were a bunch of girls that would get together, friends. So they had different... they'd give it names. Ours was the Good Fellowship Club. Then there were some other girls that got together. Theirs was the P&M Club. I don't know what it stood for. They'd name their clubs and get together. There, we put on plays. We really had a lot of fun down there. we'd put on plays, and play basketball, and played other schools. We won the championship one year for basketball. I played forward. I couldn't play guard. I'm too short. But I was fast on my legs, so I played forward. Ours was the Good Fellowship Club.

LM: Who else was in it? [Pause] Here it is.

Where did you find it?

MM: In my mother's stuff.

Just lately?

MM: Yeah.

LM: Here's a picture of the Good Fellowship Club.

MM: Yeah.

This isn't the school. But for heaven's sakes. I'd better get... I'll look at it with the light on.

MM: I'll get the magnifying glass.

[Laughs] I said I've got bangs. I cut bangs.

LM: There you are. There's Laura.

Oh, gosh sakes. Our club was the Good Fellowship Club.

LM: Can you name these people now?

This isn't from high school. This is from the field house.

MM: Yeah.

LM: Okay. Start with that. who is that?

You know, I can't see. I'll have to see it in the light. I can't even see it. [Pause] I'll have to look at it afterwards in the light. That's me there, I think.

LM: Uh-huh. And that's Laura.

Laura, up there. See, the Good Fellowship.

LM: Yeah. [Laughs]

I should know. I'll have to look at it in the light where I can see. That's Lil Longke. I can tell. Isn't that Lillian Longke?

LM: I don't know.

You knew her, didn't you? Oh, didn't you?

LM: Well, I didn't know her well enough to recognize her at that age.

Oh. But you knew Lillian Longke.

LM: Yeah.

Well, that's Lillian Longke. That's Ruth Greiner, the one with the hunchback. She was in our club. That's Esther Hegdal. She was in our club. This is the picture that I said, "Whatever happened to it, Morris," remember?" I saw it one time here, and we never found it again. Where did you find it now?

MM: With all these pictures and things that I—

Up in the attic?

[Continue talking about photo, trying to identify people, theater productions with Good Fellowship Club]

Loise Wylie
BWA

Loise

Loise Wylie Tape 1-A

[11:52]

OK, this is Jan 17, 1988, This is Morris Moen. Lynn Moen will also be on this tape. We are interviewing my aunt, Louise Wylie about the early days in Ballard. OK. Now you were born in 1895. You were born in Ballard at the house on west 48th. *58th*

Born 1895, Ballard on West 58th (Times Street). Neighbor lady or midwife helped her mother. Neighbor lady used to come over. She lived on the corner 59th and ... I think that's who helped.

L. How big was house?

5 rooms, bathroom built on the back porch later. Of course we had an outhouse. Grandpa built it with help with Mr. Olson. He bought 2 lots, one facing Times the other Crawford (59th). Lived there til I was 5 years old. Built the house on 8th Ave. (now 32nd) He bought an acre. I don't know how he paid for it. When we moved we walked up there. 65th St. was 5th St. They must have hired a horse and wagon. I remember Henry sitting on the wagon with the cat. They must have to move the furniture. The cat went home. Whether it showed up again, I don't remember. Cats are funny that way.

Where did you go to school in Ballard.

I became six that same year. I had to start school on 20th and 64th. 64th was North St. I don't know what 20th Ave was. 24th was 4th ave. It was Salmon Bay.

How many kids?

[12:00]

My two older brothers took me to school and this room. Then I cried, I bawled. with a strange lady. But that was a long time to walk. That's a long ways.

He (Henry) started school at Broadway & 4th Ave (now 24th). I think Ed started there too. He put up such a fuss he started at 5.

[12:02]

I got used to it after awhile. One time I was going to school one morning. Some people had some geese. This flock of geese scared the out of me. Salmon Bay must have been crowded.

Then I got acquainted with a girl who lived Clara Anderson. Lived off of 24th and 64th. Ate my lunch with her. Clara & Hazel Anderson.

[12:04]

I just went to the first grade. Then they built the Bay View School. They built two houses on 67th & 30th. Across the street from the Webster School. When they built that school a man fell off the roof and he lived. I remember that.

