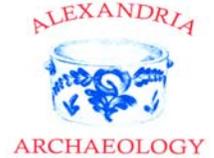




City of Alexandria
Office of Historic Alexandria
Alexandria Legacies
Oral History Program



Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies*

Title: *Interview with Charles H. McKnight*

Date of Interview: *March 28, 1992*

Location of Interview: *Unknown*

Interviewer: *Patricia Knock, Dr. Henry Mitchell, and Bradford Henderlong*

Transcriber: *Unknown (1996); Amanda Iacobelli (2006)*

Abstract: Charles McKnight was born in Alexandria and talks about growing up in the Fort Ward area. His great-aunt, Clara Adams, was a founder of Oakland Baptist Church, and Charles and his family lived with her while he was growing up. He describes Clara Adams' house and its beautiful yard facing Braddock Road. He also talks about the schools he attended, relating how he had to take a bus all the way to Manassas to attend high school. He also tells of how safe he and his family felt in Alexandria; doors were left unlocked. Charles served as secretary and Sunday school superintendent for the Episcopal mission at St. Cyprian.

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Introductions	
Patricia Knock:	I'm going to say a few words here and see how this thing picks up. Dr. Mitchell, could you say a few words, see how the pick-up is, okay?
Dr. Henry Mitchell:	Yeah. I think that this is going to be a very wonderful experience. We know that Mr. McKnight will be of assistance to us and will give us some information. He said that he was worried about the hearsay information, but that's what we want.
P.K.:	That's right [laughs].
H.M.:	The stories that were told to him when he was growing up and anything that relates to his family, his school, the seminary, the church, and likewise. You got it?
P.K.:	Yep [tape stops]. Well, here we are again. Are you ready? [tape stops]. I'd like to introduce Mr. Charles McKnight, who was the person who lived at Fort Ward, is that right?
Charles McKnight:	That is correct.
P.K.:	When you were a child. And I would like to thank you very much from Alexandria Archaeology and from the City of Alexandria for participating in this oral history project. First I want to explain quickly the legal document that we will be asking you to sign. It's called a Deed of Gift. The name of the document is called a Deed of Gift, and when you sign it, you're giving the City of Alexandria permission to use your words in a written document. And the process of doing that, we take a tape and then the tape is sent to the city typist, and they make a written transcription of the words. Then, we bring the tape in words written out back to you, and you have the right to give us permission to use all of the words, or if there are parts that you don't want us to use, then we can take those parts out. And then, I could use the words to write like the Fort Ward project—I would be able to use that. Also, what they want to do is make a transcription of the oral histories that we're doing so that they could put a copy in the libraries. And publications that would be using your words would be footnoted, you know, with your name, and then you also would receive copies of it, if you wanted, for your family, your children, or for the church. And the City of Alexandria and Alexandria Archaeology is non-profit, so there will be a charge for the publications, but that's only to cover the cost of printing and paper and things like that. Do you have any questions about that part?

Charles McKnight:	None whatsoever.
Homes in the Fort Ward Neighborhood	
P.K.:	I have with me a map of Fort Ward that has some of the streets on it that are next to the property. I am going to show this to you and see if you can point and tell me which of these you recognize. Here's the Northwest Bastion, and I think this is the schoolhouse here. So, from that could you tell me—there's this house here?
Charles McKnight:	I would venture to say that this is the house that belonged to Clara Adams. It was a house that was closest to the street. There were three buildings—one which was a school, then the home that belonged to the uncle of Maydell Belk—Maydell Casey who is now Maydell Belk—and then Clara Adams' home. The three buildings right there.
P.K.:	This road up here then, behind this schoolhouse, is the cemetery in this direction?
Charles McKnight:	Exactly. Absolutely.
P.K.:	Is this an out[house]...or a privy? Is that what that is?
Charles McKnight:	I would venture to say that's what it was. And then during the time the schoolhouse was there, an outdoor privy.
P.K.:	Now, what time frame did you live there? You lived in which house?
Charles McKnight:	In actuality, the land primarily was owned by the McKnight family under different names—as far as what they married under [unintelligible]. My father's house was a little farther down, and more or less where the Ly[ceum]—the museum—stands now.
P.K.:	Would that be this house?
Charles McKnight:	I'm not even sure to say yes or nay or yeah on that because there were two. There was the Tansel house—Bertha Tansel or Bertha Miller, and then the McKnight residence which also was closest to the highway.
P.K.:	Okay. Tansel. T-A-N-S-E-L?
Charles McKnight:	T-A-N-S-E-L.
P.K.:	And who else? Miller?
Charles McKnight:	She married a Miller. But it was her father's place there.
P.K.:	It was the Miller place?

