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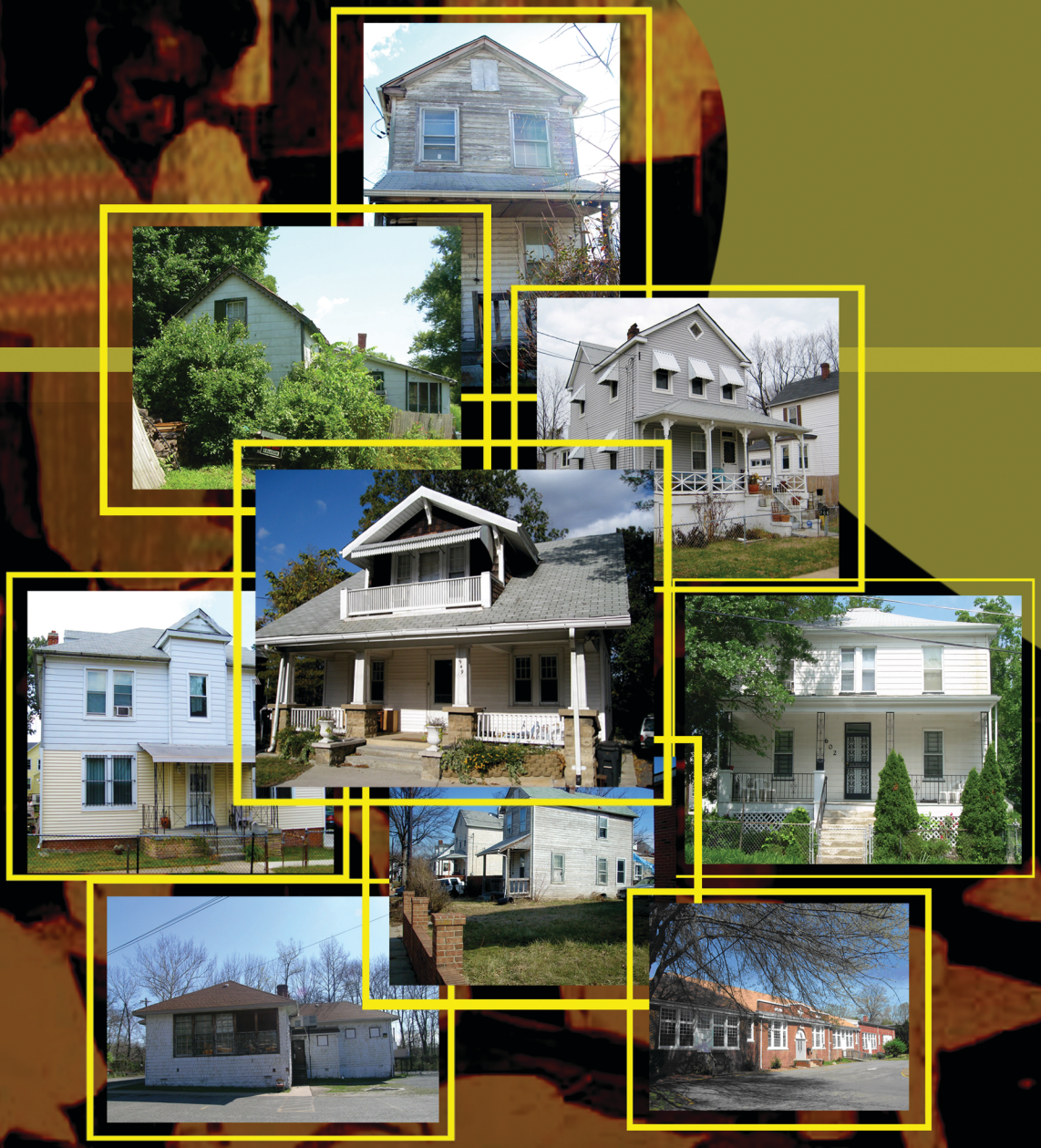

Oral History Interviews

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE SURVEY UPDATE 2008

May 2010

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
www.mncppc.org/pgco

Oral History Interviews for the African-American Heritage Survey 2008

Margaret Brooks—Towles-Brooks House
Anne Donelson—Prince Albert Washington House
Mildred Gray—Rosenwald Schools
Mary Hollomand—Community School, Lakeland
Herbert Jones—Columbia Air Center
Marjorie Osborne—Isaac Brown House
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May 2010

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Prince George's County Planning Department

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

www.mncppc.org

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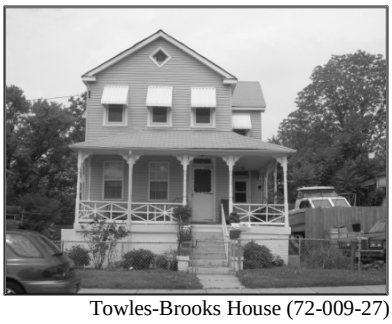
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African-American Heritage Survey Update 2008 Oral History Interviews

Introduction:

During the 1996 celebration of the county's Tricentennial, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission published the *African-American Heritage Survey.* The publication documented 107 historic properties and 14 historic communities of significance to Prince George's County African-American history and heritage including residences, schools and lodge halls, churches and cemeteries, and urban and rural communities.

As a part of ongoing survey and documentation efforts for the 2009–2010 update to the county's *Historic Sites and Districts Plan,* in 2007 the Prince George's County Planning Department, M-NCPPC retained The Ottery Group of Olney, Maryland, to produce Maryland Inventory of Historic Property (MIHP) forms for 70 historic properties (many of which had been included in the 1996 survey) and 3 historic communities. As part of that project, the consultant team was asked to conduct oral histories with ten individuals whose heritage is directly linked to the properties being documented. The interviews were conducted by Charlotte King, research assistant to Dr. Paul Shackel, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Maryland. The following are transcriptions of the ten oral interviews conducted in 2008. The purpose of the interviews was to help develop the historic context statements for the MIHP forms being produced for the ten properties.

The inventory forms are available on line at:
http://www.pgplanning.org/Projects/Ongoing_Plans_and_Projects/Historic_Preservation/Historic_Sites/HSDP_Survey_Database.htm

The interviews are filled with rich detail about day-to-day life in Prince George's County and will assist in the efforts of many groups to document and perpetuate the county's African-American heritage for future generations.

Interviewee:	**Margaret Brooks** Margaret Charlton (daughter)
Topic:	Towles-Brooks House
Relationship to Property:	Current owner
Inventory Number:	72-9-27
Location of Interview:	Towles-Brooks House 708 59th Avenue Fairmount Heights, Maryland 20743
Date of Interview:	August 27, 2008
Interviewer:	Charlotte King

Margaret Brooks
(May 1, 1920-April 25, 2009)

CK: I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself, about growing up Prince George's County; and I will also ask you some questions about the Towles-Brooks House.
MB: Well, I didn't grow up in Prince George's County.

CK: Okay, well you can tell me that too then. That's fine.
MB: I came to Prince George's County when I was 15 years old.

CK: Okay.
MB: I guess that is growing up, though, from there.

CK: Well, it is from 15. Yes. That part of your life.

CK: What is your full name, please?
MB: Margaret…what do you want? My married, my name before I was married?

CK: Your whole name.
MB: Huh?

CK: Yes, your first name and married.
MB: Margaret Lewis Brooks, or Margaret Louise Brooks?

CK: Is it Louise? Margaret Louise Brooks?
MB: What is your maiden name, Mrs. Brooks?

CK: Lewis? So is it Margaret Louise Lewis Brooks?
MB: Mmm.

CK: Okay. Where were you born?
MB: In Lewis, L-e-w-e-s. Lewes, Delaware.

CK: When were you born?
MB: May 1, 1920.

CK: Where did you grow up?
MB: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Fairmount Heights.

CK: How long have you lived in Fairmount Heights.
MB: 70…. (Talking with her daughter…)
Margaret Charlton: Yeah, 73 years.

CK: You lived here for 73 years or you moved here?
MB: Been here 73 years.
Margaret Charlton: In the town, not at this house.

CK: Okay. When you first moved to Fairmount Heights, where did you live?
MB: On, what was that…61st Avenue?

CK: And what brought you to Fairmount Heights.
MB: That's where we were going to live. We moved here from Pennsylvania.

CK: You and your family?
MB: Family was here. We moved here.

CK: Who was "we"?
MB: Cheeks family.

CK: How do you spell that?
MB: C-h-e-e-k-s.

CK: How did you move here with the Cheeks family?
MB: How did I move? What do you mean?

CK: Did you?
Margaret Charlton: She married…
MB: My mother was married to a Cheeks brother and we moved here.

CK: And you all moved to together here?
MB: We all lived together. Mrs. Cheeks, now Mrs. Cheeks was dead when we got here, wasn't she? Yeah. We moved in the Cheeks' house. My mother was here for a while with Mrs. Cheeks. Mrs. Cheeks when I had to come.

CK: Where did you go to school?
MB: I went to, I went to…
Margaret Charlton: Cardoza
MB: Cardoza High, yeah. In Washington, D. C. That's why I need somebody here, I forget.

CK: When you moved here, were you already in high school at that point?
MB: No, I went to grammar school in Philadelphia. In Newton.

CK: Newton Grammar School?
MB: Mmmhmm.

CK: And that was in Philadelphia?
MB: Mmhmm.

CK: And then when you moved here, you went right into Cardoza High School?
MB: Well, yeah. I'll tell you why, 'cause see, we had a ninth grade there, and so ninth grade was right with the high school. And so they had, it was just a little bit different. So I had to go on in high school?

CK: What do you remember about going to school?
MB: What do I remember?

CK: Mmhmm. Anything significant about going to school?
MB: Like what could it be?

CK: Did you like going to school? Was it a good experience?
MB: Oh yes. Lovely experience. It was just a little different from here…in Philadelphia.
Margaret Charlton: What did you like about Cardoza, she asked. Did you have good friends there? Did you like the teachers?
MB: Well, in Philadelphia I had closer friends. But I did like Cardoza a lot. I liked it a lot.

CK: How did you get to school?
MB: Walked.

CK: How far is it from here? Is it far?
MB: Oh, well, I didn't walk to Cardoza. See, I was thinking I walked to Philadelphia. I'm getting Philadelphia and Cardoza all mixed up.

CK: That's okay.
MB: I went…
Margaret Charlton: Was it by bus?
MB: No, I went on a street car.
Margaret Charlton: Trolley, street car?
MB: Yeah. Because they had, the you know, tickets, we were on the trolley.

CK: Did you go to church regularly as a child?
MB: Oh, yes, yes, yes. Went right down here to Grace church.

CK: Grace Methodist Church
MB: Mmhmm.

CK: Do you still go to church there?
MB: Still go to church there.

CK: Do you go every Sunday? Do you go regularly?
MB: Pretty much.
Margaret Charlton: Grace United Methodist.

CK: Grace United Methodist?
MB: That's what it is now. It was Grace Methodist.
Margaret Charlton: It used to be Grace Methodist, something like that.
MB: I forget all that stuff.

CK: What is your association with this house, the Towles-Brooks House?
MB: With this house?

CK: Mmhmm.
MB: Well, his aunt, see, he was raised up in this house.

CK: Who was that?
MB: My husband was raised up in this house. And then after we were married, of course, he moved. And we built our own house up the street. And then after his aunt died, I had, we had taken care of her before she died. After she died, we moved here because it was his house then.

CK: What was your husband's name?
MB: Lawrence.

CK: Lawrence Brooks?
MB: Mmhmm.

CK: Where did you meet Mr. Brooks?
MB: In Fairmount Heights. On 61st Avenue. That was Chapel Avenue then. Chapel, what was it, was Chapel Road or Chapel Avenue?
Margaret Charlton: I don't really remember, Ma, because I think it was 61st when I was growing up.
MB: Ah ha. It was Chapel Avenue then.
Margaret Charlton: And her husband later became the mayor of Fairmount Heights.

CK: When was he mayor?
Margaret Charlton: How many years?
MB: He was mayor for four or five years, but I don't remember the...
Margaret Charlton: I have to think back. How old was William (talking to Mrs. Brooks)? William was in high school?
MB: Huh?
Margaret Charlton: William was in high school during that time, right?
MB: I guess so.
Margaret Charlton: When he was mayor?
MB: I saw that the other day, I don't remember. Saw it on the thing.
Margaret Charlton: I have to think backward.
MB: It was in the 70s.
Margaret Charlton: 36 years ago. Say, 36 years ago. That about right?
MB: It sounds right.

CK: Your husband, did your husband's family live in this house?
MB: No, his aunt and her husband. That's all that lived here. And then when we moved in, we were all that lived here.
Margaret Charlton: First it was Frances and Samuel Towles; that was his aunt.

CK: Frances?
Margaret Charlton: and Samuel, or Samuel and Frances.

CK: And what was their last name?
MB: T-o-w-l-e-s.
Margaret Charlton: Towles.

CK: Are they the ones that built the house?
Margaret Charlton: Mmhmm.
MB: They had it built.

CK: They had it built? Do you know the year that was?
MB: 1909.

CK: What was their relationship to the Brooks family?
MB: It was his aunt. My husband's aunt.

CK: How did it come into the possession of the Brooks family?
MB: Well, he was a Brooks, and when she died, it was his house.
Margaret Charlton: He inherited it.

CK: I see, so he inherited from his aunt when she died. But when you came here, you didn't live in this house immediately?
MB: No, I lived on 61st Avenue.

CK: Did you build that house?
MB: No.

CK: It was here already?
MB: We built the one we lived in on 59th Avenue. What was it, Chapel, what was it then?
Margaret Charlton: See, that was before I was born. I don't remember the old streets.
MB: Oh, you don't remember? What was the street? I forgot what the street was.
Margaret Charlton: Just hear you all talking about them.
MB: Goodness gracious, isn't that something. I'll remember it after you leave.

CK: That's okay. So, then, after the Towles, your husband's aunt and uncle, after they died, then he inherited the house?
MB: Uh huh.

CK: And then did you move in here with him?
MB: Yeah. We moved in there, sure, after she died we moved in here. Now, she stayed in here a while by herself. And then, we had to take care of her. And then after she died, we came on down here.

CK: What year would that have been?
MB: 1975, wasn't it?
Margaret Charlton: I think so. I think so.

CK: What do you know about the house? Do you know who built it? And when it was built?
MB: Yeah, Louis Brown. They called him; I guess he was L-o-u-i-s Brown.

CK: And that was in 1909?
MB: Mmhmm. What they call it, stick built? He built it stick by stick. Yeah.

CK: He built it stick by stick?
MB: Uh huh. Guess that's why it's still holding up.

CK: He must have done a good job.
MB: Huh?

CK: He must have done a good job building it.
MB: Yeah, he did a good job.

CK: It's still solid. How large was the house when it was first constructed?
MB: It was three bedrooms…
Margaret Charlton: Just like it is now, mainly, except for this room
MB: Except for this room.
Margaret Charlton: Because this room had a fire.
MB: Uh huh.

CK: There was a fire in this room?
Margaret Charlton: Not in this room per se. Wasn't it a fire in the kitchen area, and they just re-did the walls and things? Wasn't it a fire in the kitchen area, or something?
MB: The fire was in the basement, wasn't it? Oh, yeah, and then it smoked up to there.
Margaret Charlton: Oh that's right. Yeah, it smoked up here. Yeah, yeah.
MB: But it, but the fire didn't interfere with the house.

CK: It didn't damage the house?
Margaret Charlton: No, it didn't burn the house down or anything. I was just trying to remember that.

CK: So it had three bedrooms, and…
MB: Three bedrooms.

CK: And living room?
MB: And living room, kitchen, and dining room. Uh huh.

CK: Was this (indicating current location, room at the back of the house); is this part of the original house?
MB: No, we put this on here after we moved here.

CK: So, you added on to the house then, when you moved in?
MB: Just added this. Mmhmm.

CK: What did you add to it? How big is it? Could you just describe it?
Margaret Charlton: This room is what, 18 x 20?
MB: 18 x 21, or something. But, since that we've had the bathroom put in.

CK: This bathroom right here?
MB: Mmhmm.

CK: So, that was in the new portion of the house?
Margaret Charlton: It was in this portion (indicating current room) right here.
MB: That's a portion of this room.

CK: But this is new, right? It was added to the other part of the house?
MB: In the '70s, yeah.

CK: Okay. Who all has lived in the house?
MB: How all? Just the Towles.

CK: The Towles. And then your…
MB: My husband. My husband, when he was a boy, but…

CK: Do you remember any discussion of the house? Do you remember your husband talking about the house at all? Like what it meant to him, or his association with it?
MB: No.
Margaret Charlton: Alfred stayed here awhile, didn't he?
MB: Okay, Alfred did stay here a little while. He wasn't here even long enough to even talk about it.
Margaret Charlton: Oh, okay.

CK: Who was Alfred?
Margaret Charlton: That was Mrs. Towles brother. My father's uncle.

CK: What does this house mean to you?
MB: What does it mean to me? A place to stay.

CK: But you have pleasant associations with it?
MB: It has no special significance, no.

CK: So, it's your home.
MB: It's my home, that's what…

CK: Is the house important to you?
MB: Well, certainly. Any place you got to live that's yours, it's mine, and so anything that's yours is important to you, I guess.
Margaret Charlton: Not all the time.
MB: Huh?
Margaret Charlton: Not all the time.
MB: Not all the time, no. Yeah.

CK: What about the history of the house? Is that important to you?
MB: There's no special history.

CK: But, it's been in your family for a long time.
MB: Oh, yeah. But the only significance is that, at the time, I guess, people didn't pay for houses when they were first built, did they?

CK: I don't know.
MB: They paid for it when it was built.
Margaret Charlton: I think the history means a lot to her. She, you know, you talk about it a lot.
MB: Yeah.
Margaret Charlton: You like the idea of being in a historical house.
Mr. Charlton (son-in-law): It's still standing.
Margaret Charlton: Yeah. And leaves history for the, you tell the children the history of the house and how long it's been here. And that it's historical.
MB: And what's here because what's here was already here, you know. I mean, except for the cabinets in the kitchen, of course. We had to put them on. But, but the walls and stuff.
Margaret Charlton: You have place for all your children to come. She has five generations.

CK: Five generations of children that come over?
Margaret Charlton: And this is where they gather at Christmas and everything.
MB: Well, that's what it means to us, I guess, a place to gather.

CK: I'm sure you have a lot of memories, too, over the years that you've had here.
Margaret Charlton: Yeah.

CK: Do you think the house is important to the community?
MB: I don't know, I mean…
Margaret Charlton: Yeah. There are a lot of people…
MB: I guess so because it's been here.

CK: Because it's been here for so long?
Margaret Charlton: People use it as a reference point also. You remember the lady came down and said, the lady told me to come to this house and you'd be able to tell her something about the neighborhood and, you know. So that house has always had the same family and, you know. So, it's, it's significant to the neighborhood.

CK: As a landmark. People recognize it.
Margaret Charlton: Yeah, yeah, people do.

CK: And associate it with the beginning of the town.
Margaret Charlton: In fact, you know that's where the mayor used to live and that's where…You know, she was also assistant mayor and town treasurer.

CK: Oh, you were assistant mayor?
MB: I was council member also.

CK: And council member.
MB: Council member for 12 years.

CK: What year was that? When was that?
MB: Hmm?

CK: When was that?
Margaret Charlton: What years were you council?
MB: Oh, boy.
Margaret Charlton: '79 through '80?
MB: I guess.
Margaret Charlton: Wait a minute, let me think.
MB: I did it for 12 years, however it goes.
Margaret Charlton: We're going to have to sit down and get those dates.
MB: Huh?
Margaret Charlton: We're going to have to get those dates down pat.
MB: Yeah. I need to. I didn't think about that.

CK: It was in the 80s, you think?
Margaret Charlton: Yeah, in the late, the early '80s when she resigned.

CK: You held some important positions here in the town. You've seen a lot of changes…
MB: I was the clerk treasurer. I was the first one to work in the old, in the Town Hall, when they had it. They've torn it down now, but I was the first clerk treasurer in there. Uh huh.

CK: So, you've seen a lot of changes in Fairmount Heights.
MB: Oh, yes.

CK: What is the biggest change, do you think, over the years?
MB: The biggest change is the way its run because those older people, I guess, they just knew a little better how to do things. And it wasn't pleasant, all this confusion that they have…
Margaret Charlton: The fact that you don't know every neighbor like you used to.
MB: No, you don't. We used to know; I could tell who it was going; who it was by the car driving by. Mmhmm.

CK: So, there are a lot of new people that have moved in?
MB: Oh, my. Yes.

CK: Did any significant events occur in this house, since you were so affiliated with…
(Mrs. Brooks's granddaughter came to visit. She had been ill.)
Margaret Charlton: Significant events in the house? Anything significant happen in the house? Those things happened away from the house, didn't they?
MB: Mmhmm. That I know of.
Margaret Charlton: Yeah.

CK: But, when you were working with the local government, did you ever have meetings here, or do anything, or was it always at the Town Hall?
MB: Oh, they were at Town Hall.
Margaret Charlton: Well, when you worked with the church, you had a lot of church meetings here.

CK: So, people would come over here. You'd gather when you were doing things for the church?
Margaret Charlton: Different, like the women's society, groups that she belonged to. Homemakers.

MB: Golden Cross, remember?
Margaret Charlton: Yeah.

CK: Golden Cross? What was that?
MB: Organization of the church.

CK: Was it a ladies organization?
Margaret Charlton: Yeah.
MB: You remember John T. and them? Or did he just come?
Margaret Charlton: Were the Golden Cross men?
MB: Yeah, they had men in the Golden Cross.
Margaret Charlton: Okay. It was the Women's Society of Christian Service that was only women. And May Elmo Campbell Gill that was women, they all met here.

CK: What was the name of that?
Margaret Charlton: May Elmo Campbell Gill, and she used to be the wife of the previous mayor. May Elmo Campbell.

CK: McCampbell?
Margaret Charlton: Campbell, May Elmo Campbell.

CK: How long was your husband the mayor of the town?
MB: Honey, I don't know. He was mayor for five years but I don't…

CK: Five years?
MB: Before he went to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. He was the first black commissioner on the WSSC.

CK: Do you have any idea what year that was? When he was the commissioner, what years that would have been?
MB: It's on that thing over there (indicating framed certificate on wall).
(Conversation with daughter, son-in-law)

CK: Are those your husband's (awards framed on the wall)?
MB: Yeah, some of them. (Talking to daughter who is looking at certificates on wall).
Margaret Charlton: (Reading certificate) June 1980 to June 1981. This is for…
MB: Oh, that was for…
Margaret Charlton: That's just for chair…
MB: For chair...
Margaret Charlton: Yeah, that's just for one part.
MB: For chair, wasn't it?
Margaret Charlton: There's another for the '80s, so we were questioning whether it went to the '80s, so it did.
MB: That was when he was, because he was on there twice. He had served one time and then he went back. They called him back on to another term.

CK: And that was the Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission? What is that gavel (framed on wall) that's on the wall?
Margaret Charlton: That's when he was chairman. The year that he was chairman, that was '80 to '81.

CK: And that certificate that I see (on the wall) with the state of Maryland?
Margaret Charlton: That's a…
MB: I got a lot of those things around here. I don't know where they are, but…
Margaret Charlton: (Reading certificate) People of the Legislative District 24, reposing great trust and confidence in your integrity and wisdom, did on the day of September 1982, elect you a member of the Prince George's County Republican Central Committee.
MB: Yeah, he was…

CK: Prince George's County Central….?
Margaret Charlton: Central. Republican Central Committee.

CK: Republican Central Committee.
MB: Wouldn't he be tickled now?

CK: What did that organization do?
MB: Oh, I, you know what, that was up in Annapolis too, wasn't it? I don't know; they just recruited more Republicans. They talked about being Republicans, and, you know?
And discussed being Republican, and laws.
(Mrs. Brooks talking to son-in-law).

CK: What would you like to see happen to the house? Do you want to see it stay the same way that is, and have it passed down through generations?
MB: That's what I would like. That's what I would like, but how, but when it's passed to the generations, what are you going to do? I won't even be here, so I won't know what's happening. But, I hope that the ones that get it will sort of take care of it until it decides to fall. Which it's trying to do!

CK: You think it's trying to fall? Why?
MB: The ceiling fell.
Margaret Charlton: I think that's (inaudible) from the crack. The plaster got old in the ceiling in the front room. And I think when the guys put that air conditioning in, they probably tapped something up there 'cause they had a dropped ceiling. The original ceiling was up there, that's what fell, the original ceiling. And I think it just got old (laughing).
MB: It did get old.
Margaret Charlton: It got old.

CK: Have there been many changes made to the house, to the outside and to the inside?
Margaret Charlton: Huh uh.
MB: No, just this, this, you can't even see this (indicating back room addition).

CK: This was added on to the back of the house, so you don't see it from the front. It doesn't change the appearance of the house at all.
MB: No, didn't change the appearance any.

Margaret Charlton: No. All the brick, same woodwork and everything is on the porch. Same wood and everything.

CK: The house always had a porch that went across the front?
MB: Oh yeah.
Margaret Charlton: Oh yeah. Always had the porch.
MB: The house next door had the same kind of porch. But what happened...
Margaret Charlton: They expanded their living room…
MB: They enlarged their living room.

CK: Do you use your porch?
MB: My goodness, yes. Can't do much else.

CK: What do you do out there?
MB: Nothing. Maybe sometime, if my eyes will permit me, I'll read, but other than that…
Margaret Charlton: Sit out there and talk and have fun.
MB: People wave…
Margaret Charlton: But she doesn't like to be around the (neighbor's) dog.
MB: But so many times I have to come in because, see, dogs and trash, you know, make gnats and stuff, so you have to get in the house. And sometimes you smell that, and to get away from that…
Margaret Charlton: Other than that, she enjoys it.

CK: But you have a lot of good memories that were here in the house? Times your families got together.
MB: Oh, yes. I mean…
Margaret Charlton: Every holiday.
MB: Yeah, every holiday we celebrated and…
Margaret Charlton: And once a month we have a big family get together here.
MB: So, when, so when he left, my husband left, the children still wanted to come here, so they still come here.

CK: Do you remember any favorite places in Fairmount Heights when you first moved here? Did you have any favorite places?
MB: Well, they had a nice playground at that time. That was the main spot.
Margaret Charlton: That was back in the 1940s.
MB: Yeah, that was back then.

CK: Were there at that time…
Margaret Charlton: Early '50s.

CK: Early '50s? Late '40s and early '50s?
Margaret Charlton: Uh huh.

CK: Were there any places in Fairmount Heights, when you first lived here, that were considered especially sacred or very historic?
Margaret Charlton: The store.

MB: No. Well, we had a store, we had a nice store. And then there was another store, Mr. Barber's store, across the street from us.

CK: Mr. Barber?
MB: Umhm.
Margaret Charlton: But you all had Brooks Market.
MB: Yeah, but we had a, we had a, I think our store was slightly larger than his.

CK: You had a store?
MB: We had a store, yeah. Down on the corner. Yeah.

CK: And that was called Brooks Market?
Margaret Charlton: Umhm.
MB: Umhm.

CK: What did you sell in your store?
MB: Everything.

CK: Like what?
Margaret Charlton: Groceries, kerosene.
MB: It was a grocery store. We sold oil; we had, there was a porch outside and on it was a place where we sold coal oil.

CK: Coal oil? And what was that used for?
MB: Kerosene, you know.
Margaret Charlton: For heating.
MB: For heating, uh huh.
Margaret Charlton: They had a, what do you call cold... not delicatessen, cold cut counter. Deli.

CK: Deli counter?
Margaret Charlton: Uh huh. Yeah. They had a tobacco counter, you know, where they sold cigars loose, and things like that.
MB: Cigarettes for a penny.

CK: You sold those too?
MB: Cigarettes for a penny and chewing gum for a penny.
Margaret Charlton: Cookies that were loose, you used to buy three for a penny, or two for a nickel, something like that. They went up as the years went on.

CK: How long did you have the store?
MB: How long did we have that store?
Margaret Charlton: I think, let's see, Lawrence had gone away to college that year. (Inaudible) was 18, I was 16. We had it about five years.

CK: About five years? What years would that have been?
Margaret Charlton: About 19…, hold on, I can tell you. About 1962 till around 1966, or was it like '61 to '65, around that era.

CK: Why did you close it?
MB: I couldn't do it anymore.
Margaret Charlton: My mother's back got bad. My older brother had gone off to school, my sister had gotten married, and it was just the younger ones left. Me and my younger brother.
MB: And the doctor said, don't let her go in the store anymore.
Margaret Charlton: Illness, really.

CK: What happened to the store?
MB: Well, who took it after that?
Margaret Charlton: Laura and them took it back, took it….No. John Little, no Littlejohns.
MB: Oh, he did. Yes. He took it.
Margaret Charlton: Sold it to another family.

CK: The Littlejohn family?
Margaret Charlton: Yes. Umhm.
MB: But he didn't keep it very long.
Margaret Charlton: No, he didn't. Then eventually it closed. They turned it into a house and people live there (laughing). Because there was a house behind it, a four bedroom house, behind the store.

CK: I see.
Margaret Charlton: So, it's been torn down now.

CK: Did you enjoy working at the store?
MB: Well, no.

CK: You didn't like working at the store?
MB: No.
Margaret Charlton: She enjoyed the people.
MB: I like people, so I made it alright, but I mean, I don't like shopping even now or working in that store. But it helped the children because they, they learned how to treat people. Learned how to greet people. And it did a lot for them, you know.

CK: Why did you open the store?
MB: Because it was there.
MB: We bought it from Laura.
Margaret Charlton: It was in the family already.
MB: Already in the family. And we bought it from…
Margaret Charlton: Family.
MB: From the family.

CK: From the Brooks family?
Margaret Charlton: Try to keep it…try to keep it, you know, in the family.

CK: Mrs. Brooks, what do you consider the most important event in your life?
MB: Marriage and children.

CK: What do you think has changed most about Fairmount Heights since you've lived here?
MB: Well, good streets. I mean, they've messed them up now, down, but we had nice streets. And we have lights now.
Margaret Charlton: And like you were saying previously, you know, you don't know everybody now. You used to know everybody, and you don't anymore. And the older homes are being torn down and, you know, it's different.
(Mrs. Brooks comments to Mrs. Charlton).

CK: And you said, the house was built in 1909 by Louis Brown, and it's relatively the same as it is now except this part has been added.
MB: Except this part.

CK: This section has been added. And it was just your, the Towles family and then the Brooks family that has lived here since then.
MB: Umhm

CK: What does, does the house have any special meaning to you? I mean, I know that it's your home, and it was a place for your family to gather. And it has social, historic significance because it's been here. It's one of the original places here in Fairmount Heights. Is there anything that has, about the house, that you could tell me about?
MB: (Asking Mrs. Charlton). What would be special to me? The children know me better than I know myself.
Margaret Charlton: I guess, just the idea of being in a single home. You know, so many people her age can't now. Except for a lot of people here in Fairmount Heights that do quite well. I think she likes the idea of being in her own home. Being in the…
MB: But down the street, I was in my own home.
Margaret Charlton: No, but I mean now, now…now that you…
MB: Yeah. Well, it's special to me now because…I live here.
Margaret Charlton: I mean, you know, it's what she has from her husband, you know.

CK to MC (Mrs. Charlton): Does the house have a special meaning for you?
Margaret Charlton: Yeah. I, it's something I grew up with. You know, it's been here all my life.
MB: She grew up with Aunt Frances, you know.
Margaret Charlton: So, you know, I was here a lot when I was younger. And it's always been the house I could come to, you know. Because when my aunt was here, you know, I was here all the time to visit her, or stay with her some nights. And then, you know, so it's been here all my life.

CK to Margaret Charlton: So, Mrs. Towles, is that your aunt?
Margaret Charlton: Umhm. Yes.

CK: You came to visit here when she was living here. And then, did you move in with your parents when they moved in here?
Margaret Charlton: No, I didn't. I stayed with Mrs. Towles some nights when she got older.
MB: She and her brother took turns, you know.
Margaret Charlton: Staying here with her because she didn't like the storms and she was by herself after her husband died. After Uncle Sam, we used call him Uncle Sam. So, I stayed here a lot of nights. But when Mama moved here, I had gotten married. So, you know.

CK to MB: Were you eager to move here? Did you want to move here from your other house?
MB: Yeah, I wanted to move.

CK: Yeah?
MB: Umhm.
MC to MB: Oh, when she asked you where else did you live; you lived down on the corner too, on 59th Avenue.
MB: On the corner, right on the corner, on 59th Avenue.
Margaret Charlton: You lived at the store, and then you moved over, and then you moved here.
MB: 59th Avenue. 727, down the street. My granddaughter lives there now.
Margaret Charlton: And this is the town where my father was born. He was born here in Fairmount Heights.
MB: The house he was born in is back there.

CK: What street is that on?
MB: Hmm?

CK: The house he was born in, what street is that on?
MB: 59th Place. What's the name of that place now, they messed it all up now, but I still call it 59th Place.
Margaret Charlton: Umhm. That's what it is.
MB: It's right back here. Next street over.

CK: So, he lived here all of his life?
MB: All his life. Yeah, he was born here. Born in that house back there.

