



City of Alexandria
Office of Historic Alexandria
Alexandria Legacies
Oral History Program



Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies – Living Legends 2011*

Title: *Interview with Henry Brooks*

Date of Interview: *March 2, 2011*

Location of Interview: *Brooks Home, Alexandria, Virginia*

Interviewer: *Molly Kerr*

Transcriber: *Stacy Bowe*

Abstract: *The following is an interview with one of the most active residents of Alexandria, Henry Sidney Brooks, who positively deserves his Living Legend status. His life story unfolds, beginning with his childhood in the diverse neighborhoods of 1950s Manhattan, his early achievement within engineering at the City College of New York, his finance degree at Columbia University, and continuing into his experiences while serving in the US Army. After settling in Alexandria during the 1970s, Mr. Brooks outlines his career, which includes positions within the US Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA), the Federal Energy Administration (FEA), and the Small Businesses Administration. He discusses his family's immigration history, as well as his current wife's, Carolyn. His story is peppered with intriguing anecdotes which involve some well known individuals of modern times (Colin Powell, Henry Kissinger, and Frank Lloyd Wright). There is scarcely a volunteer position that he has not undertaken and his community service record is inspiring. Mr. Brooks has held leadership roles on the Sister City Committee, Virginia School Boards Association, the Bienvenidos and Healthy Families programs, the Campagna Center, Boy Scouts of America and ROTC. He campaigned and lobbied for current and past Virginia legislators such as Patsy Ticer and Mark Warner. Mr. Brooks has cultivated a deep passion for his home and professes his incredible devotion towards educational programs for children of all ages within his community.*

This transcript has been edited by the interviewee in August 2011, and may not reflect the audio-recording exactly.

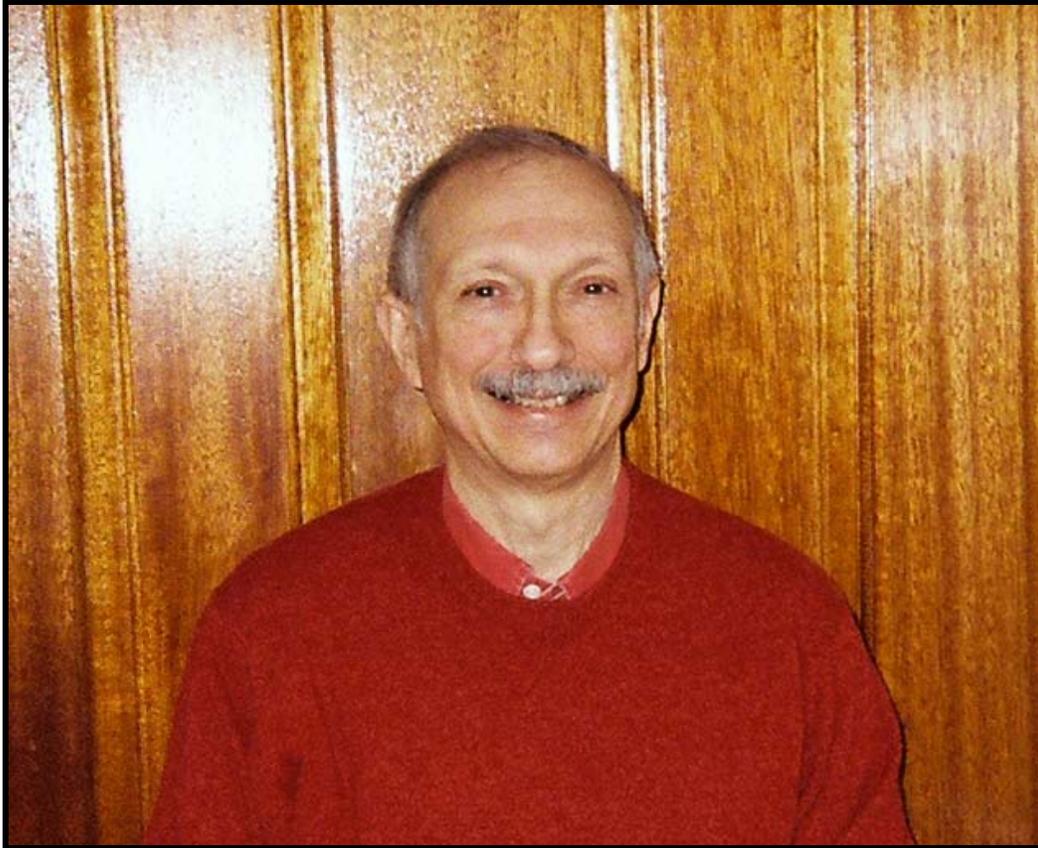
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Henry Brooks, 2011
 (credit: Molly Kerr for Alexandria Archaeology)

Living in Every Section of Alexandria

Molly Kerr:	This is an oral history interview on the second of March 2011, for the Alexandria legacies program - interviewing living legends of Alexandria of 2011. This is Molly Kerr and today with me being interviewed is...
Henry Brooks:	Henry Sidney Brooks.
M.K.:	Very good Mr. Brooks. Now I have an address on file for you is there any other address of record that I should be aware of for future historians?
Henry Brooks:	I've lived in every section of the city, but I've live[d] here on the 100-block of Gibbon Street since 1988.
M.K.:	So with that, where else in the city have you lived?
Henry Brooks:	I have lived at 5641 Sanger Avenue, between January '66 and July '67. I don't think that address exists anymore, because I think they renamed the street and stuff, but it was in Hamlet West. I paid \$112.50 a month

	<p>for a one bedroom plus den. I was there with just my wife and then our oldest boy was born there in April of '66. We left there in the following July and we lived in Annandale [Virginia] for about twelve months and then we moved to Heidelberg, Germany, where I spent twenty-six months as chief of operations research in the U.S. Army, Europe. Lived in colonel's housing and that was an interesting assignment. I came back, I was on the Army staff once again, and we lived at 319 South Pitt Street, which was my father in law's house. My oldest son went to Lyles Crouch School for first grade 1972-73 and was in Marie Boyd's class. We moved in looking for a house in Old Town [Alexandria]. My father-in-law was deputy station chief at the Central Intelligence Agency in Saigon, Republic of South Vietnam. We lived there until May of '73 when we moved to 3830 Fort Worth Avenue in the Seminary Ridge subdivision. I lived there most of that time as a single parent because the marriage broke up right after the move. I was left with three little kids of seven, five, and two, boys on the end and a girl in the middle. I was the first man to get child support in Virginia. The Supreme Court of Virginia in 1981 found in my favor in Brooks vs. Featherstone.</p> <p>I married Carolyn A. Miller of Gibbon Street on the fourteenth of July 1988. We both try to dabble in French, and she speaks French fluently...She has two girls. [In] 1988, and we've lived here ever since. We didn't have all five living with us at the same time. The oldest one was in law school at the time of my marriage, and my daughter got married six weeks before we did when she was twenty, so only my youngest son who at that point was seventeen moved in. He soon went off to college and he now lives down the street at 430 South Lee Street. He and his wife have two little girls and my wife's oldest child, my oldest granddaughter, lives on Crestwood with her three little girls [as of the edited date]. My daughter, who taught in the Alexandria Public School system for five years, has a girl, sixteen, a girl, twelve, and a little boy whose six months old and she and her family live down in Waynewood. She used to live in Alexandria, and that's Helen Brooks Vermillion. She married Sean Vermillion from the Vermillion family in Alexandria. They have investments around, real estate and stuff. Anyway I've lived in every section of the city.</p>
<p>M.K.:</p>	<p>You mentioned that you lived in Germany. Have you lived anywhere else in the world?</p>
<p>Henry Brooks:</p>	<p>Well, I've visited lots of places on [temporary duty assignment] but I've lived in Germany twice. After graduation from Columbia University's School of Business in '62, I was a lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers making liquid oxygen for the Redstone missile in Germany for about ten months and then I was reassigned to a combat</p>

	<p>engineer battalion where I was the adjutant. The battalion was brought back to Fort Gordon, Georgia, before its deployment to the Republic of South Vietnam in 1965, but I left in July of '64 to take a position with the federal government. After working at the VA [Veterans Affairs] for two and a half years, where I worked for a gentlemen who later became Secretary of Treasury, Paul H. O'Neill. I went to work for the office of the Chief of Staff as an operations research analyst, and I lived another twenty-six months in Germany from June '69 to the first part of August of '71. We went over on the SS United States, first class, one of the last voyages that left North River, Pier 88 on the tenth of June. We landed at Bremerhaven [Germany]. The seventeenth of June 1969. That was a very good assignment because my boss was back at the Pentagon, a three star general, and I was basically an intelligence agent trying to find out operating information about our troops so that we could plan better in the Pentagon.</p>
M.K.:	All right, so you were in the army...
Henry Brooks:	That's correct. I got out of the army, from active duty in 1964 and from the reserves, as a captain in 1969.
<p>Work at the VA (Veterans Affairs)</p>	
M.K.:	And then you were a civilian for the VA for awhile.
Henry Brooks:	<p>Right, I designed an accounting system, brought it into the twentieth century, it was designed as a centralized accounting for local management before that everybody did things on three by five cards. I did the system design, central general ledger, at a VA computer center with using messages and stuff like that. Before that, everybody had a little pot of money and had to keep an account for it and now we kept all the books in one central place and they knew how much money they had and were able to better manage it. They were very upset that I left when I did. The guy [Mr. O'Neill] I worked for was going to [Office of Management and Budget] on a lateral and I went on a lateral to the office of Chief of Staff in 1975. [He later became deputy director of [Office of Management and Budget] at that time I was Inspector General for the Federal Energy Administration.]</p> <p>I worked in the Pentagon, including my service in Germany, for seven years, and I was Chief, Cost of Analysis Research at the age of twenty-nine, and then shortly after that I was in charge of cost analysis in Europe. I came back in 1971 to the Army staff. I was the U.S. Army representative to the team that planned the personnel center over at the Hoffman buildings. The team was run by the [Office of the Secretary of Defense] Comptroller. He thought the army was wasting a lot of money having all these offices all over the place doing personnel and so we centralized the personnel function, put it in one place. And I was the Comptroller of the Army's person on that and Alexandria is where</p>