Charles McKnight:	It was the Miller place, exactly.
P.K.:	Okay, and McKnight. Those three properties were...?
Charles McKnight:	Exactly.
P.K.:	Did you know a Jackson?
Charles McKnight:	I only knew the Jacksons through what I would hear my Aunt Clara speak of the Jacksons. First of all, let me make this perfectly clear. Born in that particular area, at the age of four, I left and went down to North Carolina to be with my mother's people. At that time my mother was having problems with my baby brother as far as carrying him in her womb, and so her sister said, "In order for you to get help, let me take Charles down," and I stayed there until I was nine years old. I left at four and came back at nine. So from nine on, up until my present time, I've been back in this area.
P.K.:	And were you living then in this house in Clara Adams' residence?
Charles McKnight:	No. The one, I would say, the house that is in this general location...one, two, three, four...
P.K.:	This one?
Charles McKnight:	The one right here. Exactly.
P.K.:	That [one] closest to the road?
Charles McKnight:	That is correct, yes.
P.K.:	And then the Miller place is this one?
Charles McKnight:	Then the Miller place was somewhat in the back, it was in the back of our residence.
P.K.:	Do you know what this house is? ...If you went up the main drive now, it's sort of off to the right. Do you know what that could be?
Charles McKnight:	It's hard for me to visualize. You know, even from the map area.
P.K.:	I know. I've looked at this map a lot.
Charles McKnight:	What we are talking about now is the two to three buildings here.
P.K.:	This was the Young, right?
Charles McKnight:	Exactly, exactly. And the building here, and the driveway—how far back is this supposed to go?
P.K.:	If the driveway that's there now is the one I'm talking about—if you go back to where the driveway is now and pass the place where it

	goes to the Oakland Baptist graveyard, then on the right, where that parking lot begins, it's right there.
Charles McKnight:	I would venture to say that that is the home where my wife's people lived, and I'm not even sure if they owned their home but it was a very small house that was lived in by my wife's people, Wallace and Cynthia Smith.
P.K.:	Had you been in that house?
Charles McKnight:	I have been in that residence, yes.
P.K.:	Did that seem like a older house than the other houses?
Charles McKnight:	No. For some particular reason, I would say it was built prior to the other larger homes that were there.
P.K.:	Do you think this might have been an older home than these houses?
Charles McKnight:	That is correct.
P.K.:	I'll tell you why I ask you that. Because this house that's next to here—Menokin—did you hear about Menokin?
Charles McKnight:	No. That name is not familiar to me.
P.K.:	Well, on some old maps like 1860 it looks like this house might have been part of this. You know, as though they might have had an overseer's house here, because this was all farmland out in here. So, we always had the question about this house—maybe was this house older than the other houses.
Charles McKnight:	Now the one that's [unintelligible] by here, is that the one that is...
P.K.:	Straight up the driveway, like up the driveway. And you or your wife's people lived...?
Charles McKnight:	Let me make this clear here—this driveway here that was all the way back, I don't know how far it goes, but there was a small house—it may not have been there, uh, when these houses were standing—the one where my wife's people live—there was a house where the Stewarts, Dan Stewart and his father, lived there, and on down was another house farther down where the Javinses lived.
P.K.:	Oh yeah, I know that name, right, the Javinses.
Charles McKnight:	Right. That is correct.
P.K.:	They were deed holders.
Charles McKnight:	That is correct.

The Schoolhouse and the Episcopal Mission at St. Cyprian	
P.K.:	This schoolhouse, can you tell me what the schoolhouse looked like? This one, this old schoolhouse?
Charles McKnight:	The old frame schoolhouse, I would venture to say, was ah, I guess, like old schoolhouses looked like that time of the year. I want to refer to it as this. When I was stationed in Freeport, Louisiana, they had like a home, they called it a shotgun home, you look in the front door and straight through to the back door.
P.K.:	Right. That's for the breeze to come through. For the coolness.
Charles McKnight:	That is correct by all means. That's exactly how this old school was established.
P.K.:	So it has a front door on this side, right, this side? Or that side?
Charles McKnight:	It had a front door directly in the front and I can't make any of it.
P.K.:	This is the road.
Charles McKnight:	This is the road, okay. Facing the road.
P.K.:	Facing the road was the door, and what's this little thing in the back?
Charles McKnight:	I would venture to say that was the outdoor privy, because that was there even when the church, when the school was converted into an Episcopal chapel. That's how we used this outdoor privy, both male and female.
P.K.:	Okay, this school was made into a chapel?
Charles McKnight:	Exactly.
P.K.:	Was this St. Cyp—
Charles McKnight:	St. Cyprian's.
P.K.:	Dr. Mitchell? This school here was St. Cyprian's?
H.M.:	I really don't know. If it was a chapel, it probably was. St. Cyprian is a name, was an African saint, and so a lot of black churches are named after St. Cyprian. The one I came out of is named St. Cyprian's.
P.K.:	I talked to the guard down at Fort Ward because I was concerned about getting you a key to go into the gardener's plot, and he said that he had talked to a Mr. Randall, that said he was baptized at St. Cyprian's, and he said it was up on the hill. But I didn't know where he meant. So, this schoolhouse then became St. Cyprian's?