CK: Then, when his aunt and uncle died. Then he inherited this house, so you came here.
MB: Well, we were living in our own house then. And when they died, well, I mean, I, I wanted to come, I, I wanted a bigger house, so we moved here.

CK: Then, what happened to the house you left?
Margaret Charlton: She rented it for years.
MB: Yeah. Rented it for a while. But Carlotta (granddaughter) wanted it, so she went there to live.
William lived there for a while, didn't he?
Margaret Charlton: You talking about William…your son, or the other William?
MB: My son.
Margaret Charlton: Yeah. For a minute, yeah.
MB: For a little while.

CK: Who was Frances that you referred to?
MB: She was my husband's mother's sister.

CK: Did she live here too? Where did she live?
MB: Huh?

CK: Where did she live?
Margaret Charlton: Frances and Samuel Towles, they were the owners of the house.

CK: Oh, I see. Frances was the aunt that lived here.
MB: She was his mother's sister.

CK: I see. So, you would like to see the house preserved as it is now and just stay in the family.
MB: Yes, I would.

CK: Who lives here in the house now with you?
MB: Me.

CK: Just you, by yourself?
MB: Me, myself, and I (laughing).
Margaret Charlton: She has good neighbors. They watch her.
MB: I have good neighbors. They have lots of things. I want you to look outside the window and see how much they have.
Margaret Charlton: Oh, Ma (laughing).

CK: Then, your family lives close by, too, right?
MB: Well, Carlotta lives down the street.

CK: And Carlotta is your granddaughter?
MB: Uh huh. And her daughter lives around the corner.

CK to Margaret Charlton: And where do you live?
Margaret Charlton: I live in Baltimore now. I was, I was in the area until, you know, my husband got really sick, and we had to go to Johns Hopkins so much, so I moved to Baltimore.

CK: And what is your name?
Margaret Charlton: I'm Margaret Charlton.

CK: Charlton?
Margaret Charlton: I'm Margaret Frances Charlton. I'm named after Frances Towles. My mother and Frances. My mother and my aunt, Margaret Frances.

CK: Oh, that's nice. Is there anything else you could tell me about the house? Anything else you'd like to say about it?
MB: Well, I tell you, when the house was first made, when they first made it, it didn't have a basement. And they had it raised later, and put a basement under there.

CK: Was that done when the Towles…
MB: Well, the Towles did it.

CK: The Towles did it?
MB: Because when we got, it was basement everything here, you know, like it is. Say like it is. But, they, they had it raised up because, well, she was a funny person, you know. She wanted things like…
Margaret Charlton: And then Uncle Sam could do what he wanted to do in the basement, so. He liked gardening and vegetables.
MB: He had his tools and stuff down there.

CK: They had it, a basement added on when they, did they move out of the house while it was done?
MB: No, no. I don't know what they did. Now, I wasn't here then.
Margaret Charlton: They probably dug, you know, under.
MB: Yeah, they had the house raised and put the basement there.

CK: Did they make other changes to the house too?
MB: Oh, no. It wasn't an idea of changing the house; it was an idea that they wanted a basement. And they were people that had what they wanted to have.
Margaret Charlton: I think they probably dug it out, you think?
MB: I don't know how they got it.
Margaret Charlton: Because you can walk in from the ground and go down a step or two.
MB: But it was a ground house.
Margaret Charlton: And it's always had central heat. I think that's something else she loved about it. They've always had running water and central heat. When a lot of people used to tote water here in Fairmount Heights. She's always had central heat. See the radiators?

CK. That's original to the house, then, the radiators?
MB: Umhm.

CK: Okay. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.
Margaret Charlton: If I think of anything else, I wrote down the email address.

Interviewee:	**Anne Donelson**
Topic:	Prince Albert Washington House
Relationship to Property:	Current owner
Inventory Number:	72-9-43
Location of Interview:	Prince Albert Washington House 949 Eastern Avenue Fairmount Heights, Maryland 20743
Date of Interview:	August 27, 2008*
Interviewer:	Charlotte King

Anne Elizabeth Washington Donelson

*Interview was updated in May 2010 by Anne Donelson and Gail Rothrock

CK: I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself, about growing up in Fairmount Heights, and I will also ask you some questions about the Prince Albert Washington House. Could you state your full name, please?
AD: Yes. My full name is Anne Elizabeth Washington Donelson.

CK: Where were you born, Mrs. Donelson?
AD: In Fairmount Heights, Prince George's County, Maryland.

CK: When were you born?
AD: August 18, 1929.

CK: You grew up in Fairmount Heights?
AD: Yes, I did.

CK: Where did you live in Fairmount Heights?
AD: I lived in the residence known as the Prince Albert Washington House. I have lived in this house all of my life.

CK: How long has your family been in the area?
AD: My family has been in this area since 1890s. My grandparents lived also on Eastern Avenue, but on the District side. The Prince Albert Washington House was built on the Maryland side in Fairmount Heights before it was incorporated. In 1922, the construction began and it was completed in 1924.

CK: Describe the house as you remember it as a child.
AD: The house as a child, is, what we call the cottage bungalow. It had an upstairs, downstairs, and a basement. Three bedrooms upstairs and a bath, living room, a little library, and a dining room, and a kitchen. There was a porch on the back, and it was screened in. We had a front porch, and I think that was all. Oh, and a balcony was on the front, and we used that too.

CK: Do you remember any special places in Fairmount Heights when you were a child?
AD: Special places? Growing up we had the Elks Lodge.

CK: What is the name of it?
AD: W. Bruce Evans Elks Lodge. I can't remember if it was on 60, 61st, 62nd Avenue. Presently, it is located on that same corner, but facing Eastern Avenue. The old edifice has been destroyed. Torn down. There was also the town hall, which was a social focal point even up until World War II. They didn't have social functions there very much after that.

Then the town hall was eventually evacuated, I guess, for lack of a better word, and they built another facility. Well, I wouldn't say built, but obtained another facility that was newer. The old town hall fell in disrepair.

There were few mom and pop stores in the town in my time, as a child. They had a few playgrounds. There were a few businesses. I'm not even sure we had a doctor at that time. They all lived in surrounding areas. So, basically, it was mostly a residential area, and businesses and theaters, and that sort of thing, were all out of town, so to speak. The town, however, was incorporated in 1935. Then we had an elected mayor and council.

CK: How has your community changed over your lifetime?
AD: Well, it hasn't changed so very much. We did get a few more businesses along the perimeter of the town. A little more commerce, I'll put it that way. We never did get a bank, and we never did get any grocery stores, and so on and so forth. The little mom and pop stores faded away. As one could imagine, they all succumbed to the super markets, and that made them obsolete, so to speak.

The streets in Fairmount Heights were improved. The street lighting was improved, and the housing has improved over the years. They have done, I think, a very good job of establishing and planning for new housing in the town, which I think is very beneficial. There's been a lot of new housing in the town, and I think that has helped a lot to make it more attractive to the younger people to come into the town. So, it won't end up a ghost town, so to speak. It's been a stimulus to the younger people to come into the town of Fairmount Heights.

CK: Where did you go to school?
AD: Well, when I went to school, we lived in a unique situation in that the people who were employed by the federal government, even though they lived in Maryland, could exercise the opportunity to attend the D. C. public schools. The D.C. public schools were more accessible to us because, in my time, we didn't have bussing, and the schools weren't local, they were a good distance away. By living on the perimeter, we were able to use public transportation back and forth, or were in walking distance. I don't believe, when I was growing up, that Fairmount Heights Elementary School and certainly not the high school, and certainly not the middle schools were even in existence in my day. Therefore, we traveled to the District schools, where I went to elementary school, junior high school, and high school.

CK: What were the names?
AD: The names of those schools were Burrville Elementary School, which is on, I don't know the exact address, but it was on Division Avenue, Northeast, Brown Junior High School, which is on 26th Street, I think, in the District, and Cardoza High School, which was then located at 9th and Rhode Island Avenue, Northwest.

CK: Did you go to church regularly as a child?
AD: Yes, I did. My parents, my mother especially, took us to church as wee little children, as babies. I still belong to that same church, a Baptist church. I was baptized when I was twelve years old.

CK: What's the name of the church?
AD: Tabernacle Baptist Church. It's located at 719 Division Avenue, Northeast, Washington D. C.

CK: Do you go to church regularly now?
AD: Every Sunday.

CK: Is it in the same building?
AD: No. When we started out, it was a little white frame church, and, unfortunately, it burned down. And then a new church was erected on the same site in the 1950s, I think.

CK: Was the church an important part of your family life?
AD: Oh, yes, it was and still is. Very much so.

CK: Can you tell me why?
AD: Because we are a family that has always believed in God and Jesus Christ. And we have learned that having a strong faith has kept us from, we feel, some of the pitfalls of life. That our faith in God and Jesus has protected us, and kept us a close family. We don't think, looking at today's society, that we could do without our faith in God and our maker.

CK: Do you work outside the home?
AD: I did. I worked for the federal government for 31 years, and I retired in 1979. Since then I have been grandma, taking care of the grandchildren, and enjoying it, for the rest of my retirement period.

CK: What did you do for the federal government?
AD: Well, I started out as a clerk for the federal government on April 22, 1948. Then after various clerk positions, I went to clerk typist, then from clerk typist to secretary, then staff assistant. And that's the title I had when I retired, staff assistant.

CK: In which department was that?
AD: I worked for the Department of Commerce. At that time my area was called the Bureau of International Commerce. Knowing that the Commerce Department encompasses many areas of government operations, I specifically was involved with the Bureau of International Commerce.

CK: The following questions relate to the specific historic property that you have an association with. What is your association with the Prince Albert Washington House?
AD: It's my home. My father built it, and my family has lived in it ever since. We're still here.

CK: What do you know about the house?
AD: Well, I know that my father built the house, as I have aforesaid. He purchased this property from a family called Silence.

CK: Do you know how to spell that?
AD: Yes, I have the original deed, if you want to see it. Do you want to see it now?

CK: Sure. Thank you.
AD: (Looking at deed). It was purchased from Eugene L. and Georgia E. Silence. S-i-l-e-n-c-e.

CK: And that was in, could you tell me what the date was?
AD: The 17th day, it looks like, I can't even make that, what that was. 1922. Can you make that?

CK: Maybe January?
AD: Well, that's what I thought. Let me see if it's more specifically…No. Yeah, now it says, "I hereby certify that this, the 19th day of December 1921." Oh, that's the notary's thing. So, it probably, it was January. Let's see if there's anything. No, it says "21" on here too. Well, why does it say "22" on the outside?

CK: Maybe that's when it was recorded.
AD: Oh, that's when it was recorded. Okay. So, should I go back to the 20.., December?

CK: Yes.
AD: Nineteenth day of December in 1921.

CK: Is there a deed number?
AD: Yes, I think so. Hold on just a minute. Does it say down there anywhere? I see 484, 287, and 274.

CK: I think this is it right here.
AD: Can you open it up? Maybe if you open it up, you can see on the inside, it might have a deed number.

CK: Oh, that's just a date too. Oh, here it is. Here it is. It's book number 175 and it's on page 5.
AD: Oh, okay.

CK: Thank you.
AD: Okay.

CK: When was the house built?
AD: He commenced construction on this house in 1922. And I don't know exactly, let me see, (putting documents away). Now, here's the original envelope in which the plans came. Does it have a date on there?

CK: I don't see a date. But the envelope is from Sears, Roebuck, and Company.
AD: Yes.

CK: How large was the house when it was first constructed?
AD: When it was first constructed? It was pretty much like it is now. Here is the original catalogue I told you that I had.

CK: It was called the Westley?
AD: The seven room Westley bungalow. Yes, it was called The Westley.

CK: "Seven room bungalow" (reading from the catalogue).
AD: Yes.

CK: Does it say what the cost was of the house?
AD: Yes. Wait a minute, I read that on here in the catalog. (Mrs. Donelson asks husband for magnifying glass). It was $2,000 something. I read it just the other day.

CK: Oh, I think I saw it here too, $2,460 (Reading from the African-American Heritage Survey 1996).
AD: Yes, it says, see this house had two plans. We took this plan over here (looking at catalogue).

CK: There were four different plans?
AD: No, there were only two.

CK: Oh, two different plans, and he chose the one on the right side of the page.
AD: Yes, but there were two prices. One was $2,424, and other one was $2,460. He chose the floor plan that calls for a bedroom, he used that for a library. And then we had this upstairs floor plan where we had three bedrooms, and one bath at the end of the hall. And the first floor has the living room, dining room, and kitchen. And then there's that porch that I told you about. So, this is the floor plan that he used for the house. As you see it now, this is basically how it was constructed. We had an addition put on the back, where this beam is?

CK: Yes. (beam in living room ceiling)
AD: That room back there was what was the library, and then from this wall was the living room. And then there was a closet, and, which was that closet there, we just moved it back a little bit and then the door into the kitchen led into the basement. All that's changed. This is the original staircase that was in the house. It was painted, my father had painted it, but then when we repainted it, we decided to take it back to its original wood, and leave that 'cause I thought the grain was so pretty. So we decided to just leave it and return it to its original wood.

CK: The room then on the other side of those curtains. Is that an addition? (back of the house)
AD: That's an addition. And on this side of that addition, is where the porch was. We enclosed that porch, and made it into a breakfast room (room on the left at back of the house), and later we enclosed this porch (room on the right at back of the house), when my aunt came to live with us, because we had planned to make that her little bedroom in there, so that she would be all on one floor. But, unfortunately, she passed away before she could make use of it. So, then we turned that into a little computer-fax room. I have a fish bowl back there too. And so, that's how, that was all open porch before she came to live with us (indicating room at back of house). She couldn't maneuver the steps, so we were going to make that her little bedroom back there. But, as I say, she didn't survive to occupy that.

CK: Were there other modifications made to the house?
AD: Yes. As you can see up here (indicates diagram in catalog), this was a bedroom. This was a linen closet. So, what we did was to add eight more feet on to the back of this house, which enlarged this bedroom. We still had this walk-in closet. When we converted this end of the hall we made that into a larger bathroom. And then with this closet we made a second bathroom. Both of the bedrooms were extended out. There wasn't anything done to the width of them, but they were just extended back to make them larger and to make space to accommodate a second bathroom. Then we had a closet down on the other side of this room that was more or less a storage closet. In the original house, back up a little bit, in the original house that little space was a pantry. You know what a pantry is for?

CK: Right.
AD: So, then we took the pantry and the little closet and incorporated it into a storage closet. But, then, again, when my aunt was to come here, we had to get a facility for her, so we took the closet and made it into a little powder room in that area. Then, in the basement, we added on another bath down there, but just a shower and bath. So, that added another bathroom onto the house. Those basically were the structural changes that we made from the original plan. We did not want to disturb the front part of the house. See, from here to here. We didn't want to disturb any of that. So, we left that as is, and then just added on to the back.

CK: So, you just added on the back?
AD: Yes. Made a dormer and added that much on to the back.

CK: So, you just expanded the back?
AD: Expanded the back, exactly. But all of this, the whole entire front, remains exactly the way it was originally.

CK: Who all has lived in this house?
AD: Nobody but us. My father, my mother, my husband, and myself. My sister lived here for her childhood years until her early teens. And then she, my grandparents have a house diagonally across the road, and that's where I was telling you, in 18 something. So, when she, my grandmother, became elderly and her husband died, my grandfather died, my mother and father did not want her to be alone. And so she, they made arrangements for my sister to live with her and, in that house, so then when she moved…Now I like to say this, and I know you're recording all this, but this was called "the house by the side of the road that's a friend to man" because we had many relatives to come and live with us.

And so, we have always had our door open for those who needed refuge, so to speak, not that they were destitute, but they needed someplace to live. We always were able to make room. Most of them were relatives or in-laws of relatives who lived here, from time to time, not all at once, but down, through the years. I had two cousins, a cousin-in-law, two cousins-in-law, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, that shared this house with us from time to time. (Mr. Donelson comments about grandmother).

My grandmother was here, and as I just finished telling you, my aunt was here also. This house has not been wanting for occupants. We always tried to help and accommodate those that were in need of housing, for whatever reason. Now, I had several cousins that were here because of facility to get back and forth to work. Others for school, and so on, you know, for different reasons. Wanting to go to school in this area. As I say, facilitate transportation back and forth to work. And for those who had, I don't how you put it in so many words, those that needed help. You know, somebody to watch over them, somebody to guide them and the best that we knew how to do. So, that's how they, all these various people lived in here. But, actually, getting back to your question, far as relatives are concerned, it's only been our immediate family that has ever occupied this house.

CK: And as far as ownership, it went from your parents to you?
AD: Yes, that's right. I have all the deeds, if you want to see them. Now the way that it was deeded, when my father died, was to my sister and to me, because my mother pre-deceased my father. And we had an attorney; I think his name was Dickson.

CK: D-i-x-o-n?
AD: No. Wait a minute. Where's my piece of paper? We're 'bout through with this book, you don't need to see that anymore, do you? (Indicates Sears catalogue).

CK: No. Thank you.
AD: Okay, wait a minute, we'll find this man's name. And these are the pictures of the house under construction (indicates packet of photos), remember I told you I had those? See that, how old it was? Now my grandfather, my father's father, worked at the National Museum.

CK: It says (document) "U.S. National Museum, Washington,"
AD: "D.C." And that was my grandfather, Charles S. Washington.

CK: S. Washington?
AD: Umhm. And they sent these pictures to him while the house was under construction. And I told you this was the original envelope the plans came in (indicates envelope from Sears, Roebuck, and Company).

CK: Yes.
AD: Now. This attorney's name, I ran across it the other day. I think it was Dickson, Dickerson, Dickson. But he spelled it differently. Now, where did I find that? Oh, here it is, Ernest C.

CK: Ernest C. Dickson.
AD: Said, legally, the only way to release the property so that this, see that (indicates house across the street owned by grandparents) belonged to my father too, after his mother died.

CK: That house across the street?
AD: Across the street. So, the only way that we could release these two pieces of property was to deed them to a neutral party, and then transfer each piece to the other, which would then give each one of us clear title to the property. The person that we used for the transfer was like a family member.

CK: And what was his name?
AD: His name was Clifford Saunders.

CK: Was that S-a-u-n-d-e-r-s?
AD: S-a-u-n-d-e-r-s.

CK: Thank you.
AD: Clifford's middle initial was "E." My grandmother raised this young man from a baby. But she never felt the need to legally adopt him. But she raised him as her son. Well, at any rate, he was selected because he was a single person. The lawyer, Mr. Dickson, said that he would be an ideal candidate to use for the transfer, so it would all be simple. But the transaction was all done on paper in one day. So, that gave me and my husband clear title to this house and my sister, clear title to that house. So that's how it got transferred into our names.

CK: What are the names of your parents?
AD: As you know, my father's name was Prince Albert Washington. And my mother's name was Augusta Arrington Washington.

CK: How do you spell Augusta?
AD: A-u-g-u-s-t-a. Arrington A-r-r-i-n-g-t-o-n. and then Washington.

CK: Thank you. What is your sister's name?
AD: Gloria Augusta Washington Lancaster.

CK: Does she still own the house across the street?
AD: Yes, she does.

CK: Does she live there too?
AD: Yes, she does. And she's been in that house, as I say, ever since a teenager. And my grandparents moved here from… Now, do I need to say this, or should I not say this on the tape?

CK: If it's something sensitive that you don't want to be revealed, then don't say it.
AD: Well, my father is of a bi-racial ancestor. I don't know if that's important.

CK: Yes, it is important. Sure.
AD: My grandmother was an immigrant from Germany. And my grandfather was born in Columbia, South Carolina. And I don't know too much about his background, but I believe that he was also of mixed race. And so, as they would have it, they worked in private family. My grandfather and my grandmother worked in private family, and that's how they met and that's how they unioned together. And they lived in the District of Columbia, I don't know the address of the house, but they lived on Montella Avenue for a little while. They had a mom and pop store up there. And they decided that they wanted to move, at that time it was in the suburbs, you see, I mean really suburbs. More or less country (laughing). And they located the house across the street. They moved there, well, I imagine. Now, I have to take that back, I said the 1890s, but I think really it was more like the early 1900s because my father was born in 1897, and they tell me through folklore, you know how they pass it down, that he was five years old when they moved out here. So that would be actually in the 1900s.

CK: Was your father born then in South Carolina?
AD: No. They all lived right here in Washington. He came here to Washington. That's where they all met. My grandmother, when she immigrated, they were in Baltimore. And then the family for whom she worked moved to the District of Columbia, and she came with them. So that's how all that evolved, I guess you'd say.

CK: Do you remember your parents discussing the construction of the house?
AD: No. Well, yes, I do because I can say that he and his friends were the ones who did the construction of the house. He would tell me how they would come and work on it after work and on the weekends. And he would work on all holidays. At that time, he worked, I think, for the federal government as well. So he said to me, sometimes he would use some of his annual leave, when there was something he really wanted to finish. He worked on it that way, piece by piece, which is why it took him two years to finish the construction.

His friends were plasterers, carpenters, bricklayers. He had a nice circle of friends who were in the construction business. Not literally, but they knew the construction business. As a collaborative effort, they…and my father, course, had some interest in it. These are the pictures of the house in its various stage of construction (shows pictures). Some of them are duplicates. This was the one before they finished the porch, put the columns on the porch. Then they put the siding on. So, which ever ones they want (M-NCPPC), if they wish to make pictures of any of these stages of construction. Now, these ones don't mean anything (miscellaneous pictures). Actually, and this is probably how my grandfather got these, because they were all in the camera at the time. But these pictures are in South Carolina, from where he originated. And so, I think, by that all being in the same camera together is how they happened to be in this package together. So, anyway, I have a picture.

I don't know whether this would be of any good for the historical purposes, but I also have a picture of my grandmother. I have a picture of my grandfather's mother. I have a letter that she wrote him, well,

'course, I guess, she couldn't write, she probably had somebody write it for her. And I also still have up there a couple of letters that were written to my grandmother in German. I can't do a thing with them (laughing). I don't know who would interpret them for me, but, anyway, I have them hidden up there in my file. The letters she had received. Do you want to know anything about her background?

CK: Your grandmother's background?
AD: She's one of five children. There's four sisters and one brother. All the sisters came to the United States, but the brother didn't, he stayed in Germany.

CK: Do you know what part of Germany?
AD: Yes. She came from a little place in Germany, I guess you've heard of, called Darmstadt.

CK: Darmstadt?
AD: Yes, in the Hessian province then. I don't know how it's geographically divided now. She went with another family who was also immigrating to the United States because my grandmother was only sixteen at the time that she left Germany. And so she came under the, I guess you might say, for lack of a better word, guardianship of this family that was also immigrating to the United States. So, they went to Hamburg and boarded the vessel. I don't know what the name of it was, to journey to the United States. And at that time, Baltimore was one of the ports of embarkation, so that's where they landed. I think she told me that this voyage took about a month. So, we've always said that she had to be a very strong person to do this all by herself. Coming into a country where she did not know anybody.

CK: Or the language.
AD: Or the language. Exactly. But she made her way. She certainly did. She was a great lady.

CK: What do you remember your parents saying about the house, about its construction, the whole process? What it meant to them?
AD: Well, they were very anxious. Very dedicated to building and having their own, and they concluded, at the time, that the best way was to build their own home, as opposed to buying a house already constructed. They wanted to, more or less, as you might say, do it from scratch. So they were very dedicated to that. And, economically, it was more advantageous for them. My father being very talented in carpentry and whatever have you, he felt he could do this job himself, with the help of his friends. And so, they were very devoted to that. And it meant everything to them to have a house to raise a family. That was very important. They were both very family oriented because my father was an only child and my mother came from a very large family. So, they were, I guess, dedicated to provide a nice home for their family. And this is the way they could best achieve that goal.
(Interruption to check recorder).

CK: What does the house mean to you?
AD: It has tremendous sentimental value. I've been very happy here. I have not really ever desired to be anywhere else. I like to travel, so I go and come back. But I have never, ever had a desire to relocate. I've been very happy, very content, very satisfied right here. And so, I don't want to change that. Since dedication to the memory of my father and my mother and to all, to realize all the love and hard work he put into this house. So, I want to keep it. Don't want to let it go. I've been criticized for that, you know.

CK: Why was the criticism?
AD: Well, you know, this house is old and everything is new and modern and up-to-date. And why do you want to…When we were in the process of doing this remodeling, one of the persons that we were interviewing, I guess, or talking with about remodeling, "Oh, this house is so old, you ought to just tear it down and build a new one." I said, "Thank you very much. You can be dismissed. You can go now." And so, he didn't even want to….it's more trouble than it's worth. And I said, "Well, that's all right, we'll muddle along." Because I wasn't about to tear this house down; it has too much history. So, here we are, and here we'll be.

CK: Is the house important to your family?
AD: Oh, yes. We have two children. And they are very, as dedicated almost, as we to the preservation of this house. They understand completely, the sentimental value, the historical value, and the need for preservation of this house. And they also know how much love went into building. So, they're going to keep on. And my grandchildren as well. As I say about a house by the side of the road, this is the focal point, you see. This is where we gather every Christmas. This is their base, so to speak. So, I want to maintain that.

CK: Do you think the house is important to the community?
AD: I think so, because the town, as I know it, looks at this house as one of the first houses, in the first group of houses, I'll put it that way, that was constructed in this area even before it was an incorporated town. So, they look at the history of this particular house. And it also marks the perimeter of the town. I think they feel that this is an important site for the town of Fairmount Heights.

CK: Was the house important to the social life of the community?
AD: My mother belonged to a little social club of the ladies of the town of Fairmount Heights. And the name of that club was the Carnation Needle Club.

CK: Carnation Needle…?
AD: Yes, because all these little ladies loved to sew. So, they would get together once a week or once a month, or something like that. I think they had about ten, maybe twelve members of all the families in Fairmount Heights. They would bring their little crocheting, or their knitting, or if they were working on a dress or something, and they would bring all their little sewing, and then they would socialize, and get their little sewing done. Then, of course, they would always serve lunch. And so on, and so forth. As a child, I had the privilege of a couple of times, to attend some of these functions (laughing), and it was really nice. And they always served lovely luncheons.

CK: What would they have?
AD: They'd have salads, mainly, and they loved to bake. My mother was an excellent baker. She would have maybe a chicken salad, or tuna fish salad, or sometimes she'd make an egg salad served with lettuce and tomatoes, and different kinds of little vegetables. And then she'd serve, sometimes, iced tea. Then she'd have sometimes, lemon meringue pie, or berry pie of some description for dessert.

CK: And you enjoyed it too?
AD: Oh, yes, I enjoyed them. I didn't go to each and every one of them. When I was on a holiday, or something like that, I was out of school, then I would go. Even before I went to school, I would go with her. There was four years difference between my sister and me, and so, she, of course was in school. I was here by myself while she was in school so my mother would take me along.

CK: Do you remember any significant events that took place here?
AD: Significant events? You mean, civic wise, or?

CK: Either way.
AD: Well, as I say, we always had Christmas, a big family affair, here every year. My mother's sisters took turns in the family gatherings. So, my mother's occasion was Christmas. Her older sister's occasion was Thanksgiving. And the next to the youngest sister's occasion was Easter. They split it up that way. We had many social events. This aunt had her wedding reception here. My sister was married here, and also had her reception here. We didn't have too many town functions, as such, in that we all maintained a relationship. My father was the sheriff. And I don't remember when that was, whether it was before it was incorporated, or after it was incorporated. Of course, the mayors of the town were always good friends…Mr. Brooks, Mr. Gray, and so on like that. We visited back and forth.

CK: Has the meaning of the house changed for you over time?
AD: No. It's still very much a part of my life. And I don't think the meaning has changed at all, really, from growing up to living in it as an adult. No.

CK: What would you like to see happen to the house?
AD: Just what's happening to it now. That it would be designated as a historic landmark and that it be preserved for as such time as possible. Yes. I would like to see that because I feel it is a historic landmark.

CK: And what do you feel is the historic significance of the house?
AD: I feel that the historic significance is the fact that it was built by a layman. It was built with love. It was built to be preserved because it was very sturdily built. I think he built it because he wanted it to last. Not just something that would, more or less, as they say, fall down in a few years. And it is a house that was built at the time when Sears and Roebuck started. It's a sort of history for Sears and Roebuck too, because it's how they got their start. So, I think it says a lot for them too. From their beginning up until the present, they have so many houses that came out of the catalogue era that are still here. They are still viable. People are still living in them. And I think this would make a very good historic statement for the Sears, Roebuck Company. They were putting out a product that was substantial.

CK: And then, of course, there's the significance of your family.
AD: And the significance of the family having had the foresight to investigate a Sears and Roebuck home, and to decide that this was the type of building that they wanted to erect for their living quarters. This spot, I think, was selected very well for the site of this house because it's, I won't say a showcase, but it's a place that draws attention. Because they always say, oh, yes, that's that big white house, you know. And so it is, more or less, a gateway or entrance into the town that gives them some idea of what the town is all about.

CK: So, a landmark, in a sense.
AD: So, it's a landmark, in a sense. That's exactly right.

CK: Thank you.

Interviewee:	**Mildred Ridgley Gray**
Topic:	Rosenwald Schools
Relationship to Property:	Attended Rosenwald Schools
Inventory Number:	N/A
Location of Interview:	Home of Mrs. Gray 10450 Lottsford Road Mitchellville, Maryland 20721
Date of Interview:	August 11, 2008
Interviewer:	Charlotte King

Mildred Ridgley Gray

CK: I am going to ask you some questions about yourself, about growing up, and I will also ask you some questions about the Rosenwald Schools.

CK: Would you state your full name, please?
MG: My name is Mildred Ridgley Gray.

CK: Thank you. And when were you born, Mrs. Gray?
MG: I was born on September 24, 1920 in my parents' home. There were 13 of us and all but one, my oldest brother, was born in Washington, D.C. There was a set of triplets and all of us were born in the house built in Landover (inaudible).

CK: I was just going to ask you where you grew up.
MG: I grew up on a farm; I grew up on a farm that my grandfather purchased around about in 1871. It was earlier than that but I can remember basically the date of the church, when it was founded. And before then, my grandfather had services in his home.

CK: And that was in the Landover area?
MG: That was in the Landover area, that abuts Central Avenue. At the time my mother married and came out to Prince George's County, Central Avenue was a mud pike and she would tell us often of, it was through the year when people from England in their red jackets and boots and their hounds would go down to Northampton, which was slave quarters. And, well, it was a plantation down there, and there were slave quarters on there, which is listed in Prince George's County, Maryland National Park and Planning under Don Creveling. And we just loved hearing those stories my mother told about the British and their hounds yapping.

CK: That is interesting. How long have you and your family lived in this area?
MG: Over, I would say, over 1871.

CK: Describe where you lived as a child.
MG: We lived on a farm, it was about 62 acres of land and the main crop on the farm was tobacco. The boys and the people who lived in the tenant house did the tobacco. We had to get up very early in the morning, before daybreak, and to have breakfast on the table through the time my father and boys would be out feeding the horse, the mules to take out and they would come in to breakfast and at daybreak life began, (laughing), on the outside. It was just fascinating.

CK: And you said there were how many of you?
MG: Thirteen of us.

CK: Do you remember any favorite places as a child?
MG: Favorite places were places through church. We had camp meeting at church; we had Sunday school at church. And the outing outside of the community that we went to was when my brother would have the truck and we would drive to the National Zoological Park in Washington D.C. What was your question again?

CK: Did you have any favorite places as a child?
MG: As a child, I also, we went with my mother to market. The market at that time was down by the Smithsonian. We would go in, it would be very early in the morning, long before daybreak, and we would

sleep in the light and when day broke, we would wake up and help mother set up the stand in the light. And then, when the Smithsonian opened, we would go to the Smithsonian Museum and also the stores there on 7th Street. There were always two of us together.

CK: So you sold produce from the farm?
MG: Yes. My mom was a very interesting person. And we grew up knowing that Dad was the head of the house, whatever he said. But my mother was a very interesting lady in that she really, in her quiet manner, took care of the household.

As I said previously, there was a main crop of tobacco, corn to feed the pigs, and whatever you…but, my mother had what was called a truck garden with chickens, eggs, strawberries, and string beans. And we had five acres of lilacs on the farm. And those five acres of lilacs were taken to market and also sold on Central Avenue and they always opened around about Memorial Day in May. Now that money was used to pay taxes. Set aside to pay taxes. But the string beans, the vegetables and the poultry and eggs and the like, that was my mother's money. And she put it in the bank. And with her money, she was able to buy land and she gave up a portion of her land to have the first public school in our community.

She was the first teacher in our community because, this is the second church (showing photo), the first church was destroyed by fire, I don't know, but this is on the other side of the driveway leading into the church from Central Avenue on 214. And my mother taught school there. And when the church was no longer able to hold us all, we went to what was called Benevolent Halls and this (indicates photo) still stands today, the Benevolent Halls there on 214. The older brothers and sisters went to Benevolent Halls, and the younger ones of us went to a Benevolent Hall on the other side of this building. This property initially was a part of the land my mother owned.

CK: That's very interesting.
MG: Fascinating

CK: It is fascinating.
MG: This is a picture of the back of Ridgeley School (shows photo).