The fair was in 1909. There was a thousand voices. Sixth of June, Children's day, we got in free. My mother never took me anywhere. She was from the old country. She was just shy, maybel. I had to do everything myself.

The flag. We took bunting. That was quite an honor too. I thought it was. Big deal.

[12:08]

Ballard. Not very different. But they changed the names of the street.

And they made 65th.

Groceries. Over on 24th. Wilson's. Then they built the one Strom's on 65th. Wilson's had meat. Carl Anderson drove for the one on 64th and 32nd.

[12:10]

There's a meat market over there, too.

M: I can remember grandma walking to 24th when I was a kid. She used to walk there because it was cheaper.

When Mr. Strom died, I came down to keep her company.

Finished the 8th grade at Webster. I walked 4 years to where the high school. It used to be the Central School. Right where the hospital is.

[12:12]

He rang the bell. And sometimes if he saw us coming. Ususally Matilda was with me. A mile and a

quarter every day. Did that for four years. Matilda got money from the Street care came up 32nd. Never horse-drawn. They had that when Mama came here from Minnesota. I'm the only one in the family who finished high school.

Ed didn't like one of the teachers so he quit.

[12:15]

Shingle.

I had that one after they came out once a year. I have that one and one more.

There's Inga Olson. She had a sister named Bertha.

[12:16]

I have the year book, the real one.

L: What did you learn in school.

English, History, a foreign Language, German, because that was closest to Norwegian. After that they took it out of the schools. Because of the war. Teacher would ask me to read.

I don't ever remember talking Norwegian. Ed and Henry both were in school before.

L: Henry didn't speak English before he went to school.

[12:19]

My dad went to school starting with the little kids. He was always reading. He'd just sit and read, and read, and read.

L: What did he do?

Most of the time he worked at the mill. He was a tallyman at the mill. How much lumber there was down at the mills. The Stinson mills.

Later he worked for the city, digging sewers. That was killing him. That's when my mother had him quit.

Now they do that all by machine. Because he was a small person, wasn't very big.

Raise things on the farm.

[12:21]

Raised stuff and sold. Raspberries. Every summer he made good money selling raspberries. Vegetables. Chickens, he sold eggs. If someone wanted any he would.

(silence)

M: What else did Grandpa sell?

[12:22] Cherries and everything that you could raise. Sold to the grocery stores. By the crates. All us kids had to pick raspberries. Henry and Ed would get up early. We'd get so much for each box, paid a few cents. We all of us had to pick berries.

For fun? I have to think. I was always a awful rope jumper. One, two, I played all the games the boys played. I played Mumbly Peg with the jack knife. I don't know. It was a kind of a game we used to do with a jackknife.

[12:24] (silence)

Turn Tape Over Louise Wylie Tape 1-B

[441]

Didn't you ever play [marbles]

Ed was always a crack shot with the marbles.

L: And what did you do when you were older. When you were in high school.

Penny's used to be there. Straight down there on Ballard Avenue. They used to be there before they moved to Market Street. [4:43]

Oh, they had a beauty parlor, a beauty school.

They moved to Market too.

The sidewalks were planks.

Jim born 1920

[4:45]

Horses went down 64th. Wagon got stuck in the dirt. Just awful, you know. Horses got stuck in there.

Oof, I forgot what happened. Lot of different things.

Fire hydrants. Horses pulled the wagon. Maybe they had a tank on one of the wagons. I don't know about that. That's something I don't know.

L: Did you have a horse?

No, we had a cow. The stree wasn't cut then. It was level.

There was no street then. It was all level.

L: Did you do any of the milking?

That was something I never did.

You know where 60th and 30th is? I had to walk that far from home with milk. Maybe 11-12 years old.

Ed had a wagon. It didn't have sides on it but it was a wagon. There was a gully on one side.

One time I had a sack of potatoes to deliver. I had Agnes and Harold and I was delivering the potatoes.

I fell off, and it never did straighten. I had to do all kinds of thing for my dad.

I always did the dishes and set the table, but I didn't do much of the cooking.

M: Did you have a well?

[4:54]

When we first moved in we got water from near the Asmervigs.

[interruption in tape.]

M: When did you get city water & electricity?