Charles McKnight:	Let me say this. I don't know what Mr. Remington talked to you...
P.K.:	I didn't talked to anyone; I just heart a name.
Charles McKnight:	Okay. Mr. Randall. It wasn't actually on a hill. If we're referring to the same, you know, street here, it was sort of like a—how can you say it—not like a valley like, I guess it was sort of like a valley. So, therefore, where the other houses stood, beyond this street right here, it was like a knoll like a....
P.K.:	Do you know where the creek runs, how the creek runs down in there? Do you remember the creek?
Charles McKnight:	I [unintelligible]...
P.K.:	You do?
Charles McKnight:	I'm just sayin' to some degree, to some degree yes. [laughs]
P.K.:	I know boys usually like to play in creeks.
Charles McKnight:	I know that, and I recall that you know, that we were down there at one interval, and we saw snakes, and I made it known to myself, "This is my last trip to the creek." [all laugh]
P.K.:	A good decision. Well, I was trying to place St. Cyprian's the building, if it was to the right side of the creek...
Charles McKnight:	To the right side, exactly.
P.K.:	And behind where the, behind where the cemetery is, which the cemetery is here...
Charles McKnight:	Well, no, not behind. Let's say that St. Cyprian's, when you and I went down, along with Reverend Mitchell, and we went to Clara Adams' grave, that, Clara Adams' grave was more or less to the right of the church, in the area. So you can visualize where her grave is now, the church itself was sort of a [unintelligible].
P.K.:	So that was the schoolhouse area?
Charles McKnight:	Exactly. The schoolhouse area.
Bradford Henderlong:	[unintelligible] facing West Braddock Road?
Charles McKnight:	Facing West Braddock Road exactly.
Bradford Henderlong:	Looking at Clara Adams' gravestone, the school would be to the right or left?
Charles McKnight:	The school would be to the right, to the right, and I'd like to make

	corrections here. The entrance to the schoolhouse did not face Braddock Road. The school now, and did at that time faces the area where the library is now, in that general area.
B.H.:	The entrance to the school.
Charles McKnight:	Exactly. It did not face Braddock Road.
P.K.:	How large of a congregation was it at St. Cyprian? Do you remember?
Charles McKnight:	At that time we had the Peters family, we had the Randall family, we had the Craven family, and the McKnight family. We had the Thomas family, and I would venture to say that was the gist of the congregation, made up of those families there.
P.K.:	When I was reading in the Diocesan journal at the Seminary, I found that Charles McKnight was the secretary, and also the Sunday school superintendent.
Charles McKnight:	I am he.
P.K.:	Are you, is that you?
Charles McKnight:	Yes. I am he.
P.K.:	Oh, now see, I gave you a compliment in my mind, because I thought it was your father. [laughs]
Charles McKnight:	No. I am he.
P.K.:	So you were that person.
Charles McKnight:	Exactly, at that time, at that time.
Oakland Baptist Church and Clara Adams	
H.M.:	Let me ask you this, Charles, How did Oakland Baptist Church come out of this?
Charles McKnight:	Well, I'd have to indicate at this point because of Clara Adams. Clara Adams was a member and founder of Oakland Baptist Church, where Clara Adams lived [unintelligible] facing Braddock Road, and she—part of that I guess was part of her land that was donated for the school and so for the church. And so she attended. Her sister, Amanda Clark, was an Episcopalian whose home at one time stood for quite a while, and then that was one that was burned down, you know, for the clearance of the park area there. Aunt Clara, as we called her, became very interested in Oakland Baptist and St. Cyprian's because she—I do believe it was she who donated the grounds for the building of the school—and also she had great ties