	the center is.
M.K.:	So, you more or less finished off your career working for the Department of the Army and the Office of Chief of Staff?
Work with the FEA (Federal Energy Administration)	
Henry Brooks:	<p>No, I left the Army Staff a couple months after I got separated from my first wife because I could not manage my time there. So I went over to the Internal Revenue Service where I was the Budget Officer and I was there, a little over a year, and I was working with a gentlemen named Frank Zarb who was the head of the Federal Energy Administration because we were accounting for their budget operations as well at that point. The Federal Energy Administration (FEA) and most of their people in the field were Internal Revenue Service agents doing accounting, making sure refiners were accounting for the old oil properly and not charging the government for new oil because it was during the price and allocation regulations. Since so many of the FEA workers were Internal Revenue Service agents, he asked me to be special assistant for him and I did. That was in the spring of '75 and shortly after that, I became inspector general of the agency staying there until I think it was '77 or '78 when I switched over, when it became the Department of Energy to the Energy Information Administration.</p> <p>I worked on international energy issues. I designed the energy balance of the United States, which is submitted every year to the International Energy Agency in Paris and I was the US Representative to that. I would go to Paris every three or four months and work with those people. Pick up a little bit of French and when I met Carolyn, we could speak. It was nice. I retired from the government in March of '87 on an 'early out.' I got a job offer from a consulting company making more money than I was making in the government. And at that time, if your job was abolished --even if you weren't fifty-five-- you could, if you had more than twenty-five years of service, you could get an 'early out,' and that's what I did. So, then I went to work for a consultant, doing work for several agencies including the CIA and I did a lot of work for the Small Businesses Administration -- evaluating their small businesses innovative research program, across the entire government. Talking to all kinds of people that got grants from various agencies. It was set up in 1982 under the Reagan Administration as a way of subsidizing innovative research which did not have an immediate payoff. Sort of early stuff. And the chairman of the Energy Commerce Committee, John Dingle, thought this was welfare for the rich, so he asked the Small Businesses Administration to evaluate it and they hired me as a consultant to do that and I went and talked to anybody who had what is called a 'Phase 2,' which is a follow on contract for half a</p>

	<p>million dollars, because ‘Phase 1’ was only fifty thousand from which they would construct a follow-on research effort. I would call the companies to see how well they did in commercializing their research. Based on that I would visit more successful companies, some of the successful ones I visited was, well, your cellular telephone. One of things that was invented under this was code division [was] multiple access, which is the technology which is used in Verizon phones. QUALCOMM was a small little research outfit just north of San Diego run by a guy named Jacobs. I visited him and talked to him and saw that this was good, and Sprint uses it also. Unfortunately, Europeans went a different way, so [did] AT&T and the German telephone companies’ subsidiary, T-Mobile. They didn’t use that. But that was one of the companies, and there were several others. Candela Laser, a laser company was another. But anyway, there was a bunch of companies that were very successful, a lot of good stuff that are now major companies in the United States. That was one of the things I did and since I had that job, George Herbert Walker Bush was interested in who was stealing our secrets under this program, so, the CIA hired me to see who was stealing these. Who was buying up these companies, so they could buy the technology? So, I visited English and French companies in the United States, as well as the Japanese and the Korean ones. The Japanese companies had American CEOs in the United States, and were not evil, and everybody feared them. It was the French and the Koreans! [laughter]</p>
Henry Brooks:	<p>A good story is that of HDTV, the largest maker of HDTVs now is Samsung and the way that happened was: they were up in Princeton right near the Robert Sarnoff Research Center where a lot of work was done, even though it was run out of the headquarters here on Braddock Place under the FCC. They would hear about an engineer who was doing a lot of good work at Robert Sarnoff Center and they would ask him to be a consultant and they would offer him three times than what he was making at the Sarnoff and that’s how Samsung did it. [chuckling] And now they’re the largest producer of televisions in the United States. And Lucky Goldstone also is doing the same thing. You may know it as LG, but it’s a Korean company as well. That’s what LG stands for.</p>
M.K.:	<p>Did not know that. Well, you have certainly had a diversity of opportunities. You mentioned that you went to Columbia [University].</p>
<p>CCNY and Columbia University Education / ROTC Memories</p>	
Henry Brooks:	<p>That’s correct.</p>
M.K.:	<p>To get a degree in...?</p>
Henry Brooks:	<p>That was in quantitative analysis and finance. And I did that on scholarship. I got a 40 percent grant and 60 percent loan. How that happened was after I graduated from City, the army didn’t want me</p>

	<p>right away if I got another degree, so I went to the Baruch Graduate School where I took three courses of economics and one in accounting and another in management and one of the economics courses was banking and finance and I really did well in that. Then there was history of economic thought which I thought was really interesting and the third one was a seminar and the gentlemen who taught that was a recent grad of the University of Chicago where he got his PhD under a man named Milton Friedman, so Uncle Milty, who was all of four foot eleven, came to speak to us. Well, when everyone heard he was coming and this was in the spring of 1961, it was maybe March, everybody came. Our classroom was too small, so we had it in a big hall and we might of had a couple hundred people there. But we also had Baunol from Princeton and the then governor of the New York Fed came to talk with us about debt reconstruction in the United States and how we finance our things. That was a very interesting course and then I had to take the GMATs, in order to graduate, so I took it and I did so well, I took the score off to Columbia and they offered me, as I stood there, the deal to come to Columbia and that's how I came to Columbia.</p> <p>I graduated in June of '62 and I immediately went on active duty in July of '62 at Fort Belvoir here in Fairfax County [Virginia]. That was the third time I had been to Fort Belvoir though. The first time was in the spring of '57 as a cadet in the ROTC and we did a visit of Fort Belvoir to the engineer research and development labs. At the time, John Eisenhower was on the staff at the engineer school. I remember he lived close to the Mackenzie Hall, which is the Officers' Club, and there was just one car in front of his house from the Secret Service...Which is interesting because when I married Carolyn, there was a car across the street with D.C. plates and I called the police and they said, "Well, the car was supposed to be there." That's because Marvin Bush lived down the street. At a house that's now for sale again. I think it's about 426 or so South Lee [Street], or 424. Then the second time was in the June of '60, late June, when I went to ROTC summer camp at Fort Belvoir. I remember going through here but the first time we went down by bus. And it was really interesting going down Washington Street because it was mid-January 1957 and there was a flag for every flag pole on Washing street. But it wasn't a U.S. flag. It was the stars and bars. It was the weekend of [Robert E. Lee's] birthday. And we were amazed and speechless, we had never seen a flag flying from a flag pole that wasn't the United States flag at that time. It would have been forty-nine stars, I'm not sure, I don't think we had fifty stars yet. In January '57.</p>
M.K.:	It may have been only forty-eight.
Henry Brooks:	Yeah, it may have been only forty-eight. We put up a flag out in front

	of the house every day from the Second World War. And we always raised it every morning and it was forty-eight states.
M.K.:	Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
Henry Brooks:	Well, I was born at an early age on Broadway on the island of Manhattan on 168 th Street, Sloan's Baby Hospital [in New York City], which is part of the Columbia Presbyterian Complex Medical Center. I grew up in the Bronx, South Bronx, and I went to PS 82 for kindergarten first and third grade, I skipped second, then PS 104 for fourth, fifth, and sixth and then back to PS 82 for seventh through ninth. I went to Bronx High School of Science for my high school and then I went to CCNY [City College of New York]. I won a state scholarship, they have an exam and if you know a lot about everything and have good recall they gave you a scholarship and I got \$2500 which was \$500 a year for being a science student or an engineering student. Going to CCNY, I was able to self-finance my education because it was free tuition and it was \$12 a semester for activities fee. There was a bus fare and books and that was it, and I would buy used books. And then I went to Columbia.
M.K.:	May I ask was that dollar figure a lot then?
Henry Brooks:	Yes.
M.K.:	Was that considered very reasonable?
Henry Brooks:	Yes, because a whole year at NYU [New York University], which I also got into at that time, at the engineering school, was \$800 a year and that would have paid for NYU. I didn't go, though some of my friends went. I didn't think it was worthwhile going to a school you had to pay for when you got into one that was free. They may not have gotten in, I had a very high average, you had to compete to get into the day school and be matriculated; now they have to pay. I took the subway home every day. I joined ROTC and there was another cadet in some of my classes that took the same train I did when I took a train instead of a bus (and late at night I would take the train because sometimes I had to stay on campus), and his name was Colin Powell by the way.
M.K.:	Oh, gee. [laughter]
Henry Brooks:	In fact, I have a picture of him and me up at T.C. Williams. [gets up and retrieves photograph] It's here somewhere, yeah here it is. [shows photograph]
MK	Oh, neat. Very good.
Henry Brooks:	So, Colin and I were in ROTC at the same time, he graduated two years before I did. And we used to run into each other at Boy Scout jamborees because when he was the head of the forces command in Atlanta he came up to Fort A. P. Hill. I think that was '89 he at that time had four stars but he was a couple weekends after that he was named chairman of the joint chiefs. But in 1987, when he was assistant