It's kind of hard to say, but we had lamps when I went to Webster.

After high school I went to work for the American Can Company. And after awhile I worked for Sears in the shoe department. That what I did before, and then I got married.

There might have been an ad in the paper. There was this job. It was down between Seattle and Ballard.

I think somebody took me there. I went down there. I don't think I lasted but a week. I got homesick. I had to eat alone in the kitchen. I know I didn't last many days. I got some homesick, I just couldn't stand it.

We had three boarders.

How many bedrooms?

They had the front bedroom with two bed. Mr. Nolan, Mr. Wherley, and Mr. Sharp. [5:02]

Your dad took pictures. Met them in the next week. Sold the pictures to them.

We had that dog for thirteen years. Teddy. He was a plumb nuisance. I had more trouble with that darn dog. He cornered the cat under the house. And he barked and he barked, and this was after pa died and I think I was

That was an awful thing. We didn't have any basement. This was before the basement was built. He was such a nuisance.

I made my own clothes even when I was going to grammer school. Because Mrs. Asmervig used to let me use her machine.

M: What did you use for a pattern when you sewed?

I don't know.

She would take clothes apart.

[5:13]

Tape 2-A

Henry's cute. Oh this is cute of Laura's. Where'd she get the sailor suit. Olaf was in the navy.

That where I was born. That was the house.

[12:32]

That another taken in front of the house. She looked older there than when she got old.

I think he built that himself. And then he added that later. And later on they built the bathroom on. They had two families living here at one time. One family could go in this way and one family this way. Can you imagine two families in just five rooms? Th

When I was there there was only a big pear tree and an apple too on that side.

Mr. Olsbeck helped him (built the house on 32nd).

That's Carl Anderson. 1913. He's the same age as I am. A few month's older. Just full of the old nick, most of the time. I wished I'da got the picture. School picture it was. I wish I had it. Only picture when I was younger. But I never had a picture of myself.

[12:55]

They were going to see if they could get some money for this. They sent it in but nothing came of it. Those two boys were always going out camping. Elmer and Albert didn't do anything like the two older ones. Mama had too many kids, she didn't have time to worry about them.

[12:57]

I'm going to take this with me.

M: There's my mother and Jim

Just before you (Morris) was born. Jimmy was five. 1925.

[12:59]

That was Beatrice in Edmonds. Now what was her name? ...but what in the heck was...she was an only child and you dad got acquainted with her folks. Very nice couple up in Edmonds.

[1:01]

She was kind of old fashioned.

Oh, I got a kink when I did that.

M: This one has a good story about that. Jail. Thought they were draft-dodgers. Telegram they sent back from the draft board. "Both Registered. Not Called."

I remember now when you mention it. What'd they do, arrest them? Who was it, your dad and Carl?

[1:03]

Your mother, and my mother. She's holding Marilyn I guess. Jean. Must be Janet. I don't know. No, it isn't Janet. Who is my mother holding? Marilyn? yes.

Who's this. Martha Vik from Bainbridge Island. Ed was kind of sweet on her. I think that's who it is.

I don't think her last name is Vik. That might be Martha Erikson.

[1:06]

Doesn't Dot look different than she does now. She does look different.

M: That's Dorothy, then, and Jim.

And Agnes is in there.

I made that dress for her. and several rows of white lace around the neck.

M: There's Ed in the barrel.

M: Do you have any idea who those people are?

Who are they?

M: There's Emily, my mother. Esther Hegdahl.

Hegdahls had a furniture store up in Ballard. Mr. Hegdahl. had a furniture there.

[12:13] (stop for awhile) [3:44]

L: Who is Esther Hegdahl.

Reading in the Bible and Esther was going to school. She used to be sweet on Blake. Well-to-do. He went to Queen Anne High school because Ballard was not

They had a little wooden step on the back of Esther Hegdahl's house. He would write a note and put it under the step. She was beneath him.

All those kind of things I remember. She was kind of a ladies man, Esther.

She married a kid from Ballard High School. His name was Blake. He used to help the janitor.

Esther was good company. I liked Esther. It wasn't long since she passed away.

L: Blake?

No. I don't think she married him.

(looking at a picture, identifying people).

M: Getting kind of late.

(end)