	with the church itself.
P.K.:	We have a deed that she gave the land for the school in the beginning.
Charles McKnight:	Exactly.
H.M.:	So Clara Adams was a Baptist?
Charles McKnight:	A Baptist.
H.M.:	What relation is she to you?
Charles McKnight:	She was my great aunt.
H.M.:	Great aunt.
Charles McKnight:	My father's father's sister.
H.M.:	I was just interested to see why all of them didn't become Episcopalians, since the Episcopal Church was the one that started the services.
Charles McKnight:	Absolutely, right. My father, from that, my father also [unintelligible], I'm not even sure if I would consider him as being an Episcopalian back then even though he did attend St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville.
P.K.:	In Lawrenceville.
Charles McKnight:	Lawrenceville, Virginia. St. Paul's is a college there.
B.H.:	Can you recall [unintelligible]?
Charles McKnight:	I don't know the area....[unintelligible] I have no idea, I'm sure she did, but I guess it's such a long time ago, my mind is somewhat nebulous now.
B.H.:	[unintelligible]
Charles McKnight:	She was a [unintelligible] yeah.
P.K.:	She was one of eight children?...Clara, I think. Well, on that genealogy chart I gave you...there were two that died...
Charles McKnight:	She always made this perfectly clear that she was a family, her mother—I'm trying to visualize how did she always say this—she had thirteen children through the Civil War, during that time
P.K.:	Her mother did.
Charles McKnight:	Her mother had thirteen children. I do recall her saying that.
P.K.:	And she was real close to her mom too because...

Charles McKnight:	Definitely.
P.K.:	She lived with her mom after her husband, after Clara's dad died, then she lived with her mom.
Charles McKnight:	I'm sure she did, because she often said this to us, that she took care of her mother, even when she was bedridden. She always said to us, "I powdered her, I bathed her, I would straddle her, I would turn her in the bed." I know for sure, from all indications I've heard, that she was very close and near and dear to her mother.
P.K.:	She was one of the babies of the family.
Charles McKnight:	That is correct, absolutely.
P.K.:	There was a younger, a brother younger than her named John Shadnick. Did he die when he was young? Because in the 1870 census Clara's three and John Shadnick's six months, and then I don't see him again.
Charles McKnight:	No. That name, John Shadnick, it doesn't sound familiar to me at all.
P.K.:	Then maybe he died; he might have died as an infant.
Charles McKnight:	As an infant, could very well have been.
B.H.:	Did you ever hear stories about the [unintelligible] during the Civil War? [Unintelligible]
Charles McKnight:	It's far beyond my comprehension. I don't ever recall there being any stipulation as to how they came to be in Alexandria.
Family	
P.K.:	You had Virginia relatives there. Everybody was Virginia except that one lady, your great grandfather's wife from Tennessee?
Charles McKnight:	Oh, that was my father's mother.
P.K.:	Was from Tennessee.
Charles McKnight:	She's from Tennessee.
P.K.:	Most of the people in this area that you knew, were they from Virginia originally?
Charles McKnight:	As far as I can recall, they were Virginians, for the simple reason that my Aunt Clara always said this, she said, "We come, we are FFV's." First families of Virginia. She always made that point.
P.K.:	When I was looking in the census, it was sort of surprising to me. They're all Virginians. Except that one, of all the families and all of,

	and it states their parents, their mothers, their fathers, it said Virginia, Virginia, Virginia, Virginia, Virginia, Virginia.
Charles McKnight:	Exactly, absolutely. And I have no idea as to how my father's mother came you know to this area. All I know is that she came from Tennessee. I don't even know the area in Tennessee, or the city, or the town.
P.K.:	We were talking before about your family working for the Seminary. Which of the people can you remember that would have worked there? Did Clara?
Charles McKnight:	You know, it's rather strange as to her duties with the Seminary. Back then, as we all know, as Reverend Mitchell said they used the word "colored," and she may have been a domestic there, but I'm not sure. She was quite well-known at the Seminary, a person who was very outspoken, and she would tell you off in no uncertain terms, she always said that. She said, "I never did bite my tongue on what I had to say, even though," she said, "I'd be over that stove cooking, if they said anything I didn't particularly like, I let it be known." So I'm sure she worked in that capacity, as far as domestic [unintelligible]. I don't know to whom she was allotted to, as far as [unintelligible] duties, who she worked for there, but in fact, even during my father's tenure, while we were young, he played a great important part at the Seminary also, as a groundskeeper.
P.K.:	What was his first name?
Charles McKnight:	Willis.
P.K.:	He was Willis.
Charles McKnight:	Willis Robert McKnight.
P.K.:	On this 1910 census, then, here's the McKnights. This one is Charles, that had May, Cassius, Henry, and I can't read that one. The McKnight, Cassius, that was married to Rachel. Is that your—which McKnight are you? Will the real McKnight please come forward, I can't figure him out? [all laugh].
Charles McKnight:	Now go back, and you said where you called the name Charles McKnight, now how far back...are you talking...
P.K.:	I'm gonna get my copy, it's enlarged.
Charles McKnight:	Because to be really sincere, I don't know of a Charles McKnight. I never questioned the idea as to why I was named Charles. I think I was named Charles because my mother was from North Carolina, and her father was named Charles.