	national security advisor, we had a breakfast for him up at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center Officer's Club, and he was only a three star general at that time. He was working for a guy named Frank Carlucci who was NSA to President Reagan. We talked then, we see each other once in awhile, we both are very active in trying to bring back ROTC back to CCNY and it looks like we're going to be successful.
M.K.:	Oh, good.
Henry Brooks:	Yes, and the major reason is because of the veteran's program for new students that have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have a veteran's club and they wanted it so that they could reenter the army as officers. So, we hope to start it again this coming fall. The City University of New York has approved it and we have to make an application to the Pentagon, but we have a lot people behind us. Because CCNY is a very diverse institution. The Army Officer Corps has become a very southern kind of thing. There are twelve schools in Alabama that have ROTC, there's only two in the city of New York. [chuckling]
M.K.:	That's interesting.
Henry Brooks:	So, that is one of the causes I put a lot of time into. In fact we're doing a reunion here in Alexandria, in November for Veteran's Day. We're hoping to get a tour of the White House and I'm the Chairman of the entire thing. We're going to be up at the Residence Inn on Duke Street [Alexandria] and Powell may show up, I don't know, it depends on his schedule, he's very popular. We had one a couple years ago up in Maryland, but this time we going to visit that, we have five people on the wall at the memorial down on Constitution Gardens, we'll have something there on November eleventh or twelfth.
M.K.:	Wow, so you are not only local in Alexandria, but you are local back at your home town too.
Henry Brooks:	Right, I haven't lived there since I went into the army, but I have very close associations with the people I went to school with especially the people who are in the Society of Military Engineers, the national headquarters of which is on the 600 block of Prince Street [Alexandria], as you well know.
M.K.:	Yes, yes, in fact I have a friend here right now who is taking a class with the Corps. She works for the Little Rock District.
Henry Brooks:	Excellent. She has a lot to do with the Mississippi River?
M.K.:	No, because that's actually a different district.
Henry Brooks:	That's out of Vicksburg? I guess, yeah, that's right.
M.K.:	Speaking of things connected to your home town, what were your parent's names?
Family History	

Henry Brooks:	My father's name was Raymond Edward Brooks and he was born in 1898 in San Francisco [California], which was eight years before the devastating quake. He lived on Bush and Fillmore, the house was destroyed in the quake. His father was a contract physician with the U.S. military, in the Presidio. He went into private practice in Pasadena after that. My father ran away from home when he was fifteen, and he was the eighth child by the way, his father was in his late 50s when he was born, and his father came to the United States in 1853 from Mazatlan, Mexico on the Panchita, on March third, 1853, it's a matter of record. I have a picture of him on the wall, if you want to see [gets up to show picture]. He was actually born in the late 1830's in southern California and in 1847, during the Mexican War, the family, which spoke Spanish, went to Mazatlan. He ran away from home to partake in the Gold Rush.
M.K.:	Running away from home seems to be a trend?
Henry Brooks:	Yes! He came alone, his name was Edwin Jacob Brooks. And then I had a brother that was named after him, he died when he was thirty from kidney disease. My mother was born in 1901, in July, in Krakow, which then was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Her father spoke German, as well as Yiddish, and some Polish.
M.K.:	And what was her name?
Henry Brooks:	Her name was Frieda. She came to the United States in 1904. Her father came in the Fall of 1901, until they sent for my mother and grandmother. Immigrants back then, wanted to be American, so I did not know until she died that that was her real name. Everybody called her Florence.
M.K.:	That's a big change.
Henry Brooks:	Yes, and they changed their name from Sauerstrom to Strom because it sounded more American in the 1930s.
M.K.:	And what was the original spelling?
Henry Brooks:	S-A-U-E-R-S-T-R-O-M, but in the ship records, which I can show you, they used the maiden name of her mother because her mother came over after. I have the ship record of her father, and then she came over in 1904 with her mother and that name was Pelzman, P-E-L-Z-M-A-N. And most of the relatives that were left over there, during the Second World War, were either Sauerstrom and Pelzmans. I really didn't know much about the Sauerstroms until I was in Krakow [Poland] in 2008 when I found birth records for Sauerstroms from the same town, obviously relatives of my grandfather. None of whom survived the war, some of my mother's relatives did survive the war. Very few though. Some came to the United States, but not very many.
M.K.:	You mention that you speak German. Do you speak any other

	languages?
Henry Brooks:	<p>I try to get by on French. My wife is much better than I am. In fact there's a good story, when I was chairman of the Alexandria-Caen Sister City committee, we were in Caen [France] for the fiftieth anniversary of their liberation and they were rededicating the Normandy Museum in Caen and we got there and there were some people there ahead of us, and my wife and I went to talk to this man who nobody was around because everybody else was clustered, and so we thought that that wasn't very nice so we started to talk to him. And my wife, of course, using her French and it turns out the reason nobody wanted to talk to him was because he was too powerful to talk to. He was the culture minister, a man named <i>Toubon</i>. So, he claps his hands and asks for the things to start and of course we don't believe all of this, you know, we were quickly apprised of the situation and he asked for somebody to translate for him from the museum staff and they tried to translate into English and weren't doing a very good job of it, he asked, because his English was apparently very good, even though we spoke French to him. He said [noise] "Stop! I have a better translator here," and he says, "<i>Madame Brooks, traducer s'il vous plaît</i>". This was her moment in the sun, and then she did it and she did a marvelous job. The French love her because she has wonderful pronunciation and she says the secret of good pronunciation is to have the native French speakers in the public schools teaching pronunciation. She grew up in Chevy Chase [Maryland] and she went to [Bethesda-Chevy Chase] high school. She had six years of French in eighth, well five years I guess, in high school and four years, she was a minor in romance languages, at [George Washington University], majored in economics, so her French was very good. I was able to get by in France before I knew her, but since then... [laughter] We used go to France at least once a year between the time we got married and 2001 when we were in France for the month of September and that was really shocking. We were on a barge in Burgundy and all of sudden I see the French Air Force above us doing combat air patrols. There was an air base near us, and later found out and I said "Hey, these guys are up there on their lunch hour, something must be up." It wasn't until we landed and the other couple, who went on the barge trip with us, who were French, were trying to do a stock trade in Paris, called his broker in Paris to do a trade in New York, we found out actually what happened.</p> <p>It took forever to get through and then we tried to get through to our kids because we had a kid downtown working at the [Federal Aviation Administration] and some other children here. It took forever to get through. Just shocking. I remember when I was six years old and a plane went into the Empire State Building, and it was a B-24 or a B-26,</p>

	something like that, and my father took me down the next day and it was just this black smudge on the seventy-fourth or seventy-seventh floor, I couldn't imagine that a plane could get through like that. It was kind of amazing, but not only had aviation changed the size of their fuel tanks but construction of sky scrapers went down from brick and steel to just curtain walls and steel and steel will melt.
M.K.:	It must have been a scary way to find out.
Henry Brooks:	Yeah, on the flight back, we came back on the twenty-first after going to Château Margaux, where we stayed three days and then St. Emilion for two days, and then took the [Train à Grande Vitesse] back to Paris. The plane back was United Airlines flight 911 and it was maybe one third full. They stopped using that number at the end of the month. We went over on Flight 910 on the fourth of September. [chuckles] And we haven't been to France since. We went to Ireland for a couple of weeks in 2005 and then we've been going mostly to eastern Europe, Czech Republic, Poland, and last October we spent a couple weeks in Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro. That was an interesting trip actually. We are going back to Croatia in July, as well as Slovenia.
M.K.:	Very different from France I suspect.
Henry Brooks:	Oh yes, yes. The food especially. It was interesting.
Committee for the Sister City	
M.K.:	You mentioned that you were on the Committee for the Sister City.
Henry Brooks:	Yes, the Sister City Committee I think I got on in '91 or '90, probably '90. What happened was, the year after we got married in '88, and went to the Canadian Rockies for our honeymoon, where I learned how to ride a horse. We had horses on our farm, they were raised for racing and you know, only professionals rode those, but in '89 we were going to Paris, as a vacation, I was planning it, so I called Jim Moran, who at that time was mayor, I said, "I understand we have a sister city in Normandy." Now, I went there in 1969 as a tourist when I was living in Germany. "What's happening?" and so he gave me a couple of phone numbers and I called a couple of people and one of them was Kathleen Baker, and she told me nothing was done. The Sister City Committee chairman didn't want to do anything about it. She was only interested in the [United Kingdom] and our Scottish city and she was supposed to meet people in France and then she stood them up and they were very insulted. Ms. Baker gave me a couple names of people to look up once I got there. So, I called them before I got there, and then when I got there I met with them and we had lunch and then we had dinner, and I met a lot of the people and they told me how to get around the prior insult and to put the relationship on a sound footing, so when I got back I met with Jim and Jim didn't want to do anything. He was too interested in running for the House of Representatives. (The election against Stan Parris was coming up, 1990.)