CK: Is this (photo) from a publication?
MG: No, no, no. We're in the process; I'm so excited about this because in, in 2000…I mean, September 24, 2001, I started the trust (Mildred Ridgley Gray Charitable Trust). I started the trust because at the time of the extension of the Metro, the Blue Line to Largo Town Center, and initially there was a 20 year study period by Prince George's County – Maryland-National Park and Planning. We knew that Metro was coming, but we did not know it was going to take more land than what was planned during that 20 year study. After the 20 year study and Metro got started, I was told, I wanted to say give an acre of land on which this house, which my late husband and I built in the early '50s, when this was built by an Afro-American builder who lived in Montgomery County, and it was built for less than $2,000. His nephew was a minister at the church, and we went to, we were looking for somebody to build the house, and he was a very sociable man and loved people, "Come on in, come on in." And after about an hour, I was interested in finding out what about the house. And he said we'll build it with whatever amount of money you have. And he did, and this is the lovely home he built for us.

CK: And you built that in 1955?
MG: It was "round about that, I'm not sure that was what someone said, but I really have to do the research, but I do know it was in the '50s.

CK: Now, the Ridgely Cemetery…
MG: The Ridgely Cemetery here goes along with the Ridgely Church. Ridgely Church has two pieces of land. One piece of land was a half acre of land when my father no longer, my father no longer was having services in the home. Then, they, my grandfather and two other trustees went to buy from Thomas Berry a half acre of land for $20, and on that they built the church. So the lumber came from my father's forest and was taken down to the local mill and sawed. The person who owned the mill kept his portion, and my grandfather had his portion and the people, the men of the church built the house, the church, I'm sorry. And it was very rough, but there were plastered walls and these walls were white-washed. And they didn't have window panes, but I don't know what was, but there wasn't glass at that time available for the church. And the pews were very rough and around about this time, in the 20s, Ridgely Church was built. I can remember that very well, we got brand new furniture, which is still there now. And everybody contributed to get new furniture.

CK: That's wonderful.
MG: (Shows photo of cemetery) This is also interesting. These tombstones were made by my oldest brother. They were cement and with a chisel, something like, he carved whatever, a little design that he had. And also he named when you were born and you died. And all of that (inaudible). Well, this was done by my brother.

CK: That's remarkable. Do you remember any places considered especially historic or sacred in your community?
MG: The church, the church. There was also a Catholic church in the community. Those were the two faiths in the community.

CK: And the church, the one that wasn't the Catholic church, what was it called?
MG: The Methodist church.

CK: Did it have a name?
MG: Ridgely Methodist.

CK: Ridgely Methodist.
(Pause while Mrs. Gray looks for a document.)
MG: The original deed reads Ridgely Church, Methodist Church. Ridgely is spelled on the deed, R-i-d-g-e-l-y. Incidentally with Ridgeley School, it is spelled R-i-d-g-e-l-e-y. Now it's spelled, as Susan Pearl's survey shows, it's spelled three different ways. But I elected that the deed that had Ridgeley School spelled R-i-d-g-e-l-e-y that had only my mother's name on it, was the one I preferred.

CK: So that's the spelling you preferred.
MG: For Ridgeley School.

CK: Thank you. What do you consider the most important event in your life?
MG: That's a hard one.

CK: Do you want to come back, think about it and come back to it?
MG: Yeah. I think I'll do that.

CK: Okay.

CK: What has changed most about the community in your lifetime?
MG: It has changed from an agricultural community to a highly commercial community, which is sad. It's not good.

CK: The next set of questions relate to school. Where did you go to school?
MG: I went to, my first school was to the Benevolent Hall, and that building is no longer there. The first floor was used as a school room and the second floor was used for, the Benevolent Society held its meetings. And the, I don't have a picture of that, but I can show you a picture of the other Benevolent Hall. And the same set up was there too, where the older ones went to school.

CK: So that was elementary school?
MG: Mmm.

CK: And where did you go after that?
MG: After elementary school, I went to Ridgeley School. And that was the first Rosenwald School in the community. Rosenwald School…just terrific, just terrific. The windows, all down one side. And there was a cloak room that had windows. There was a vestibule like you went into, and you could go into either room, either side of the building. And that area, of course, that sheltered you from the rain, and the like. And that area was about the same size of a room we called the multipurpose room. We cooked in the room; we did all kinds of things in that room even when I was going to school there. (Shows photo) This happens to be a picture of the inside of the room during the when my older sister, my older sister was one of the first teachers there, and I was no longer going to the school at this particular time, but my, that's the room where my older sister taught. She was a primary teacher.

CK: That's nice. Where did you go after Ridgeley School?
MG: When I left Ridgeley School, I went to another Rosenwald School, Highland Park, which is still standing today. That is a school that President Bush came out with his concept of Leave No Child Behind; he came out to take a look at it, and to further the concept of Leave No Child Behind. I went to high school there. I came back as a fourth grade teacher there. The building has been, the original building, which was built in 1928 is still there, but it's the other is built around it, but you have an outside entrance to go into the building. Incidentally, the Ridgeley School, not incidentally, that was the first, I said earlier, the first special education center for trainable children. That's what it was called back then. And 214 separated the northern section from the southern section and Calvert homes was at the northern section. Calvert homes is no longer there, but Ridgeley School is still there. The Board of Education, let me get this straight. Maryland-National Park and Planning, under the leadership of Samuel Dean, obtained money to buy the land up to Central Avenue. And that was really great because the school itself was

behind what was going on in the front. My sister owned the part which is in the front. But she sold it and then industry came in. But he purchased the land all the way up to the front, to 214. Of course, it's now under litigation as to… but hopefully one day, you'll go driving by the school building.

CK: Very nice.
MG: The Deltas are going to have an education program…

CK: Who, is? I'm sorry…
MG: The Deltas, that's an organization of ladies, of Deltas, it's the female part of…it's a sorority. I don't know too much about Deltas other than they have, they had, they have purchased, obtained many Rosenwald Schools. And they have excellent programs in there for the youngsters. They are going to use it also as a museum too. So, I'm very pleased that that's well taken care of.

CK: What do you remember about going to school?
MG: I remembered, (laughing), I remembered the fun we had. It was a break from farm work. I remembered people my age could go out at recess time and play. We had lunch hour, recess before lunch, recess after lunch. I remembered that it was a pleasant place, but it was also, when recess was over, it meant business.

The, one of the things that happened to me, and I just pulled this out the other day. I'm reorganizing things (laughing). I put that away real good. In the 7th grade, they were called speaking contests, and my teacher, her name was Gladys Armstrong Dettis

CK: What was the last name?
MG: Dettis, Dettis. D-e-t-t-i-s. In fact her father was a home demonstration agent, and he went to the University of Maryland.

CK: Oh, interesting.
MG: Right (laughing). I really did not push to be in the recitation. I wanted to be like the other youngsters, but somehow or another I knew that my parents were not going to support my not being in it. The teacher said you did it, you did it. And the thing that really made it a lot easier for me, she was a Miss Armstrong then, her boyfriend had a car that had a rumble seat, and I was promised to get, able to ride in the rumble seat of the car (laughing)! And I won for the western shore and I also won for the eastern shore. I have a picture of myself in the levels (laughing).

CK: Congratulations!
MG: Why, thank you.

CK: Where did you go after Highland Park High School?
MG: After Highland Park High School I went to Bowie. Incidentally, we had to walk to high school. It was, I would say, about 2 1/2 miles, but it was fun. It was fun. When you're used to walking, what difference do you know? But it was rather interesting to see the whites ride busses, and they would…not all of them, not all of them, but they'd spit out the window. Not all of them. Well, you're going to find, that isn't to any particular ethnic group in America, in our country. It's just the kind of thing some people do. But, we walked; we did, because education was a must in our home. Education was the answer to whatever…you made your own life. And you got a good education. That was it.

CK: Can you describe the Rosenwald Schools? You talked a little bit about it.
MG: Yes. The Rosenwald Schools, they're just little two room schools.
On the eastern side was a mass of windows. Almost the whole length of the school. And there was the cloak room. There was the entrance, there was enough of the entrance where there would be a door to go into each side. And then between the two rooms was another room, which we used for many things.

CK: Was that typical of Rosenwald schools; that type of construction?
MG: That kind of construction, yes. Some were more than that, but all of them had the windows and the vestibule. Now the design of the school was done by Booker T. Washington. In the Rosenwald school, the Ridgeley Rosenwald School, well, in all of them, there was a picture of Julius Rosenwald on the wall. So when the school, whatever the school is used for, I hope that there will be in a prominent place, a picture of Julius Rosenwald, a picture of Booker T. Washington, and a picture of my mom Mary Eliza Ridgley Dyson.

CK: What was her last name? Dyson?
MG: Dyson was her maiden name.

CK: Oh, I see. So it was Mary…
MG: Eliza

CK: E-l-i-s-a?
MG: E-l, E-l, uh. No, there's a z in there.

CK: Oh, Eliza.
MG: Eliza.

CK: E-l-i-z-a. And then?
MG: Dyson.

CK: How do you spell that?
MG: D-y-s-o-n. And of course, Ridgley when she was married.

CK: So Ridgley was her…
MG: Her married name. Dyson was her maiden name.

CK: Ok, so it was Mary Eliza Dyson Ridgley with the e on either side. R-i-d-g-e-l-e-y?
MG: No, interestingly enough, it's just R-i-d-g-l-e-y (laughing). So we have three spellings then: Ridgely Church –-e-l-y. Ridgeley School, -e-l-e-y; and Ridgley, R-i-d-g-l-e-y.

CK: Can you tell me more about the construction? So, Booker T. Washington designed a prototype for the Rosenwald schools?
MG: Basically, all of the Rosenwald schools.

CK: So they basically had the same type of structure. Did they vary very much between them, or were they fairly consistent in style?
MG: Some, I understand, were more than two rooms. But they had basically the same features.

CK: So, it had two rooms.
MG: Two rooms, mmm. Now, T. B., because one of my sisters taught at T. B. I can't remember any more. Clinton was a two room. T.B., I can't remember.

CK: That's okay.

CK: Did you go to church regularly as a child?
MG: Oh yes. Yes. You went to church every Sunday and you literally stayed in church all day. You went to Sunday school and stayed. If you were too sick to go to church, you couldn't go anywhere else (laughing) for the rest of that day.

CK: Do you go to church now regularly?
MG: Yes, I do. (Inaudible) church is now merged with Seat Pleasant and the minister at that time, Dr. Sharpley, allowed the two congregations and the people who came in who were not a part of either congregation to name the church whatever they wished and they named it Gethsemane.

CK: Is that what it's called now?
MG: Gethsemane is the name.

CK: Do you remember your parents describing their experiences with the church?
MG: Yes. My mother was Sunday school teacher and teacher of the church. My father was very quiet, very observant. He was a trustee and nothing passed his eyes. It was an interesting thing back then, any adult could just look at any youngster and you knew you were out of order. My mom, she was Sunday school teacher, she was president of the Ladies' Aid Society, with Maryland Methodist it's called, United Methodist now. There wasn't really too much of the association of the colored churches with the conference. We had what they called circuit preachers, or what's another name? They weren't totally qualified according to the discipline, but they were recognized by the superintendent. And one of the interesting things, they paid church dues, was 25 cents, 10 cents, and whatever you could pay, and what they paid the minister. When we go in the other room, I will show, I think I can pull down a book that my mother kept when she was in charge of that portion of the church. And incidentally, my mother took care of when there were burials in the cemetery that the death certificate got to the proper place in Baltimore, the something of vital statistics?

CK: Do you remember your grandparents describing their experiences with the church?
MG: No.

CK: You said there is a cemetery associated with it, you showed me the picture.
MG: Yes. The second time when the, I can't recall these names either. (Mrs. Gray reading document) "This deed, the ninth day of the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one by Thomas Berry, e-s-g-r, whatever that is?

CK: Thomas Berry, was it?
MG: Thomas Berry, B-e-r-r-y comma, e-s-g-r. What does that, what does e-s-g-r?

CK: It's probably e-s-q-r, esquire? It means that he's an attorney.
MG: He's an attorney, okay, well, (continues to read) "and Betty Berry, his wife, Prince George's in the state of Maryland, witnessed that for and in consideration of the sum of twenty dollars money in hand paid as the said Thomas Berry and Betty Berry, his wife, do grant unto Lewis Ridgley, colored…

CK: Was the L-e-w-i-s?
MG: L-e-w-i-s, right. And my grandfather's name was R-i-d-g-e-l-y, colored, Joe Beall, colored.

CK: How is that spelled?
MG: B-e-a-l-l, "Richard Cook, colored, as trustees in trust and trustees to the subject and newly appointed at the pleasure of the annual conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church," so it's Ridgely Methodist Church. It's interesting how time goes on people can take certain liberties and do not do as originally, and that's why I'm going to have to get rid of these little things I see done. I mean there are, they lack authenticity.

CK: Where have the members of your family who have passed away, where are they buried?
MG: My mom and my dad are buried in the cemetery at the church.

CK: The Ridgely?
MG: Yes. A sister is buried there, Geneva.

CK: Her name is Geneva?
MG: Geneva Ridgley. A brother Elmer, he's one of the triplets, is buried there. My grandmother Mary Dyson, Mary Eliza Dyson is buried there. And, how many is that?

CK: Four.
MG: Yes. I'm going to be buried there. Let's see, mom, dad, Elmer, and Geneva.
My mother, my father, that's six. And I'll be buried there and hopefully, I'm going to have my husband exhumed and reburied.

CK: So you'll all be together in one place.
MG: Hmm?

CK: Then you'll all be together in one place.
MG: In one place.

CK: You worked as a teacher, you said?
MG: I worked as a teacher. I started out in a one room school, grades one through seven (laughing). It was a school called Sharpersville…It's in the southern tip of the county.

CK: Could you spell the name of it?
MG: S-h-a-r-p-e-r-s-v-i-l-l-e. Sharpersville, Maryland. I lived, I was living at home on Central Avenue and I would go daily back and forth to Sharpersville. There was the potbelly stove, there were the benches, seats and the like. There was the outdoor privy. There was the coal, a place where coal was kept. And I had 18 children from grades one through seven. But I never had a child that could not pass the Stanford-Binet test.

CK: What was it called?
MG: Stanford-Binet.

CK: S-t-a-n-f-o-r-d?
MG: Uh huh. Binet.

CK: B-e-n-e-t?
MG: No, B-e-n-i-e-t. Beniet. It's French and a type of test. I had youngsters who were in the fifth grade who could pass the test. One of the fascinating things to me, as I reflect on my experience there, the community kids all came. It was interesting; I want to make a point about children today being separated according to testing. Every last one that came, the children that really couldn't do some of the academic things were the best ones to keep the fire banking, the fire over the weekend. And we would have this large chart with everybody's name, and if you did something very well you got a gold colored star. Everybody got a star. But it was according to how well you did what you did. I can remember on weekends I would always have something like a roast, or something like that. Then Monday morning, I would put on the stove, the potbelly stove, and by lunch time, boy, boy, boy. The children were encouraged to bring whatever they could for the next day. Sometimes some would bring like navy beans, or what have you. We would soak them the day before and put on them on that potbelly stove over night and everybody ate. Children that could bring their lunches, didn't want to bring their lunches because they wanted, there were parents that would come and (inaudible). But a child could not, you can't, you have to eat. It's amazing, all of the kids wanted to have what everybody else was having, so we had them.

CK: How often did you do that?
MG: Up until the time I left and was transferred to a two room school in Croom.

CK: How many times during the week did you do that?
MG: What happened, the children always brought enough, and they would bring it in on Monday. They would, I mean, they would bring things in on Monday for Tuesday. There were beans, soaking of beans, some would bring potatoes out of the garden, sweet potatoes, whatever they had and we would cook them. And they were happy.

CK: Was there enough for the week with what they brought?
MG: Every day, everybody didn't bring on the same day. Whatever it happened, it was there. You would take like beans; you'd have to soak them, and the like. There was always something.

CK: Did the other teachers do that too?
MG: I don't know because the schools were so far apart.

CK: I see.
MG: They were so far apart.

CK: How did you get to your school from Central?
MG: I drove there. I needed a car. And there's an interesting thing about the car. Needing the car, my father said to me, he said, "If I were you missy," my parents called me Missy and I was the youngest of 13, "I wouldn't get a new car, I would get a good used car that you can afford, and you'll have transportation then." I didn't care as long as it was a car. So, big brother and I went out and found one. When, before I signed the contract with the dealer, my father who then was an invalid, he said to me, he

said, “Well I tell you what, you’ve got your car,” he said, “why don’t you let me pay for the car and you pay me.” I had no problem with that, I had a car.

And after the car was paid for, my father, that the car dealer who had paid me, my father had, in cash money, in bushel baskets, you know, pecks, whatever, he said “and this is what you would have to pay the dealer.” And I said, “All of that money!” He said, but the dealer had to prepare on the table too.” He said now, “If I were you, the next car that you get,” he gave the money back to me. He said, “If I were you, I would put the money in the bank.” And it took me about a month before I put the money in the bank. I took the money in my bedroom and threw it all up, and I slept with money in my bed, and what have you (laughing).

When I did put it in the bank, he also had said to me, “If you continue to pay, put the money in the bank that you were paying for your car, you won’t miss it and you’ll have money in the bank to get a new car, or if your car breaks down, you’ll…” you know, so I did. And ever since then, I have never, I have never gotten a car with the dealership. I was making $65.00 a month at that time, and my counter parts were making $100.00 a month (laughing). But that’s the way it was.

CK: It was good training, wasn’t it?
MG: Absolutely, absolutely, absolutely.

CK: What other schools did you teach at, in addition to Sharpersville?
MG: I taught every two room school in Croom. I was principal there. The primary teacher, a very lovely person, we would go down to do things together. Oh, field day was a big affair for all the county. We’d go down to the fairground, it had places for dodge ball, baseball, and pitching horseshoes and the like, and we did that on the playground at the school. And from Croom, a two room school, I went to Fairmount Heights, which was a graded school…

CK: It was a…?
MG: A graded school. I had… (pause to change audio tape).

CK: You went to Fairmount Heights?
MG: Fairmount Heights

CK: That was a graded school?
MG: A graded school.

CK: What did that mean?
MG: It means, first grade, could be more than one first grade, second grade, and…There I stayed until, that was where I stayed a half year because they needed a core teacher at Lakeland, and Lakeland was, it was a (inaudible) I taught core, and that was in junior high area. And from Lakeland, I went to Highland Park back as a teacher under Richard S. Brown, the principal there.

CK: Richard S. Brown?
MG: S. Brown. He was really one of the best teachers, principals. I hadn’t been under many principals, but there was a friend of mine, and he taught at the school that was on the list you had (pause to look at the list) Parkland Hill. I taught fourth grade, I was in the main building and she was in the temporary. The teachers had personalities and the children had personalities. We had made this pact, there were a couple

of youngsters that really, you know, and she had some…so, those days, I'd say, "Would you like to go on over with Mrs. Henderson?" "Oh, yes, send them over." "Going over to Mrs. Henderson." And she did the same thing, with me as the teacher. And our principal knew what was going on.

CK: What was it about those children?
MG: Personality clashes. And then also, in one room school, well, I was not going to marry a farmer and have a house full of children. I was motivated to go to school to get this thing called education, therefore I did not, and really this was wonderful for me and all of the others. But when I went to Fairmount Heights, in a graded school, I was beginning to get a little difference in personality, kids and the like, and there at Highland Park I had 43 children in a classroom. Of those 43 children, the special education supervisor came by one day, and he came in and of those 43 children, 18 of them, she said, belonged in special education. That's when I made the transfer from Highland Park to Ridgeley as special education.

CK: So from Highland Park you went to Ridgeley?
MG: To Ridgeley.

CK: Was that the last place that you taught?
MG: That was the …oh, oh, and from the program we developed at Ridgeley, I was able to go to Princess Garden.

CK: Prince's Garden?
MG: Princess Garden Special Center, which is in Lanham. And today, when the population overgrew Princess Garden, they went to another elementary school for more space. That was the year I retired. Princess Garden center is now the town hall in New Carrollton. Now the school in New Carrollton, the multipurpose room was the center of the school. The primary, the younger children, went to one wing and the upper went to another wing. In the special areas that we had there was a therapy tank.

We had an apartment built where children could learn, one of the criteria was, I thought I could put my hands on one of those, maybe I can't. Well, anyway, they need to learn how to take care of themselves to be a contributing member to the family. There was the bathroom, the kitchen, the dining room, the bedroom. And there was also a shop. Now we had an area at Ridgeley where we did those things. But there at Princess Garden, we had the real thing built from scratch. There was a shop, and there were things that they made in the shop (inaudible). There were classrooms. There was the work-study program because in centers you had children from five through twenty in one building. All kinds of handicapping conditions.

There were some couldn't walk, couldn't talk, we diapered, but we had only in the primary group, in the youngest group, there would be five children with the teacher's aide. At no time could a teacher, could any of the children, on any level, be left with the aide. I didn't like the word "aide," I preferred paraprofessional because a lot of my teachers, and they were good teachers, they were very good teachers, but they did not have experience in child rearing and the like. And a lot of the aides did.

CK: This was all part of the program that you developed?
MG: At Ridgeley Center.

CK: That's amazing.
MG: Princess Garden was just larger, having the actual place. Ridgeley was (inaudible) space. At Ridgeley, the cloak room was supposed to have been my office. I had a paraprofessional who was very, very good. What happened, the paraprofessional went on to school with working and she became a teacher. But, I will have to be very honest, there were times I let her, I never left the building, and as I said, the cloak room, every classroom had a cloak room, I would be observing what's going on. And she did such a beautiful job. The late Jessie Mason, who was my supervisor, she said, "Mrs. Gray, we got to find funds some way some way to send her on to school because we don't want to lose her." And I said, "No, we don't." And she was good.

Over at New Carrollton, with it being a predominantly white community and with a people who had, some were professionals and all of that, and the children, because the county wasn't sending out using state money. It was being invested in the school situation. So, we had, the teachers of very varied backgrounds and I selected them because of what they could bring to the situation. And some of them, one of the teachers wanted to take her children to see Amahl and the Night Visitors.

CK: What was it?
MG: Down Constitution Hall. Amahl and the Night Visitors was what they saw at Constitution Hall.

CK: I've never heard of that.
MG: Beautiful (inaudible).

CK: Is A-r?
MG: I think A – l

CK: Maybe A-m-h-l?
MG: What happened is the teacher's father was an official in the Navy, in Virginia, and at that particular time we were really departmentalized. We tried to bring all of the experiences to the children that they would find, that their sisters or brothers would have in the regular school, if they could handle it. Our, we always had special, but this was, I mean the real other kind of thing, like Amahl and the Night Visitors. She had, there were three buses from the Navy. There was a Navy ranked person; I don't know the different ranks of people in the Navy. They came all in their uniforms and the like. There were parents to go around. The teachers and the teachers' aides went. There were at least about four to five adults to take care of the needs of every child. What happens is, the kid came to school that day. The kids rested that evening. They had to be redressed and fed dinner, but the sight that really was terrific, standing, seeing in the hallways, seeing these men in uniform, some of the kids were on their backs and the like. I mean it was really something to behold.

CK: Mrs. Gray, what is your association with the Rosenwald Schools?
MG: Now?

CK: Through your experiences?
MG: I don't understand.

CK: How do you know about the Rosenwald Schools?
MG: Oh, that was the first public school in our community. And I repeated the first grade in the Rosenwald School. Although I could write my name, I could count, and do all of the things like that but

my sister put me back in the first…I never thought about it as being put back. And I'm not too sure whether or not in the other school I was of the age to be of the public school. Okay? And that made a big difference because, as I said, if everybody was going to school, everybody, you know, went to school.

CK: What can you tell me about the Rosenwald schools? Describe what their structure was, or their method of teaching.
MG: The method of teaching was, coming from Bowie you were teacher trained. And what happened was, whatever level the child was functioning on, that was where you started.

CK: That was part of the Rosenwald principal?
MG: No, that was part of Bowie State training.

CK: Did the Rosenwald Schools have any sets of standards as far as instruction?
MG: No, no. They only did the buildings, as far as that was concerned. Julius Rosenwald was the one who brought public education into communities that didn't have public education. I understand there was such a thing as a Freedman's something, but I wasn't familiar with that, but it certainly did, for minority groups, bring in public education. The criteria, as I understand, is that the community had to do something, Rosenwald did something, and county government did something.

CK: And it was for the construction of the schools then?
MG: It was. The Rosenwald was basically the building.

CK: Right. Okay.
MG: And, you know, it just was in recent years that it became known that the design of the building was by Booker T. Washington.

CK: Yeah, that's interesting.
MG: He's a Hampton graduate.

CK: Hampton?
MG: I think he's from Hampton Institute. Hampton Institute is where a lot of things were done for minority people who were striving to get somewhere.

CK: Who attended the Rosenwald Schools? Was it only African Americans?
MG: I believe, well, in Prince George's County, I give this example because he's now deceased, the state supervisor came into Sharpersville one day. And he said, "What is this youngun doing here?" I said, "He was here when I came here." He said, "He doesn't belong here." I said, "Okay, what should I do?" He said, "Get his records and I'll take him to the school down the road." I got his records together (inaudible) down the road. About fifteen to twenty minutes later, we were getting settled, "Mrs. Gray," somebody called to me, "someone's out there crying." So I said, "Crying? Out there." And, you know, "Let's go in wash your face" and what have you. And, you know, get him something to eat. But the superintendent left the youngster in the yard. And, my God, because the school down the road wouldn't take him. The school down the road was a white school, and this was a black school. And that's why.

CK: Was he a white young man?
MG: You could, the superintendent thought he was.

CK: And that's why?
MG: That's why he came to take him out. He was just doing a routine visit. He didn't come particularly to do that.

CK: He just happened to be there.
MG: He just happened to be there. The superintendent tells you to do something, you do it, he signs your paycheck.

CK: So what happened? Did he stay in your class?
MG: After, you know, calmed him down, washed his face, and gave him something special to do. Everybody catered to him that day.

CK: And he stayed in your class?
MG: Yeah, he stayed. It was a one room stayed. He stayed.

CK: Do you remember your parents talking about the Rosenwald schools?
MG: No. No. It was on a farm. There wasn't much talk about those kinds of things.

CK: What do the Rosenwald schools mean to you?
MG: Public education. A part of "I pledge allegiance" and the Preamble to the Constitution was being fulfilled.

CK: So, it was important to you.
MG: Very important to me. Very important to me. Yes, it's true we got discarded things from the white schools, but if you didn't have a school before, you didn't know the difference. It was getting an education. It was a better way of life for me.

CK: Do you think it means the same to other African Americans?
MG: No.

CK: No? What do you think it means to them?
MG: Some of the Afro Americans, they didn't like it and they showed (inaudible)it.

CK: They didn't like the Rosenwald schools?
MG: They liked the Rosenwald schools, but they didn't like, see, how can I explain that? I think it was a segregation issue. I think it was just a segregation issue. There, in the schools, was second hand (inaudible). I can remember the Dick and Jane book that came up that we were supposed teach, (inaudible), but at Bowie you were taught, in order to get the child to read, let them tell you their story. And you write it and you put it in a book. First it was written, and then on a chart, and the chart could have been paper bags or whatever you could write on. And they liked seeing their name. They liked seeing their picture. They liked their dog's name. And they just put the other books aside. And that was one of the reasons why, I really believe, I really believe, that they were able to pass the Stanford Benet tests. Because B is B no matter where it's written. Dog is dog, no matter where it's written. And you didn't, there wasn't the isolation of, like the Dick and Jane book. There was a father and a mother. There was a dog. There were two cars. Everything was from another culture. Bowie taught you to start where the child is. Booker T. Washington dropped (inaudible) and go from there.

CK: The materials then that were used at the Rosenwald Schools those were discards from white schools? Just surplus materials?
MG: Well not, yes, yes. But not as much as in other schools that were not Rosenwald Schools. Some of the schools in the county for blacks were not Rosenwald Schools. One of the things that when I was at Sharpersville, there was a grandmother who worked for the judge in Upper Marlboro (laughing). And if there was a need for the school, I would talk with the grandmother and we would get it for the school. Here again, looking for opportunities. I don't think I liked it, but there wasn't anything I could do about it but teach the children. My greatest gratification was that they could pass the standardized tests. And Ridgeley School, really, thanks to Betty Rigg, Prince George's County, in my judgment

CK: Betty?
MG: Betty Rigg, supervisor of special education. In my judgment, in my judgment, created the No Child Left Behind because they were the children who could not come to public schools.

CK: Do you think the legacy of the Rosenwald Schools will be important to future generations?
MG: They should be.

CK: Why?
MG: Well, it's a part of our history. It's a part of what a man for whatever the reason, made it possible made it possible for youngsters, oh well, for me to live the life I'm living and, I think, to develop a [indicates charitable trust brochure] trust! That's what I think about it.

CK: You made the most of it and your opportunity.
MG: Absolutely. And you know, there's no such thing as a free lunch today. I think, in my opinion, some people waste because they didn't work to get it. I'm not saying everybody needs to work like I did, but I think there is a need for things not being handed to you. You didn't ask me this, but, on the Board of Education, I went to a board meeting, I mean a relocation for the Ridgeley School bus line, the Rosenwald bus line. It was held in James E. Gholson Elementary School.

CK: James?
MG: E. Gholson

CK: G**-O-L-S-O-N?**
MG: I'm going to have to make a note and get back to you.

CK: Okay.
MG: G. James Gholson was the one who really brought into the county, maybe this lady from Lakeland works there, well; he brought communication into the county.

CK: This Mr. Gholson?
MG: Yes. G. James Gholson. That's why the school's named after him. He was the one who wrote to the superintendent of schools, whatever, the bit for the desegregation. That was G. James Gholson. Where were we before I moved off on him?

CK: We were talking about the significance of schools.
MG: Of Rosenwald Schools. Yes, yes. To me, to me, it is another step toward the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to the Constitution.

CK: Why did the Rosenwald schools stop functioning?
MG: Oh, public education took over. I mean, it served its purpose, but I think the legacy should continue. I believe this is, in my opinion, one of the reasons that the doubters, [inaudible] get into more schools to continue a kind of legacy and have a program there at the Ridgeley School.

CK: Some of the Rosenwald Schools are still standing, aren't they?
MG: Yes, they are.

CK: What would you like to see happen to those?
MG: I'd like to see them preserved. I'd like to see them preserved because, to me, this is a part of the building of America.

CK: What are the most positive aspects of the Rosenwald Schools?
MG: Well, there are many people, I look at my family. My family had people who served in every branch of the service, number one. I have, my sister's son is a graduate of the University of Maryland. I couldn't go to the University of Maryland. Beyond, the highest form of education, I had to go to university at NYU.

CK: Was that because of segregation?
MG: Because of segregation. The University of Maryland didn't allow blacks until [inaudible] in Baltimore [inaudible]. Well, that was just the way it was. I, personally, I will not forget, but I don't have time to dwell on it, yesterday is gone. Yesterday is gone.

CK: Were there any negative impacts caused by the Rosenwald schools?
MG: I for myself really can't think of anything. Because, as I said, if it wasn't for the Rosenwald School, I would not have a master's degree.

CK: You briefly described to me how the schools were organized.
MG: The only thing I would say, it would have been nice if a picture of Booker T. Washington had to be put in the Rosenwald Schools, beside Julius Rosenwald's picture, because Rosenwald gave the money but Booker T. Washington designed the school. And really and truly, there are many people today, as I said, it was very recent that I learned that Booker T. Washington was the designer.

CK: Can you tell me again just how they looked. You told me before there were windows on one side?
MG: Yes. Okay [Indicates picture of Ridgeley School]. Okay. Here is a picture of where the back of the school. But from this picture, this is not the front of the school. This is the back, this is the back room that protrudes out this way. The other goes across; we were originally a two room school.

CK: So, this would have been one room and this would have been the other room?
MG: No, no, no. This is the protrusion of the added room.

CK: I see.
MG: There was a room; here is a picture of the side of the building.

CK: That's where the bank of windows were?
MG: On either side. There is a picture somewhere, I have a picture somewhere of the front entrance going into the original school. And that was where you would walk in and the cloak rooms would protrude and then there would be a roof over that and you could see very clearly. Now [draws diagram of school]. This is the back, this is the side windows, this is the side. Back here was classroom, [inaudible], this was the front, this was the front. This was that room that I was talking about [inaudible]. Here would be a door, here would be a door. There would be windows here. There would be windows here. The cloak room, the door came after.
This is a door, this is a door. And this was the cloak room, but this was a door going into the classroom. And out here would be, over the top of it… [starts another diagram]. [See Gray diagram]. [Inaudible].

Closets would come across the total back. Then there was the extension of Ridgeley School to add the other room, which the Board of Education added and they used it as, one time the whole building was used as a storage room. You'd have a bank of windows here. This window was no longer used.

CK: This is the basic structure of…
MG: Ridgeley

CK: Of Rosenwald Schools, right?
MG: For Ridgeley Rosenwald School. All of them weren't totally the same. I understand that some were of different styles. But this one was Ridgeley. And to my memory, the same as schools in Prince George's County. Now, there may be, but to my memory, of all that I went in, the one that was at Bowie had two rooms. There was one in Collington now, it's still there, and it's used as an apartment. And can't you see how it could be? Because everyone had their own…

CK: Mmm. But there were variations of that then. A specific structure and then variations on that.
MG: Right. But all the structures had the bank windows. And there was something about that, about giving…and the walls were of the same color. And that was, I understand, for lighting.