P.K.:	So you were Charles from your mom's side, not from your dad's side. And you father was Willis?
Charles McKnight:	Willis Robert.
P.K.:	Okay. Here's Cassius, the head of the family with the wife Rachel and their children, so that's not that one. Except this is 1910 and the children might already be gone. Mary, Cassius, Lavinia?
Charles McKnight:	Louvinia?
P.K.:	No, this is his son that's ten. Harry? A son, twenty-one, and in 1910. So these must be like your uncles or your father's, right?
Charles McKnight:	I, you know, to be perfectly honest, a lot of those names that you are calling are very unfamiliar to me.
P.K.:	Well, we're going to have to study this further then, but your father's name was Willis.
Charles McKnight:	Willis Robert McKnight.
P.K.:	And do you know the year that your father was born?
Charles McKnight:	I have no idea.
P.K.:	What year were you born?
Charles McKnight:	I was born in 1922.
P.K.:	So he was maybe the turn of the century, somewhere around there. Were you the oldest child?
Charles McKnight:	I'm the second.
P.K.:	So probably 1895 maybe. Who knows, I'm just guessing.
Charles McKnight:	Oh no, that's fine. It's a possibility.
P.K.:	Then I can add and subtract and try to get to the right answer.
Charles McKnight:	It's too bad—back then there was a family album.
P.K.:	A Bible or...?
Charles McKnight:	No, it wasn't a Bible, it was a photo album. Green velvet—I remember as though I can see it right here today. We kept it for I don't know how many years. And during the time, up until the time that we left there and moved up here, it just got misplaced. We had a woodshed, it got misplaced in there. And I often wondered, you know as a youngster back then, and I figured you know, what the heck, it couldn't be of any value. I only wish now that I had kept

	that. It had all the pictures and all the photographs of my people. Even Clara's people, my father's people. I was only able to salvage, I think I got two right there of my grandfather, and my father, and one of Dan Stewart, who was in the Stewart family.
P.K.:	Yeah. I think we heard, somebody mention the Stewarts earlier to us.
Charles McKnight:	Exactly.
The Family Home	
P.K.:	Can you tell me what the house looked like that you lived in? That was Clara's.
Charles McKnight:	Clara's house...
P.K.:	I'm saying Clara because she had the original deed, and that was her original house.
Charles McKnight:	Oh sure. Absolutely. Clara's house had a porch on it.
P.K.:	On the front, facing Braddock?
Charles McKnight:	Facing Braddock Road. And as you entered, you entered like a hall and on the left was a stairway going up to two rooms upstairs. On the right was what you considered her living room.
P.K.:	Downstairs.
Charles McKnight:	All this was downstairs.
P.K.:	Oh, this is still downstairs.
Charles McKnight:	Still downstairs. Straight to the back was a kitchen, and then when after uh, Clara Adams took my father in, because he lost his old home place. I guess [unintelligible] deed or the property tax [unintelligible], and anyway, we moved into Clara's house and...
P.K.:	From this other place, that was closer to the street?
Charles McKnight:	That is correct. So, therefore, during that time, my father had what they considered like a lean-to room put on what became the kitchen, so therefore we had the dining room, and so that gave us three rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. She had her bedroom and in the back of the house, was just one large room, say about a room this size. So we had two rooms upstairs, her bedroom at that time, and the large room in the back, the one room downstairs which was the living room, and at that time the kitchen and the dining room [unintelligible] until such time we put the new kitchen on [unintelligible].

P.K.:	I know what you're talking about. How was the yard, underneath the trees? Or did you have a lot of grass or...?
Charles McKnight:	Beautiful, beautiful. It was really a picture. Her husband, Bob Adams, planted trees straight down the walkway. And those, Clara Adams and people would come out there, even families in later years would come from Washington, D.C., out there to have picnics and just to sit out there. The yard was beautiful. She had benches out there. She had a glider swing, and opposite the lean-to (she said lean-to)—the kitchen—was a chain well. I pulled water many a time at that chain well. And then, a little farther back was what they called the coal house. All these things were there before we moved in with her. And farther down was the outdoor privy.
P.K.:	Did she have lots of flowers? I heard that the Youngs really took an interest in flowers. [unintelligible].
Charles McKnight:	Clara was very fond of—what's that plant?—geraniums. That was her thing. And the yard was, uh, I don't know, greatly [unintelligible] with geraniums [unintelligible].
St. Cyprian Turned Into a Home	
P.K.:	Do you know when St. Cyprian changed over into a dwelling? Because it became a place where people lived later on. I'm saying somebody told me that.
Charles McKnight:	Oh, most definitely, when you say the Youngs, you are referring to Lee Thomas Young, who was a retired military sergeant. Before he moved there, um, Claiborn, who was a barber in Alexandria, he bought the property and had it totally refurbished into a lovely home. And then, I'm not, I don't recall whether he passed away and his family moved back to Alexandria, and after that Sergeant Young bought the property there. Does it give anything about Claiborn living in the uh...?
The School on Fort Ward	
P.K.:	They hold census reports for 70 years, so the latest census that we could get and read is 1910, right now. So there's no way of exactly checking that. That's another reason for the oral history, is to find out those names. Do you know anybody that attended the school on Fort Ward, the small one, the small school that was made...the name of it, we still haven't had it called a name.
Charles McKnight:	You know, that is very peculiar. I never knew the name of the school. But I do know that one of the teachers who taught there from