And so, I joined the Sister City Committee trying to get them interested. And, it was like pushing a piece of spaghetti up the hill with your nose. So, we formed a small committee that was informally called "Twinning Committee." And, at that time, after Jim got elected, Patsy took over and I had a very close relationship with Patsy. (She used to live around the corner from me when I lived on 319 South Pitt and our kids played together. It was my son Edwin, and Virginia Ticer, and Andrew Braswell, Ed Braswell's son; Ed was chairman of the planning commission for years.) Anyway, so, we had the one of the Caen associate city managers come over, *maire adjoint*, which is like assistant mayor, but they have like seventeen assistant mayors, but he was the one to come over because his school which he was principal of, or he was head of the PT or physical education department -- Mr. Bertillier. They had a relationship with Saint Agnes and Saint Stephens, (actually, at that point it might have been just Saint Stephens). So, we had lunch with him at a Chinese restaurant (that no longer exists) at the 4900 block of Kenmore in the building, which is now part of Alexandria Hospital. And he told us how to plan it all out. How we did it was, we invited the mayor to Alexandria and he came and we put him up at the Morrison house, for free, and his international person. He met with Mayor Ticer and then he invited Patsy for a signing ceremony in Caen. Patsy and I went over in the fall of '92, I think it was, and we signed this agreement, it might have been '91, I don't remember now, '91 or '92, and we formed a committee and I was the chairman (until I got elected to the school board) and I was still, at that point, chairman of the Sister City Committee because the person who was chairman worked against Patsy on some election or something, and she didn't get re appointed and people got upset, that was Linda something, Linda Whitman, I remember now. Anyway, and then things went very well and then I helped plan for the fiftieth anniversary of the D-Day landings. I was invited, I went, Peggy Papp, who was the mayor's assistant, and Patsy did not go, but just Peggy and I went for the June sixth and that's where I met up with Henry Kissinger who I had a relationship with because a person who was my professional advisor was his student. When I was in Heidelberg, I took an exam, not an exam, I took a degree in international relations when I was stationed in Heidelberg with somebody who studied under him was there, a guy named Ralph Thompson, and I got a degree in international relations when I was there. So we talked about that guy, I had been on a committee in '92, '93 for Bill Clinton, the transition team, I was in charge of all agency inspector generals, and we talked about how the transition team went, what was happening in the White House, which I had some sort of inside into, from people I knew as well as my service,

	<p>and so there's a picture of Henry here, [gets up to find picture] and that is in Caen. Anyway, that was interesting, because I was the official Alexandria representative for the D-Day landings, got as close to Bill Clinton and the Queen and Francois Mitterrand, who was then president of France as I am to you and spoke to them, and that was at the ceremony on Omaha beach—</p> <p>And one thing you should know is we have two relatives, two brothers, who are buried in the Normandy cemetery at Colleville-sur-mer. My wife had the same nanny for seventeen years. She was born in Florence, Italy, and just after the Second World War, she met a man who was an American enlisted man, who she married, well, her family wasn't too much in favor of this because he was only an enlisted man, but she did it anyway. She came from one of the finest families in Florence. For presents she would get fur coats from her family and Bruno Magli shoes, and she was living down there at Fort Belvoir. Her brother Emberto Baldini, was head of the Ufitzi [Galley] during the flood in I think it was 1986, the river floods because I remember giving her a Smithsonian and there was his name. He later became culture minister and left his wife for a very young woman, and it became a very, <i>cause célèbre</i>, in Italy. She's buried right off the Piazza Michelangelo, she died in 1992, Miranda Baldini Anderson. Anyway, how I got into that, is two of her husband's brothers, one of them died on the thirteenth of June, '44, from his wounds, he was in the famous twenty-ninth infantry division, 116th infantry, and that was the one that took an awful beating, they were the first ones there at the beach, so, every time we go to France, and we're in Normandy we always visit their graves, and decorate them and take pictures. He's still alive, he's 91 years old, Mr. Anderson, his name is Carl Anderson. We all call him Carlo because that's what his wife called him. He spoke fluent Italian and his sister is still alive up in Pittsburgh, the family is originally from Pittsburgh, but we considered him part of our family, our children visit him out in California, he lives with his only daughter and her husband, they didn't have children, so they bring their children to see him because they took care of them for so long because my wife had an important job at the Securities and Exchange Commission [SEC] where she retired last January after forty-one years.</p>
M.K.:	Congratulations to her.
Henry Brooks:	She had several people working for her. When she retired, the board, you know, the Commission had a special event for her.
M.K.:	Aw, well how wonderful.
Henry Brooks:	Anyway, I don't know what she did with her certificate; she probably put it in the closet where no one can see it. It's signed by every member of the SEC. But, where were we? We were talking about our 'French

	Connection,' I guess.
M.K.:	Yes, we I was going to say your role in the sister committee, the Sister City Committee, is one of the things that was highly recommended about you as part of your nomination to the Living Legends program.
Nomination to Living Legends	
Henry Brooks:	Which I left out a lot of things on my nomination. Because the thing is I didn't feel all that good about going through that, I thought it was kind of silly, I still do.
M.K.:	Well, but, my question to you is, how do you feel about being nominated?
Henry Brooks:	Nah, I would have rather have it not had it not happen.
M.K.:	Why?
Henry Brooks:	I just think its... if the city did something officially that would have been fine but its sort of run by people who mean well but, um, I don't know, what kind of criteria they use, or whatever, there's so many good people in the city that never get recognized. I'm not even going to the event because that is my last night on the Parks and Recreation Commission. I've been there eleven years, and I am not asking to be reappointed. I feel like that was long enough, I'll do something else, but March seventeenth I am going to be at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. It's at the same time.
M.K.:	That's okay.
Henry Brooks:	I haven't even told my family I was nominated, nobody even knows about it. I just think it's a way of finding out about the people who live here, I don't consider it an honor.
M.K.:	I think you should because you certainly have participated in lots of things and one of my goals, my personal goals, out of talking to everyone, is to discover what motivates folks to be active in their communities?
Henry Brooks:	Oh really?
M.K.:	That's one of my personal goals out of doing all of these, because I'm not actually connected to the Living Legends program.
Henry Brooks:	Right, I know.
M.K.:	Nina asked if the <i>Alexandria Legacies</i> program would be involved this year and do interviews with everyone.
Henry Brooks:	I think that's a good idea. You can get a much fuller understanding of what people's backgrounds is.
M.K.:	Right.
Bienvenidos and the Campagna Center	
Henry Brooks:	What happened was somebody came up to me, it was Arleen Hewett, we met at Christ Church during a Thanksgiving program. It was two years I guess now, yeah, two Thanksgivings ago. Beth El used to be on the other side of Cameron street from Christ Church and they had a

very close relationship even after they moved up to Seminary Road and every Thanksgiving they have a Thanksgiving at ten-o'clock at either Beth El or Christ Church. They pair off and when it's at Christ Church the rabbi gives the sermon and when it was at Beth El, the rector or the assistant rector gives a sermon. And the first time I went, a rabbi spoke, and he was a new rabbi, and the church was full, as it always is, and he started to speak and all the people in Christ Church fell in love with him. Because he was born and brought up in South Africa, in the British community and he has a British accent. [laughter] And he's a very charming, a man with great humor. So that was kind of neat. But anyway, two Thanksgivings ago, I was helping this woman, who I knew was from Beth El, and I knew her name was Arleen and I went and got her some food and some drinks, you know, I'm still in pretty good shape physically, even though I just celebrated my seventy-second birthday, and she asked me, "Do you know about the Living Legends?" and I says, "No, what's that?" and she says, "Well you know, people who do a lot for the city, Nina Tisara is running this thing, and I would like to nominate you, and get to know about you." I forwarded her an email that I had forwarded the executive director of the Healthy Families, because I'm on the board of that what they needed for their accreditation kind of thing. Didn't have everything on it, and it was very summary, and she used that. I would say that I was a board member of Bienvenidos, for umpteen years but I didn't say what I did on there, and you know, I should have explained it better, taken it more seriously, because when I was on Bienvenidos, I set up things with Tori Thomas who was a friend, because I dated when I was single, one of the Winklers, Karen Winkler, for awhile. And so I got an office up there for free for Bienvenidos and then we set up a computer training lab for young adults, Hispanic adults, and then we set up a mentoring program. I did all these things, but it's not in there.

The thing I'm most proud of is that I was on the board of the Campagna Center, the same time I was on the board of Bienvenidos. I was the only one on the Campagna Center board with Hispanic background. My father's family having come from Mexico, directly or indirectly, and they wanted to do something but they didn't know what to do, and then on Bienvenidos, we were talking about starting a mentoring program. I got help from Margie Walsh in starting this. I said, to Bienvenidos, why don't we have it at the Campagna Center, why don't we have an office there and they'll support us, I'm sure they will. I talked to General Bob Sennewald, he was also an on the board, and we presented that, and we got their ok, so we had support and we started Building Better Futures and hired Krishna Leyva. That's her name, she's still executive director and we built it up to twenty-five

students and then fifty, and we were trying to raise money to support it, and I said well you know maybe we can get the Campagna Center to do the whole thing, because we started it and it's successful, so we had like seventy-five students and now we have 125 up at the Campagna Center. It's run out of T.C. Williams High School. What it basically is, it's tutoring and mentoring, the idea is that some of our new immigrants have some English, but not enough to do well enough to get into college or they don't know how to get into college and the idea is let's get our Hispanic youth to raise their goals. If you raise your goals not only are you likely to do better than if you don't, but you actually are going to meet them if you can get some help and that's what we did. We partnered with the Center for Naval Analysis off of Beauregard, and some other institutions to come in and help tutor in math and science and English and we have a lot of volunteers now, especially students in the Key Club. My oldest granddaughter does this down in West Potomac [High School] as a member of their Key Club. Students learn better from somebody their own age than from an adult. First of all, they know how to communicate better and second of all, how to present it in such a way that it's easier for the subject of the tutoring to pick it up.

My wife tutors up at Lyles-Crouch [Traditional Academy] and she's learning more everyday about students. [laughing] I don't know how much they're learning. She has two students a young girl in second grade, and a young boy in first grade. Not necessarily children at risk have problems with reading. My youngest son had problems with reading, although he did graduate from the University of Connecticut *cum laude* in English, and his first grade was rocky. He came into first grade not knowing how to read but lot of work by his father. He didn't have a mother you know at that point in his life, and a lot of tutoring helped him.