CK: In Rosenwald schools. Were they painted inside then?
MG: I can't remember. I believe they were and I believe all of them were of the same color. But just like anything that some people make in their influence, just a little bit different. Or when the back was turned, painted it whatever color they wanted. But not…I can't remember it being anything other than.

CK: So, just to summarize it then. The Rosenwald Schools did have a tremendous impact on the ….
MG: Tremendous. On which?

CK: On the African-American community.
MG: I think on the whole bit. I think, because children, well, the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble, and I think without the Rosenwald Schools a lot of people would not have as soon as they did.

CK: Would not have what?
MG: Have an education. I think my generation wouldn't have unless you lived near a place that had transportation into Washington, D.C. and unless you had a relative who lived in Washington, D.C. Because two of my brothers, the one who went to Howard and is now colonel, when he retired from the service he was a colonel. He lived with the doctor of Freedman's Hospital and the woman who was

principal of (not audible). And that connection came as a result of my mom going to market and the like, you know. And this other brother, the same thing, he lived with the Johnson family first and then he went to Washington. I think my older sister lived with my father's brother in Washington, D. C. And some of my sisters went to Burrville, which is in Washington D. C., but they walked from there on Central Avenue, where the homeplace was to Burrville in Washington, D. C.

CK: They lived with various family members so they'd have an opportunity to go to school?
MG: Absolutely. To further their education. To further their education. And all of this was before the Rosenwald Schools. It started out in Ridgely Church, for Ridgley Section, then the Benevolent Halls, and then the Rosenwald, and then the walking to (inaudible).

Interviewee:	**Mary Hollomand**
Topic:	Community High School, Lakeland (formerly Lakeland High School)
Relationship to Property:	Attended Lakeland High School
Inventory Number:	66-14
Location of Interview:	Home of Mrs. Hollomand 5107 Navahoe Street College Park, Maryland 20740
Date of Interview:	August 12, 2008
Interviewer:	Charlotte King

Mary Hollomand

Part 1

Mrs. Hollomand, I am going to ask you some questions about yourself, about growing up, and I will also ask you some questions about the Community High School in Lakeland.

CK: What is your full name?
MH: Mary Day Hollomand.

CK: Where were you born?
MH: I was born here in College Park.

CK: When were you born?
MH: June 14, 1931

CK: Where did you grow up?
MH: Here in the community.

CK: Here in College Park?
MH: Yes.

CK: In Lakeland?
MH: Yes.

CK: How long have you and your family lived in the area?
MH: I lived here until 1962 when I got married and moved to Washington for eight years. Then we built this house and came back.

CK: Describe where you lived as a child.
MH: Diagonally across the street.

CK: Was that still on Navahoe Street?
MH: Yes.

CK: Do you remember any special or favorite places as a child?
MH: In College Park, you mean?

CK: In your community.
MH: Well, the only places we had were school and church because there was no entertainment here. So we just went to each other's house and met at school or at church.

CK: Do you remember any places considered especially historic or sacred in the community?
MH: The same places. School and church.

CK: Do you remember hearing your parents describe their lives?
MH: In some respects, yes. My mother was born here also and she had three brothers. And her father died when she was very young. She doesn't remember him. My father was born in Bladensburg, Maryland. So I knew both my grandparents on both sides growing up.

CK: Do you remember your grandparents describing their lives?
MH: My grand, my mother's mother lived in the same house with us. In fact, it was her house. So, I knew her brothers and sisters who were still alive and their families.

CK: What has changed most in your community in your lifetime?
MH: Well, the schools became integrated.

CK: What do you consider the most important event in your life? Do you want to come back to it? That's a hard question.

CK: The next set of questions relate to school. Where did you go to school?
MH: I started at a private school in Brentwood, first grade, because I was five years old and they wouldn't take me in public school. But the teacher died when I was in the second grade and then I was six, so I was able, I came here and went to elementary school in the community.

CK: Who did you live with, did you live in North Brentwood?
MH: No, my mother took me there every day.

CK: She commuted everyday to take you to school?
MH: Yes. That's not far. Brentwood is just past Hyattsville. It's before the District line.

CK: How did you get there?
MH: Car.

CK: So, she just drove you to school every day and back. Seemed like a long way for me, I don't know North Brentwood. What do you remember about going school?
MH: Well, I met children from other neighborhoods. The teacher was excellent, she really was. It was an older lady. But as I said, I was just there a little over a year before she died. I don't remember why she died. She must have died suddenly. There was a small school and they had a few classes, there wasn't just one class. I don't remember how many classes she had, but there was only one teacher. She was very good.

CK: What do you remember about going to school when you came back here then, to public school?
MH: When I came back here, the teacher wanted to put me in the third grade, but my mother wouldn't let her do it because I was so young. I was just six. So, I went to the second grade. We had a system that we used in those years, was seven years of elementary and four years high school. You had to pass a state test in the seventh grade in order to go to high school. A lot of children couldn't pass the test. It didn't matter what you had done all year. If you didn't pass the test, you had to repeat the seventh grade. They did that, I don't know what year that stopped that. But they later brought in junior high and the six years, six, three, three system.

CK: Can you describe anything about the building or the classroom of your school?
MH: It was a two classroom school and no bathroom. We had to go outside to the bathroom. It was down across the railroad tracks. It was a good walk. Then they…that was elementary school, but then high school, the building is still there by the tracks but it's now a church. The high school was built in 1928. They built Fairmont Heights in 1950, so this high school was closed when Fairmont Heights was built.

But they used it for other schools. They had it for an elementary school, a special ed. school. It really went through the gamut before they sold it to this church.

CK: What's the name of the church that's in it now?
MH: Well, this isn't the first church. I think the people are Hispanic now, I'm not sure. It was Korean Catholic Church, the first church that moved in there.

CK: Do you remember your parents talking about their experiences in school?
MH: I remember my mother, yeah. She was saying that, well she went to Dunbar the first year of high school because the school wasn't built. But then after they built the school, she went here to Lakeland. She said that it was a new school, but everything in it was old. They got sewing machines, books, and everything from the white school.

CK: Do you remember your father talking about his experiences in school?
MH: My father died when I was five, so I don't remember a lot about him.

CK: Do you remember your grandparents talking about their experiences in school?
MH: I don't know where they went to school. They didn't go to school here in College Park.

CK: The following questions that I'll ask you are about church. Did you go to church regularly as a child?
MH: Yes.

CK: Do you go to church regularly now?
MH: Yes.

CK: Which church do you go to?
MH: Embry AME.

CK: Is that E-m-b-r-y?
MH: Correct.

CK: Have you always gone to the same church?
MH: No. I grew up in the Baptist church. Then, when I moved to Washington, my husband belonged to United Methodist Church, and I joined his church. But then when we moved back out here, the children went to Embry. They went to Sunday school there, and then I joined the church.

CK: Is there a cemetery associated with the church here?
MH: No.

CK: Where are the members of your family buried?
MH: Various places. My father was buried in the cemetery in, I guess it's, I don't know whether it's considered Bladensburg or Cheverly, or where, but it's down in the Bladensburg area. But it's not a cemetery any more. The land was bought by some; I think a trucking company or something. I don't think any graves are out there now. I know they don't bury anybody any more, it's been years and years since they buried anybody.

CK: Did you work outside the home?
MH: Yes.

CK: What did you do?
MH: I was a crypt analyst.

CK: Could you tell me how to spell that?
MH: C-r-y-p-t analyst.

CK: What type of function is that?
MH: Well, I worked for National Security Agency, the federal government.

CK: The following questions will relate to Lakeland School, also called the Community High School, as I understand.
MH: I just heard that the other day. I never had heard of Community School before.

CK: Really? You've always just called it the Lakeland School?
MH: That's the name of it. It was the only name I've known. Someone just told me that over the weekend that they heard the school was named the Community School. I don't know where that came from.

CK: What is your association with Lakeland School?
MH: Now?

CK: What was it before? Did you attend school there?
MH: Yes, I went through high school there.

CK: What can you tell me about Lakeland School?
MH: Well, it was all we had and if we didn't want to go to Washington, there were three schools in the county for blacks. And they were far apart, so this was the only school that was available to me. I liked it fine. We had some sports and had a choir. It was fine as far as I was concerned. But we didn't have any extra classes like foreign language classes, or anything like that. It was just reading, writing and arithmetic. But I was able to go to college from there.

CK: Where did you go to college?
MH: Howard University.

CK: Was Lakeland School a Rosenwald school when you attended?
MH: It might have been. I know the elementary school was.
(Pause)
MH: We used to have a picture of Rosenwald in elementary school up on the wall. And everybody knew who he was and what he'd done, but I don't remember that after I got to high school. That's why I'm saying he might have been instrumental in that school, but I don't know whether he was or not.

CK: So, the elementary school and Lakeland High School are two different structures altogether?
MH: Yes.

CK: And you attended both of them?
MH: Yes.

CK: What year was it, do you know, that you attended the elementary school?
MH: I went there in ’37, and I graduated in ’43.

CK: Then from there, you went on to the high school?
MH: Yes. I’m ’47 for high school.

CK: What can you tell me about the elementary school? What do you remember about it? What did it look like?
MH: It was just, I had a picture somewhere…but there are a lot of them in the county that looked like that. It was just; I think there were two doors, outside doors. One went to first through third. The other side was fourth through seventh. And there was a small room in the middle. I don’t remember what that was for. I don’t know whether that’s where we ate lunch, or what. It was a small room there for something. And there were two teachers.

CK: One for each of the rooms?
MH: Yes.

CK: Were there windows in each of the rooms too?
MH: Yes.

CK: Was it a long series of windows or just one big one?
MH: I think it was a series of windows.

CK: What does the Lakeland School mean to you?
MH: Meant my foundation, as far as education was concerned.

CK: Was it a good experience for you?
MH: Yes.

CK: Do you know much about the Rosenwald Schools? Is there anything you can tell me about them?
MH: Well, what I’m saying, Rosenwald was part of Sears, Roebuck. He assisted to getting several schools, black schools in the area.

CK: Do you know if there were any around here? You said that the one here,
MH: The elementary school….

CK: The elementary school was…
MH: For sure.

CK: Is that building still standing, did you say?
MH: No, it’s not. The high school is still standing. But the elementary school was torn down a long time ago. Plus it’s nothing over there now because of urban renewal. That whole area across the track was leveled.

CK: And that's where the school was, in that area?
MH: Yes.

CK: Do you think the Rosenwald Schools were important to the community?
MH: Oh, yes.

CK: Can you tell me anything about that, about how you think it's important?
MH: Well, I don't know when we would have gotten a school had it not been for that.

CK: Do you think that the community feels the same way about them that you do?
MH: Yeah, I think so.

CK: So they provided opportunity for the youngsters here to go to school?
MH: Yes. The people here, the school, the high school, was for all the blacks between, primarily between Laurel and Mount Rainier. And I guess this is probably the center of that area, and that's probably why it was built here. But the people in those areas raised money and bought the land themselves. They didn't buy the school, but the people of the communities bought the land. And I was upset that when the school closed, that we didn't get any benefit of having bought the land. The people here wanted to use the school for a community center, but somehow that wasn't approved. And the county just sold the whole thing and the people didn't get any benefit.

CK: What was that land used for then after urban renewal?
MH: They sold it to the church.

CK: So the church was built on the land that the school used to be on?
MH: Well, they used the school, they didn't build anything. They just used, they did some renovations, but they didn't do any additions. They used that same building. And nobody here, of course, went to the church. It was a Korean church.

CK: Since that school was built, when it was used as a school, did the people then from all the different communities come here, or was it just for the Lakeland?
MH: They all came here for school and school activities.

CK: Did any of them take the train that ran through?
MH: Not when I was going to school, but when my uncle was in school, I can remember a girl that lived in Jessup or somewhere that way that rode the train. There might have been some others that I didn't know. But I do know that that one girl came on the train.

CK: On the one that stopped right in front of the area that comes through?
MH: It stopped in Berwyn, I think. I don't remember a stop ever being in Lakeland.

CK: Oh, is that right? So, it just came through Lakeland, it didn't stop here?
MH: No. But Berwyn is the next community.

CK: How far do you think that is, Berwyn, from here?
MH: Oh, few blocks.

CK: So they could easily just walk from the train then to come over here?
MH: Yes.

CK: What kind of train was it? Was it a freight train or a passenger train?
MH: I imagine it was a passenger train that went to D.C. There's still one that goes from Baltimore to D.C. I think it's that same train.

CK: Does it still go come through here, the train?
MH: Yes.

CK: But there's no stop here now either?
MH: I think there's still a stop in Berwyn.

CK: Do you think the legacy of Lakeland School will be important to future generations?
MH: Should be.

CK: How do you think so?
MH: Well, there's still a lot of old families here. So, you know, the ones would know what we had and what we knew.

CK: Were the schools important to the social life of the community?
MH: Yes. Because they would have different programs, dances, and parties at the schools.

CK: At both schools, the elementary and the high school?
MH: Well, there would be programs at the elementary, but I don't remember any other social activity.

CK: But the high school had some other social activities?
MH: Yes.

CK: Do you remember any significant events that happened at the high school or at your elementary school?
MH: Well, at high school, every year, at the end of the year, we had a teacher named Mrs. McClellan who would sponsor a program, end of the year program. And she would have a lot of dancing and singing and all types of activities. She was there the whole time I was there. In fact, I think she stayed there until the high school closed and then she went to Fairmont Heights, I believe. A lot of the teachers went to Fairmont Heights after the school here closed.

CK: Do you know when the school closed here, when that happened?
MH: 1950.

CK: And that was the elementary school?
MH: No, high school.

CK: The high school closed in 1950.

CK: What is the building that's here now then, the Lakeland School, when did that open?
MH: 19…, Let's see, my daughter went there. Her kindergarten year was the year the school opened. She thought the school was built for her. She was born in '67, so five years from there…'72. 1972.

CK: And it was called Lakeland High School then, right?
MH: No, I thought you were talking about the elementary school.

CK: Oh, the ele…Oh, okay. The elementary school
MH: Paint Branch Elementary.

CK: Paint Branch, I see.
MH: We don't have a high school now.

CK: Has the meaning of Lakeland School changed over time?
MH: Well, now, or when my daughter was in school, they were bussing children from a lot of different areas, like Fairmount Heights. And, I don't know, the District seemed to change, because we were legally able to go to other schools. Like in Laurel, they've always had a high school for whites and so the blacks in Laurel went to Laurel High School instead of coming here. Other areas where children would come here because they're black, they would go to, later would go to the closest school. So that was the biggest difference.

CK: Do you think Lakeland School affected the lives of the African-Americans who attended school there?
MH: Yes, I think so.

CK: How do you think it affected them?
MH: It gave them a chance to get an education, get a better job, or go to college or whatever they chose to do.

CK: Do you think education in general has changed over the years?
MH: I don't know exactly what you mean by that.

CK: Has the system, the policies, how has that changed since you were at school, from what you know that goes on now?
MH: Well, one thing I've noticed, one big difference I've noticed, since integration you don't hear of teachers staying after school or children having to stay after school that, I don't know, I guess everybody's in it for the money now. They don't get paid; they don't stay like they did when I was going to school. And that's, some places they stopped having school teams and...

CK: You mean like sports teams?
MH: Yes. But I think that's gonna change. I think that's gonna come back because you hear a lot of talk about children not having any exercise. So I think physical ed. and things like that will be bigger than they are now.

CK: What impact do you think the Rosenwald Schools had on the African-American community?
MH: It gave us opportunity.

CK: Do you see any negative impacts that were caused by the Rosenwald Schools?
MH: I don't know of any.

CK: Were there many positive benefits in addition to the opportunities that it provided?
MH: I don't know what else it did. I don't remember any social benefits or anything like that. But there might have been some that I just wasn't aware of.

CK: When the Rosenwald Schools opened do you remember hearing a lot conversation about them, were people talking about it in the communities?
MH: Well, they opened before my time.

CK: Yeah, but as you heard about them though, as you were aware of them growing up, do you remember people talking about them, or thinking what their comments were?
MH: No, I don't.

CK: What would you like to see happen with the schools in your community?
MH: Actually, I'm not as close to the schools now because I don't have anybody there. But when my children were in school, I was very active with the PTA and the school itself. And I think it is important that parents be close to the schools so they know just what is going on.

(Part 1 of interview ends)

Part 2
MH: I never rode the school bus because I always lived right here by the school.

CK: But the other students, you were saying, came from different parts of the community and they rode the school bus?
MH: Yeah. They had two buses, one came from the north and one came from the south, to come to our school.

CK: How many people were in your class?
MH: I think it was thirty-something.

CK: Thirty-something?

CK: (Looking at Mrs. Hollomand's senior picture in the Lakeland High School year book of 1946-47) What does "charm" under your picture, what does that mean?
MH: Oh, those are the clubs.

CK: Oh, a charm club. So you were in charm, library, basketball, dancing, and what was N.H.A.?
MH: National Homemakers Association.

CK: What did the charm club do?
MH: I don't remember.

CK: You had all these different activities in your school?
MH: Yes.

CK: Now your name's down here.
MH: Because I helped write the...

CK: Oh, you helped write the Class History?
MH: Two names there?

CK: Yes. Robert Moore and Mary Day.
MH: Robert Moore was from Laurel.

CK: Was he one of the people that rode the bus?
MH: Yes.

CK: Came to school on the bus. Then you said you thought that maybe a couple other people came on the train.
MH: Not while I was going to school, but during the school history they had some who came.

CK: Are there other people in the community also that are living here now that attended school with you?
MH: I don't think so. They've either moved or died. I don't think there's anybody here now that went to school with me. Oh, there's this lady right behind me. That's one.

CK: What's her name?
MH: Mary Harding

CK: Was she in your class? The same age as you?
MH: She's the same age, but she wasn't in my class 'cause I started early. I finished high school couple days after I turned 16.

CK: That's young.
MH: Yeah.

CK: Did you go right on to college then after that?
MH: Yeah.

CK: Well, you had a lot of different clubs (in the high school). The Glee Club,
MH: Right.

CK: Dramatics, newspaper staff, dance group. Is this the group that you were in too, in the dancing group?
MH: Yes.

CK: Oh, there you are. You were president of the dancing group.
MH: We had a basketball team. Well, two… girls and boys.

CK: Safety patrol, New Homemakers of America – that's the club that you were in too?
MH: Yes.

CK: Girls athletics. You were captain of the basketball team?
MH: I loved basketball.

CK: Then there was the junior basketball team. Is this the varsity basketball team?
MH: That's the boy's team.

CK: Boys team. The football squad. And then these are pictures of activities and all the autographs from your friends. And this is another yearbook?
MH: It's the '48 yearbook.

CK: So this, (the year book just described) is '46 – '47?
MH: My next door neighbor was in this class (indicating 1948 year book).

CK: I see. And you had graduated by then.
MH: Yes.

CK: And did they have the same clubs and organizations as when you were at school?
MH: Yes. I was saying nobody else is here, I'm just thinking of some other. I can think of two others who went to school. They weren't in my class, but they did go the same time.

CK: And they still live here in the community now?
MH: Yes. They're back. They had moved out, and then they built a house here and came back.

CK: Can you tell me what the high school looked like when you were going to school there?
MH: (Indicates photo of school) Just like that picture.

CK: Just like this picture. So, it hasn't changed much since then.
MH: Well, they did add something. They added a part, I don't know if this is the part that they added. Well, they added a part down here (indicating picture). I think it was after I left that they added a big auditorium down on this end.

CK: How big do you think that, how many classrooms do you think the school had when you were going to school there?
MH: Hmm. I guess six or seven classrooms and a library, and a principal's office.

CK: Did you have a cafeteria too?
MH: I think so.

CK: Did you bring your lunch to school, or could you buy lunch at school?
MH: I used to either take mine or come home for lunch. I don't remember buying any.

CK: But you could, they had a facility where you could buy your lunch?
MH: Yes.

CK: So the people who came from communities around that were brought here by bus, they could buy their lunch, if they wanted to. What did you take for lunch, when you took it to school, do you remember?
MH: Sandwich, fruit. You could always buy milk at school. I don't think I had anything else. I don't think I bought anything else.

CK: You were fortunate that you could just walk home and have lunch at home and go back. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about Lakeland High School as you remember it when you were going to school there?
MH: Well, I don't remember how old the principal was, but he was the oldest teacher there while I was there. We had, the year I started, three or four teachers started and they were right out of college. So some of them were almost as old as some of the students. There was really like one big family.

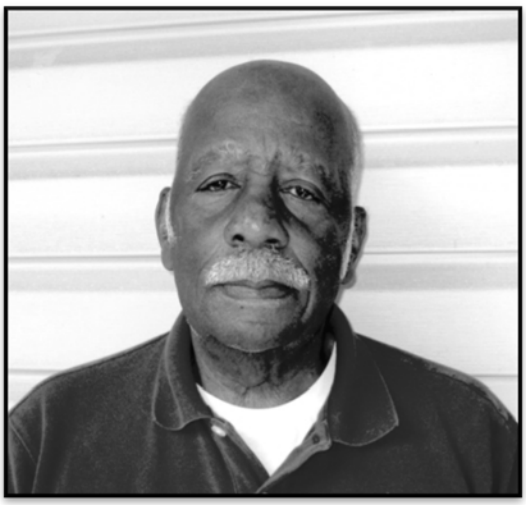
CK: So it was a good experience for you?
MH: Yes it was. Now there are some people from the neighborhood and from nearby neighborhoods who went to school in D.C. Well, D. C. actually, was considered better schools. I know they offered more. Some of them went because they couldn't pass that seventh grade test, and they could go to D.C. and go to the next grade.

CK: But they couldn't do that here? If you didn't pass the test, you couldn't go on? Right?
MH: Yeah.

CK: But in D. C., those schools…
MH: They probably took their report cards or something, and went to…I don't know. But I know a lot of people in Brentwood, which was right next to the District line; they went to D.C. high schools.

CK: They didn't have that testing system?
MH: They didn't have that in D.C.

CK: I see.
MH: They had junior highs. They would go to junior high. But what they told us was that the seventh grade was seventh and eighth grade material. I guess that was true, I don't know. So, we didn't have a junior high.



Interviewee:	**Herbert Jones**
Topic:	Columbia Air Center
Relationship to Property:	Former manager/private pilot instructor
Inventory Number:	82B-38
Location of Interview:	Home of Herbert Jones 9005 Rollingwood Drive Fort Washington, Maryland 20772
Date of Interview:	July 31, 2008
Interviewer:	Charlotte King

CK: (I will ask you some questions) about yourself, about growing up in Prince George's County and I will also ask you some questions about the Columbia Air Center, and about your involvement with the Tuskegee airmen, your experiences with flying.

CK: Could you tell me what your full name is, please?
HJ: Herbert Harris Jones, Jr.

CK: Where were you born Mr. Jones?
HJ: Washington, D. C.

CK: Did you grow up in D.C.?
HJ: Yeah.

CK: How long have you been in Prince George's County?
HJ: Oh, about 15 years.

CK: Where did you live as a child in D.C.?
(recorder malfunction: interview started over) Could you tell me what your full name is again, please?
HJ: Herbert Harris Jones, Jr.

CK: And you were born in Washington, D.C.?
HJ: Washington, D.C., yeah.

CK: And you grew up in D.C. as well?
HJ: Yeah.

CK: And you've lived in Prince George's County for…
HJ: About 15 years.

CK: Describe where you lived as a child.
HJ: I lived in a little place called Deanwood, which is in northeast Washington.

CK: Is that D-E-A-N-WOOD?
HJ: Yeah.

CK: What do you consider the most important event in your life?
HJ: The most important event in my life. Can we come back to that?

CK: Of course.

CK: Where did you go to school?
HJ: I went to public school in Deanwood called Deanwood School, then for junior high school I went to a school called Brown Junior High School, and then I went to Dunbar High School in Washington. And from there I went to Howard University for two years.

CK: What did you study at Howard?
HJ: Liberal arts.

CK: How did you become interested in flying?
HJ: Well, I used to live near the airport, which is called the Capital Airport, and the airplanes flew in a traffic pattern…flew over my house. And I remember on Sundays when my mother used to make us go to Sunday school I used to sit there and look out the window and watch the airplanes fly over the church. And so, as I grew a little older I read about this fellow Clarence Chamberlain, who was the second man to fly the Atlantic, and he was a barnstormer, which means he was going around the country flying people, and he was flying at the old Capital Airport, which was only about three or four miles from where I lived. And I remember my father took me up there and shelled out one dollar and fifty cents, which was a lot of money back then, a lot of money, and I got my first airplane ride with Clarence Chamberlain.

CK: That must have been exciting.
HJ: Yeah, it was for me.

CK: How old were you?
HJ: I must have been about 11 years old.

CK: What inspired your father to take you there? Because you had the interest?
HJ: Yeah, because I was interested in flying and he always tried to, as far as his children were concerned, tried to cultivate their interest. Whatever they were interested in.

CK: Then, how did you learn to fly?
HJ: Well, long story. I learned…my first flying lesson was with a man by the name of C. Arthur Anderson. And that happened at a place called Buzzard's Point in Washington.

CK: Buzzard's Point?
HJ: Yeah, Buzzard's Point. It's still there and it was not an airport, it was a seaplane base. I took my first lessons there. And then after that, I was at Howard University and they had a CPT program, and that is Civilian Pilot Training Program, and I got flight training in that. Of course, the flight training I got, even though it was at Howard University, I took it in Chicago at the Coffey School of Aeronautics in Chicago.

CK: What was the name of the school?
HJ: Coffey School of Aeronautics.

CK: Do you know how it's spelled?
HJ: C-o-f-f-e-y, I believe.

CK: Thank you. And, how long were you there?
HJ: I was there for about, oh let's see, about six or seven months.

CK: What did it feel like the first time you flew?
HJ: Well, the first time, well, I was really thrilled. I had wanted to do that all my life, of course, I was a young man; I was a young person then, see. And, the person I flew with was C. Arthur Anderson, who is considered as the father of black aviation. He was the primary flight instructor at Tuskegee. He taught a

lot of the instructors at Tuskegee how to fly. Very few people know about that, they think in terms of the military, but the military at Tuskegee were taught primarily by black civilian pilots.

CK: Interesting.
HJ: Yeah.

CK: So, you were 11 when you first flew, and then how old were you when you actually went to the school in Chicago?
HJ: I must have been about 19 years old.

CK: Was it frightening for you to go off all by yourself?
HJ: No, it was never frightening for me at the age, you know young people…that was a big thrill for me. I remember I came back and told my father the airplane was going 150 miles an hour, which was not true because those airplanes then, Piper Cubs, they didn't go over 80 miles an hour, and I was looking at the temperature gauge. I thought that was the air speed indicator but it was not, and I told my dad that it was going at a higher speed, which it really wasn't.

CK: How fast do you think it was going?
HJ: Oh, it was going about 60 or 70, 'cause that's the fastest they could go. But you think about airplanes at big Mach 1, Mach 2 speeds, but back then, Piper Cubs only had 65 horse power, and they were not fast airplanes at all. And they were used primarily for training purposes only and, you know, for cross country flying there were bigger airplanes: Fairchild, Stenson, and that sort of thing.

CK: Did you get your pilot's license then?
HJ: Oh, I got my pilot's license when I left Chicago; I got my first, I got my private pilot's license.

CK: What year was that? Do you remember?
HJ: Oh, that was in, wait a minute; let me think awhile, that was in 1940…about 1942.

CK: Did you get your pilot's license in Chicago?
HJ: Well, let me put it like this, I didn't get it in Chicago, but what happened, I took the training in Chicago and then, I came back to this area and I got some additional training from a guy by the name of C. Arthur Anderson, and I got my pilot's license right here, right here, not in Washington, but in Virginia, again because at that time there were no airports really in Washington, except the seaplane base down there at the end of First Street, southwest.

CK: What happened after you got your pilot's license? What did you do then?
HJ: Well, after I got my pilot's license, during that time I was still going to school at Howard University and then I found out about the Army Air Corps and then I applied for aviation cadet training. Now, one thing I need to tell you. I did not complete the aviation cadet training…something I don't talk about, but I was what they called "washed out." In other words, I didn't meet their…there were certain things that I did not do, which meant that they didn't find me fit to be a military, to be an Air Force pilot. However, after World War II, I did get some military flight training and did a lot of search and rescue missions with the Air Force Auxiliary and then I retired from them I was a lieutenant colonel, so things kind of equaled themselves out, but my whole life is not a success all the way down the line. There are always some things that you don't like to talk about, but that's the truth. I was washed out as an air cadet, but as far as

the safety was concerned, I did pretty well in that. I was group commander; I was the deputy for operations, all that kind of stuff.

CK: Did you do that here in the United States?
HJ: Yeah, I was here, yeah.

CK: And what were you doing then?
HJ: Well, as far as CAP (Civilian Air Patrol) was concerned, I was flying search and rescue missions, you know that's where airplanes were going down and nobody knows where they are and all that sort of thing, and then I was doing flight training also, and then during that period, I became a certified flight instructor, which meant that I was qualified to teach other people how to fly.

CK: When you taught people how to fly, where was that?
HJ: That was down at Columbia (Croom airport), and also did some of that at Hyatt's Field, where we are right now.

CK: How do you spell that? Is it Hyatt?
HJ: (not sure of spelling)

CK: That's okay, we can look it up.

CK: How did you meet Mr. Greene?
HJ: Mr. Greene, right before World War II, he was a school teacher at a vocational school and they had an airplane mechanics course over there they were giving at night. I found out about this and that's where I met John Greene. Greene was really a black aviation pioneer 'cause when I first met him, he was already a commercial pilot and all that sort of thing and then later on he opened up Columbia Air Center down there and went from there.

CK: So, how would you describe your association with the Columbia Air Center?
HJ: I became a flight instructor at Columbia Air Center, and then later on, I took over the management of it in conjunction with a man by the name of Charles Wren. He and I managed the airport just before it closed, managed the airport for about 10 or 12 years.

CK: And how do you spell Mr. Wren?
HJ: Yeah, W-r-e-n.

CK: What do you remember about the Columbia Air Center?
HJ: Well, as far as I know, well I do know this, what happened, Columbia Air Center came into being about the same time that they opened up Tuskegee, as far as flying is concerned, and Columbia Air Center was the first black owned and operated airport in the country and Tuskegee, when they opened up, they had a group of white people who were doing most of the operation at first, later on it began to change. But Croom, Columbia Air Center, was the first one where it was run completely by black people, primarily by John Greene himself, who was one of the true black aviation pioneers.

CK: Who used the Columbia Air Center?
HJ: Anybody who wanted to fly could use it. When you say, who used it? It was used by the general aviation community in this area. Those who were willing to fly over there, of course. You have to realize

that the racial situation was pretty bad then, and so a lot of people didn't come there because it was run by black folks, but then there were others who didn't care about that. So, it was available for use by anybody who was a qualified pilot.

CK: Was it used for general aviation?
HJ: Yeah, it was used for general aviation; it was a licensed CAA airport.

CK: And where did the planes fly to, how far could they go?
HJ: Well, if they were training planes, they were used for training purposes and there were individuals who kept their private airplanes there and wherever they went was up to them...It depends on the capability of the aircraft and all that sort of thing. But there were no restrictions as to where they could go as long as they complied with the FAA rules.

CK: Was it used for any other commercial purposes, like shipping?
HJ: No. The only other thing they did down there was skydiving.

CK: Skydiving? Did you ever participate in that?
HJ: No, no. Never did.

CK: You've been in the building many, many times if you managed it for ten years. Is that right?
HJ: Yeah, yeah, along with Charles Wren. Course, Wren's gone now. He's dead.

CK: When did he die?
HJ: About five years ago.

CK: Did you maintain a relationship with him until his death?
HJ: Oh yeah, yeah. We were good friends for years. We did a lot of flying together. A lot of flying together.

CK: And training together too, I would assume.
HJ: Well, he was already a pilot and I was a commercial pilot then. We used to fly on cross country flights and all that sort of thing, not necessarily training flights, but flights down into North Carolina and flights off to Pittsburg, places like that.

CK: What was the purpose of those flights?
HJ: Well, a lot of times we were going to visit other black operations. See, Columbia Air Field was the first real black operation, 'course it came along about the same time as Tuskegee, but then other people, other black people began to fly. And there were some people, especially down in this part of the country that were not welcome at the other airports, however, further up north that was not the situation and a lot of these, some of these people who had been Tuskegee pilots and Tuskegee people who trained at Tuskegee opened up airports up north. There was a guy by the name of, I can't remember his name now, he was a flight instructor at Tuskegee, and he opened up an airport in New York. There was a whole bunch of them. A lot of them began to open up flying services, because what happened after the war, a lot of black folks learned to fly before the war. And so they were not being hired by the upper staff and they decided to open up their own operations. But then things began to change and later on, the guys began to…well, let me put it like this, there were a few black guys in schools for airlines because by the time the airlines began to hire people, they were too old. And there was only one guy that I know of that flew for

scheduled airline and his name was Perry Young, and he flew helicopters for the Port Authority of New York, but, oh yeah, there was another guy, I can't remember his name, who flew for Western Airlines, I can't remember his name; I don't think he's living now, but anyhow, there were few opportunities for jobs for black people in commercial aviation.