	what I was informed, from Clara Adams, was a lady by the name of Alice Ashby. But they had a dwelling also, is the Ashby's name there?
P.K.:	Yes.
Charles McKnight:	Her name was Alice Ashby, and I don't know how far her schooling was, but I guess back then, for a normal school you would get a certificate, and you could teach. So Alice Ashby taught at that little frame school.
P.K.:	We have an Edward and a Garnett and an Elizabeth Ashby on the 1910 census, so maybe it was...children of theirs.
Charles McKnight:	It's very possible, very possible.
P.K.:	Do you know anything about the school that's up on the front of the property? That's like facing...a school that was uh facing...
Charles McKnight:	Another school? I have no idea of another school [unintelligible].
P.K.:	This school was like a cinderblock base. I'll show you where it was. In fact this might even be it. This dwelling right here. Like here's Clara's, and there's this right here.
Charles McKnight:	I don't know. This is supposed to be the school itself?
P.K.:	It might be.
Charles McKnight:	Is that so stipulated?
P.K.:	Well, we heard that there might, that there was a school up there with a circular drive, there was a building with a circular drive around it. I mean, the drive went like this here and up and around like that.
Charles McKnight:	Like a cul-de-sac.
P.K.:	Yeah.
Charles McKnight:	That I don't recall.
P.K.:	You don't remember that at all.
Charles McKnight:	I have no idea. If you would consider this as being Clara's house, now I do know across from Clara's house when you spoke of the Jacksons, I think that there was a frame house there. And I think Aunt Clara always said that it did belong to the Jacksons, but the cinderblocks, the cinderblock foundation, I can't expound on that.
House Foundations	

P.K.:	What sort of foundation did your houses have there? Like a brick, or a stone, and then the frame on top of that?
Charles McKnight:	I would venture to say it had to be a cinderblock. It had to be. I don't recall because the way Aunt Clara's house was built—I don't even recall that there was a space between the house and the ground itself [unintelligible] heavy foundation. But eventually I know she put on what they called Bricktec. The house was a frame house but she put on the Bricktec. But as far as the foundation, I guess, I guess a wooden foundation, how all the houses were built back then. I don't recall, or scrutinized that closely, but it seems as though all the houses that were built during that time had only I guess a wooden foundation or it could have been a cinderblock foundation.
Influenza Epidemic	
P.K.:	Did you happen to hear if Harriet Shorts, how she died or what she died of?
Charles McKnight:	I have no idea, I can only say from what—normal causes at old age. I don't know.
P.K.:	I'll tell you the exact reason I'm asking is because she died in 1918 and that was the year of the big flu in Alexandria. They closed the churches for a month, and a lot of people, like a certain number out of twenty, I forget what the statistics were, did die, and then older people of course being not as strong, at that time, and no antibiotic. I just thought maybe that she had...
Charles McKnight:	It could very well have been that what caused her demise. But I would say this, I did hear Aunt Marilyn speak of that year of the flu.
P.K.:	Did you?
Charles McKnight:	Yeah, sure she spoke of that at all times.
P.K.:	She had nursed her mother, she was sick towards the end of her life, Harriet was sick?
Charles McKnight:	I would venture to say, since she and Clara were sisters and I never saw Harriet, only just through what my father spoke of her and also what Aunt Clara spoke of her. Naturally, I never saw Clara's mother, naturally. And I do know this and [unintelligible], back then, you never know what you're going to have to project to. In the living room, this huge, [unintelligible] about the size of that mirror there, with a beautiful you know bordered frame like, she had a huge picture of her mother and she, side by side on the wall. And I only wish now that I had kept those, I could have rolled them up and kept