That's what this does, a lot of students who may not necessarily have a parent at home who can help them. Some of their parents are conversant in the Spanish language but don't know how to read or write it. And here we are trying to teach children to read, write, and speak English. It's a big task and they need as much help as they can. So that's one thing I did that probably should have been highlighted.

The other was that I financially supported that organization for many years, I don't spread it around, you know, I didn't donate a car or anything like that, but when they needed a couple hundred dollars here, couple hundred dollars here to meet a payroll, I did it, and I told them not to mention it to anybody, and that's the way it was.

M.K.:	What, or who inspired you to get involved with Bienvenidos originally?
Henry Brooks:	When I learned about my father’s heritage. I didn’t find out about it until after he died. He died in 1990 at the age of ninety-two and it was after he died and the internet. [chuckling] My wife’s sister is a news director and she was the news director in Sacramento and they put me onto a lot of research, where I was able to trace my father’s family because he was very quiet about it. That’s how I found the ship record that was in the California State Library in Sacramento and stuff like that.
M.K.:	So, if that’s what inspired you to get involved with Bienvenidos, which is wonderful to use the genealogy as the spring board, but you’ve also mentioned and your nomination indicates that you’ve been active in the community in lots of different ways: the Parks and [Recreation] Commission the sister city, the school board...
Henry Brooks:	The water front commission.
Election to the School Board and Accomplishments	
Henry Brooks:	Oh, the school board story was really funny. We had a ninth grader at that time and they were trying to dumb down the curriculum so everybody would pass, and there was a committee to not do that, and my wife was on it. The previous November they passed a thing to make it elective, the general assembly in its great wisdom said, “School boards can be self-elected based on local option chosen in an election.” So they did that in 1993, November election. I think that’s when it was. I think that’s when it was, but I’m not positive, it may have been ‘92. So they got the application in front of the Justice Department because we were still under the Voting Rights Act and they came up with three districts and I was the going to help Rodger Degilio, right, because my wife says, “You should run too!” and I said, “No, no, no, we have Rodger,” so I was his campaign manager, and here it was, it was during the George Washington birthday parade, I was out there pumping for him and I find out that only two people had filed for this district for three positions and I says, “That’s ridiculous!” so I filled out the nomination petition and filed it and it turns out there were four people because there was Brenda Johnson Green had also filed, but we didn’t know about it because she was getting signatures in the black community and we didn’t know. So it was Brenda, Rodger, myself and Leslie Hagen, who were running. Leslie had been on the board for eight years at that time, which was the kiss of death for anybody because everybody wanted a new day. And there were some very talented people that were on the old board who had a lot of years, like Gene Lange, and they thought they’d get elected. And it didn’t work out that way because it was like last November. People wanted a clean slate. They didn’t care what they believed in, they just wanted a clean slate.

M.K.:	Somebody different.
Henry Brooks:	Yes, and Leslie had an awful lot of good experience in the learning disabled area which I got very interested in once I got on the board and she wasn't there. I worked with Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC). I was on the board of PEATC for five years. It's state and privately funded. Anyway and that's how I got to run for School Board the first time. The Democrat Leadership Council endorsed me as well as the <i>Washington Post</i> and I got elected. I only spent \$269.
M.K.:	That's not bad.
Henry Brooks:	Everybody else spent more than I did. I only made one brochure and just delivered it to every home, myself, on foot. [chuckles]
M.K.:	Very cost effective way of doing things.
Henry Brooks:	Right, and I ran one more time and I got elected. Using the same method I did one mail piece to all the houses, the multi-family houses, which you can't get into them, so I thought I'd do that so I spent more money but it wasn't any more effective, but I still got elected. There were six people running that time. It was mostly the people in Jefferson Houston precinct, Lyles-Crouch and Old Town [Alexandria], who got me elected. Because I used to own property in Jefferson Houston, I had a property where I would rent it out to school people, school teachers, at about half the market rate. New teachers that couldn't afford, nobody knows about that either. I since sold it in 2002.
M.K.:	Ok, when the market was still good.
Henry Brooks:	Yes, yes.
M.K.:	So with all of these various things, why, are you active in your community?
Why He is Active in the Community	
Henry Brooks:	Why? Because I think it's my duty to be so. It's the thing that made me volunteer to do ROTC. I didn't have to do ROTC, it was an elective, but I felt that national service was important for every individual. I still think that. I think that there should be something similar to what the Mormons do, where you have to do two years of service to the church; I think you should do two years of service to your country. You will learn so much whether you are working on an Indian reservation, at a veteran's hospital, in the armed services, it doesn't have to be in uniform, but it has to be service.
M.K.:	But where did that sense of need for national service come from? Do you think?
Henry Brooks:	Being a young person during the Second World War. I might have been little, but my brother was eleven years older, and we did scrap drives with his Boy Scout Troop of which he was a leader. So when I was four or five I went around on scrap drives in 1943, '44, '45. Because my parents were active in Masonic orders and he had to babysit me.

<p>M.K.:</p>	<p>Oh, time out! Hold that thought! I need to do a quick intro again. As we did before, so keep holding your thought. It is March 2, 2011, Molly Kerr is interviewing Henry Brooks for the Living Legends program of Alexandria for 2011. This is tape two.</p>
<p>Henry Brooks:</p>	<p>Anyway, when I was very young, my brother was very active, he was eleven years older, he was my role model, he was active in the [Boy Scouts], he was a Scout Master when he was young. And then when he worked for District Sixty-Five of the [Congress of Industrial Organization], CIO in the 1950s, he was very active in things that had to do with equality. District Sixty-Five in lower Manhattan was the headquarters of the retail clerks union and they had a very diverse retail clerk's membership. A good percentage of them were African American and the man he reported to was a man named David Livingston. He was the vice president and he was an African American and my brother became very involved in going down south in 1956 during the bus boycott in Montgomery [Alabama]. And he died, my brother died September 30, 1957, and when they had his funeral in New York, over half the people that turned up at the synagogue were African American. That was a very eye opening thing for me and I really felt that I had to do something.</p> <p>Another story, sort of similar to that, when I was going through the engineer officer basic course, in 1962, when you go on active duty in the Corps of Engineers, you went to the engineer school, at that time the engineer school was at Fort Belvoir. And you have thirteen weeks where you learn all about supervising all kinds of bridge construction and stuff and there was a Lieutenant Garnett, in our unit and we were housed [in] Bachelor Officer Quarters in a sort of an upscale barrack, all together, and it was done alphabetically so I slept between Becker and somebody else, I forget, but Garnett was in the same complex, he was from Tuskegee [Institute in Alabama]. So one day we decided to go out for burgers. Five lieutenants, at that time we were all sick of Army food. Out in a car, but we were in our civvies. And we go up Route One to a burger place, we pull into the parking lot, and it was one of these places like a diner, and all of sudden Garnett says, "I don't think I can eat here," and I says, "What do you mean?" "I don't think they'll serve me," and I says, "You're kidding!" and to me that was an eye opener. I should not have been surprised. This was '62. So, we sent one guy in to get everything and we ate in the car, we didn't want him embarrassed.</p> <p>And that to me was a shock, it was like, Colin Powell, I never thought of him as black, you know, I just thought of him as another one of the other ROTC cadets 'cause, at City College everybody was different we</p>

	<p>had Ukrainians, we had Jews, we had Poles, we had everybody, all the huddled masses, from Eastern Europe, and Africa and Latin America, were going there. One of my fellow students was Andreas, you know him as Andy, probably, Andy Grove, he graduated six months before I did. I took chemical engineering courses with him. He was the head of Intel for many years. He came not speaking a word of English. After the Hungarian uprising in October of '56. Great student. So we didn't think about what was different. It was just a very different mindset and then you come down here and everybody's sort of ethnically aware of what everybody is and that to me was never the way I was brought up.</p>
<p>Boy Scout Troop Leader Experiences and Racial Diversity</p>	
<p>Henry Brooks:</p>	<p>My Boy Scout Troop had everything in it, so when I made a Boy Scout Troop in Immanuel-on-the-Hill, I'd have all ethnicities included. What I did was I told the people up there that I visited them in Bethesda where the Boy Scout, "if anybody calls up and they live in Alexandria, especially if they're African-American, direct them to my troop, I'll treat them with respect. So I had a lot of African-American kids in my troop and when it came time for young men to make the decision to stay in after they were twelve or thirteen, a lot of them did. And one of them was Sean Veney, who made Eagle Scout and he's now an associate professor at Kent State University. He was raised by his grandmother, his parents that live in the city, they were in D.C., they finally got a house on Robinson Court, but until they could, and he was in my Boy Scout Troop and it was really interesting. One day we were on a camp out, it was time for his patrol, and they had an election for patrol leader and he ran against my son, Benjamin. He gets elected because there were a couple of wise ass kids, thinking that, you know, a couple of them, you know at that age, twelve, they're really wise asses, he get elected and they thought I wouldn't let them do that, so I said, "Well, you know, Benjamin, Sean won and he's now your patrol leader, and if you want to be elected next time they have an election, you got to do a lot better." [laughing] It was a teaching moment for everybody and Sean Veney stayed in my troop until he was eighteen years old. And a lot of kids stayed in my troop that way. One time, several boats on the T.C. [Williams High School] crew team, were people completely with boys who were in my Boy Scout Troop. I had seventy boys in it!</p>
<p>M.K.:</p>	<p>Jeez Louise.</p>
<p>Henry Brooks:</p>	<p>Murphy Pepper was in it! F.J. and Dale Pepper's son. David Speck's son was in it. I had a waiting list.</p>
<p>M.K.:</p>	<p>[laughter] I wasn't aware that they could be as large as seventy, so that's a fairly sizable group of boys.</p>
<p>Henry Brooks:</p>	<p>Oh yeah, I had a lot of boys up there. I had a waiting list. We had a camp out every month, I don't care how many boys went. We had a</p>