CK: So, the people who were involved in aviation, what was their main purpose, how did they earn a living?
HJ: Well, most of them who followed aviation as a career, well, let me put it like this; a lot of them went to work for the CAA, the Civil Aeronautic Authority, which is now called the Federal Aviation Administration. They went to work for, that was a government agency, they went to work for them. And then soon, the airlines began to take on black pilots, and at first there were only a handful of them, and of course today there are several thousand black airline pilots.

CK: What does the center mean to you though? What significance does it have?
HJ: It has a historical value to me. It is the first effort by a black person really to operate an airport on their own, and it meant also that black young people had a place at that time to go where they could really learn something about aviation because the other avenues were closed to them.

CK: Why is it important to you in addition to those?
HJ: Because the aviation industry is an industry that has growth to it and it has employment possibility. Airline pilots make a lot of money and when you close one group out, if you say well, this is going to be a private club with only white people in it, to me that's not real fair. So, that situation is changing now, when you're looking at black pilots now, there's a whole bunch of them flying for the airlines. And of course, we have another turn which is a source of pilots also.

CK: How is Columbia Air Center used now?
HJ: It is owned by the National Capital and Parks Association [Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission], I guess that's the right term, and it's simply a park down there. They do have a big plaque down there indicating what was, anything, a plaque, there was an airport down there.

CK: Do you think the Columbia Air Center is important to the community?
HJ: From a historical standpoint, yes. I think, you know, like most communities, people don't like to have airports close to them, but sensitive people down there know the airport, they feel the airport is not going to be open again, and they know it has certain historical value, so I don't think they have a problem with it.

CK: Do you think it will be important to future generations?
HJ: Yes, yes.

CK: How so?
HJ: Because that was the early beginning of black aviation. When I say black aviation, I mean strong participation in black aviation. Of course, we know that one of the first black aviators was a woman, Bessie Coleman, we know that, but Bessie Coleman, you know, she did not run an airport. She didn't run an airport, and I don't think she even taught anybody, I don't think she was a certified flight instructor. Of course they didn't, I think, maybe they didn't have what we know as certified flight instructors back then, I don't know. Croom is important because that was the first effort by black people to operate an airport independent, on their own. Like I said, Tuskegee came along at the same time, but at the beginning, the

flight portion of Tuskegee was run by white folk. And of course, there was one man C. Arthur Anderson, who was a black man who came along later on and ran the whole primary flight program at Tuskegee.

CK: Bessie Coleman had to go …
HJ: Had to go to France to learn to fly. And a few years later she was killed in an airplane, well the airplane didn't crash. She fell out of the airplane. Yeah. The airplane went into some type of aerobatics, the airplane was upside down. Of course, back then I don't why they didn't, well, I guess they did have safety belts, but for some reason she fell out of the airplane, and of course she was killed.

CK: That's tragic. I read too that during the time of the Columbia Air Field, there was never a fatality.
HJ: There was none, no, we had a couple of near ones. The nearest to a fatality, a man by the name of, named Dr. Gill, who was a partner of John Greene, he was a doctor here in Washington, he and another man by the name of Shirley King, they had a crash down there and they were both of them seriously injured, but that's the closest they've ever come to a fatality.

CK: That's remarkable, isn't it?
HJ: Yeah, yeah.

CK: To what do you attribute that?
HJ: To that crash?

CK: No, to the success that there were so few?
HJ: Well, because John Greene was a stickler for safe flying and making sure that people followed the rules, and no what we call dangerous flying, such as buzzing and all that sort of thing. And, of course, he was also an A and P mechanic, which is an airplane engine mechanic. He maintained his airplanes even though he was a commercial pilot also, so we never had any problems with engine failure. Now in the case of Dr. Gill and Shirley King, what happened, they took off on a winter day and the fuel selector valve developed a lot of ice and the tank they changed to had ice in the line, so, therefore, that shut the engine down, and that happened to them just after takeoff, which is a bad thing to happen after takeoff, you know, once we get in the air, maybe two or three thousand feet, you can find a place somewhere to land, especially in the country, but after takeoff, there is no place to go but down. So that's what happened to them, but otherwise, that's the only serious accident we ever had.

CK: That is remarkable. What was the field like when you started working there? What sort of buildings were on the premises?
HJ: We had one big hangar down there, which was large enough to hold about 12 or 13 airplanes. And we had another small hangar down at the other end which could hold about three airplanes, and we had an office down at the other end there. And the office was just a wooden structure that we used to use for administrative work and all that sort of thing. The big hangar up there was so big until they had an extension on the side where Greene had a shop in the extension where he worked on airplane engines and worked on airplanes himself.

CK: Did the same buildings remain during the entire time of the air field?
HJ: Just about, what happened when Greene retired, he sold the buildings and they were tore down and shipped away.

CK: They tore all the buildings down?
HJ: Yeah, there were no buildings left after that.

CK: What is there now?
HJ: There is nothing down there now but a big field and people grow corn in the field owned by the National Capital Park, I can't remember the name of it. You know, the organization I was telling you about. They own it, they own the land.

CK: I was reading something about a potato field that was nearby?
HJ: There used to be a potato field, but that was when we, when they first opened the airport. The field was owned by a lady by the name, on the eastern shore, by the name of Rebecca Fisher and she had, there was a big potato farm on that land. When the guys took it over they brought trucks and things, they had to even the field out and all that sort of thing. After all the work was done, the field had about eight runways which made it one of the biggest general airports in this area; as far as runways were concerned.

CK: How many runways did it have?
HJ: Eight.

CK: Eight?
HJ: Eight runways. And all of them were sod runways; of course, none of them were concrete runways.

CK: What were they? Solid, what?
HJ: They were sod, you know.

CK: Was it hard to maneuver on sod runways?
HJ: Oh, that's all they had years ago. They didn't have hard surface runways years ago. Many years ago there was an airport at the end of 14th Street called the old Hoover airport; that was a sod runway also and that's where commercial airplanes came in at that time. And those commercial airplanes were nothing like those that we have today, but all those runways were sod. Hard surface runways didn't come into being until about maybe five or six years before World War II.

CK: It must have been difficult if it rained or during snow.
HJ: Well, it was, yeah. It was, yeah, yeah. But sometimes, you know, if you had inclement weather back there, you didn't fly either because, see, we didn't have the modern instruments, modern blind flying instruments. Back there you could fly based on what you saw, but back here, back here now, you know, you've got GPS and all those other stuff and you can fly from here to Timbuktu and never see the ground. It wasn't like that back then.

CK: Who owned the property that Columbia Air Field is on now?
HJ: The National Park.

CK: No, I mean before when Mr. Greene first set up.
HJ: A lady by the name of Rebecca Fisher.

CK: Oh, she owned all that property.
HJ: Yeah.

CK: That was part of the potato…?
HJ: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

CK: And how did he acquire that? Did he rent it from her?
HJ: He rented it from her for $50.00 a month.

CK: It doesn't seem like much now, does it?
HJ: No, no. It doesn't.

CK: And financed all the buildings, the hangars and…?
HJ: He and Dr. Gill. Dr. Gill, as I think I said, was a physician here in D.C., and he was financially, how should I put it? Well, he had some money, so he and Green were partners and he did a lot of the financing, not only as far as the rent was concerned, but he bought a lot of airplanes also which at the time cost quite a bit of money.

CK: So, did people rent those airplanes?
HJ: Yeah, yeah. We would rent the airplanes to qualified pilots and we would use them also for flight training. The flight training was the biggest thing.
(Interruption when Mr. Jones' wife walked in.)

CK: So, they rented the airplanes then to qualified pilots and for training?
HJ: For training and for other purposes, you know, pilots, say a guy wanted to take his wife to Atlantic City, so he'd rent one of the airplanes and go to Atlantic City.

CK: I read too that you worked for a time as a commercial pilot? Is that correct? Who did you fly for?
HJ: I flew for a guy by the name of George Harrington, and he had a fishing business along the coast here. He had some boats in Ocean City, Maryland, and in Savannah, Georgia. And we had a Cessna 195. And I used to fly the 195 from Ocean City down to Savannah, Georgia and other places too. Yeah.

CK: How long did you do that?
HJ: I did that for about two years or less.

CK: What other types of work have you had in aviation?
HJ: Well, I ran an airline. Well, it was a charter airline. I don't know if I have any pictures of it around here or not, but anyhow, we operated a four engine transport aircraft, a Douglas DC 7, and mostly our flights were down to the Caribbean and different parts of the continental United States; most of them were down to the Caribbean, Freeport, Jamaica places like that though.

CK: And what was the purpose of those flights?
HJ: To make money.

CK: Did you carry passengers back and forth?
HJ: Yeah, yeah.

CK: So they would fly out of the Columbia?
HJ: No, they would fly out of Martin State airport; Columbia was not big enough for that airplane.

CK: Martinstead? Is that it?
HJ: Martin State airport

CK: And that's here?
HJ: No, that's in Baltimore.

CK: So you would take the plane from your air field, then you would fly them to…?
HJ: No, no, no. The plane was based at Martin State, 'cause this was a big airplane which would never fit in these small airports. This was a big transport type airplane. So we had to fly out of an airport that could handle a large airplane.

CK: So, this was in addition to your work at Columbia?
HJ: Yeah, yeah.

CK: So you did this on the side, in addition to...
HJ: Yeah, we had to a lot of things to make money to keep going.

CK: What other kind of things did you do in aviation then?
HJ: Ah, well, that's about all because operating the DC 7 was a big situation as far as I was concerned 'cause it's big money, and not only did you have to maintain and fly the airplane, you had to deal with the administrative work. See, with the government type of flying there were a lot of requirements you had to make, you had to meet, see. That meant you had to have lawyers and Indian chiefs, and everybody.

CK: Was the Columbia Air Center important to the social life of the community?
HJ: As far as, not really a big thing. They used to try to have social events down there, such as motorcycle riding and parachute jumping. Parachute jumping and motorcycle races, they were limited to a small group of people who had that interest. But as far as I know, that's the only social thing that they had. Of course, every once in a while the airport management, Charlie Wren and myself, we used to have little activities for the people who serviced the airport, but otherwise that's the only thing that we did.

CK: What kind of activities?
HJ: We used to have picnics and all that sort of thing and we used to have, people used to go swimming down in the river, right down from the airport. But that's about the extent of it.

CK: Was there any particular event that you remember very significantly?
HJ: Well, not as far as that's concerned, but now if you come up to modern day, today, for years I ran the Cloud Club, which is modern upsweep of the old Cloud Club, which is in existence today. We used to have affairs down at the officers club in Croom field for folks, some of these big fund raisers and others were not. And what else did we do? We had these affairs which were dinners and all that kind of stuff. Of course, you're picking brains going way back, and I can't remember all that kind of stuff. But we did have affairs for people, for the members, and that was to, you know, keep an interest going and also to earn money too sometimes.

CK: How has the meaning of the Columbia Air Center changed over time?
HJ: The meaning of the Columbia Air Center? Well, the Columbia Air Center is a name, now as far as the meaning is concerned, I don't know, you know; right now it is non-existent as far as an airport is

concerned. From a historical standpoint, there is a lot of interest in what was down there. And there are some people right now who feel that they can get the airport, get the space back as an airport. Of course, I don't know if that's going to work or not, but they're working on that right now, see. And, like I say, it has historical value, a lot of historical value, because a lot, some of the people who flew down there, including myself and others, ended up at Tuskegee, some as flight instructors at Tuskegee. And the airport closed down during the war years, you couldn't operate commercial airplanes within fifty miles of the east coast here, so we had to close down during the war years. And then some of the guys who were in the Air Force and who had flown at Croom before the war came back to Croom. There was a man by the name of John R. Pinkett, who…

CK: Pinkett, was his name?
HJ: Yeah, John R. Pinkett, his family was a prominent real estate family, people in Washington. And he was one of the guys who really started the original Cloud Club really. Well, he and some others came back after the war, and they began to fly down at Columbia also. And the Cloud Club's name has been in existence for over 50 years now.

CK: I was going to ask you how the appearance of the Air Center has changed over time, but I think you've told me that. First it was this place that had two hangars...
HJ: Yeah

CK: And now there's nothing there.
HJ: There's nothing there but a big placard down there indicating what was there.

CK: How has life changed since the Air Center was constructed?
HJ: That's a tough one. How has life changed? Life has changed a whole lot a ways; I don't know where to start. Well, number one, as far as the racial business is concerned, racial business eased up from the way it used to be. Black folks can almost fly in any airport they want right now. And certain banks that wouldn't loan people money for airplanes and for other things, they've kind of eased up on that too. So, to me, that's the some of the big change that's taken place.

CK: Those are significant.
HJ: Yeah, yeah.

CK: Did you start the Cloud Club here?
HJ: No, I didn't start it. The club was started in Washington, by this man John Pinkett and a few others. And when they first formed, they used to fly in a field in Virginia called Beacon Field, but they only stayed there for about a month or so and the people felt that, well, they indicated that they were not wanted over there, so then they went out and found this potato patch from Rebecca Fisher and opened Croom airport. I'll tell you, the first name was not Croom Airport; the first name was Riverside Airport.

CK: What was the purpose of the Cloud Club?
HJ: To have a place where black folks could learn to fly and fly.

CK: How was that different than the Columbia Air Center?
HJ: What? What's that?

CK: The Cloud Club.
HJ: Oh, the Cloud Club. Well, the Columbia Air Center is the name of the air field, the place. The Cloud Club is the name of the organization that utilized the field.

CK: Do they still get together…the members of the Cloud Club?
HJ: All the Cloud Club members, every one of them are dead now. You know, that's been a long time ago. I don't know of any of them that's still alive, 'cause that was back…they quit flying, the Cloud Club as a group quit flying in about 1946 and they were all old men then.

CK: When you started flying you said you went to Tuskegee. Was that where you went for training?
HJ: I trained in two or three different places. I trained here, I took a few lessons here, and then my biggest training was in Chicago at Coffey School of Aeronautics, then the next training I took was at Molton Field in primary flight school at Tuskegee in the Army Air Corps.

CK: How long were you there?
HJ: What?

CK: In Tuskegee?
HJ: I was down there for about five months.

CK: So, you learned a different specialty at each of the schools you went to?
HJ: Well, no, you know, aviation is a series of things. In other words, from the military you learn to fly and you had to have a certain amount of skills. In other words, certain maneuvers that you had to learn how to do and all that kind of stuff, so like, well, let me put it to you like this. In the military training, you have what you call primary flight training, which is training that you do to have exams, flight training. And the primary flight training is for beginners. And then the primary flight training is where you learn aerobatics, 'cause in combat flying aerobatics is very important. And then, you go to advanced, where you learn to fly fighter airplanes.

CK: Which of that training have you had? Have you had all of that?
HJ: No, I have not had all of that. I got as far as primary.

CK: How many students do you think you've taught?
HJ: Oh, lord. Total of about 150.

CK: What years was it that you were working there?
HJ: It was in, I started instructing in 1947, and I instructed all the way up to 1961.

CK: How many instructors were working at Columbia Air Field?
HJ: Now, let me tell you, all this was not done at Columbia Air Field, 'cause by that time Columbia Air Field had closed down. But, at one time there were only about two flight instructors down there, myself, and John Greene.

CK: When was it that Columbia Air Center closed down?
HJ: Let me get those dates right. I'll tell you what, that sheet that I gave you, that's got the dates.

CK: Okay, I'll look at that.

CK: You said that I could come back and ask you what the most significant event in your life was. Have I given you time to think about it?
HJ: The first time I flew an airplane by myself. Yeah.

CK: Can you tell me about it?
HJ: It was a big thrill, it was a scary thing at first and the idea of being in the air by myself, having control of everything and knowing that what happened, if anything happened, it would be because of what I was doing or what I did. And it was a really exhilarating feeling, really.

CK: Remind me again how old you were?
HJ: I must have been 19 years old then.

CK: How much training had you had?
HJ: I had about 15 hours of dual flight instructor.

CK: What does that mean, "with a dual flight instructor"?
HJ: That means with a flight instructor, with a certified flight instructor.

CK: What type of an airplane was it that you flew in?
HJ: A J-3 Piper Cub.

CK: That was propeller type plane?
HJ: Oh, yeah.

CK: How many propellers, was there one each side, or just one in the center?
HJ: That was before you were born (laughing). They only had one propeller.

CK: One propeller?
HJ: Yeah.

CK: How did you fire it up? Was there a key?
HJ: No. You got on the side you pulled the prop, and you, what you used to call "propped" it. Back then very few airplanes had starters on them, very few.

CK: How long were you in the air the first time?
HJ: The first time? About 15 minutes. We just took off and went around the track and landed again. They used to require that you did two take offs and landings and then you were all fit to go.

CK: Where did that take place, your first flight?
HJ: My first flight took place at, let's see, now where the heck was it? Right here at Buzzard's Point in the seaplane.

CK: What was your feeling when you were up there?
HJ: Well, you know, I felt, a feeling of exaltation, if you want to call it that, and after getting over the moments of a little fear, I felt that this is where I want to be.

CK: How long ago was it that you stopped flying?
HJ: About nine years ago.

CK: What type of planes were you flying then?
HJ: Oh, I was flying a series of Cessna airplanes, a Cessna 172, 182, and then I've flown the BT 13s, which was an old airplane. I flew practically all the general aviation aircraft; Beechcraft and the Avion and stuff like that.

CK: The individuals that you instructed, were there many women?
HJ: No, there were not many women. I don't know of even know of one woman that really, well, when I say one woman, I know one who went the whole route, she got her airline transport rating, which is the highest rating the government issues, but there were a lot of other women who got private pilots licenses which enables you to fly for pleasure. But the ATP is a license which means you can collect money for flying. It's a commercial license. And there's one woman that I know of, now there may be others, but there's one woman that I know of that has the ATP. I'm sure there are many others, because there are a lot of black women today flying for airlines. The airlines require that you do at least have a commercial license and if you're going to be a captain you've got to have a transport pilot's license. So, things change. It's hard to keep up with what's going on in aviation because they change so fast.

CK: The individuals then when they finished training with you, they were qualified commercial pilots?
HJ: No, they were qualified as private pilots. There were some who went on and took additional training and became commercial pilots and some even became flight instructors.

CK: The ones that completed your program?
HJ: When they completed my program and they took additional training.

(Pause to change cassette tape).

CK: So they completed your program and they went on to additional training.
HJ: Yeah. What I used to, I used to carry them up to their private license and then for additional training, they had to get in bigger airplanes for additional training. In other words, you could get a license for smaller airplanes, but there were certain certificates that you had to use airplanes with what we call constant speed props, and most small airplanes don't have constant speed props. That's where you can change the pitch of the propeller; if you need to see. For sophisticated airplanes, you had to have that type of training, in an airplane with a constant speed propeller.

CK: What else can you tell me about the Cloud Club?
HJ: Well, let's see, what can I tell you about the Cloud Club? We've got a picture down at the airport of some of the old Cloud Club members, and I think I suggested that we maybe might want to go down there but the time is getting to twelve o'clock now.

I'm sorry, what did you ask me? What else can I tell you about the Cloud Club? The only thing I can say is that the Cloud Club was the beginning for a lot of black pilots in aviation. It opened the door for a lot of them. And some of them, three or four, ended up at Tuskegee as a service pilot or instructors. A lot of people don't know, as far as Tuskegee is concerned, they think about the 99th, 332nd, 100th group and all that sort of thing, but there was more to it than that, they had what they called service pilots. These were

pilots that did not fly combat but who were instructors at Tuskegee, and this fellow John R. Pinkett, who was one of the guys who started the Cloud Club, he ended up at Tuskegee as a military flight instructor.

So, there's a whole lot of stuff that I may have forgotten, but this is over a period of years, you know, and a lot of stuff has happened. But, as far as Columbia Air Center is concerned, to my way of thinking, it was something that opened the door for a lot of black people in aviation. And it was a pioneering effort, and on the part of John Greene, because they were under-funded, they didn't have much money and they did a lot of things with just sheer determination. And had it not been for Dr. Gill, I don't think they could have stayed in business very long because even back then, aviation was an expensive deal, even for the few who had money, and most black folk didn't have a lot of money then.

So, I give a lot of credit to John Greene and to Dr. Gill for sticking to it. And, incidentally, John Greene was the first black man to receive an A and P license, which is the airplane and engine mechanics license, and he was the second black man to receive a commercial pilot license, the first one being C. Arthur Anderson, the primary instructor at Tuskegee, he was the first one to receive a commercial license. And Greene was the first one to receive an A and P license.

CK: A and P, it's called?
HJ: Yeah, A and P, yeah. It means aircraft and power plant; talking about the engine.

CK: Would you like to see the Air Center reopened as a field?
HJ: Columbia Air Field? Yeah, I would like to see it reopened. Yeah. Sure I would, yeah.

CK: What would you like to see there?
HJ: I'd like to see, well, it just depends on what the needs are. The ideal thing would be to have a commercial operation that served the commercial aviation community. That would be the ideal thing. The next thing would be to have a flight school down there.

Yeah, and, you know, you could just go up, up the ladder, really. I don't know whether or not if that's going to ever be possible.

CK: That's something good to aspire to, I think.
HJ: Yeah, well, there are some people working on that project right now, but I don't know how successful they're going to be.

CK: Thank you very much.

Interviewee:	**Marjorie Osborne**
Topic:	Isaac Brown House
Relationship to Property:	Former owner
Inventory Number:	72-9-30
Location of Interview:	Home of Mrs. Osborne 713 59th Place Fairmount Heights, Maryland 20743
Date of Interview:	August 20, 2008
Interviewer:	Charlotte King

Marjorie Osborne

CK: I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself, about growing up, and I will also ask you some questions about the Isaac Brown House. What is your full name?
MO: Marjorie Gresham Osborne

CK: Mrs. Osborne, where were you born?
MO: West Point, Virginia

CK: When were you born?
MO: February 16, 1940.

CK: Where did you grow up?
MO: I grew up in Virginia in King William County.

CK: How long have you lived here?
MO: I've lived in Fairmount Heights for 33 years.

CK: Describe where you lived as a child.
MO: I lived in a little town called West Point. It was a peninsula about 33 miles outside of Williamsburg, Virginia. It was a little town with 24 streets, all single family homes and lots of rivers.

CK: Did your entire family live there?
MO: Yes, I had mother, father, two brothers and three sisters all born in West Point.

CK: Do you remember any favorite places as a child?
MO: I think my favorite place was just on the street we lived on because of the closeness of all the children that played and the people that did the baking, and you could always get lots of good fresh baked goods from them. It was just a quiet, peaceful little town.

CK: What brought you to Fairmount Heights?
MO: In 1970, I joined the police force and I when I joined the police force I met and married a James Carter III. And he had a small house in Fairmount Heights. And we increased the size of that house, and in 1977 I married him and made this my home.

CK: You've been here the entire time since then?
MO: Yes. Yes.

CK: Always in the same area?
MO: The same house for 33 years. Right next to the Isaac Brown House. And when I came to Fairmount Heights, Mrs. Hester Gordon lived next door in that house. And she became my friend and she and I used to sit on the porch together and talk. And she would teach me how to make preserves. We had a good relationship and she became "Grandma" to me because I didn't have a grandmother of my own.

CK: What do you consider the most important event in your life?
MO: Well, I think the most important would be having a daughter Kiristan Leftwich, she was Kiristan Carter then she got married three years ago and became Kiristan Leftwich, because it was years after my other two children were born and ready to come out of school. So I think that was my biggest venture.

CK: The next set of questions relate to school. Where did you go to school?
MO: I went to elementary school in West Point, Virginia. High school was in King William County, Virginia, about thirty miles from where I was born and raised. And I came to D.C. in 1969, '68 or '69, and I went to nursing school in D. C. and became a practical nurse. Later I went to the police academy, so I changed professions from nursing to police officer in 1970.

CK: Did you stay on the police force for a long time then?
MO: I spent 10 years on the force. I was retired at the age of 40. A problem with my knees.

CK: Did you work after that?
MO: When I retired, I retired with a little baby, so I stayed home for eight years and got to raise my child myself. And then at the age of eight, I went out and I got a job at a law firm back in D. C. again.

CK: So when your daughter was eight years old.
MO: Yes.

CK: So, you worked in a law firm then?
MO: Yes, I worked in the law firm until 1997. And then I went back into retirement.

CK: The following questions are about church. Did you go to church regularly as a child?
MO: I did. Every Sunday I went to church in West Point, Virginia, called Mount Nebo Baptist Church. We moved from the town into the country, I joined and stayed in the Baptist faith at Baptist Liberty Baptist Church and I stayed there until I left Virginia at the age of 18. Since I've been in Fairmount heights I've only attended Grace Methodist Church, which is two blocks over.

CK: Are you a member of Grace Methodist?
MO: No, I used to go with Grandma all the time.

CK: Do you go now to church?
MO: Sometimes.

CK: Still go to Grace?
MO: Yeah, if I'm here. But like most Sundays, if I'm going to church, I'm in Virginia back at Baptist Liberty or my nephew's church.

CK: What's it called?
MO: (can't recall)

CK: The next questions relate to the specific historic property that we talked about, the Isaac Brown House. What is your association with the Isaac Brown House?
MO: Because I was friends with Grandma, Mrs. Hester Gordon, when she was put in a nursing home, her son, who was the owner of the house, offered to sell it to me to keep in the neighborhood. And I bought that house from him in 1988, I believe. At some point, Kiristan and I lived in the house for two years after that.

CK: What do you remember about the house?
MO: Well, the biggest thing was I remember living next to Grandma and get up in the day time and go over and we always sat on the porch, and talked, and everybody in the neighborhood came to visit her, and called her "Aunt Het" and we all sat on the porch and talked.

CK: What did they call her?
MO: Aunt Het.

CK: Het? H-e-t?
MO: H-e-t, 'cause her name was Hester, but they called her Aunt Het. And many days we would be in, and sittin' in the house in the kitchen. And she always cooked good, so we always had something to eat, or we sat out in the yard. And she was telling me how, when she first came there, there was no running water in the house, and that there was a well right outside the porch, and the well had good water. And then at some point the town said they all had to close up their wells and put in running water.

CK: When she lived there, had they made any alterations to the house?
MO: The only alteration was the addition of the bathroom on the far, on the rear end of the house. Other than they still, it had two rooms upstairs, two bedrooms upstairs, living room, dining room, and kitchen downstairs. And then at the end of the kitchen, they put the bathroom.

CK: So they just added a room on and made into a bathroom?
MO: Yes.

CK: But the rest of it, they didn't change the structure of it?
MO: No. It's basically as it was then.

CK: Do you know when the house was originally built?
MO: Not exactly. I think Mr. Gordon said it was somewhere approximately around 1910 that it was built.

CK: Do you know, when it was first built, do you know who lived in the house then? Did the owners live there?
MO: The owners lived there then, Isaac Brown. Because Mr. Gordon said he purchased it from Isaac Brown about 1940, I believe.

CK: So, Mr. Gordon purchased it from Mr. Brown in 1940? And the house is still the same size, they haven't added on to it since then?
MO: No.

CK: When you purchased the house, did you make any alterations to it?
MO: The only thing I did have done, the roof of the porch fell in and I had to put a new roof on. But other than that there's been no major alterations. And one window was vandalized and I had to replace that window.

CK: Is that window in the back?
MO: Yes.

CK: So, as far as you know, first it was the Browns that lived in the house, and then the Gordons purchased it, and then you lived there for a short time with your daughter?
MO: Yes.

CK: And now who owns the house?
MO: The house is now owned by Kiristan. K-i-r-i-s-t-a-n.

CK: And her last name?
MO: Leftwich. L-e-f-t-w-i-c-h.

CK: And Kiristan is your daughter?
MO: My daughter. I gave her the house about three months ago.

CK: Why did you decide to give it to her?
MO: Well, because it previously, it was owned by another daughter who passed, and to keep the house in the family and since it was next to mine, I gave it to my baby daughter.

CK: The daughter who, what family was that? You said another daughter owned it.
MO: Sonja owned it, but she got sick and died before she got to do anything with it. Sonja C. Osborne.

CK: So, Sonja was your daughter?
MO: Yes. She was the older daughter.

CK: I'm sorry about your loss.
MO: Well, I'm getting over it. Somehow.

CK: How long ago was that?
MO: Four years. I gave it to her so she would have her own place but yet be close enough, because she wanted to be close to where I was. And that's the thing with this one. She wanted a house, but she doesn't want to go away, she wants to stay.

CK: How long did your daughter Sonja live there?
MO: She didn't get to live there.

CK: She didn't get to live in it?
MO: No. She came back from Pittsburgh, and she was, I guess, sick when she came back and she died within two years of coming back.

CK: But you had sold the house to her already. You had turned it over?
MO: Yes. Yes. So then I had to re-do and turn it over to Kiristan.

CK: Why did you move away from the house?
MO: Did I?

CK: Yes.
MO: Well, because when Kiristan was in elementary school, I went through a divorce with her father and during that divorce the judge said I was entitled to keep her birth house, which was this one, so then I moved back into my own, into this house, where she was born.

CK: So you had kept this house during the time you lived there as well?
MO: Yes.

CK: What else do you remember about when your friend who lived there, Mrs. Gordon?
MO: Well, the house never had central heat or air, because she used to heat the house with wood. And then as she got older, they decided they would put a space heater in the middle of the house, a gas space heater. And it was heated with that. It was comfortable, never was ever too hot or too cold. And the bathroom was sort of, I guess, no planning, but the bathroom was in a peculiar area because you had to go through the kitchen and around the hot water heater to get into the bathroom, but other than that, it was just a comfortable, pleasant house to be in.

CK: Is there central air or central heating now?
MO: No. Nothing. And I guess the seasons have changed because when I left from there it was colder in the front of the house because of that one little space heater. Mrs. Gordon started off with a wood heater and that made it really warm. But the gas heater was never enough to warm four rooms that size.

CK: What was the wood heater like that she had?
MO: It was, I guess, about four feet high, and you just put the wood in from the side and it heated up pretty good.

CK: So, it was a portable unit?
MO: No. It went into a flue. It was a flue in the dining room, and the heater was there, and heated the four rooms pretty good.

CK: But it wasn't like a fireplace that was built into the wall?
MO: No. No. It was a stove.

CK: Oh, a stove. Okay.
MO: A wood stove.

CK: Is that what you used for cooking too, that wood stove?
MO: No. It had a gas oven and heating for cooking. I don't remember having, her having a wood cook stove.

CK: So, that was just used for heating?
MO: Uh huh.

CK: And the gas stove…
MO: Used for cooking.

CK: What does that house mean to you?
MO: I guess because she, Mrs. Gordon, was such a good friend, I like to see that the house is there. I like to remember it because a lot of times when I couldn't find my baby, all I had to go was go next door, and she was next door with her grandma. So, I sort of figure it belongs there. My daughter and I are both happy with it being there.

CK: Is the house important to your family?
MO: I don't think, not as much as with me and Kiristan, my daughter, that now owns it. She remembers it as Grandma's house, and she's not particular about it being destroyed. Although people have told us to destroy it.

CK: They've told you that you should just knock it down?
MO: Yeah. Yeah

CK: Why?
MO: I guess because everybody wants everything that's new and modern and fancy. Not that it withstood years of hurricanes, winds, and everything, and the only thing that's loose is some of the bricks up on that flue, but other than that, that house has withstood some bad storms and stuff, and it's in good shape.

CK: Who was it that suggested that you tear it down?
MO: According to, some of the contractors that didn't want to build around it or to repair because it's easier to just tear it down and put up something fast than to do it a little at a time.

CK: Do you think the house is important to the community?
MO: I guess being the community is mixed now, so those people that knew Mrs. Gordon and used to come and sit on the front porch and talk to her think it's something that's part of the community. When's that new people that just moved in, or people that are up to wanting everything to be so modern, they aren't that interested. But there are a number of people that I guess, still around that still thinks it's a very good house. I think they would enjoy seeing it stay here.

CK: Do you have any plans for the house?
MO: We're trying to get it remodeled now. And so Kiristan will be living in it. It has to have a whole new electrical system, and heating and air, and have to have a new bathroom because that bathroom has collapsed too. And we'd like to see the porch back to the way it was originally.

CK: Your plans for remodeling, do you want to change the appearance of house?
MO: Not the original structure. We would like to put something beside, behind and beside, but not the original piece.

CK: So, you're thinking of adding on to the house, is that it?
MO: Yes. Where the bathroom fell in. Starting there and come over in back, but not…that will always look as it was. We want to keep that original structure as it is.

CK: I see, and just add on to the back, is that it?
MO: Yes. So that when you look at it you still see the original house first.

CK: Do you think the house will be important to future generations?
MO: I think it will be for us and if she has children, for her, because we can always tell them that we spent time there and how we enjoyed it and how we enjoyed having Grandma there next to us. It can go on and on.

CK: So, you'd like to keep it in your family?
MO: Yes. That is my plan. To keep it in the family.

CK: Do you know, was the house ever important to the social life of the community?
MO: I think so. Because, like I said, people, when she got up and she came out on the front porch, if you, people came by and sat on the porch and talked to her and visited with her. People from all over that knew her just came and visited, because I know she was near a hundred and walking around. So I think people would, our original neighborhood people from the time I got here in 1977, see those people knew her and they would remember her and the house.

CK: Do you remember any significant events that occurred in the house?
MO: No. Not any that I can think of.