	them. But when you're young, you don't think of these things...I know, this old beautiful frame I guess would be worth money today. This large wooden frame.
Clara Adams and Other Family Pictures	
P.K.:	We had someone describe Clara as being very tall and elegant looking.
Charles McKnight:	Very stately.
P.K.:	Stately.
Charles McKnight:	Can I see the picture?
P.K.:	Yeah, in fact, we're gonna, we can zoom in on it.
Charles McKnight:	Now, this was taken, somewhere I do believe in the Seminary grounds and that is she.
P.K.:	Oh, she's pretty!
Charles McKnight:	She's a very beautiful lady.
P.K.:	Oh, look at the clothes. I love those clothes. I have Victorian clothes at home.
Charles McKnight:	Yeah she was a tall, very stately air.
P.K.:	Brad, can you zoom in on this? Or do we need me to bring it closer to you? You got it?
Charles McKnight:	Is it good, do you see it?
P.K.:	Let me see it again.
Charles McKnight:	She always would laugh and tell us about the McKnights' structure. We were known to have very thin legs [all laugh]. She always said, she said, you know she said, "They always teased me for having skinny legs." And my father had skinny legs, and even today I'm glad that I wasn't a girl, so I could hide my skinny legs. This is my father's father, and I don't know what his name was. I guess I should have known.
H.M.:	We know he was a McKnight, but you don't know his first name?
Charles McKnight:	I don't know.
P.K.:	Your father's father. Well, I do have a Willis that was a child attending school in 1900. So, it might be that that was your father. I forgot how old he was. I think twelve.
Charles McKnight:	This is he right here.

P.K.:	Is this Willis?
Charles McKnight:	That's my father right there.
H.M.:	That's his father's father.
Charles McKnight:	That's my father's father.
H.M.:	That's your grandfather.
P.K.:	I wish I had all my census reports. If I had my 1880 census report I could tell you right now. But I don't have everything with me.
Charles McKnight:	That's my grandfather. [unintelligible] This is he on the tintype as a baby. Now you know about tintypes?
Dr. Mitchell and P.K.:	Yeah.
Charles McKnight:	Do you really? [laughs]
H.M.:	Yeah I know about tintypes.
P.K.:	He wasn't quite there though. [all laugh]
H.M.:	Yeah, well I'm 73 years old I ought to know about it.
Charles McKnight:	And this is Clara again right here.
P.K.:	Do you know who this man is?
Charles McKnight:	You know I don't know. Now, she, that's Dan Stewart.
P.K.:	This is...?
Charles McKnight:	That's my father right there as a baby.
P.K.:	They wore dresses. I have a picture of my Dad with a dress on too. Brad, we're gonna have to get these afterward.
Charles McKnight:	On this picture right here, and this gentlemen right here, he is—his name was David Weekin, Weekins, and Clara worked for the Weekins family, right down here, the house is still on Quaker Lane. He is the Virginia coroner or what is it called, the person who uh...
H.M.:	Coroner?
Charles McKnight:	Coroner. David Weekins. She baby-sat for him. She nursed him from birth to...
P.K.:	How old is she in that picture?
Charles McKnight:	I would say, I would say about 60.
P.K.:	Her hair is a little gray, isn't it?

Charles McKnight:	Yes. She lived to be I think it was 85.
P.K.:	Her mother was 88, I believe.
Clara's Conversion	
P.K.:	When I was here just to get introduced, you told me a very moving story of Clara's conversion. Would you be willing to share that?
Charles McKnight:	Oh, by all means. Because she told it, you know, frequently.
P.K.:	So, we'll tell Clara's story first.
Charles McKnight:	[laughs] And we, it was very, you know, it was really moving to me also of how she embraced religion. I was informed—not informed, but I knew—she was saying that, as a young girl, I understand that there were all the, they said the McKnight girls were very pretty people, very pretty girls. And they were somewhat, what's the word, you wouldn't say rowdy.
P.K.:	Flirts? [McKnight laughs] I'm putting words in your mouth.
Charles McKnight:	I, I like that, I like that.
P.K.:	You choose the words.
Charles McKnight:	No, but she said herself and she said, yes, she said many a time she said, she straddled a horse with a bottle of whiskey in her mouth and I don't know why, but she said one morning, in the home where we lived after her husband passed away, she indicated to us, she said she was lying in bed and it felt like the world was on her chest, and she said she couldn't breathe. She just took and pushed it, and the weight came off, and she put on her bedroom slippers, and you can imagine from where we were on Braddock Road there, and she put on her bathrobe, and ran from the house to the Seminary, and I don't know who the person was, but he said to her, "I knew you were coming. I knew you were coming." He met her somewhere on the grounds and they embraced. And she got on her knees, she said, and she accepted Jesus Christ at that time.
P.K.:	And so, she lived out that life too...starting a Church and...
Charles McKnight:	Yes she did, absolutely, and she was a staunch Christian lady from then on out. I used to love to go to Oakland Baptist Church to hear her testify. And she walked, at that time, while we had no transportation, and she walked from Braddock Road all the way down to Oakland Baptist. At that time Oakland Baptist was just the basement part of the building. It was a long time before they came up with where they are now. And she testified and would come back.