	<p>camp out, we had a very active committee, we had a transportation committee, when I knew how many boys were coming I had enough vehicles to take us. We went to summer camp every year. David Poretz was a member. Danny Poretz, his father was a magistrate judge here at the court house, US court house with Barry, he became an Eagle Scout. John Stanton's father was a bankruptcy judge, lawyer, Tom Stanton. I had a whole bunch. I had two African-American boys, Watts, Billy and Sean Watts, Eagle Scouts. I mean I had a lot of kids who stayed in to get Eagle [Scout]. And the way I ran it was not everybody had to come to the troop meeting, once they turned fourteen. If they were a Life Scout, they had a meeting at our house, here, with my wife being present, and we ran an Eagle, an Eagle meeting, where I made sure they worked on things to make them Eagle. And we did it in a fun way, one of the things that was we always watched the "Simpsons". Because the Simpsons, if you take notes, everybody needed a safety merit badge, and so, in any one of those episodes there's at least five things that he does that's unsafe, driving, whatever, and we would discuss them. So we would watch it and my wife said, I don't go down there it's so quiet, and I say, watching the Simpsons, I said hey it part of the curriculum. You know, Jeff Nesmith, you know, I forget about Aaron Pollard, there's a whole bunch, I have a scrapbook somewhere with all their pictures in it. They're all in their late 30s now, or middle 30s, Jamie Derrington, Chris Clark, who was up at the school administration, her son was in it, he runs a landscaping company that works for the city now under contract. If you make it fun and you make it learning and if you do things that are fun, we went to summer camp at Rock Enon up in near Winchester, every summer we did canoe trips, down the Shenandoah, down the Rapidan [River], down the San Croix [River], you haven't heard of the San Croix River, well that's because it's the border between Maine and New Brunswick in Canada.</p>
M.K.:	Yeah, that's a little far.
Henry Brooks:	That was a five day trip.
M.K.:	Yeah, I would think so. [chuckling]
Henry Brooks:	<p>We did lots of neat stuff. That I organized. I didn't use the council because their trips were more expensive, I could do it a lot cheaper, if I hire my own guy and rent a van, take them up to Maine. Or organize a two-hour car trip out to Rock Enon Camp, not all the way down to Goshen which was a four or five hour trip. And they earned merit badges here and they had a mess hall. Down in Goshen [Virginia], you had to cook your own food. I mean, they do that on camp outs, I don't need that, I need these boys to work on their merit badges if they want to be Eagle.</p> <p>My son is an Eagle Scout, my youngest son, my oldest boy only got the</p>

	second class in my troop, by the way, he's a lawyer in Richmond. My youngest son, who lives up here at 430 South Lee [Street], he's in charge of business development for NII Holdings, that stands for Nextel International Incorporated, the only part of Mark Warner's original company that is independent. The domestic arm was merged into the Sprint but international arm is independent. They're in Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Peru and my son is taking planes down to Mexico and Argentina and Brazil all the time. He just came back from Barcelona, the World Mobile Conference, so they're headquartered out in Reston. He wishes he spent more time learning Spanish when he was at [T.C. Williams High School]. [chuckles]
M.K.:	[chuckles] I suspect so.
Henry Brooks:	He took German in college.
M.K.:	Well, he's picking that up quickly I imagine at this point.
Henry Brooks:	Oh yes, he has too. Yes, yes.
M.K.:	Now, you alluded to one of the challenges of being a Scout Leader and how to organize your boys and do trips and rather than go with the council's programs, because of their expense, what other, what would you say, were some of your strategies whether it be with Scouts, or some of the other organizations that you've worked with to overcome obstacles? Being a volunteer can be challenging, and so what do you, what keeps you going?
Healthy Families	
Henry Brooks:	Well, I just enjoy the things I choose the time with being a success. So when you come up on an obstacle you figure out how to get around it in one way or another. Healthy Families, which I'm on the board of now, for eleven years, is something I'm very devoted to, and that helps young families learn how to cope with small children. I had that experience, and there was nothing there to help me, I had to learn on the fly. What we do is send public health nurses into a home even before the child is born to help set up, see what's age appropriate. We went to a thing, just before Christmas, we have a party for all the people in it, and their children, was held up at First Baptist, we sat at a table where somebody was from Belarus, outside of Minsk, another person was from Russia, south of Moscow, somebody from Bolivia, they come from all over the world. You can be sure that we're going to get people living in Alexandria from Libya in another six months. Wherever there's a problem, they come here, well we want them to be assimilated as soon as possible and their children to be successful and for them to be successful as parents. The success of a parent is that your child does not live at home when it becomes an adult and is working at gainful employment with health benefits!
M.K.:	[laughter] Yes.
Henry Brooks:	That is the picture of success for a parent.

M.K.:	So, is Healthy Families mostly geared towards immigrant families?
Henry Brooks:	We're trying to get into the African-American community, and we've been offering things, we've been doing a lot of outreach and we've been somewhat successful but I would say over the last several years about eighty-five to ninety percent of its clients have been referred by social services, have been immigrant families. And only half of them are single parent families, interestingly enough. Part of that is that Hispanic families are very close, their family values are very strong, usually.
M.K.:	And what, it sounds like its something that your wife also joins you in?
Henry Brooks:	Well, she comes to the events. She's not on the board or anything like that. She shows up and helps. Anybody that speaks French she's happy to translate because there's a lot of people from West Africa that speak French.
M.K.:	How important would you say has it been to you to have a spouse who is willing to put up with your volunteerism? Your activism? Is she equally active in other groups?
Henry Brooks:	<p>She doesn't put up with my being out of the house. She encourages it.</p> <p>She was the one who put me up to run for the school board. When I said I don't know if I want to do this, she said yes you should you would be really good at this. I am still active in Alexandria school affairs. I was the Chairman of the Superintendent Search Committee that selected Dr. Sherman.</p> <p>Carolyn's active in a book club and she also meets with a group of women who she's been meeting with for forty years, they get together once a month.</p>
M.K.:	A book club?
Henry Brooks:	<p>No, it's called a Craft Club, they work on a craft, and they all used to work at the SEC at one time or another, one is a senior attorney at Morgan Lewis, she's a securities account lawyer. All these women are anywhere between fifty-five and sixty-five years old and my wife is not quite that old. I hasten to ask, she's much younger than I am! [laughter]</p> <p>But, she's been very supportive, when I was on the school board especially, I felt that it was important for me to go to every event at any school I was liaison to plus I went to everything that Cora Kelly had, or GW, and TC, even though I did all three at the same time. I would read to children at Hopkins House every week. I am a Life Member there. I would go out to any group that asked me to speak. I was also on the Virginia School Boards Association. I was the head of the eighth district political thing so I would go up to Capitol Hill and talk to my congressman who was very easy to talk to because I knew Jim very</p>

well, but also the Senator at that time, it was Chuck Robb, I spent a lot of time with Chuck Robb, trying to get him to support things that we were actively engaged in supporting. And then after I got off the school board I actually, the summer, the spring of my last year on the school board, I became Patsy's legislative aid in Richmond and I ran a lot of her legislation trying to get people to support it. (I also represented the City in Alexandria, Egypt in 1992 when Patsy couldn't go. I was Chair of the Sister City Committee at that time.) The Republicans were in majority in the state senate at that time and she had a lot of child oriented legislation and that's why I tried to get her stuff passed. Now the state senate is a very collegiate body of people, people really helpful to each other, even though they may be Democrats or Republicans and stuff. So I worked with Emmett Hanger from Strausburg, not Strausburg, Stanton, and Marie, Senator Marie, from Southwest, he's not there anymore, I don't think he's alive anymore. He was a Democrat, and then a couple of the other Republicans, one was from Loudon County, he's now deputy attorney general, that's a civil service State position, and they would tell me who to get to co-sponsor the legislation and I would camp outside their office until they agreed. [chuckling] A lot of her legislation got through, so I did that that year and then following year was 2001, was an election year, so the spring of 2001 I was helping get people on Mark Warner's band wagon. Mark had three small daughters, and when I was on the school board, I had a teenager at home, and Lisa would call me on my school board phones and line up my step daughter to babysit. So, I was passing out literature for Mark, I bought buttons from Mark, and I would pass them out to everybody who would wear one down in the general assembly and I was on his Hispanic Outreach Committee. Then, after he got elected I was on his Educational Unmet Needs committee, I was the only private individual. Everybody else was either a state senator or a school board member, from either Campbell County, no that was a superintendent, Kris Amundsen was on it, she was then a delegate but she was formerly the chair of the school board in Fairfax County.