CK: Has the meaning of the house changed over time?
MO: I don't, I don't, for me it hasn't. But the other people that thought that it needed to be destroyed because it wasn't new and modern; I think that's the significance of that. But to me it's just Grandma's house, and I like it.

CK: And now it's Kiristan's house.
MO: Yes.

CK: How has life changed in the area since the house was built?
MO: I suppose we've lost a lot of the older members, and the houses that are built now, new generations have moved in. I'm not aware of half of the people who live here now, like it was then. Because there's only about three families close around that I can remember that were there when I came in 1977. Everybody else is new. New houses, new people.

CK: But there are still three families that you remember from the time you moved in?
MO: Yeah.

CK: Do you associate the house with Isaac Brown at all?
MO: No, because I until recently, I never knew that it was called the Isaac Brown House. I had gotten a pamphlet years ago and said that it was some historical significance to it, but I never followed up on the history of it.

CK: So you don't know what the background is of Mr. Brown?
MO: I have no background information on Mr. Brown at all. And unless Mrs. Brooks [long time neighborhood resident] does. Because I hadn't heard anything about it.

CK: So your association is more through the Gordons and your own possession of the house?
MO: Yes. Yes.

CK: And tell me again, please, what you would like to see happen to the house.
MO: I would like to see the original house restored and just kept in the neighborhood as it is. Not the actual structure redone or changed in a lot of ways, but just to bring it back to its original shape.

CK: And to keep it in your family?
MO: Yes. And to keep it, well, I'm making efforts to keep it in the family.

CK: Why is that so important to you?
MO: Well, because like the lady across the street says, you can't get, they can make a lot of things, but they can't make new land, so you keep the land you have, and if you got a good roof over your head, you keep the good roof over your head. And that's the way I see that.

CK: And then you preserve your association with it too, memories that you have as well.
MO: Yes. And then when I'm gone, they'll have my memories to stick with.

CK: Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the house?
MO: No. I guess if I can, I'll try to see if I can find out any information on Mr. Brown, but I've asked the three people. and they didn't know anything about him at all. And before then I hadn't heard anything about it because it was just associated with the Gordons who was the second owner before me.

CK: Thank you.

Interviewee:	**Evelyn Quander Rattley**
Topic:	John Henry Quander House
Relationship to Property:	Quander descendent
Inventory Number:	79-63-70
Location of Interview:	Home of Mrs. Rattley 1711 Allison Street, NE Washington, DC, 20017
Date of Interview:	August 7, 2008
Interviewer:	Charlotte King

Evelyn Quander Rattley

CK: I am going to ask you some questions about yourself, about growing up, and I will also ask you some specific questions about the Quander House. What is your full name?
EQR: My full name is Evelyn Orena Quander Rattley.

CK: When were you born?
EQR: I was born October 8, 1924.

CK: Where were you born?
EQR: I was born in Washington, D. C.

CK: Where did you grow up?
EQR: I grew up in Washington, D. C.

CK: How long have you and your family lived in the area?
EQR: I am 83 years old, so I've lived in the area, in Washington, D. C, for 83 years.

CK: Your family has been here a very long time?
EQR: Yes.

CK: Describe where you lived as a child.
EQR: As a child, I lived in southeast Washington, D. C., which is now called Capitol Hill. Every summer, two days after school closed, my two brothers and I went to the Quander family home in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, which is the house on Old Crain Highway, and this is where my brothers and I spent our summer. Three days before school opened, we returned to Washington, D.C., to get new shoes to go to school.

CK: Do you remember any special or favorite places when you were a child?
EQR: My favorite place here in Washington, D.C., was going to, walking to the Capitol. And counting how many steps to go up and down to the Capitol. The other place was under the old walnut tree at my grandfather's home on Old Crain Highway.

CK: Why was that so special to you?
EQR: Well, that's where I sat most of the time because my chore was threading the needles so that my aunts could mend the clothing of the brothers and my grandfather. And then also, I had the job of gathering the walnuts, so that they could be used for cooking.

CK: What did they make with the walnuts?
EQR: Oh, we had walnut cakes, walnut bread, instead of making peanut butter, it was walnut butter. So, and then, some of them was taken to the market because my grandfather had a tobacco farm, strip tobacco, and we took vegetables and the walnut products to be sold.

CK: Do you remember any places that were considered especially historic or sacred in your community?
EQR: I don't know whether the meeting place in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, which used to be where the school board met and the Knights of Saint John met and the Ladies' Auxiliary met. And that was directly across the highway from the Assumption Catholic Church, and I think now the old courthouse was there,

but Main Street has now been modernized, so I don't know whether that particular building is still there. But Assumption Catholic Church holds great memories for the family because many of my aunts and uncles were married there, (sound gap) social activities there.

CK: Do you remember your parents talking about their lives?
EQR: Oh yes. That was really the foundation of the Quander family because the parents talked about family values; they stressed hard work and education. Those were the three main things that were constantly told to us. To love one another, to respect the elders, to be polite, and also because I had so many, my aunts who went on to become teachers, inspired me to become a teacher.

CK: What do you consider the most important event in your life?
EQR: Oh there have been so many for 83 years, so… I can remember my first communion when I was a little girl. My grandfather, my grandmother, my father, my mother, all my aunts and uncles and everyone came. Then, the next outstanding event was my wedding. I was married to a wonderful man, who died in 1991, but we were married in 1947. And then, coming up to the present time, I have had the honor of meeting the Pope. So that was the culmination of all these wonderful, wonderful things that have happened to me in these 83 years.

CK: Was that during the Pope's recent visit?
EQR: Yes, it was. And also, when Pope John Paul II was here, I belong to an organization called the Council of Catholic, the Council, and the National Council of Catholic Women. And the Archdiocese of Washington has a chapter and I was president, past president, and what was called past province director, and so the Council of Catholic Women has always been called on to partake and participate in the liturgy or the mass and have some type of relationship, whether we act as ushers or volunteers so forth, so this is how I was fortunate enough to have been able in my lifetime to say that I have seen both of the popes in this modern day and age.

CK: That's really nice. What has changed most in your community over the years?
EQR: I think mostly, the values that I stressed with my children and my only grandson and what was stressed in our family, the Quander family, those values have broken down. And it's unfortunate that the values of home, and what family means, and the respect for others and for others' property, and for others' personal wellbeing is lost, and that love thy neighbor is not practiced. And even the third one about education. When I came along it was a hardship, really, to be educated because your parents had to work so long and so hard to provide for you even your shoes. And now, to me, the young people are not taking advantage of what is there for them, and this is what seems to hurt me the most.

CK: Where did you go to school?
EQR: I attended school right here in Washington, D. C. I was fortunate enough to get my early education in the Catholic schools, St. Cyprian's Catholic School, which was really called St. Ann's Catholic School, which is no longer in existence. And from there I went to public school and I graduated from Cardoza High School, Howard University with my bachelor's degree, and George Washington University with a master's degree. I went on to Catholic University hoping to get my doctorate, and I did not complete it, I have yet to write my thesis. And I have also attended Trinity University, which was then called Trinity College, two years and graduated from what is called the Education for Parish Service, EPS.

CK: Education for …
EQR: Parish Service. In other words, EPS.

CK: Thank you. What do you remember about going to school when you were a youngster?
EQR: Happy times. We, at that time you had prayer in the schools, you lined up and you were inspected to see if your shoes were clean and shiny, and if you had your, the girls, had a handkerchief pinned to their dresses. And they inspected your fingernails, to make sure they were clean. Then you said, good morning, and you greeted everyone. And as I said, then we would sing, we would have Pledge of Allegiance, and then we would have prayer. And then I was raised, early childhood was by the Catholic nuns, Oblate Sisters of Providence. They are now located in Baltimore, Maryland.

CK: Can you describe anything about the building or the classrooms?
EQR: The classrooms where I attended school were always clean, very clean. And we had chores, the children had chores. Some of, there was a group that, you had to clean out your desks every evening and then there was someone who would bring the trash can around so that you could put your trash in. Then there was someone who would take the trash can and set outside the door for the janitor to collect it. We had someone to beat the erasers; you had someone to erase the blackboard. And then it was special if the teacher asked you to stay after school and help her to set up for the next day. Now, as I mentioned, my father's sisters, they were, one of them was the principal of a school in Maryland. The other one was an elementary school teacher in Maryland. Then I have two uncles who married teachers, so there were four teachers in my family when I was growing up. And I had occasion to visit their classrooms, and I was so impressed and this is why I retired as a teacher today because of the influence of my early childhood and being able to visit the classrooms of my aunts and in one particular school with my aunt, I did some substitute teaching. So, this is how I really got started.

CK: It's a wonderful way to start. Do you remember your parents talking about their experiences in school?
EQR: Oh yes. My father John Edward Quander, Sr. was the oldest of the children who lived in this house. And he was not able to finish his education there in Maryland. He being the oldest had to work and support and help support the family. And he left the farm early and moved to Washington D.C., and this is why I was raised in Washington, D.C., because my father moved here. My father was only able to go to the third grade while he was in Maryland, but when he came to Washington, D. C., he went to night school. He drove a taxi cab during the day, after he drove the taxi cab, he went to work at the Stone Paper factory and three nights a week he went to night school and he was able to complete the sixth grade. And he was so very proud of the fact that he had this diploma and he encouraged, my father and mother had three children, and he encouraged the three of us to be educated and we were very fortunate. My brothers also attended high school and college.

My mother was able to attend school up through the ninth grade and this was at that time, it was called the Armstrong Trade School. And there she learned how to cook and sew.

CK: Thank you. Do you remember your grandparents talking about experiences at school?
EQR: My, I don't remember too much about my grandmother because my grandmother passed away at an early, when I was at an early age. And my father's oldest sister Henrietta really took over as the mother to continue to raise the other brothers and sisters. And my grandfather was a statesman. He was a very strong elegant person. He rode a horse all through town. Not a horse and buggy, just his horse. And he was the one, although he was not able to be educated, but I don't know who taught him how to read. Not, I mean, simple books and he would get those books and he read to us. And he insisted that you get another book and that you come and read to him. And this is how he would try to get one book better than

the other so that we could continue to read to him. And he insisted on this education and this is why all of his children were able to go to college and become teachers. Two of them became teachers because the other men went to college and married teachers.

CK: That is remarkable.
EQR: Yes.

CK: Did you go to church regularly then as a child?
EQR: Yes, we did. Here in Washington, D.C., we attended St. Cyprian's Catholic Church and for special occasions in all the summers we attended Assumption Catholic Church in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. And that church is still here today. And at that time, we African-Americans could not sit in front of the church. We sat in the back of the church, not at St. Cyprian's because St. Cyprian's was a complete African-American church founded by slaves. And this is the church we attended in Washington, D.C., with no prejudice at all. But when we went to Maryland to stay with my grandfather in the old homestead and went to Assumption Catholic Church, this is when we sat in the back of the church and we had to wait until all the other parishioners went up to the communion rail to receive communion and then we went up to receive communion. And this is how that was back in those days.

CK: Do you go to church regularly now?
EQR: Yes. I attend St. Benedict the Moor, that is M-o-o-r Catholic Church in northeast Washington, D.C., That is also an African-American church staffed by the Josephite fathers who are dedicated to spiritually give hope and life to African-Americans and Native Americans. And I have attended that church for 62 years. It started in 1946.

And my mother and father and my brothers attended that church. And at this time there is a room called the Quander Room at that church where meetings, conferences, and small affairs are held because that room holds 100 people.

CK: Do you remember your parents describing their experiences with the church?
EQR: Well, yes. My mother and father met through a cousin of my father's. And my mother was not Catholic, my mother was Baptist. And, but my father was so smitten with my mother that I understand that he would not give up in courting her, so finally she decided that she, in order to marry this man, she would turn Catholic, and become Catholic. And they were married at St. Augustine's Catholic Church here in Washington, D.C., which is called the mother church, the oldest African-American church here in Washington, D.C.,

CK: Do you remember your grandparents talking about church?
EQR: Yes, yes. Oh, dear, dear, dear. We had to pray, pray, and pray. And my father and my grandfather and then at that time my grandmother was living, but she was sickly all the time. This is what I remember most about my grandmother, is that she taught me how to say the rosary, which is an important prayer in the Catholic church. And I enjoyed sitting beside her on the floor as a child saying the rosary with her. And during the summer, you see, there was lots of thunder storms back then, not as many, well we're beginning to have more now than we used to have. And whenever it started thunder and lightning everyone had to come in from the fields, from whatever they were doing, in the house, kneel down and start praying. And I would wake up, I would go to sleep, and I would wake up and the sun would be shining and everybody else was still praying (laughing). So, my grandparents believed in prayer, and this

went along also with family values or, how to treat one another, and especially husband and wife, how to treat each other and then, how the mother and father should treat the children.

CK: Is there a cemetery associated with your church?
EQR: Not with St. Benedict the Moor Church here in Washington, D.C., My father and mother and all of us, and when I say us, my late husband and where I will be buried, and my uncles and aunts, buried at Mt. Olivette Catholic Cemetery here in Washington, D. C. But my grandfather and grandmother and not only the Quanders, the Greenfields on my grandmother's side, are buried in the cemetery in Upper Marlboro in Maryland. I cannot think of the name of that cemetery.

CK: The next questions will relate to your work. You've retired, you said, as a school teacher?
EQR: Yes, I'm retired 17 years as an elementary school teacher and, actually retired as supervisor of teachers of special education.

CK: Thank you. The following questions relate to a specific property to which you have an association. What is your association with the Quander house?
EQR: Well, as I stated before, my father and his siblings were born there and lived there. And I visited there for special occasions. We were there for Thanksgiving, Christmas, birthdays, weddings, picnics, lawn parties, teas…oh, we had so many of the teas. We dressed up for teas and so forth. And, as I said, I visited there as a child during my summer months. This is where my brothers, my two brothers and I, and along with other first cousins. They didn't stay the whole summer. The other first cousins, would come and stay the weekend, or maybe two weeks, but I and my two brothers were there for the whole summer.

CK: So, how long was that, how old were you when you started to go there for the summer?
EQR: Oh, I would say, I would say, from the time that I was about five years old.

CK: And how long did you continue to do that?
EQR: Up until I was about 15.

CK: So, you said you went there all summer long and then you came back just a few days before school started?
EQR: I would stay there, we would go there, in, when school closed in June, and we would come home after Labor Day in September.

CK: What do you remember most about the house?
EQR: Now, I wonder how so many people could get into that little house! But it seemed large, and very comfortable and just so warm and loving. And there was a big potbelly stove in the main room that kept the whole house warm. And then over the side, was the dining room. And as I said before, when I would sit under the walnut tree and thread needles. It was because the aunts had the job of sewing lace on all the linens in the house. So all the linens in the house had beautiful lace on them. There were linen covers on the arms of the chairs, on the back of the chairs, on the dining room table, on the side boards. Anywhere you looked there was beautiful, beautiful lace cloths and embroidery work. And then, we were not allowed as children to go into the room off from these two rooms because that was my grandfather's room and where my grandmother was. We were invited to come in when we had time to pray and for special occasions. But the children, we did not disturb that particular room. In fact, in the upstairs there were three rooms, and there were bunk beds everywhere because there were whole lots of people. And we just got along well, but now I wonder today, how did they manage? And to bring in and accommodate nieces,

and nephews, and cousins when there was already a quite a number of people already living there. But there was plenty of food always. Plenty of food and just happiness. We would pray, we would sing. We would do what was called the "buck dance."

CK: What's that?
EQR: And, but we had to do that in the back of the house because my grandfather did not allow dancing. And buck dancing, I don't know, it was something that they would do, and they taught us. You would jump up and down and you'd kick the heels.

CK: Like a buck would do?
EQR: Yes, uh huh.

CK: Interesting. How big was the house?
EQR: The house now, it was not, is not large at all compared to the way houses are, but then it seemed large. And, as I said, it accommodated everyone. There was the main room with this big potbelly stove, and then, as I said, off from that was the dining room, and that was a nice large, sunny room, and it always had a beautiful lace tablecloth on it. And we only ate in that room for special occasions like the holidays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, someone's birthday, a wedding. The tea parties were held outside on the beautiful lawn and under the walnut tree. Outside there was a meat house, and there was a, where they smoked the meat. And then there was a place, a big place, where they stripped and hung tobacco. And then there was an open space with an awning over it where we ate in the summer time. And the children, my grandfather, and uncles and aunts, those who worked and all, ate first. And those of us who were young, we had to take branches from the trees and we would have to fan to keep the flies away. And then after our grandparents and uncles and aunts and all who would come in from work would eat, then the children would eat. And, as I said, there was always plenty of food. They raised chickens and had hogs and cows, one cow. And a vegetable garden. And when I would come from the city to come there, my father and mother would always send about six loaves of bread. And all of my aunts and uncles and cousins and all there called that city bread and they loved it. And I didn't care about the city bread, I loved the biscuits. That homemade biscuits. And I couldn't understand why they would take and throw the homemade biscuits and crumble up to the chickens and want city bread, and I wanted the biscuits!

CK: What was city bread like?
EQR: Well, that's the bread that we buy, that we would eat here in Washington, D.C., and buy in the store.

CK: Was it sliced?
EQR: Yes, just regular white bread. And they would call that the city bread.

CK: How many people were living in the house when you would come to visit?
EQR: Let's see. My grandfather, well, at one time I said my grandmother was there, but my grandmother passed at a very early age. And I'll get back to her passing. But my grandfather, my Aunt Henrietta who is the oldest, and next to her was Mary, Aunt Christine, I mean Aunt Charity, Aunt Christine lived down the road; Francis, Jimmy–Uncle Jimmy, Uncle Gene, Uncle Paul, Chesterfield, John, and Kenny. Well, on my fingers I come to eleven. So let's say 11 or 12 (counting).

CK: And you said there were three bedrooms upstairs?
EQR: Yes.

CK: So, those were the only rooms within the house itself?
EQR: Well, when I said bedrooms, they were not large like we would consider a large bedroom. There really was one, one large room that was partitioned, that was divided into three parts. That's the best way to put it. I would not say three big, separate bedrooms because the house was not that large. But just one large room that covered the whole top of the house that was partitioned off into three parts. So that the girl children slept all the way over in the corner, then there were my aunts, the elder women, and then the men and the boys were in the other section. It was all one big room, but just partitioned off.

CK: So, there were partitions to separate them?
EQR: Yes.

CK: And then downstairs, that main room, was that the kitchen, the one with the stove?
EQR: Oh no, no, no. The kitchen, they didn't cook in the house. The kitchen was outside. You see, I forgot to say that, there was where you would eat. And then there was a kitchen, and then there was the meat house, and then it was the place where they stripped tobacco. So these were like, not rooms, just like you would build individual stalls with a covering over them.

CK: So, it was like just one big structure, and then it was divided into these different sections?
EQR: Yes. And no doors where the outside. No doors on anything on the outside. Of course, the house had doors, but not the outside places.

CK: Did they cook out there even in the winter?
EQR: Yes. Yes, and no running water and no bathrooms. We had to go down, let's see, about, I don't know, what would we say, 50 feet to the outhouse. Then there was a well to go and get the water. This is why I said, there were different chores for different children, and different uncles and aunts. Some of them had the chore, I never did, of cleaning the outhouse, they had to keep the outhouse clean. There were those who go bring the water back. Somebody who had to go kill the chickens, and all kinds of duties and things that, that were allocated. And then after all the chores were done, it was good family time.

CK: The buildings, how far was that from the house exactly, that outdoor structure with all these…?
EQR: Oh, no, it wasn't far at all. You just walk down the steps from the house about, I'd say, 20 feet.

CK: So it wasn't too bad in the winter time when they cooked outdoors to bring the food inside?
EQR: Yeah, because this was the back, from the back of the old house, from where we lived, the back door, right straight down and you go right to, either where we ate, or where you had to…in the kitchen, you would bring water to where we had to wash the dishes. Because see, the women did the cooking, and cleaning, and washing the dishes. And that's where the young ones came in; we had to dry the dishes.

CK: Where were the dishes stored? Were they stored outside in that building?
EQR: Well, the eating dishes were, but the good dishes that we had for Thanksgiving, and Christmas, and the holidays stayed in the house, in the dining room. And that was special to bring those out for special occasions. And then, we would bring, they would bring the chairs out when we would have the teas. And that was nice and everyone, this was Sunday evenings, and they would, people would dress up. And we always had to have a hat on and gloves. Even to go to church. And I can remember when my

little girl was born and we were going out some place and she says, "Mommy, where are my 'gubs'? I need my 'gubs." So, even then, you know, for the next generation, I taught my daughter that she must wear gloves and a hat also. But they don't do that now.

CK: When you had the teas, were they in that outside under the walnut tree?
EQR: Under the walnut tree. That was a beautiful area on the side, on the side. And it kept, the, my Aunt Henrietta's sons Kenny and John, their job was to cut the grass and trim the bushes and keep that area clean. And then, my Aunt Charity and my Aunt Mary would plant the flowers. So that area was just like a beautiful garden. And this was why I enjoyed and talked so much about the walnut tree. This is where we had the teas and a wedding reception also was held there, under there. When my Aunt Mary, that was the youngest girl, young lady, married.

CK: Do you know how old the house is?
EQR: Well, if I'm 83, and, let's see, my father, oh, I don't know how old that house is. I know it's over a hundred years, if I'm 83 years old!

CK: Did your grandparents live there too?
EQR: Yes.

CK: They lived in the house and then your parents lived in the house?
EQR: No, no, no. My father…

CK: He moved to D.C.?
EQR: Yes. Yes. My mother and father, as a married couple never lived in the house. My father lived in the house, I imagine, until he was able to come here. He probably left home at 16 to work here in Washington, D.C., and then he would send money back or visit. But he stayed in Washington, D. C. and this was when he was introduced to my mother, not at 16 years old, but, I think he was 21, and my mother…no, no, no. My mother was 21 and he was 23. That's how it was when they married.

CK: So, your grandparents then were the first people to live in the house?
EQR: Yes.

CK: So, did they build it, do you know?
EQR: I don't know. I really don't know that much about the house as far as who built it and when it was built. I really couldn't tell you that.

CK: Was the house enlarged or modified over time?
EQR: Yes. There was a kitchen added to the house and my Aunt Henrietta was so happy that she did not have to go outside to cook anymore. And so that was the only modification. And the kitchen wasn't that large, but at least she did not have to go outside to cook.

CK: Do you know when that, the enlargement took place?
EQR: I guess that happened about 25 years ago. I'm just guessing.

CK: Do you know if the house is still standing?
EQR: I don't know if the house is actually standing. The last time I was there, which has been, I don't mean in Upper Marlboro, but just to visit there particularly, about ten years ago. They were building up all around there, developing houses. And it was like the only antique, old fashioned thing standing with all the modern houses around it. So, I really don't know what has happened to it. Whether it's still there. At one time, I think someone, one of my uncles leased it out at one time, and someone was having a vegetable garden there. But I really cannot verify, who, when, and where about that because this particular uncle is deceased.

CK: After your grandparents were no longer here, then, did members of the family live in the house?
EQR: Oh, yes. The last one to leave the house was my Uncle Gene, whose name is Uncle Eugene.

CK: Do you know when that was, that he would have lived there?
EQR: I really cannot say. I really can't because he, his wife taught school there at Douglas Junior High School in Upper Marlboro and they moved to D.C., also. Eventually, everyone moved to D.C., and, as I said, as they would leave the homestead, they would stay with my mother and father until they got on their feet and was able to work and go out on their own. So, this was why I lost contact with the house itself, because the family was on this end in Washington, D.C., and we started socializing and having our family gatherings and all right here in Washington, D.C., rather than back in Maryland. However, one of the sisters, my Aunt Christine Simmons married James Simmons, and she and her husband still lived in Upper Marlboro but not in the old family homestead. They moved further up the road on Old Crain Highway and the family started going there for family gatherings and so forth because no one, at that time, was in the old house.

CK: But the house was occupied after your grandparents were no longer there and the other children would stay in the house? Is that correct?
EQR: After my grandfather passed, yes. There were children there in the house, but then as I said, gradually each of the children left. My Uncle Francis, my Uncle Paul, and my Uncles James, Jimmy, went in the service. And when they came out of the service, they married and moved into Washington, D. C. So, you see, as they gradually left the Army or finished college, and then they did not stay or live in the family house. They may have visited there. And, as I said, the last uncle that stayed there was my Uncle Eugene. Unfortunately, he is dead or he would have been able to tell you more.

CK: But he was the last one to live there?
EQR: Yes.

CK: What does the house mean to you?
EQR: Well, the house itself, the building, I feel bad about the fact that I am not physically aware of it and where it is and what happened, or if it's still there, but I can live on with the happy memories that I've had. And the lesson that I learned and the values that I have received and that I have been able to pass on to my own son and daughter and to my only grandson and great grandson. They are very proud that they are descendents of the Quander family. This, I feel, is a part of what that house means to me is that I can look back on the memories that I have had and the lessons that I have learned from emulating my grandfather and grandmother, my father and his siblings. I hope that we will be able to carry on the Quander family and continue. There are enough males to continue the family.

CK: Is the house important to your family?
EQR: Well, I think it's important to the family as far as its historical value.

CK: Do you think it's important to the community?
EQR: I don't know. I don't know that I can say that. I don't really know.

CK: Do you think it will be important to future generations?
EQR: Only if what it stood for in its day and that that can be a lesson to others, or an example, I should say, to others.

CK: Was the house important to the social life of the community?
EQR: At that time, yes. Because, as I stated, the societies at that time, in that era, were all African-Americans. So, the Knights of St. John Society, my grandfather held meetings there, which my father and all of my uncles were members of that organization. The other organization was the Holy Name Society, the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Then my grandfather and my Aunt Henrietta, who took over as head of the household after her mother passed, which was my grandmother, they were both trustees of, in the early times, of the school there. So, and they had meetings there at the house, and, as I said, there were teas, and then there were weddings held there. As I recall, as I said, my aunt… and then graduation parties – I forgot that, because my aunt finished Bowie State Teachers College. The other aunt was at Virginia State. My uncle was at Virginia Union, I think that's what it's called. And so there were graduation parties and celebrations, as I said, and birthdays and Thanksgiving and Christmas, and those kinds of things always.

CK: Do you know who owns the house or the property now?
EQR: No, I do not.

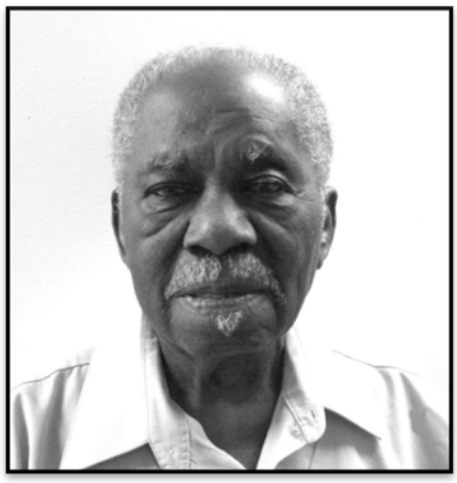
CK: When I spoke with your cousin (Rohulamin Quander), he mentioned, I think I said this to you, that they use the grounds to grow vegetables or fruit. Do you know anything about that?
EQR: No only that, as I said, when I understood when it was leased out, the person was growing vegetables and things like that. But, when my grandfather was living, we had vegetable gardens and all because this is where we got our food, you know, mainly.

CK: What would you like to see happen, if the house is still there, what would you like to see happen to it?
EQR: Well, if it could be restored, probably, and used when they tour, bring, you know, tourists through to see this old house and so forth and so on. It could bring back memories because I was just at Mount Vernon with my cousin Rohulamin Quander for the dedication of the slave cabin there at Mount Vernon. And I was sincerely moved to think that there was a descendent of mine who was a slave who actually worked on that plantation, and here they did a replica of the slave cabin. And my cousin Rohulamin Quander was on the video that talked about the history of that slave cabin. And I was, I had pictures also, they took pictures of me standing in front of the cabin. So the only thing that I could say about that house would be that it could be used as a site for tourists if they are interested in history, and, of an African-American family that stood up for values, and education, and hard work. We certainly were influenced, and still influence, and believe in the American dream and serving our country. As I said, my father was in the World War I, my uncles were in World War II, my husband was in World War II, my first cousin, and my Aunt Christine's son was killed. She was awarded the Purple Heart. So, we stand for something and all of this could be presented as evidence of what an African-American family can achieve just by

hard work, clean living, believing in a higher being, praying, and respecting each other, and love of country, of love of family, and most of all, of education.

CK: Thank you very much.

Interviewee:	**Raymond Smith and Royette Smith** (daughter and manager of adjacent Beauty shop)
Topic:	Smith Barbershop
Relationship to Property:	Owner/operator
Inventory Number:	None
Location of Interview:	Smith Barbershop 7907 Martin Luther King, Jr., Highway Glenarden, Maryland 20706
Date of Interview:	August 4, 2008
Interviewer:	Charlotte King



Raymond Smith

CK: I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself, about growing up in Prince George's County, and about the Smith Barbershop. What is your full name?
RS: Raymond William Smith

CK: Where were you born, Mr. Smith?
RS: Prince George's County.

CK: When were you born?
RS: January 4, 1918

CK: Where did you grow up?
RS: Glenarden

CK: So, right around here in this community?
RS: Yes.

CK: How far away from where we are right now?
RS: I guess we're about 10, 15, I'd say about 20 blocks or more, that's from McLain, that would be McLain Avenue, that's where she lives (indicating Mr. Smith's daughter Royette Smith, also present at the interview).

CK: Is that McCL..?
Royette Smith: M-c-L-A-I-N Avenue
RS: And, do you want to know exactly where I lived, now that's my first house I built, that's where she lives now.

CK: Describe where you lived as a child. What was your neighborhood like?
RS: Glenarden. I lived within, right in that particular area there. Funny thing, that house would be, I lived in the third house from the house on McLain Avenue.

CK: Do you remember any favorite places in Glenarden when you were a child?
RS: Well, I would say the favorite place would be the baseball field.

CK: You liked to play baseball as a child?
RS: Yeah, I played baseball, and I had two softball teams, girls and boys. It was very good. You can get the history from Park and Planning Recreation.

CK: Good, thank you. Do you remember any places that were considered especially historic or sacred in your community?
RS: The only thing I would say there was my first church was St. Joseph's Church where, what's the name of that street?
Royette Smith: Where on Glenarden Parkway or Johnson Avenue? It was where the gas station used to be?
RS: No, it was right off there, where the playground was.
Royette Smith: I don't know the name of the street, but it was back behind there.
RS: The first St. Joseph, of course, now we have a new St. Joseph's, down there off of the 202. I was an altar boy there, too.

CK: Do you remember your parents talking about their lives?
RS: Not really. I mean my grandmother used, before she died, she used to cook for the Fairfaxes. That's a very popular name in this area.

CK: Who were they?
RS: They were Lord Fairfax, one of his sisters from England. In fact, he was, with Lord Calvert, and his sisters came with him and where St. Joseph Church is that area in there, where three or four, three sisters lived there and my mother was born and my grandmother that's up in Northhampton. My grandmother cooked down there for one of them Fairfaxes. And after they died, she cooked for some of the Claggetts, some of the boys.

CK: Do you remember your grandparents talking about their lives?
RS: Not really. During my time we had a good living in Northhampton. We got everything we wanted. Of course, I mean, I was back and forth. During the winter, they had about four families living there as farm hands, four black families, and about two or three white families, and they were farm hands. And every year in fall everybody would get a barrel of flour and a barrel of meal, according to how many was in the family. We got that free. Your wood was free, everything like that. I mean, it was nice living like that. I worked there during the summer with my family, once I got married and moved to Glenarden. I used to work down there on the farm.

CK: In Northampton?
RS: In Northampton.

CK: What do you consider the most important event in your life?
RS: The most important…? I would say this barbershop. I used to cut hair here in Glenarden when I was about 12 years old, 15 cents for children and 25 cents for grownups with those hand clippers. For years I did that until I went into the Navy. I stayed in the Navy four years, when I came out the Navy I came back, and I built my barbershop.

CK: What has changed the most in your community over your lifetime?
RS: Well, I guess, Glenarden, when we first moved to Glenarden, it was just a little town called Glenarden, and then they incorporated. And we get some mayors, there were good mayors and bad mayors, councilmen same, and I got along with all of them. I was of the committee that seen that they stayed straight.

CK: The next set of questions relate to school. Where did you go to school?
RS: At Glenarden Elementary.

CK: What do you remember about going school?
RS: Well, we had a good little walk. The Glenarden school was, they call it Glenarden, but it was I guess, about a mile or two miles back there, and we had to walk to school.

CK: It's a long way. Can you describe anything about the building or the classroom?
RS: Well, we had a two room school, two classrooms. First, second, and third was in one classroom, and fifth, sixth, and seventh was in another.

CK: Do you remember your parents talking about going school?
RS: Not really. They didn't, they went to school, but there wasn't a whole lot of conversation about that. It was down on Central Avenue somewhere (inaudible).

CK: Do you remember your grandparents talking about going to school?
RS: Not really. Like I said, my grandmother, they didn't talk too much about it, but she worked for the Fairfaxes, one of the Fairfaxes, and she worked there until she died, in fact I used to work there in the kitchen with her.

