of the participation. There may never be a "best," because someone will always have a story about another player who was better. It is the camaraderie of the game which gives all of us a special connection over time. Even today, after so many years of playing b-ball on the courts of D.C., I run into other players in board rooms and grocery stores; we still talk about the legendary players and games we remember.

D.C. playgrounds, for decades, have been the incubators of basketball talent. It was on the playgrounds at 10th & R, Luzon, Turkey Thicket, Happy Hollow, Sherwood, Banneker, Kelly Miller, and Bundy where so many first displayed their prowess. Average players were developed and nurtured to greatness by many unsung mentors and coaches, such as Bill Butler and Jabbo Kenner, who tirelessly gave of themselves. Because of their contributions, perhaps it can be said, "Everybody has game."

In Washington, D.C., pick-up basketball is the game of choice. Like a boomerang evolution: no matter to which level of play the game has taken you, pick-up basketball always brings you home.

Tom Blagburn plays pick-up b-ball on Sunday mornings at the Chevy Chase, D.C., playground. He has played for more than 30 years on playgrounds across the city from River Terrace to Chevy Chase.

"I Am a Proud Woman"

by Elizabeth Clark-Lewis

In the fall of 1979 my great-aunt Mary Johnson Sprow found a diary she had written while working as a domestic servant more than 60 years before. She was part of the outward migration from the South between 1900 and 1920, when cities such as Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia shifted from reliance on European immigrants to African Americans for household service.

[Mary's writings] stress the power and autonomy of a working-class woman.

In 1910 nearly 90 percent of [Washington's] gainfully employed African-American women worked in domestic service. [But] she chafed at the attitudes of those, including her own family members, who believed that simply because she was a poor African-American female born in the rural South, she should work as a live-in servant all her life. Living in meant being on call to one's employers 24 hours a day. Those women like Mary who ultimately made the transition from live-in service to day work sought the autonomy of setting their own schedule and tasks. Living in meant little if any privacy, few opportunities for a social life, and minimal independence. Live-out work meant that the worker had the freedom to quit an unpleasant situation; she did not rely on her employer for the roof over her head.

> Then what is work? Who made work? To clean and scrub days in and days out. Above all who made the people that we toil for? That never knows what it is to want and yet is never thankful for nothing that we do, no matter how hard no matter how we try to please. When I look at them I see that they are made

of the same flesh and blood as we. I see that they eat three times a day same as we — but only after being waited upon they enjoys it better because their digestion organ have had the rest while our body and minds work all the time.

After all, work would not be such a task if it was not for the ingratitude we get from our employers. But then all of the good boys and girls that can, find better works. You can get something to do that don't take all day and night; and you have parents that try to make something out of you.

Mary Johnson Sprow personified the determination that women workers brought to the eventual transformation of domestic work from near-slavery to independent contracting. Women such as Mary established and sustained support networks with other women who had left live-in service in the 1920s and 1930s. These networks provided role models for the transition into daily paid work, mentors who did not belittle the former live-in's desire for independence. These women shared their knowledge of how to operate in several households simultaneously. They also formed self-help groups, savings clubs, and burial societies, which augmented the region- or kin-based associations that also provided African Americans with some social security.

Mary Johnson Sprow died in Washington in 1981 after more than 80 years of work in domestic service. Her story is one of the very few first-person sources for understanding the feelings, experiences, and aspirations of members of this important social and economic group as they confronted life in the first generation after slavery and made the leap from live-in service to day work. Her diary [offers] a different view from historians who emphasize the victimization of America's domestics; [Mary's writings] stress the power and autonomy of a working-class woman. She reveals how African-American women were simultaneously intricate and plain; overt and subtle; visible and veiled. She helps us again realize why the women who have been "domestics" will themselves write the correctives to this culture's misconceptions about them.

Elizabeth Clark-Lewis is Associate Professor of History and Director of the Public History Program at Howard University. She has spent nearly 30 years collecting the oral histories and documents of rural-to-urban migrants from 1900 to 1940.

These excerpts are from a longer article that appeared in *Washington History* Magazine of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., 5-1 (Spring/Summer 1993). Reprinted with permission.

When I arrived in Washington, I found an atmosphere of solidarity.

Latinos and Human Rights

by Nilda Villalta

Last year in the midst of a discussion about the Latino Festival in Washington, D.C., Quique Avilés, a performance artist and writer, summarized the irony of the Central American migration to D.C.: "We came to D.C. because of a war that was supported from here, and now we are here to stay." Historical and social developments in Latin America have drawn Latinos to the U.S. capital. They represent a large community of people of different nationalities, educational levels, social status, races, and immigration experiences. Verónica DeNegri, a Chilean exile, illustrates the activism, search for justice, and political struggle within a community that has grown and diversified over the years.

In 1973 in Chile, Augusto Pinochet led a coup that removed socialist president Salvador Allende.