'Unmet Needs,' it was the advisory committee to help him on unmet needs, and I gave him a lot of advice. Most of which was not very politically astute, [chuckling] I must admit it, in retrospect, because I felt that if you had a shortfall in learning disabled teachers, especially outside of Northern Virginia where we paid a very good wage, but especially along the southern tier of the state where they had to compete with North Carolina who pays ten thousand dollars more, that we should pay ten thousand dollars more. But the Virginia Education didn't like that suggestion so it didn't go anywhere because they

	<p>believe in the Soviet system where everybody gets paid the same no matter how much work they do.</p> <p>I believe if you want better results in the classrooms you need better teachers, and the way you get better teachers is by rewarding better teachers. The president, current president, is on board with that and so is Arne Duncan. It's very hard to get it past teacher's unions for some reason. Some teachers' unions are on board with it, many are not. Getting rid of poor teachers is one thing that's very difficult to do.</p> <p>We did it a couple times and it required Herculean effort. One teacher was giving out drugs to a student and it took us six months to get rid of him. When I was on Cora Kelly, a teacher would complain to me about one particular first grade teacher who would never prepare her students, just goofed off the whole year. "Why can't we get rid of her?" [they'd ask] because they had to pick up the damage in second grade. And you know what, it's impossible, without the principal doing their job and you know what, if the principal does his job on somebody like that, it would take all his time away from supervising all the other teachers. It's just much too difficult to get rid of a poor performer. I don't know what the answer is in the present structure, but having children waste an entire year is not very good.</p> <p>It's a crime, in my view, because, if you notice, everything I do is for children. I just love children. I have five children. I'm going have my eleventh grandchild. Last Saturday night, I had a date with my oldest grandchild, it was her sixteenth birthday, we took her to Vermillion, down on King Street, Carolyn and I because that's her last name and she loved it. [laughter] We're trying to buy her a car.</p>
M.K.:	Oh, that's very ambitious.
Henry Brooks:	Her parents aren't too, she's eligible to drive on her own, in a month and a half, two months now, her parents are not on board yet. But the car is sitting right up here, it's my wife's ex-car, she bought a new one, it's a good car, sixty-five thousand miles, driven only on Sundays to church and that kind of thing, [laughter] it is ten years old, 2001, but it's a nice Honda Civic, I don't want to sell it to anybody else because you're not going to buy a car like that.
M.K.:	How are you doing, do you want to take a break? We've got one more part. [Takes break]
Arrival in Alexandria	
Henry Brooks:	I came to Alexandria after I married a local girl who went to Saint Agnes [School].
M.K.:	But was the marriage the only thing that brought you to Alexandria or was there employment?

Henry Brooks:	<p>Yes. Oh I was already living here. I came to work for the VA after I got out of the Army. I had a kidney problem. I couldn't continue as a commissioned officer. At this point, I only had thirty percent of kidney function back. Then, I only had one kidney, the other one had shut down. I came here for two years.</p> <p>Why did I come here for two years? Well, I was very patriotic. I wanted to work and make a lot of money in corporate finance up in New York, but then the President got shot and I watched everything on TV and only a few months after his untimely death, I took what they call the Federal Service Entrance Exam and I also took the Management Intern option. I did very well on both of them and then I had an oral exam in Columbia, South Carolina for the region. I drove there from Augusta. I was stationed in Fort Gordon at that point in my career. I was Adjutant of the 299th Engineer Battalion, it's a very famous battalion, has a cenotaph on Utah Beach.</p> <p>(In the film <i>The Longest Day</i>, the 299th engineer battalion gets Robert Mitchum's unit off the beach by blowing up the field fort. Guy asks, "Are you an engineer?" "Yes, 299th Engineer Battalion sir!" [laughter] "Boom!" Ok, we wore a presidential unit citation ribbon on our uniform for that action, given by Franklin Roosevelt.)</p> <p>Anyway, I came here for two years. I worked at the VA [Veterans' Administration]. I lived on Fifteenth and Rhode Island [in Washington, D.C.] that time, and walked to work. I figured that was very civilized, commuting did not attract me. I met a young woman at a party off of Seminary Road who came with somebody else, and we started to date, we got married.</p> <p>Actually, I was in the Reserves. I was dating like four women, fairly casually, and then in the spring of '65, I invited them to come down to Tidewater, to Williamsburg. I put them up in a motel. [I was billeted in the BOQ on post.] I was going to be assistant post engineer at Fort Eustis as my reserve requirement. Only one woman did that, and that was the woman I decided I would marry. Because anybody that can put up with this is really serious.</p> <p>So, we got married in August and we had the reception at Collingwood on the Potomac and a year later her father was posted to Singapore. So we started. When we got married we moved to Alexandria, or I think Arlington. We moved to Arlington for six months because it was just over the bridge and it was convenient to my job, but then she got pregnant and then I said to myself, "Well you know she's teaching in</p>
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	Alexandria.” She was teaching at Mount Vernon, she was the art teacher at Mount Vernon Community School. We moved to the Hamlets -- that’s why we came to Alexandria. But you know when I met her I visited every tourist item of interest in Alexandria. Phyllis would show me the Carlyle House buried behind the apartments, the church her parents went to which was the one on Pitt street, Saint Paul’s and so, I got to like Alexandria. We bought a home in ‘73, up in, actually we put a contract on in ‘72, we moved back from Germany in ‘71. So we’ve lived in Alexandria ever since.
M.K.:	What would you say are [gets cut off]
Henry Brooks:	And all my kids live here, except my son who’s in Richmond.
M.K.:	What would you say are some of your fondest memories of Alexandria are?
Henry Brooks:	I really liked the events around the Bicentennial, the ships. The flag that went up on city hall the week after 9/11, the flags up and down the streets, neighbors who never flew the flag put out the flag. Also, how active the citizens are in local affairs.
M.K.:	How had Alexandria [gets cuts off]
Henry Brooks:	<p>When I lived on 319 South Pitt [Street], our child walked to Lyles-Crouch, fortunately in Marie Boyd’s first grade class. That was Bill Euille’s teacher. He was the only other young white kid in the class and that was Andrew Braswell. So when I got elected to the school board, I wanted to make sure that that school would attract white families and now it has so that everybody had an integrated education so that they wouldn’t know there was any difference between people. And that was my signature event and some people didn’t see it the way I did, and I hope they see it the way I see it now. It was very controversial, I was working towards that from the day I got elected until it became approved in 1999.</p> <p>Another is when my son graduated from T.C. Williams in 1989. In April of ’89, I was the only man in a meeting of parents. I talked the ladies into putting on the first all-night graduation party at Chinquapin. I was the Chairman of that effort. It is continuing to this day.</p>
M.K.:	How would you say Alexandria, or did you notice a change in Alexandria after 9/11? You talked about the flags, but when you came back basically two weeks after, almost two weeks after the event had happened.
Henry Brooks:	Well, only people’s determination had changed, other than that, people were angry, you know, and some people who lived in the City got killed, which was very, very sad. But, you know we don’t have a draft now, although the people I see who are in the volunteer military are very professional. I watched them jump in Normandy in ‘94 as opposed to the people that jumped in Mainz Finthen Airfield when I was in the

	<p>military, stationed at Bad Krevznach.</p> <p>My first assignment was making liquid oxygen I mentioned that, about Werner Von Braun's Redstone Missile, that's a story unto itself. I recently did a historical piece for the [National] Air and Space Museum on that with pictures. I have pictures of us in the field putting my liquid oxygen into their missile. Liquid oxygen boils at minus 273-degrees Fahrenheit. Most everybody who handled liquid oxygen who worked for me were college graduates, you can't do that today.</p> <p>So, you have sort of a bifurcation, you don't see many people in uniform in Alexandria. When I was a boy, you never saw a man on the street between the ages of fifteen and fifty and if you did, they were in uniform. You didn't see that after 9/11 here. When I was a young person, even in the [1950s] and [1960s], in New York, you'd see a lot of people in the uniform. You don't see it anymore because most people in the military are down South or the Mid-west.</p> <p>So there was no real difference, here, in Alexandria. But that doesn't mean we're any less patriotic.</p>
M.K.:	Right, in general, how would you say [gets cut off]
Why He Loves Alexandria	
Henry Brooks:	<p>The reason I really love Alexandria is because it has all the attributes of a small town. People live here for generations; they know their families. I haven't lived there as long as some families who have lived here a couple of hundred years. But I love living on this street where I can walk to King Street, and not have to drive and drink, but I can drink! [laughter] And walk, hopefully well enough so that I don't get hit by a car, since I'm a kidney patient, one drink is my limit anyway. [chuckling]</p> <p>But it just has a lot of class in terms of its outlook on political and social affairs, economic affairs, it's very progressive in the way it addresses issues. It keeps in the bedroom those things which need to be in the bedroom, not on the public commons. Things belong on the public commons which are of political importance not somebody else's religious beliefs. The first amendment gives everybody the right to practice their religion. It doesn't give them the right to force their religion on me. I always carry a copy of the Constitution with me.</p>
M.K.:	For a long time I always had at least the first ten amendments in my pocketbook I think that when I changed purses the last time that got...
Henry Brooks:	You know there's now eleven amendments? One of the original twelve finally got passed.
M.K.:	Mhm, the twenty-seventh!