CK: You worked with her?
RS: Uh huh, sometimes. Her name was Susie Smith.

CK: Susie?
RS. Um.

CK: Did you go to church regularly as a child?
RS: Oh, you had to go to church. That was one thing. St. Josephs was one church. What was the church down in Woodmore? What was the name of it?
Royette Smith: What, Ascension?
RS: Ascension, I guess that was the other one. Ascension then became Glenarden, St. Josephs in Glenarden.
Royette Smith: I'm not sure if that's the name of it, but I know that's one of the churches down in Bowie.
RS: Woodmore, Bowie. Woodmore church. It was a Catholic church.
Royette: Holy Family?
RS: Holy Family, I believe that's what it was. Holy Family.

CK: When you were a child, that's where you went to church – Holy Family and to Ascension?
Royette Smith: No, he didn't go to Ascension. My mom went to Ascension, but that was in Bowie. They went to St. Joseph's.

CK: So first Holy Family, then St. Joseph's. Do you go to church regularly now?
RS: Practically every Sunday.

CK: You go to St. Joseph's?
RS: St. Joseph's. I'm a member of the men's club at St. Joseph's.

CK: But, you said there's a new St. Joseph's?
RS: That is the new St. Joseph's.

CK: How long, the new one, how long have you gone there?
RS: The new St. Joseph's…
Royette Smith: It's been there over 40 something years, because I know I went there as a child.

CK: (To Royette) You went there too?
Royette Smith: Umm.

CK: Do you remember your parents and your grandparents talking about going to church?
RS: Oh, yeah, they stayed in church.

CK: Did they go to Holy Family too?
RS: Well, my parents went to St. Joseph and my grandmother went to Woodmore.

CK: And, where is Woodmore?
Royette Smith: Now it's off of 202, it's still called Woodmore.

CK: Is there a cemetery associated with your church, with St. Joseph's?
RS: Not really, I mean, back then, St. Joseph's, I mean, we had a little cemetery, but most the people had their own place where they wanted to be buried.
Royette Smith: I think when St. Joseph's was in Glenarden, there was a little cemetery. In the book, *Like the Phoenix, I'll Rise;* I think there's a picture of it there. But I think the St. Joseph's that's off 202, there's no cemetery.

CK: Where have the members of your family been buried?
RS: We have a select; it's down off of 301. Now, what's the name of that place?
Royette Smith: It's way down there. Cheltenham?
RS: Down there somewhere, somewhere down there. We already have spots, they've already been paid for, but I can't remember.

CK: And Cheltenham is C-H eltenham?
Royette: Yes.

CK: The next questions will relate to your work. How long have you worked as a barber?
RS: Oh, what does that license say up there?

CK: 1948.
RS: Yeah.

CK: But you said you even, when you were a young boy you…
RS: Yeah, I was still cutting hair with those hand clippers going from house to house, and I did that I guess about, say, ten years or more.

CK: How old were you then?
RS: Oh, I was I guess around 12 or 14 years old.

CK: Whatever gave you the idea?
RS: Well, there was another fellow around in Glenarden cutting hair for 15 cents for children and 25 cents for grownups, and then he kind of got overgrown with cutting hair, and he stopped and I started.

CK: That's where you got the idea, knowing this other man?
RS: And I would go to house to house and cut the grownups and children both. Fifteen cents for children and 25 cents for grownups.

CK: And you did that when you were just 10 or 12 years old?
RS: Something like that; 10 or 12.

CK: Around 12 years old?
RS: Twelve or 14 years.

CK: Have you worked in other barbershops besides this one?
RS: This is the only one I worked in.

CK: How did you learn to become a barber?
RS: By cutting kids hair in the town.

CK: When you went from house to house? Did you know anything about barbering before you did that?
RS: Well, my mother used to kneel us down in front of her and cut our hair with scissors and when she was finished with us, I mean, we didn't want to go out. But then I started to cut the children's hair, and took her job away from her.

CK: I see.
RS: And go from house to house.

CK: So you really practiced on your brothers and sisters.
RS: Yeah, yeah.

CK: And that you got brave enough to go to house to house. Did you ever have any bad experiences?
RS: Oh yeah, experiences if they didn't sit still and get their hair cut.

CK: But you must have been pretty successful?
RS: Well, I guess I can say that I worked up from that to a barbershop.

CK: So you really learned the craft on your own?
RS: On my own.

CK: And from what you saw your mom doing?
RS: Yeah.

CK: And then you did that by yourself, but then you said you went into the Navy?
RS: Then I went into the Navy. I cut hair for four years in the Navy. That's what gave me the money to build my barbershop.

CK: Did they teach you how to cut hair in the Navy?
RS: Well, I knew how to cut hair in the Navy.

CK: Oh, you knew already.
RS: Before I went to the Navy, but the Navy had one style of haircut that you got. That was no problem.

CK: How long were you in the Navy?
RS: Four years.

CK: Were you stationed here?
RS: Fort Wanemee, California.

CK: What was the name of it?
Royette Smith: Fort Wanemee.

CK: How do you spell Fort Wanemee?
RS: It was on the edge of Oxnard, California.

CK: Oh, near Oxnard. OK. Were you there the whole four years?
RS: The whole four years, yeah.

CK: How long have you had this barbershop?
RS: I've had this barbershop, I'd say pretty close to 50 years.
Royette Smith: I think it's 55 years, or 54 years. He just got something in the mail that said they wanted us to buy some emblems saying something about the 55th anniversary, so I think it's almost 55 years.

CK: How did you come to set up your barbershop in this building?
RS: Well, when I came from the Navy, I was cutting hair in the Navy, and we used to get tips, we didn't get paid for cutting hair, but the boys would tip you for certain haircuts that you'd give them that they could get. And I saved my money because I didn't, part of the barbershop, I didn't get draw any pay, I didn't draw no pay for that and when I come home I had some money to build a barbershop.

CK: How did you choose this spot?
RS: I was living here.

CK: This was a house first?
RS: No, the house is down on, our first house was down on McLain, Glenarden Parkway.

CK: I see. But then you knew this piece of land, or how did you decide to build here?
RS: Well, people was buying different little spots and setting up, and I was lucky enough to buy this piece of land.

CK: And then you had the barbershop built?
RS: Yeah. I built it.

CK: You built it?
RS: Me and couple of fellows, and I hired fellows to build when I had enough money, brick by brick.

CK: How long did that take you to build it?
RS: It didn't take very long; I guess about six months or seven, something like that. But the inside, I did most of the inside myself.

CK: Was it just this section first and then the beauty salon after?
RS: This section was first, but the fellow that was helping me on the other side, he wanted a gas station, so he did that other side and used it for a gas station, after he got started, then he built another section over and then I decided (inaudible) which was rented. This was a restaurant. There were two restaurants over there, a post office, a cleaners, three or four different businesses over there, then the last one came. There was a lady with a beauty parlor and she decided to leave so I told my daughter I was going to rent it out and she said she wanted it. And I didn't know she knew anything about hair. So, she came into it.

CK: So, you own this entire building?
RS: Yeah.

CK: And you helped build specifically this part or did you help build that section as well?
RS: Both, I helped build both parts.

CK: So, you and this other gentleman that you were talking about built the whole thing?
RS: Yeah.

CK: And then he used that part?
RS: He used that part for his gas station. Then he bought another piece of land and got rid of the gas station and built a liquor store. And he moved the liquor store across the street in later years.

CK: And that's when it started to be used by all these other purposes, a post office and all these other things. How big was it? Was it always this size when you first built?
RS: It was always this size. Uh huh.

CK: It was always this size.
RS: It has a basement in it. The basement is on both sides. Of course, she wants an addition now.
Royette Smith: We need some more space.

CK: Have you always had five barber chairs?
RS: Yeah. We used to when I first started, all of them was filled.

CK: Do you have other people work with you?
RS: Oh yeah, I have three, four people still working, not all, everyday. I have two people with me every day, the weekend, I mean, it generally fills up.

CK: Is that your chair, the very first one?
RS: The first one.

CK: Have you always had that one?
RS: Always had that one.

CK: I imagine it's pretty busy, especially on the weekends.
RS: On the weekends it gets kind of busy, but it's off and on busy and slow, busy and slow.

CK: Monday is your day off?
RS: Monday is my day off.

Royette Smith: And Sunday.
RS: And Sunday. I want you to look at some of my things on the wall. You can see from over your head all the way down.

CK: I would like to look at those. So you said you've been here, you've owned it for about 55 years, and this section has always been a barbershop.
RS: It's always been a barbershop.

CK: Who are the customers? Where do they come from?
RS: The local communities all around.

CK: How many customers do you think you have?
RS: Well, that's the $64 question. I have quite a few customers. With the other barbers, I mean good and bad. But mine is...I take care of them.

CK: So you keep pretty busy?
RS: Pretty busy.

CK: But the barbershop has never been used for anything else, it's always just been a barbershop.
RS: Always been a barbershop.

CK: What did your parents think about you starting a barbershop when you came out of the Navy?
RS: They thought it was good. I was making my own money and helping them out.

CK: What does this barbershop mean to you?
RS: Everything.

CK: Can you describe a little bit what your feelings are about it?
RS: I've been very successful with it. Very successful. Give her a house. I've been successful with having what two, three houses, Royette?
Royette Smith: Four.
RS: Four. This barbershop is part of it.

CK: So it's a huge part of your life.
RS: (Nods.)

CK: Do you think the barbershop is important to the community?
RS: Oh yeah.

CK: How so?
RS: Supports the baseball team, a girl's softball team, track team. I'm a part of it.

CK: You sponsor different teams?
RS: I used to, I mean, I give them something now, but I used to help all of them.

CK: What kind of teams were they?

RS: Softball, track team, baseball.

CK: And how did you support them?
RS: Just give them cash. In some cases, I bought uniforms and things like that.
Royette Smith: And stored the equipment. Some of the equipment is still downstairs.

CK: That must be important to the community.
RS: Yeah. They've kind of vanished now. There used to be baseball teams, football teams, and everything, but young kids now are just not interested. Glenarden was something to answer to. There were some good teams.
Royette Smith: Well, now this is the only black-owned business in Glenarden. I guess he was one of the first businesses and he's still here. All of the rest of them are gone now.

CK: It's the only black-owned business in Glenarden?
RS: The only one, that's I guess, that owns it, not renting from someone else. Because there are people that I guess, like the other barbershops and places around, black people work there, but they don't own the business or the building, they rent it from someone.

CK: So, you not only own it, but you operate it.
RS. Yes.

CK: Do you think the barbershop will be important to future generations?
RS: Oh yeah.

CK: How so?
RS: She'll (Royette) will take. I'm going to turn it over to her probably next year.
Royette Smith: And so it's very well-known, everybody here knows about the barbershop. If you say Smith's Barbershop in Glenarden everybody knows about it. And we never have any trouble over here, no loitering, and no hanging around. Never had any incidents over here. There may be stuff going on across the street, but nothing ever happens over here.

CK: Why do you think that is?
Royette Smith: Because everybody knows about him.
RS: I don't take no foolishness.

CK: What do you do, I mean, if something happened? Have you ever had an incident?
RS: Never had anything really, that I couldn't…didn't handle, because they know I'd call the police. If they didn't get you one day, they'd pick them up the next. But I knew just about everybody that came in. Pretty good order.
Royette Smith: I think the one time somebody did break in here, the people across the street told us who did it.

CK: They saw it?
Royette: They knew who did it and they told us and the things that they stole. They told us where to go get it.

CK: Did you get it back?

Royette Smith: Uh huh. They stole some of the tools, the barbers' tools and stuff, and they tried to sell them to the other barbershop and they took it and they gave them back to us.

CK: Is that the only time, so you've only had one incident?
Royette Smith: Uh huh.

CK: How long ago was that?
Royette Smith: That's a long time ago. Probably maybe 15 years ago.
RS: Yeah. Something like that.

CK: Is the barbershop important to the social life of the community? Do they, people gather here, do they come here to meet, that sort of thing?
RS: Well, years ago they did, I mean, this was a meeting place. In fact, the police department would come in every Saturday, they would dress up, put on their new uniforms and come out and we would just inspect them.

CK: Oh, they came to show off their new uniforms.
RS: Yeah. But that's mostly died off; they got a new group in there, but the new people are pretty good. They come down here, once in a while to see how we're doing. In fact, I talked to one of them Saturday. We don't have any problems; they know I'm a trouble maker. If they get out of order, they know I'm going to report them. But we don't have any trouble out here. They generally come by wondering what's going on, and if I need anything, call them.

CK: So the police just stop by periodically to see how you're doing?
RS: Oh, yeah, yeah.

CK: And what about support from the community? Do they come in and say hello?
RS: The community – it's okay. I mean, not like it used to be because a lot of the old people have died, others are new ones that have moved, but I still have them.

CK: So, you still have contact with the community?
RS: Oh, yeah, yeah. I'm the troublemaker in the community.

CK: You are?
RS: Oh yeah.
Royette Smith: They have town meetings, and he doesn't live in the town anymore, but he still owns a business in the town, so we still goes to the town meetings and he voices his opinion and they listen to him.
RS: Yeah, because I still have three houses in the town. Matter of fact she has them, I give them to her (Royette).

CK: What do you talk about at these meetings? What issues are you most concerned about?
RS: Anything they're doing that they have no business doing, I tell them they're wrong. And I have enough people follow me that can make changes.

CK: Can you describe one type of issue that you're concerned about that you would go to the county to talk about?
RS: Well, just like keeping the little side streets in their community grass cut, snow removal, things like that; cars speeding through town, through the streets. Things that disturb people, me and several people others stay on them; report it to the civic association and they get on to it. Handle them pretty good.

CK: What is your biggest concern about the area that you would go to them for?
RS: Police department. To make them more active and sometime they do more riding up and down the road than they do, moving about the community. We voice our opinion about that real loud sometimes.
Royette Smith: They tried to get us to sell the business, the building. They wanted to build a strip mall here, but we wouldn't let them do it.

CK: When was that? When did that happen?
Royette Smith: That was a couple of years ago also. They wanted us to, I guess, rent a space in the strip mall. And we said no. So they couldn't do it because we were the only business still here. I think, I don't know if there was anything in that building up there at the time, but they, I think, they were willing to go along with it, but we weren't so, they couldn't do it.

CK: Who was it that approached you?
RS and Royette Smith: The town.

CK: The town of Glenarden?
RS and Royette: Uh huh.

CK: Why didn't you want to sell?
Royette Smith: Because then we would have to rent a spot in their building.
RS: And they weren't giving me enough parking spaces. And then they wanted me to pay extra for lights and all that, and I told them that this was the only last entrance (to come off the highway) to come in, and the town didn't put this in, I put it in. And so I called Baltimore, and Baltimore said that's yours.

CK: This one right off the highway where you can turn right in right out to yours?
RS: There is no other entrance, this was the only toward Hubbard Lane, that's the only entrance that will turn left going down the street, right across from my parking lot there's about a 200 foot drop there. They can't put anything in there. Baltimore said that was my entrance, I got that put in. I'm not moving. She's not moving.

CK: (To Royette) Do you feel the same way?
Royette Smith: Yes.

CK: Do you intend to keep the shop going then, when your dad turns it over?
Royette Smith: Yes.

CK: Will you keep it as a barbershop?
Royette Smith: I want to, yes. We've had a couple people that have come by to express interest in taking it over, but I don't mind them changing the name of the barbershop, but I would probably put "Smith's Place" on top of the building just to keep it as ours, and rent to them, but not sell.

CK: Do you think any of the people who are working as barbers would be...
RS: Not the ones that are working here wouldn't.
Royette Smith: They're older.
RS: They're older.
Royette Smith: The one lady, she's been here forever. The other guy, he's been here, maybe, what, ten years, or so?
RS: Yes.
Royette Smith: She's sickly sometimes, so I think if my father left, she may leave too.
RS: I'm working on getting some new barbers.

CK: Are you?
RS: Yeah.

CK: How do you look for barbers?
RS: I had one fellow I was talking to the other day has a son that's…in fact, one of the fellows that works right across the street, I didn't want to tell him I wouldn't care for him to come over here, but I'm still looking.

CK: So, is it through your customers, or do you put an ad in the paper?
RS: Well, I really haven't got out there yet, really to look. I think I will eventually get somebody to come in that will want to take the whole place over, that's what I want to do, 'cause I don't want to put her through no hassle.

CK: Then, would you sell the shop to them?
Royette Smith: No, just rent. Just rent it to them.

CK: Do you remember any really significant events that occurred here?
RS: Just like I said, I support the baseball team, the track team, and I had the boys and girls softball teams that were pretty good. We used to help other churches and playgrounds on their games and things, but we used to go to play them to make their program up. And we had several schools that used to give us all our balls and bats after they were finished. In fact, one school down to Seat Pleasant, we kept one of their programs going once a month and they gave us a trip on the Robert E. Lee, of course you don't know anything about that, down to Potomac, they had couple of boats down there that takes you for a boat ride down the river and she took the whole softball team, boys and girls and the officials, down the river and they said I couldn't do it. Said I couldn't handle those kids, I told them that I was going to take them down there if they behaved themselves. And they said, "I'll do it, Mr. Smith." Those kids went on down there and back just like they went down there.

CK: How many were there?
RS: Probably about 40 or 50 of them.

CK: Did you do that all by yourself?
RS: No trouble. I had some kids in the group that was helping me keep the bedrooms under control and the recreation department was with me. They invited them too. But it was really nice. In fact, we made a couple trips down there. No trouble.

CK: Where did that go from?
RS: It went from southwest down to Potomac, all the way to Marshall Hall.

CK: How has the meaning of this barbershop changed over time?
RS: Well, it has changed quite a bit because the members and the people have moved different places.

CK: And then new people came in?
RS: And new people, new people came in. And we have a different breed of people. It's coming back.

CK: Was that not a good thing when the people moved away?
RS: Well, you don't get the regular customers; you get a lot new people, some good and some bad. But you have to go on with that.

CK: But you have many regular customers.
RS: Oh yes, I still do, yeah. She (Royette Smith) takes up all my parking space.

CK: (To Royette Smith) You've had your business since 1990?
Royette Smith: Yes.

CK: Did you study cosmetology?
Royette Smith: Well, I started out being a shampoo girl for a lady that used to do my hair, and then she taught me how to do everything. So, I did it under apprentice. I like playing in my cousins' and nieces' hair when I was little. But I never knew that I wanted to do hair until my dad asked if I wanted to take over and I did.

CK: So you opened your own shop just right next door.
Royette Smith: Right.

CK: And how does that work out?
Royette Smith: Good, good.

CK: Do you work together, or do you keep it completely separate?
RS: She's the boss.
Royette Smith: I help him with everything.

CK: Do you do all the bookkeeping yourselves?
Royette Smith: Well, me and mom do his paperwork most of the time.

CK: How many ladies do you have work for you, or are they all ladies?
Royette Smith: Six. Six other hairstylists.

CK: And do they work full time?
Royette Smith: Most of them do. Maybe two work part-time.

CK: And your hours are the same as the barbershop?
Royette Smith: No, we come sometimes as early, Saturday mornings, we come in as early as 5 a.m. and sometimes we're there until 10 or 11 o'clock at night.

CK: How many customers to you think you have?
Royette Smith: I'm not sure. I'd say we do maybe three hundred people a week, maybe.

CK: That's a lot.
Royette Smith: Maybe not that many, but it's busy a lot. Business has slowed down because, it's hot and, you know, people wear braids and things like that during the summer because they vacation and swim. It will pick back up probably in September when the kids go back to school.

CK: When people come in do they ask for the standard hair cut, or do they ask for special things?
RS: Oh, some special, but most of the men are standard haircuts and kids standard haircuts

CK: And you do shaving, too though right, you said, sometimes?
RS: I stay away from that most of the time.

CK: You don't have many people that come in for shaving?
RS: No.

CK: So, it's mostly just haircuts.
RS: Mostly haircuts, yeah.

CK: What would you say the age range of the customers?
RS: They run from, I would say, some of them 80, 90 years old.

CK: And then you have young ones too?
RS: Oh yeah, yeah, young ones too.

CK: So between the two of you, you manage all the operations? (Great granddaughter comes into the shop). You do the cutting, the bookkeeping.
Royette Smith: and cleaning, everything.

CK: You do the cleaning too? You told me that your ancestors were the Hawkins?
RS: Family, yeah.

CK: How are you related to the Hawkins?
RS: My grandmother's sisters were the Hawkins. That was a big family and they all lived at what we call Northampton.

CK: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the barbershop?
RS: I guess that's just about all. I want to get all my barber chairs, I need two more barbers.

CK: You want to get two more barbers? And you said you were thinking of turning over the business.
RS: Yeah, I think I'll probably do another year and give it to the boss.

CK: Will you work part-time?
RS: I ain't gonna work no more.

CK: No?
RS: I'm going fishing.

CK: You're going fishing?
Royette Smith: And working the garden.
RS: And working the garden.

CK: You said you belong to a fishing club?
RS: Yes. Let me show you some of my fishing pictures.

Interviewee:	**Charlotte Knight Turner**
Topic:	Cornelius Fonville House
Relationship to Property:	Current owner
Inventory Number:	72-9-35
Location of Interview:	Cornelius Fonville House 602 60th Place Fairmount Heights, Maryland 20743
Date of Interview:	August 26, 2008
Interviewer:	Charlotte King

CK: I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself, about growing up in this area, and I will also ask you some questions about the Cornelius Fonville House. Please state your full name.
CT: Charlotte Roslyn Knight Turner.

CK: Is it R-o-s-l-y-n, Roslyn?
CT: Yes.

CK: Where were you born?
CT: I was born in the District of Columbia.

CK: When were you born?
CT: '37. December 22, 1937.

CK: And you grew up in the District, or did you grow up in Fairmount Heights?
CT: I grew up in the District and Fairmount Heights area because I did stay here with my grandmother and aunt for a time.

CK: Has your family lived in the area a long time?
CT: All of my life. Yes.

CK: And your family as well? Your extended family, your grandparents?
CT: My grandparents are the ones I'm talking about. My extended family, all of them are mostly in the Washington area. Yes.

CK: Where did you go to school?
CT: I went to Burrville. This is an area school that was an elementary school. Then Merritt. Then Kelly Miller.

CK: How do you spell Merritt?
CT: M-e-r-r-i-t-t.

CK: Was that a high school?
CT: No, that was an elementary school that started about the fourth grade.

CK: And where did you go after that?
CT: And then I went to Kelly Miller High School.

CK: Is that two separate words?
CT: Yes. K-e-l-l-y M-i-l-l-e-r. I went there when that was a new school. Then I went to Springarn High School when that was a new school.

CK: How do you spell that one?
CT: Which one?

CK: The last one.
CT: Springarn. S-p-i-n-g-a-r-n. That was a high school on Benning Road that was in D.C. All these are D. C. schools. And I attended Howard.

CK: What is your association with the Cornelius Fonville House?
CT: He was my grandfather (Step-grandfather; married Mrs. Turner's grandmother).

CK: What do you know about him?
CT: Really not very much. I know he taught school, and my grandmother taught school in Texas. And when they moved from Texas, they moved to this area. I know the funds for this home, were built with funds that were received after the flood, the flood in Texas. And my grandmother's mother came up here, and they used the funds to help build this home. That was Galveston. Galveston, Texas.

CK: Galveston?
CT: Galveston, Texas. Yes.

CK: Why did they come up here?
CT: That I do not know. Why did they move here originally? I don't know, but they didn't move to this house because they had this house built. They first moved; they were on Rhode Island Avenue in Washington, D.C. first.

CK: How long have you lived in the house?
CT: Off and on, all my life. But I've been here since about 1991 constantly because I've been working in the area.

CK: When was this house built?
CT: 19, what did we say, 12. 1912.

CK: And who built it?
CT: Cornelius Fonville.

CK: And he was your grandfather?
CT: Yes. (Step-grandfather; married Mrs. Turner's grandmother).

CK: How large was it when it was first constructed?
CT: I think the same size it is now.

CK: Can you describe the size of it now?
CT: I had it down, I had it written down, but I don't know what I've done with it. I think it's 30 x 30. Its four bedrooms originally, a four bedroom house. Full front room, dining room. Probably, they may have had a sitting room at that time; now that's turned into a library, and a kitchen. The bathroom was built in the later years. I think about the '40s because they divided one of the bedrooms for the bathroom.

CK: Has the house been enlarged over time?
CT: The house itself has not been enlarged over time, but there has been an addition. The back porch was screened in. But the front porch, I think, was the original front porch.

CK: Who all has lived in the house?
CT: Only family members lived in the house, because it remained in the family. But, let me see, I was just thinking about outside people who have lived here. One of the boxers lived here. We just saw him the

other day on TV. I can't think of his name. I'll come back to…Charles. Ezra Charles. Ezra Charles was a former heavy weight boxing champion. He did train in this area and stayed at the house at the time.

CK: After your grandparents passed away, then it was passed down to the next generation?
CT: Yes. Yes. Mrs. Fonville raised her children there. Raised her children here. They would have been my father, and aunt, and uncle. Then when she passed, the aunt inherited the home.

CK: Which aunt was that?
CT: Charlotte. I was named after her. And when she passed, she passed at 90, and then I inherited the home. So it's remained in the family.

CK: What does the house mean to you?
CT: Well, it's just my history and my heritage. It's something that you can look at and feel a comfortable feeling. Its home. This is, you know, this is where my memories are in the area. You just think of family when you walk through here. Whenever, it's a home that's always been open to family members. They always had a place to come. And when we had the family reunions, it's packed from top to bottom because everybody is welcome in the home. So, whatever squabbles they had they would leave outside the door, because everybody's welcome here. You'll have the front porch, its level, top level, all over. So it is a family home. Yes.

CK: Do you remember your grandparents talking about the home at all?
CT: I wasn't married. I mean, I wasn't born. (laughing). I wasn't born until '37.

CK: So, they died before. Did you know your grandparents at all?
CT: I knew my grandmother very well. I knew my grandmother, yes.

CK: Did she ever talk about the house?
CT: You mean talk about in the sense of what it meant to her?

CK: Yes.
CT: No. But she was a very aristocratic type person, so, knowing her, she would have felt very proud about the house. That's the type of person she was.

CK: She never discussed about the building of the house?
CT: No, she never discussed about the building. The only thing that she ever related to me was about where the funds had come from to build the home.

CK: And that was because of the flood in Texas.
CT: Right. And my grandmother's name was Bishop. That was her last name. And her brother, Robert Bishop, was the first mayor of Fairmount Heights. So it was, you know, a family which everybody tried to improve on the next generation. But they didn't do badly, because they started out pretty well.

CK: Is the house important to your family?
CT: Very much so. Yes.

CK: Can you describe how it is?

CT: Well, I think that I could almost say the feeling would almost be same as what I have. They consider it a family home. It's always a feeling that I can always go home. It's that type of feeling. Yes. About the house. I have three children. One works in Baltimore. One is in Trappe, Maryland, on the eastern shore of Maryland.

CK: Is in what?
CT: Trappe. It's called Trappe, Maryland. Eastern shore Maryland.

CK: Is T-r-a-p?
CT: T-r-a-p-p-e.

CK: Thank you.
CT: So they feel the same way. It's a home. A place where you can always come to. All of my children have lived here at one time. And they weren't raised here. Because after I married, I went on the eastern shore of Maryland, because my husband was a teacher in that area. And, so we raised our kids. And we retired, well; it's a village, a seafood village, after we raised our children. But they knew this was my family home, so when they grew, each one has lived here at one time or other.

CK: And then when the house became available, it was given to you?
CT: Yes. Through my aunt.

CK: And then you moved here from the eastern shore?
CT: Well, I moved here at that time because I was beginning to go in another direction. I was starting, making seafood, crab cakes. And we came over here to venture to the market in this area, and I already had a home here. So, I worked here and I had, I spent time in the home while I was here.

CK: Do you think the house is important to the community?
CT: I think the house is a part of the community. I think when you walk in Fairmount Heights, especially this particular street; it's right off Eastern Avenue. It's right across from the District. A lot of people, when I tell them where I live, they say, oh, I know that house. It's right on the corner. I know that house. It has a link fence there. It's right across from the professional building. Plus, it's right down the street from the fire department. We were talking about that the other night. If you lived in the area years ago, you knew where the fire department was. We used to call the fire hall. You had to pass it, you know, to get there. So, it's one of the older homes in the area.

CK: Is that why people know it so well?
CT: No, I think they know it so well because it's one always been a pretty well kept home. It's an older home. and it's a well kept home. And I think we all take pride in something that has survived. I think that's probably one of the reasons. And it's been there. When you pass something all the time for years, you know it's there.

CK: Do they know the story of your grandfather?
CT: No. No. Unless I come in contact with them personally, they would not know.

CK: Do you think the house will be important to future generations?
CT: I'm sure it will. Because as it gets older, and they can, they can see their history, they can see their past over the years. Yes. Yes. It would automatically become more important to them.

CK: Was the house important to the social life of the community?
CT: Very much so. Because they were very involved. They were involved in politics. I remember, at that time, my aunt belonged to the Eastern, well I know there were Eastern Stars. I know my aunt belonged to the Republican party at that time. They were very influential in the church, Grace Methodist Church. I'm not sure if they helped build that church, or if they didn't help build that church, they really were one of the early family members of the church, over there, Grace Methodist Church. Yes. Yes. They often talked about the people visiting in the home.

CK: Do you know if any significant events took place here?
CT: That I don't know of, right off hand. No.

CK: Do you think the meaning of the house has changed over time?
CT: I don't think the meaning of the house has changed over time to the family members. And they would probably be the most concerned about the meaning of the home. No, I don't think it's changed. I think that's something that gets stronger with time.

CK: Has the appearance of the house changed over time?
CT: No. No. We've never changed the appearance of the home. I think it's always been white. I'm trying to think. Now, the aluminum siding has. It was not originally aluminum siding, I think it was shingle. So, it's changed in that respect. Yes.

CK: You said that the bathroom was put in upstairs?
CT: Yes. And the bathroom was put in upstairs in about the '40s.

CK: And who owns the house now?
CT: I do.

CK: Do you think life in this area has changed since you grew up here? Has it changed much since the house was built?
CT: Well, I think I would look at it differently. Because, when I was here, I was a child. So, in that respect, I looked at things through the eyes of, well, the eyes of a teenager, you know. What parties you'd go to. School mates going to Sunday school and over to the church. Going to school from here. I married at an early age. I married at 18. So, when I came back, it was, you know, many years later. Then I came back as an adult. And when I came back then, I was busy all the while. Since I've been here, I've been working ever since I've been here. So, I really haven't had time to get that involved in the community activities that I would ordinarily have done had I been here, you know, full time. I did that in the area where I raised my children. I was actively involved there in a lot of community activities. But when I came here, my time was already, you know, spent trying to get a business started.

CK: When you did come back from the eastern shore to visit, did you stay here in this house?
CT: Yes. This is where I stayed. Yes.

CK: This is where all the family events took place, Christmas celebrations, Thanksgiving?
CT: Yes. We had the Christmas parties here. Had the Labor Day parties here. I haven't had any in the last several years. I guess I'm getting a little older, a little more tired. But, yes, we had the celebrations here.

CK: What would you like to see happen to the house?
CT: I would like to see the house remain…It's in pretty good condition as it is now. I would like to see some of the outside improvements done, you know, house painted. As I showed you, I want the steps and the porch (repaired). And that's something to make the house proud of itself.

CK: What else would you like to see done to the house?
CT: I would like to see that done. The other things I would like to see done to the house, I don't know if the Historical Society would cover it or not, because you have to update these homes. They're old homes, they're beautiful homes, but at the time they were built, you didn't need what we need now. At the time it was built, you didn't have all the electrical appliances you have now. So, you need update to electrical system. All that. More modern heating furnace equipment in the home. And I would like to modernize the bathroom. So, it's something that I could live without, but it's something that would make life more comfortable. And it really needs a second bathroom because I'm getting older, it's on the second floor, you know, so you really need a bathroom on this level.

CK: Could you describe the layout of the house? Like, if you describe the outside, and then take me through the inside as well?
CT: Yes. As you come in, and you come up a flight of stairs to your outside porch. The porch is the full length of the home, and you walk into a foyer. And to the left you have, you have the front room. And then you have, you can walk right through the front room to the dining room. They're both nice size rooms. That's, back then the homes were nice. Then you come in from the foyer and turn to the left, you have your, you have your library. And then next to the library, you have a pantry. Then, a lot of pantry space was used at that time. And then you have your, next to your pantry, you have your full size kitchen. Then you go up a flight of stairs, you have a little landing, then you go up to the second floor. The second floor, you have three full size bedrooms and you have a smaller room, and we usually use that for a little TV. room. And we have the bath there. And you have a full size hall upstairs.

CK: And that small bedroom is the one that you said was modified to make a bathroom.
CT: Yes. To accommodate the bathroom. Yes.

CK: And you told me that in one of the rooms down here, that there was also a built-in cabinet? Is that correct?
CT: And the built-in cabinet is in the kitchen. Yes. And then you have the mantle pieces in all the rooms. Not all the rooms. In the dining room and the front room.

CK: Are they working fireplaces?
CT: No. They're not working fireplaces. I don't know if they ever were. I don't think they were because I don't see an outside chimney. I think she had a gas heater in there at one time.