Henry Brooks:	Yes.
M.K.:	And it was passed because...
Henry Brooks:	It didn't have a drop dead date.
M.K.:	Well, they didn't originally have a drop dead date and do you know that it was actually, originally, it was passed because of a college student? A college student found out that that amendment had never been passed and he took it on as an assignment, a personal assignment, he actually did it for a paper in which he got a C on the paper. And he got [angry] with his professor and he said, "Well fine! If that's all you think it's worth," and he managed to door to door...
Henry Brooks:	In the states that still hadn't ratified it.
M.K.:	Yup, yup.
Henry Brooks:	Well, actually at that point only about eight states had ratified it, isn't that true? So he had to get another thirty to do it. It made a lot of sense. It was "Don't feather your own nest, Mr. Congressman." We had that same rule in the law allowing elective school boards. You could pass an increase, but it's not payable until after another election. They're paying a lot more now on the school board than I made. I think I earned about fifty cents an hour, although I have to admit that when I got elected, I didn't know they paid anything. [laughter]
M.K.:	Well, it ended up working out well.
Henry Brooks:	And I spent more than \$4500 in donations to the various things you have to donate to, if you want to hold your head up. Like the scholarship fund, the different schools, the Christmas wrap. I think we still have Christmas wrap from twenty years ago.
M.K.:	And it never goes out of style. That's the best thing.
Henry Brooks:	That's right and we have so many kids now to wrap for.
M.K.:	How would you say Alexandria has changed since you first arrived?
How Alexandria Has Changed	
Henry Brooks:	Well, there are a lot more people living here. When I first arrived, the houses on the 700 and 800 block of South Fairfax Street had dirt floors. In 1966, because I was looking for houses here. Mrs. Garber who was a Delaney, Delaney Realty, up there on the corner of North Washington and Cameron Street and she'd take me to all these houses and Old Town only extended as far as Wolfe Street in the southeast quadrant, where you're standing right now was a Mobile Oil Terminal area. There was a big oil tank like that one behind you, right here. That's actually a scale model of a Wyoming refinery, some of the things I've done recently in the last fifteen years has been as a refinery consultant to the Energy Information Administration and that's a scale model of a refinery in Wyoming. The tower closer to you is the crude unit, this is the distillation unit. It takes advantage of the different

	<p>boiling points of the various constituents of crude oil. And you take them off at each one of those boiling points and then you further process it to increase its fuel capabilities.</p> <p>Anyway, Alexandria has come a long way.</p>
M.K.:	<p>In what way? Be more specific.</p>
Henry Brooks:	<p>When I came here the only place you could eat, get a decent meal, was in the District of Columbia. You had the Seaport Inn and you had the Snack Bar on lower King Street and everything else was abandoned. I remember Mrs. Garber taking me to where the Warehouse Restaurant is. She owned the Warehouse and she said I could have it for ten thousand dollars. And that was the spring of 1966.</p> <p>But you know what happened in 1967, in the general assembly, is they passed liquor-by-the-drink and then you could make a living being a restaurateur. Because if you run a restaurant two thirds of costs are labor. Food will only make or break even, if you're lucky. Your profit margins are in the liquor, it has the highest markup.</p> <p>So, there were so many abandoned buildings on King Street and luckily we saved most of them. When we came they were doing, back in '65, they were doing urban renewal and they knocked down a lot of interesting places that in hindsight we should have kept, but they thought they were doing the right thing. We have a lot of mid-twentieth century uninteresting buildings on King Street now, but maybe 100 years from now people will think are architecturally significant -- but not right now they don't. [chuckles]</p> <p>That reminds me, one of the people we made friends with, was a man named Lauren Pope and when Lauren lived here he asked to build him a house Frank Lloyd Wright, and that's the Pope Leighy House, yeah. He died a few years ago at ninety-eight.</p>
M.K.:	<p>Oh, neat. Well, not that he died, but he had this house. Were you able to go into the house before it was moved?</p>
Henry Brooks:	<p>No, no. Because it was moved quite awhile ago. When they widened Route 7 which it was during the [1950s], so that was before my time. At the time I knew him, he had a house off King Street with a Japanese lap pool. He was married to a really interesting woman, Viola Pope. Viola Pope's maiden name was Barrett. Her grandmother has the library named after her, the Barrett Library on King Street, and she wore that cross that's in that portrait and then her daughter wears it. Taught my daughter English in seventh or eighth grade. Anyway, that's a horse of a different color. I very often get off the topic, where did I leave you?</p>

M.K.:	Why do you feel that Alexandria is important to you, but then also to the region or the nation?
Henry Brooks:	<p>Well, it's the only place I'd live in this area because it has a real character to it. That's why I live down here, for example. It's not homogenized. It has all kinds of neighborhoods. You can choose pretty much to live anywhere you wish, if you're ingenious enough to know how to finance it. [chuckles]</p> <p>I have the kid that lives up on Crestwood, lost a lot of money of their Seattle house, so they weren't able to live in Del Ray, but they live up in Crestwood near Quaker Lane and they're living in Alexandria. She works part time as a lawyer and he works full time in the Department of Justice as a prosecutor.</p> <p>It's important to us because this is our home. We love it. We like the people here, there's nothing not to like. If we didn't live here I don't know if we'd live in the United States. We would not live in the United States, if we didn't have children or grandchildren. We would live in southern France in some old château where we would complain about the quality of the workmanship. [laughter]</p> <p>But I grew up in New York and I went to school in Manhattan for six years and as interesting as Manhattan is, it doesn't hold all the love I have that Alexandria does. There's something about Alexandria that transcends just this architecture of people. It's just a whole fabric of society that is interesting and that I love. It's like explaining why I love my life. Age does not...What's the quote from Shakespeare, Anthony and Cleopatra. It's, "<i>Age does not wither her, nor custom dull her infinite variety.</i>" It's that kind of thing. Every day is a new day, there's something I see that I haven't noticed before, there's somebody new I meet.</p> <p>I met somebody yesterday who parked in front of my house, no it was maybe it was Sunday, it was a very warm day, and I said, "You can't park here." It was a young person about thirty-five and her mother and a little girl and [she] says, "Why?" I says, "That's my spot." And they says, "You kidding?" and I says, "Of course!" [laughter] Then I found out that the girl is five years old, she goes to Lyles-Crouch, that she knows my daughter-in-law because she's friends with Marty Divine who lives next to my son on 430, and not only that, when their wall fell on the fifth of August, because a tree fell down in that big windstorm, she helped pick up the bricks.</p>
M.K.:	Oh, wow!
Henry Brooks:	So, everyday you meet somebody who you have a connection to that

	you never knew before. It's amazing...And she lives up on Jefferson Street. I work out three times a week, at the Sport and Health club up on Madison [Street]. You don't work out, you don't keep your body at my age, your flexibility most of all, as well as your strength. And I meet a person that lived around the corner on Franklin [Street]. I meet people there all the time. I met somebody who reminded me of somebody else. I thought it was the other person and I started to talking to them, and no it wasn't, and we talked for fifteen minutes and it's not like New York where if you say, "Are you so and so?" they'd say, "What do you want to know for?" or "What's your angle?" because in New York a lot of people have an angle. Around here people are just being friendly. And I love that. My wife's an introvert, but I'm and extrovert and I love pushing her into being President of the Alexandria Optimist Club, because she's really good at organizing things and getting people to do things and she's a wonderful President, but she's becoming more extroverted, but she doesn't walk up to people and say, "Would you like to be a member of the Optimist Club?" where as I will. [chuckling]
M.K.:	You're a good team.
Henry Brooks:	Yes, we are. We're a good team and we're especially good, because she's great with kids. She can pick up a baby and get it to do whatever she wants it to do. Me, I might love that baby, I might hold it, but I'm not as good as she is. And quiet its, anxiety or drying their tears, and she can. It's great. She's not here now because she's at a hospital appointment. They say once you retire the only time you get out is for hospital appointments, doctors appointments the other thing. [laughs]
M.K.:	No, it just becomes a lot harder to make those appointments because you're so active and busy!
Henry Brooks:	Well, no the appointments come first. And you move everything around them. And you make those appointments when you don't have any conflict. You travel around with a dateline here.
M.K.:	Yes, a little calendar.
Henry Brooks:	Yes, so that you keep, you know when Easter is, or Passover, so you don't make things at the same time and then you become embarrassed later.
M.K.:	Well, I think that I have taken enough of your time this afternoon, that's all the questions that I have.
Henry Brooks:	Well, let me say, that after you review the tapes if you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact me. I found this discussion interesting, maybe you haven't. [laughs]
M.K.:	No, I have! In fact one of the things that...
Henry Brooks:	I love talking about myself.
M.K.:	I need to do, I'm not very good at, and I'm looking forward to doing the transcriptions. Basically, what will happen is you will get a copy of

	<p>our conversation and a copy of the transcription and in essence what will happen is, I will give it to you for review before it's official so you'll get a chance to read through it, and what I'm hoping to do with these, which may be a little ambitious for the number of interviews I have to do is actually to try to get a little more research information about topics that are talked about so that there are connections back to where people can find out more information if they're interested in x, y, or z, and so I maybe being very ambitious, but that is my hope...</p>
<p>Henry Brooks:</p>	<p>Well, one of the interesting things is, I told you I lived at 319 South Pitt which was redone in 1962, they took the brick down for the back up, it was my first wife's place of resident when she was going to school after she left [the College of William and Mary], and her parents lived there. When her parents became older they wanted to move to a one floor thing over at the Tannery on the 600 block of Wilkes Street, and they tried to sell it but they tried to sell it at a time in great economic travail, it was '91 or '92, and nobody was buying houses. So I recommended since we both had garden plots down at South Fairfax [Street] and Royal [Street] to my ex-father-in-law thought that maybe Helen would like it, my oldest daughter and her husband, they hadn't had a child yet, and he says, "Aw, that's interesting." I helped arrange that, and they moved in and when they had a second child, they had to leave so they sold it. I inherited a whole bunch of stuff. Doorknobs, bottles, things of over 100 years old and it's up in my attic somewhere, and one day I'll go through it, and bring it over to Pam and see what she thinks of it. I was board member of the Friends of the Torpedo Factory where the Archaeology office is.</p>
<p>M.K.:</p>	<p>Well, it's part of Alexandria's history, so it would be a valuable resource. I am positive.</p>
<p>Henry Brooks:</p>	<p>Yes, ok.</p>
<p>M.K.:</p>	<p>Thank you very much for your time this afternoon. I appreciate it. [End]</p>