CK: But the mantle is original?
CT: You know, I can't say it is not. But it's been there all of my life. Ever since I've been here, I've seen the mantle. So it probably, it probably was built with the home.

CK: Do you have any recollections of the home, when you'd come to visit? What your feeling was when you came in?
CT: Yes. I lived right across the street, actually, in D. C. It's called the 500 block of 60th Street, and you'd cross Eastern Avenue, it becomes 60th Place. And this is the 600 block of 60th Place. So, it was actually only one block away. So, I mean, visitation here was just running down the street, and you're here. So, I would come down here, and then, there weren't any small children at that time because everybody was grown. But my grandmother was here, and my aunt and uncle were here. And you'd come in and you'd have, you know, the family would be eating in the kitchen. They used the kitchen most of the time anyway. The dining room was usually used for formal occasions, or your holidays, or so forth. On Sunday morning, you'd always cook grits. I remember the double burner with the grits; they always had grits in the sausage meat. And spoon bread. That was always part of Sunday dinner, I mean, Sunday breakfast, Sunday breakfast, before they went to church. And my uncle played the piano. So he was always involved in some type of, the church choirs, he was always involved with that.

CK: Which church was that?
CT: That was Grace Methodist Church. Wherever you were brought up.

CK: Was the church an important part of your family life?
CT: Oh, the church was a very important part their life because they were instrumental in, you know, getting the church started. So it was a very important part of their life. Yes.

CK: Did you go to church every Sunday when you came to visit?
CT: Yes, when you came here, you went to church. That was just a part of it. Mostly, I went to Sunday school because I was still young at the time.

CK: Is it Grace Methodist Church, is it Methodist? Is that correct?
CT: Yes, and it's still here.

CK: Still here.
CT: Yes.

CK: Do you go to that church?
CT: No, I do not. I don't go to that church.

CK: Do you go to a different church?
CT: Yes. I go to the church I originally attended on the eastern shore.

CK: What's it called?
CT: Mine? St. Luke United Methodist Church.

CK: And that's on the eastern shore?
CT: That's on the eastern shore.

CK: Oh, you still belong to that group?
CT: Yes.

CK: When your grandparents lived here, and then your other family, did they maintain a garden in the back? Did they grow their own vegetables?
CT: Well, let me see what they did. I know that my aunt's husband, Hilary McGee, I know he used to have a chicken house. And he used to have a chicken house right at the corner of Addison Road and Sheriff Road. He used to have a chicken house there. And I'm trying to see if had a probably a chicken house here. I don't remember it here, but I do remember it there. And a garden per se, I'm trying to see if I remember a garden here. I don't remember a garden here, that's not to say he didn't have one, but I just don't remember one here.
(Pause to check time. Mrs. Turner had to leave at a specific time to return to work.)

CK: What other things do you remember about coming to the house as a child?
CT: There used to be a grape arbor. Had that for years. There used to be a grape arbor right here by the driveway. And they used to have a garage there. But after the garage age, we just tore that down. Now, I don't think, they probably didn't even have a car when they originally built the home, so I don't think that was an original part of the landscape. But there was a two-door garage there.

CK: What was the grape arbor used for?
CT: Grapes! (laughing). I'm trying to think if she made jelly. I don't remember her making jelly. But Monday, as they would say years ago, Monday was washday. Tuesday, bake day, whatever. She did make her homemade bread. She made homemade bread every Monday. I remember that. And she would make the rolls, and she would make the sandwich rolls. And I remember she made the homemade, like Boston baked beans. And, you know, today we just dump it out of a can, but years ago, you know, they would bake for hours and hours. She would make that. I don't remember her baking; I know she would make her mayonnaise. She'd make the homemade mayonnaise. I'm trying to think, I haven't thought of these things for years. And, she sewed, I know she did that. I was trying to, I know she crocheted because… I didn't have time to look, because I was trying to find a tablecloth she had crocheted, my grandmother. She was, she was, she was, sort of a homemaker. That's what I want to say. She was a homemaker. She was, she was up in age, but the home was very orderly. She was very orderly, very organized type of person. That's the way she was. That's how the house was run.

CK: How big was the grape arbor?
CT: It was just a little…Oh, when I say grape arbor, you're probably thinking in terms of something big. I'm not. I'm talking about, you know, the little arbor that has the little arches. Just a support for grapevine. That's what I'm talking about.

CK: You think she may have used those to…
CT: Oh, well, she prob….I don't ever remember her making jelly. The reason I say that, because I made jelly, and on the eastern shore of Maryland, you know, people made jelly down there. I just don't recollect my grandmother ever making it. But she did do the other things. Yes.

CK: You showed me this lovely booklet that was published. Could you talk about that, please?
CT: This is about, "The Economic and Social Status of the Rural Negro Family in Maryland." And mostly it was concerning the area around, I think, the Princess Anne, the eastern shore of Maryland. And it talked about the financial and economic status of the Negro at that time. You know, what they did for a living. Their living conditions. Their jobs. Their social conditions. It was just an involved study. You have a lot of statistics in here. My aunt did this along with another associate. They did it together. And it was back in the '40s. And that time, I think, it was brought to my attention because I had never really

thought about it, that she was one of the first black social workers in P.G. County. So, I mean, with that in mind, it probably becomes a little more important. The job that she did in the book. A little more important to the family.

CK: Did she live here in this house?
CT: That's my Aunt Charlotte. Yes.

CK: She's the one that you acquired the house from?
CT: She lived her all of her life. Now, she was married three times, but she never left the home. She was McGee, Burwell, and Head.

CK: What was the last?
CT: Head.

CK: How do you spell that?
CT: H-e-a-d.

CK: That was her last name?
CT: That was her final last name.

CK: You also showed me a letter.
CT: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. That was my grandfather, ah, my grandmother. That was Cornelius' wife. That letter was from the Bureau of Engraving. It stated, it was from the Secretary, and I imagine that was Treasury, from the Treasury Department. Might have been Secretary of the Treasury, because we ought to look that up. At that time, evidently, she was on probationary status, and it was saying that she had fulfilled that requirement satisfactory, and they were moving her on to permanent basis. And at that point, she was getting $1.50 per hour, ah, per day. Let me say it per diem. And I'm sure that was very impressive because they took time to put in the letter. And it was signed by the Secretary.

CK: Do you remember what the date was?
CT: 1907. 1907.

CK: And that was your grandmother?
CT: That was my grandmother.

CK: And what was her name?
CT: Her name was Laura Fonville.

CK: Did she remarry after your grandfather died?
CT: No, she remained Fonville. Now, my grandfather actually was Knight. It, then she married Fonville.

CK: Could you explain that?
CT: Well, she was a Bishop. That was her maiden name. Then she married Edward Knight. After Mr. Knight passed, she married Cornelius Fonville. And she and Cornelius Fonville came to, you know, the Fairmount Heights area and built the home.

CK: But they both came from Texas?

CT: Yes. Texas. Yes.

CK: Is there anything else that you'd like to tell me about the house or your association with it?
CT: That's probably…Just trying to think of some of the other things that…you know, that I think about. Because some of the things, I really hadn't thought about in years. But that pretty much covers it.

CK: Your aunt that you told me about, Charlotte. You said that she was a social worker.
CT: Yes.

CK: How long did she live in the house.
CT: All of her life. She never moved. That's one I said was married three times, but she never left the home. She never left the home.

CK: And you said she was one of the first African-American social workers?
CT: In P. G. County.

CK: In P. G. County?
CT: Mmhmm.

CK: Can you think of anything else that you'd like to say about the house?
CT: No, but leave me your number, and if I come up with something that's interesting, that I think may enhance the report, I will give you call.

CK: Thank you.
CT: Thank you so very much.

Interviewee:	**Linda H. Wallace**
Topic:	Henry Pinckney House
Relationship to Property:	Owner
Inventory Number:	72-9-33
Location of Interview:	Henry Pinckney House 608 60th Place Fairmount Heights, Maryland 20743
Date of Interview:	August 22, 2008
Interviewer:	Charlotte King

Linda H. Wallace

CK: I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself, about growing up, and I will also ask you some questions about the Henry Pinckney House.

CK: What is your full name?
LW: Linda Holloway Wallace

CK: Where were you born, Mrs. Wallace?
LW: In Washington, D. C. Providence Hospital.

CK: And when were you born?
LW: In 1963, April the 22nd.

CK: Where did you grow up?
LW: I grew up in Deanwood Park, Maryland, which is approximately two miles adjacent of Fairmount Heights.

CK: And how long have you lived in the area?
LW: All my life.

CK: Describe where you lived as a child.
LW: I lived in a small community, African-American community. The neighbors were all family, we were all considered close knit and family where the children, we really came out and played, we did a lot of outdoor activities. Formed our own little baseball team, basketball, we, whatever generally little kids do, we were doing it. We would make carts, ride down the street or hill, and get cardboard boxes and ride down the hill in snow. Just fun things that we enjoyed growing up.

CK: What brought you to Fairmount Heights?
LW: I wanted to be close to my mother. And my other siblings. We all lived at close or walking distance to each other, and I never wanted to really move out of where I grew up at because I just loved my community, and the connection that we have of being a close environment, close and, as far as, you know, getting along with each other, making sure we were protected by each other. If I went away, my neighbors could watch my children and things like that, so that made a difference to me. And I also wanted to be in an area where it was really affordable and allow me the flexibility to be home with my children. So, I knew if I lived in a more expensive area, it was more demanding.

CK: What is your association with Fairmount Heights?
LW: I went to Fairmont Heights Senior High School. Graduated in 1981, and I purchased this home in Fairmount Heights. This was an area that even living in Deanwood Park, which is right outside of Fairmount Heights, we still were very closely connected together far as different activities, I would walk to Fairmount Heights to service at the Baptist church, to sing in the choir, and different things like that. The recreation, we would still go to Fairmont Heights Senior High for Maryland Park and Planning recreation, so we were still, even though it was considered a separate community, but we were still very close in far as doing activities and things that were going on in the neighborhood.

CK: Were you aware of the history of Fairmount Heights?
LW: At that time, no I wasn't. Growing up? No. No. Not at all.

CK: When did you become more aware of it?
LW: I became more aware of it when I purchased the home. Very, well, put it this way, when I was a senior and I used to wonder where some of our, my teachers and the principal, they were African-American, where did they come from? And understanding they came from this little area. And not understanding how Fairmount Heights was very, a very prominent area back in, in the early 1900s. I was just amazed. And once I became a home owner here, I really, really became mesmerized about the history. And that's where I am now.

CK: So, it was when you were in high school then you became more aware of the history of Fairmount Heights?
LW: Yeah.

CK: Through your teachers, through the association with your teachers?
LW: Uh huh.

CK: What is your association with this house?
LW: My association with this house, well, for one, the, Ms. McGhee, Ms. Emily McGhee, was the, I want to say it right, I think she was the great-granddaughter of Mr. Pinckney, who sold me the house. Which she also taught me English in Fairmont Heights Senior High. And it was just a shock to meet her and find out, oh this was Ms. McGhee. And you know how a name kinda stick in the back of your mind, I thought, I had a teacher named Ms. McGhee, but just never putting two and two together. And that, that was the association that I have. And she really wanted to; she was really particular about who was buying the home.

CK: How were you aware of the house, that it was available for purchase?
LW: We were looking for a home; my husband and I were looking for a home to purchase. But, again, I wanted to just stay in the community. I wanted to stay close to my parents, which they still live in Deanwood Park, Maryland. It's called Capitol Heights because of the post office, but I really wanted to just stay close in the community. And when I was looking for homes for sale, we were looking, oh, everywhere…Bowie, Lanham, Upper Marlboro. And I was just drawn by this house. And once I had a tour of the house, I was just sold. It was closed up. And it needed a lot of work, like the floors needed to be redone and, but, I just, I looked past all of that. And I just saw the value of the house being an older house, built well, and it was still in good condition, other than cosmetic things. So, and it offered the room and the space that I have not seen in any house, even the newer homes. And I said, I have to, we have to get this house.

CK: Were you aware of the history, the association with Mr. Pinckney at the time?
LW: Not at that time. Not at that time. It was after I got in here. The house had been closed up for a couple of years. They would just, the family would just have someone to maintain the yard, cut the grass and things like that, but the house had stayed closed up for a couple of years. And once I got in the house, I think it was 1998, 1999, someone from the Historic Trust gave me a letter was telling me about there was some funds to restore the home and that's when it opened up. Pandora's box, to find out all the history. And then I really got up to date and familiar with all of the African-American, I call pioneers, from this community. So, I was really, just like, really appreciative to how well and such an impact that we made in the community. That was just mesmerizing to me.

CK: What do you know about Mr. Pinckney?
LW: I know that he was a steward for Theodore Roosevelt. And I came into knowledge that he was born in Albany, New York, and he moved his family here when Theodore, President Roosevelt was moving here as vice president. And he built this home in 1905. He had three children, Roswell, Theodore, and Lenore Emily. He had, he was good in his marketing skills. He was well known even in the District area, I think they considered that that Eastern Market, how he would go and make purchases for President Roosevelt. He was very excellent in his marketing skills and culinary art skills. I found that out about him. And his children were allowed to play with the President's children. And he often accompanied them and messaged, he was the messenger for Mr. Roosevelt. He handled important, important transactions, or delivering the message to important political people, which was good. And because he was so highly thought of by President Roosevelt, he was, even after President Roosevelt finished his term, he was still passed on to the other political figures to be a candidate that was trustworthy of getting the task done. So, that was just good to know that.

CK: That is interesting. So, you said the house was built in 1905?
LW: Uh huh.

CK: How large was the house when it was first constructed, do you know?
LW: It's the same as it is now. I cannot, I don't know the footage of the house, far as the square footage. But in detail, every room, except for this room, this room is the formal dining room, which is a 15 x 15; all the bedrooms are 14 x 15s, or 14 x 16s, which are really large rooms. Nothing has changed inside of the house as far as demolishing areas of the house and taking out rooms. The rooms, the way the frame of the house, it's called a Colonial Revival home, which is a two- story square, four square plan home. The porch on the front of the house was extended from one end of the house to the other, but that was removed. That's the only thing I could tell you, other than when he purchased it, he purchased it, when he first had it built, and he had it built on just two lots. And he later purchased the three other lots that make up the entire yard.

CK: Can you describe the house, how many rooms it has and how it's laid out?
LW: The house has four bedrooms upstairs and one office and bathroom, full bath upstairs. Downstairs, which is the main level, has a formal dining room, formal living room, and a family room, which they said that this was the library of the home, and a nice full sit-in kitchen, eat-in kitchen. Now it has an extra bathroom and a washroom, but before those were the pantry and the area where they held their fine china.

CK: What was in the room that held the fine china?
LW: It was long, glass cabinets with nice wood trim, and at the bottom of these cabinets were like your shelving, which were doors where you could store other things. I hate I took them out, but I did it because we needed a washroom.
(Pause while Mrs. Wallace looks after a visiting infant who is crying).

CK: We were talking about the pantry and that it had built-in cabinets with glass shelves. Is there anything distinctive in this room that's original to the house?
LW: Yes. The original mantel. I was told that that was tiger wood in the dining room, there's the original mantel and the wood carving and the emblems on the mantel matches the front door, which is still the original front door of the home. All the molding and trimming in the home are from when it was originally built. We never removed any of it. We have painted and, you know, tried to freshen it up. And I was also told when the Historical Trust came past in 1999, that in the entry way from the living room to

the dining room, it was the sliding French doors, that are right here. And that was one of the projects that they could open them up and just try to see if we can get them back in operating order, but I never had the nerve to do it myself, so I left it. I just left it. But I did replace the French doors everywhere else in the house.

CK: You replaced them with what?
LW: They were regular hollow doors, they weren't original doors. Apparently, at one time, they rented the home out in separate, like rooms, or separate apartments in the house, so I just removed that and put the French doors back to what I had.

CK: Is there anything unusual about the door, the front door?
LW: No. What's unusual about the floor, you see this dip (indicates slight slope in dining room floor) in the floor? But, you know, they didn't have levelers and things like that, everything was basically kind of eye, you measure by eye, so that's something different that I see. The front door, I can't say that there's too much different there other than all the paint that it gathered over the years.
(Interruption by one of the children)
LW: And the transom?

CK: The transom.
LW: The transom was covered, which stops a lot of light coming in, but I hope to have that removed.

CK: Is it the original front door?
LW: Yes. This is the original front door.

CK: And it has a design, I noticed.
LW: Yes. It has that crest, that floral crest with ribbons on the bottom, which matches the mantel. I planned on stripping that to get back to, but it's such a delicate piece I don't want to destroy any of it, so I'm definitely going to need some assistance or someone who can give me some professional expertise how to do it without damaging its wood or character of the door.

CK: Do you know who's lived in the house since it was built?
LW: Other than his children and his grandchildren, I don't know who lived after that to rent, who was renting it. But up until they were renting it, from what I understood, they were renting to some of the neighbors' family probably in the early '90s, 1990s, and then it just became a closed house before I purchased it. Other than that, it was just family.

CK: How long did Mr. Pinckney live here?
LW: Well, he lived, he built the home in 1905, and I think he passed in 1911, so I can't say he lived here for a long time, but his wife and his family lived here after, they continued to live here after he passed. In the history that I read about him, it said that he passed in 1911, so actually he only had six years living here.

CK: And then his wife continued to live the rest of her life here?
LW: His wife continued to live here. She lived the rest of her life here. And then the grand…, the children and the grandchildren, they continued to be, 'cause even the great-grandson, Mr. Pinckney, he's a neighbor, he talked about him still being here, living here. So it was basically a close-knit family, other

than when they were old enough to get out and move out on their own, so the family, the house was really maintained by the family.

CK: And Mr. Pinckney's grandson, is it, or great-grandson?
LW: His great, this was his, Roswell (Pinckney), Mr. Roswell, was his son, so his great-, no his grandchild was Mr. Pinckney, who just passed in April, he even talked about, before he got too ill, him living here.

CK: He lived in this house too?
LW: Uh huh. He lived in here, so that was Mr. Henry Pinckney's grandchild.

CK: Do you remember this house at all when you were growing up and coming to Fairmount Heights?
LW: No. Vaguely. I vaguely remember this house. I do remember the municipal building before it was burned down. But I really don't, I can't really recall, and I don't know if it was a tree or something that just…But I was younger because I would come to the community, we would have basketball tournaments at the place called Melvin's Crab House.

CK: What was it called?
LW: Melvin's Crab House. And we would have, they would have local area basketball team, not affiliated with a school, more like a recreational center. They came and had basketball tournaments here. And so we would walk through this street and go to Melvin's Crab House, which was like two streets over, to their tournament. And then I had a friend that we went to school with, she lived, they lived the next street over. But you know, you're young, you're a teenager, you really, you really just didn't pay attention to a lot of that.

CK: Had you ever heard of Mr. Pinckney before you purchased the house?
LW: No. No. No. Not at all.

CK: Do you remember any of your family members ever talking about the house, mentioning it?
LW: No.

CK: What does the house mean to you?
LW: The house has a lot of sentimental values to me because I really love the history of our African-Americans, and how well educated they were. And he, he was, his family meant a lot to him. And even with his wife, just ensuring that they had the proper education. And that they were entitled to it. And, to me, they did anything that they could to make sure, not anything in regards to below their standards, but they ensured that their children, all of them were educated and continued with going in college. And even reading Ms. Leonora Pinckney's letter to the gentleman in regards to, what to, getting the house in her name, she was very well versed. And that's in 1911, where even back in the late 1800s, they didn't want the African-Americans to be educated, so that just really spoke highly of them, of her writing this letter, and as I stated, very well versed just asking for instructions or guidance on how to get the house in her name so she can be protected as the owner.

CK: And who was Leonora?
LW: Leonora was Mr. Pinckney's wife. And she did that. And she held a nice position even with her employment.

CK: Do you know what she did?
LW: Not without going back reading. I could tell you. (Refers to essay written by Kevin Pinckney: "Henry Pinckney, White House Steward, an Expanded Essay," written in 2008).
LW: Okay, she worked at the United States Department of Agriculture. And Mr. Pinckney and Mrs. Leonora Pinckney became the founding members of the First Presbyterian Church in Fairmount Heights in 1930.

CK: So, the house stayed in the family until you purchased it. Is that correct?
LW: Yeah. I'm the first home owner outside the family.

CK: Is the house important to you?
LW: Yes.

CK: Can you tell me how?
LW: It's important to me as far as the preservation and just making sure it stays intact in the that way Mr. Pinckney had it and Mrs. Leonora maintained it even after his death. You can see that she took, her family and her, just took very pride and to maintain the character of the house. And to me it's historical landmark of someone very important that may not have been recognized to the depth that he should have been. Just knowing that Mr. Pinckney, Booker T. Washington, all of them, they were all connected in this area. That's, that's almost like an unsung hero, you know? Because you don't really hear of it, you don't, you don't, and you know Booker T. Washington has made his mark, but you don't really hear Mr. Pinckney in the light that I think he should have been acknowledged. So, going back to your question, it holds high value to me. It's not a home that I would be looking for, to put on the market to resale. It would be a home that I would like to keep in my family. Even if, my husband and I have even considered looking at other homes, but we've all, we've never considered to selling this house. Just keep it in the family and just buy somewhere else. I can't really explain the passion and why I want to stay so connected. You know? But that's just how I feel.

CK: Do you think the house is important to your family?
LW: Yes. Because they know how important it is to me.

CK: Have you discussed the significance, the historical significance?
LW: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, of course they know. Every time I find something, I share it with them. So they understand. And then, like, they, ten years ago they went through the same thing I'm going through now, and people look at the house, and they're saying what can they do to restore it. And so, it kind of resurfaced again, like Mommy going through this thing again. But now, I've got more information than, than I had prior to me first getting here, so it's that more interesting now. You know, just finding the book, the essay (Kevin Pinckney's White House essay) that was written for the White House and the Smithsonian, and just, you know, trying to be a part of, or goal of making Fairmount Heights a historical district, it's just shed a whole other light to why it's important to me.

CK: When you first purchased the house, what was your intention at that time, as to how you would restore it or your plans for remodeling?
LW: I've always, see. My grandparent, we, she came from a nice size home. And it reminds me of my grandparents' home. The long porch, the big rooms, the antique furniture, and, to me, that was just a part of my heritage. And so, it just takes me back there, and I feel like I'm still connected to my ancestors. So,

when I purchased the home, it was always the idea of preserving what I have, not to demolish and remodel, with limitations. I never had the idea of, okay; I'm going to put another house on the end of the house or anything like that. I wanted to just keep the thing the way it was, or bring it back to its original state. The long porch, to me, I'm like, why they didn't leave that there. But that's important to me.

CK: When did that alteration take place?
LW: I'm not, I'm not sure when it took place, and no one seems to be exactly sure when it took place.

CK: But initially, could you explain how the porch looked and what it looks like now?
LW: The porch was a wooden porch that extended from one end of the house to other end of the front. It had the wooden roof, with columns, and they demolished that. I don't know if it was because it just needed to be remodeled or just refurbished, or it just had a lot of damage where they couldn't keep it, or if they just wanted to change the style. Because they had these stones put on the porch, and a cement slab, and then half of the house was sided with aluminum with this little brick stones on it. But then they took all of that off and put the other part of aluminum, I mean vinyl siding, which that's where it is now, the two different sidings.

CK: Did you find anything as you were working on the house, when they removed some of the siding that's on it now; was there anything that you discovered underneath?
LW: When we removed the siding in the back just so the Prince George's County, Maryland Park and Planning, Historical Trust, just could kind of get an idea of how good the wood is, there's just an old newspaper article plastered back there. But I just did not want to remove it or touch it until I have something where I can easily take it off to preserve it. And the wood looks excellent. It looks beautiful. Other than that, no. When we were in the attic one time, we found a check from 1945 and a letter to Mrs. McGhee, she was in school and she was writing to her mom, you know. She was going to be a majorette, and her mother was making sure she kept her studies up. I didn't keep that letter. I should have, because I didn't know, this is when I first got here, the connection now and Mrs. McGhee.

CK: What is Mrs. McGhee's connection to the house?
LW: This is Mr. Pinckney's granddaughter, I mean; this is Mr. Henry Pinckney and Mrs. Pinckney's daughter, Mrs. McGhee. This was her letter while she was away at college to her mom. This was her letter to her mom.

CK: And Mrs. McGhee, what is her association to you?
LW: Her daughter taught me in school, and she was also Mrs. McGhee, was the educator in Prince George's County public schools and vice-principal of Dosewell-Brooks. That's her association with me. And her daughter became a teacher as well. And she taught me in high school.

CK: You told me about the newspaper print that's on the back of the house. Did you discover it yourself when you took the material away.
LW: We were taking it off. Yeah, I discovered it, but I just didn't want to pull it off. I just left it. And there's another piece of newspaper article kind of plastered back there, and I just said, aw, leave it. I don't want to, you know, disrupt it until I get something where I can really take it off to make sure I don't destroy it when I'm removing it. So I left it.

CK: Do you have any idea why it's there?
LW: No. No. I think just the form of the way they were putting siding up long ago.

CK: Could you see anything? Can you make anything out of the newspaper?
LW: You can see some print. It's a print of a woman. Looks almost like Marilyn Monroe, but she don't look like Marilyn Monroe. And it had some writing on it that I, but I, like I said, I just kind of left it. But you can see that it's old print.

CK: Do you have any idea how old it might be?
LW: No. No. I did find an old article from Mr. Pinckney accompanying President Roosevelt to go vote in Albany, New York, and that was in November 1901. But I found that on the Internet. I kind of just cut and pasted and put it with one of my, with the application for restoration and preservation of this house.

CK: Did you find anything else in the back of the house as you were making changes or just living here?
LW: No.

CK: So, do you think the house looks relatively the same as it did when Mr. Pinckney lived here?
LW: Besides the porch, yes. And the back porch, because you have the aluminum awning on the porch on the front and the back. Yes. They, I think, I'm not positively sure, I think they opened that door up in the kitchen later. Because I could never put two and two together why they have two doors in the kitchen. I think that's something they just did on their own.

CK: Where do those doors go?
LW: Both to the backyard.

CK: They both open onto the backyard?
LW: Yeah. The kitchen door in the kitchen goes straight one way facing the back of the house is going out to the porch, which I think that's the original door. But, to the left side of the kitchen, the door goes out to the side of the house. I don't know how, when they put that there. It looks as if it may have been added, you know, probably like fifty, sixty years ago. But who knows? But I know the one that's leading to the backyard has always been there because when we removed the siding, we also found what they call the ghost of where the original wood post to the porch was.

CK: In the back of the house?
LW: (Nods, affirmative).

CK: Can you describe again, the layout of the house?
LW: This house is a Colonial Revival, which is a four square home. Two story. Four rooms upstairs with an office, bathroom, full bathroom, and then when you come downstairs, there's a full bathroom downstairs, full kitchen, family room, living room and dining room.

CK: Were the bathrooms installed just as they are now when you bought the house?
LW: We installed the bottom, the lower level bathroom and the bathroom upstairs was, when they'd start putting bathrooms in homes, that was in, that's the original bathroom.

CK: You said there's an office upstairs?
LW: Yes.

CK: Was it always an office?
LW: No, that was considered their closet, where they stored their clothes and things.

CK: What was it made of?
LW: They said cedar, but I never found any cedar on the wall, there's still plaster on the wall like it is all around the house. It still had hard wood floors, and that's it.

CK: Have you done work yourself in the house.
LW: Yes. We refinished the floors. We stripped the banister because it was painted, the entire wood was painted, and so we stripped it and varnished it back to where it was originally. We stripped some of the molding that just had a lot of chipped paint on it and repainted it just to make it look fresher. We painted the walls and repaired the majority of the walls.

CK: Do you think the house is important to the community?
LW: Oh, of course. Of course.

CK: How so?
LW: I think it's important to the community if just to be a part of history and its revitalization of the community because you still have seventeen homes here that are still in historic state that have not had a lot done to it to take out their character. And it's important to the community because this is one of the first African-American communities in the state of Maryland, and I want to say, in the United States. You had a lot of prominent African-American people. You had the first African-American black judge for the county that came from here. (Interruption by guest). You had a lot of educators that come from the area, so as far as the community, I think it would be to our benefit to maintain its integrity and its history, you know, as an African-American.

CK: Do you think it will be important to future generations?
LW: Of course. Of course. It just, it's a legacy. It's our ancestry. It's where we came from, you know. And even back in the early 1900s, just understanding the struggle and the progression of where we've come from. Because I do believe we all come from somewhere. And what we do with it, that's the power. You know, where we take it, that's the power. And it just also gives us so much encouragement of where we can go, what we can achieve. And just think in those times, you know, education beyond grade level was still able to obtain, even though it was supposed to be a struggle, it was still obtainable. So, that's just letting us know that you, and even now when we have more access to education and continuing our careers and progressing, we're not limited to, as we were when Mr. Pinckney was coming up. So, it's important to our community.

CK: Do you think the house, was it important to the social life of the community, do you know, during its existence?
LW: Reading about the Pinckneys and seeing how they were socially involved in the community, as far as forming the First Presbyterian Church, as far as being a part of the Masonic Lodge and Eastern Star, helped developing the municipality and establishing the township, I think it was, it held a very integral part of being a social community. Because you had these leaders in the community to make it happen. They really strived to become the first black superintendent; the first, you know, elementary school; the first African-American church, Presbyterian Church. I mean, when you read a lot history about Fairmount Heights, you're reading it was the first to accomplish this in the African-American community. So, that's just important, you know. When you speak about, when you look at just the town of Fairmount Heights

and the history of the town of Fairmount Heights, they broke a lot of barriers for our community. And I really believe they were the first pioneers to help other communities develop, you know, economically, politically, socially. They made it happen.

CK: Do you know of any significant events that took place here?
LW: No. Not that I've read about. No.

CK: So, the appearance of the house, has it changed much over time?
LW: On the outside, yeah. And I think on the inside, it's probably the same when I purchased it, other than some cosmetic stuff. The character of the inside stayed the same. Now that I really think about it, even in the pantry, it must have been important to the McGhees, and the Pinckneys, not for, even the folks that rented it, to change any of it because, I think about it now and I'm saying, why didn't they do this? But, so it had to be of great significance to them to not even tear down the china cabinets that's in there, to leave the pantry the way it is because they didn't want to change the character of the house. Outside, what has changed is just the siding and the porch. Other than that, no. Nothing has been added, I mean, taken away or added.

CK: What would you like to see happen to the house?
LW: The house restored back to its original way that it was built. That's so important to me. That's just one of my goals that I just, I'm saying short term, I don't want this to be long and drawn out. It's just something that I would like to see short term. I would really like to see displayed outside that this was Mr. Pinckney's house. This house, this gentleman and his wife, and how he served at the White House. And just the history. I think the state of Maryland owes that to him to make sure that happens. That he's recognized about the role he played. And not only him, but even after he passed, his lineage, his children, how the impact that they've played in the community, in the Washington, D. C. area, in the Fairmount Heights area, in the Prince George's County area. That's just so good. I think it would just be wonderful. Because his family is the ones. The pioneers, they're, they're gone, and gone on to be with the Lord, and I just think it's just something needed to be kept alive, you know. The history of the making, you know. I think it's important.

CK: So the house has a lot of significance to you?
LW: Yes. Yes. And I'm not connected with the family anymore, like first been in contact with them. I mean, but I would like for them to be involved in it. And just to understand how it's important. I think it should be important for them, you know, to support the cause of the house being reserved, preserved, back to its original state.

CK: What do you think it would mean to them?
LW: I think it would rekindle the spirit of their great-grandmother and great-grandfather. And understanding how important it is, and where they come from. Even the younger generation, it might be a little cloudy to them now, you know. I think it would do something, especially Kevin Clay Pinckney, the great-grandson of Henry Pinckney, because he's taken the time to, this had to have some value to him. He's taken the time to even put this expanded essay together (referring to the essay "Henry Pinckney, White House Steward, An expanded essay" 2008).

CK: Do you ever have any contact with him?
LW: No, but I would like to. And, in one of the books, it has some of his information in it, just to let him know what I'm doing, and what my goal is for the house.

CK: Do you ever consider getting in touch with him?
LW. Yes! Yes! After I've gotten this book (expanded essay), and this is a way and a means for me to get in contact. Of course. Of course. Of course. And it would have been good, for him to be interviewed because this had to have been something so dear for him to put this together.

CK: And what is it exactly, the book?
LW: This, this, this book is a, "Henry Pinckney White House", is an expanded essay and it was stated that it was going to be used for the White House historic exhibition. Let me read this to you. He said, "I wrote this essay for the use by the White House Historical Association and its collaboration with the Smithsonian Institute Traveling Exhibition Service on the upcoming exhibition, 'The Working White House: Two centuries of traditions and memories,' which starts a multiyear national tour in the fall of 2008. So, he compiled all of this information about Mr. Pinckney to help be a part. Isn't that something?

CK: Yes, that is something.
LW. So, he did a lot of research. He answered a lot questions that I didn't know. And now it's like, okay, I can't bring closure into it until the house is done the way I think it's done the way I think it should be.

CK: And you're dedicated to doing that.
LW: Oh, I'm dedicated to doing that. If God gives me strength, I'll see it done. And I'll tell Mr. Pinckney it's done.

Acknowledgments

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