	I know many a night I walked down, on Sunday nights walked down to meet her. And walk her back. And walk back with her.
Town Streets	
P.K.:	Would you walk by the side, the street was smaller then, wasn't it?
Charles McKnight:	The street was smaller and it was dirt, at that time.
P.K.:	Gravel?
Charles McKnight:	Gravel, more or less.
P.K.:	How far did the gravel go?
Charles McKnight:	It went, I guess it covered the entire street, more or less.
P.K.:	And at far gravel was like, down to King Street?
Charles McKnight:	Down to King Street. Exactly.
P.K.:	Was there a toll gate there when you...
Charles McKnight:	No toll gate. Not to my knowledge.
P.K.:	Did you hear about it?
Charles McKnight:	Oh, I heard about the toll gate, yes, I heard about the toll gate. But at that time, at that time, see, we were attending the school down here. It was the little frame school out here at Seminary.
Mudtown School and Taking the Bus to Manassas Regional Industrial High School	
P.K.:	You were going to Seminary Hills School then?
Charles McKnight:	Yes. Mudtown School.
P.K.:	When did it start being called Mudtown?
Charles McKnight:	At this point I cannot expound on that, I really can't. From my, as far as I can remember, it has always been called Mudtown.
P.K.:	And that would be back to when, like, the '30s?
Charles McKnight:	Oh sure. Absolutely.
P.K.:	Did you hear of a place called... [recording stops].
B.H.:	[unintelligible]
P.K.:	This is the school. I mean, is this the school? The Seminary Public School? Is that where you went? On Woods Lane?
Charles McKnight:	Absolutely.
P.K.:	That was it. Tell me about it. How big was it?

Charles McKnight:	Three rooms, let's say four with the library. There was always a drinking fountain on the inside, always. In the foyer, more or less. And the outdoor latrine. At that time, that's when the city of Alexandria came around—we always referred to it as the honey wagon [laughs].
P.K.:	Oh yeah, I know what that term is.
H.M.:	[unintelligible]... the honey-dipper.
Charles McKnight:	I don't recall now how often they came around you know to empty the toilets into the truck itself. But we always knew so we always ran to the windows. As I said, it was heated by a pot-bellied stove in each room.
P.K.:	With coal?
Charles McKnight:	With coal. The first room was... the lady was Mrs. Geraldine Stevenson, and she was the principal. Then you had another two rooms at the back, plus the cloak rooms on the side, and then [unintelligible]. Back then, it was considered I guess a very attractive school. Very uh, you know, for that time.
P.K.:	It went up to grade what?
Charles McKnight:	The seventh grade. The seventh grade.
P.K.:	And then what would you do?
Charles McKnight:	When I finished that school, those who lived in Mudtown went to Poplar Grove. Being the only school in the area, we were still living at the Fort. Fort Ward Park today. We walked from there down to the school. When we finished, by being at that time where I lived then was Fairfax. So therefore, the closest high school to where I lived was in Manassas.
P.K.:	You're kidding?
Charles McKnight:	I love to talk about it. I love this story because I can expound on...talk about bussing? We were bussed for 35 miles.
P.K.:	My gosh.
Charles McKnight:	Thirty-five miles. All those that lived at the Fort were bussed from where we walked around to where the hospital is today. 'Course it wasn't as new, it wasn't fashionable then. We stood out there and it was the most, and this is what happened. The home is still there. There was a white family who, I don't know which school, how far they'd go. But the black kids and the white kids stood there and

	we'd talk together. You know, we'd talk and be very, very friendly. And then whoever's busses came first, we got on. "See you tomorrow!" We passed, going to Manassas, we passed, I know at least six schools, going to Manassas. Back then, you know, you never give it the first thought, because for four years straight, I rode 35 miles one way, 70 miles a day, going to Manassas. At that time it was Regional Industrial Boarding School. Had kids that came and stayed on campus there. And we [unintelligible].
P.K.:	Was that Chance Industrial?
Charles McKnight:	No, Jennie Dean. Manassas Regional Industrial High School, founded by a lady named Jennie Dean. And at one time it was the most prominent black school in this area, Northern Virginia.
B.H.:	[unintelligible]
Charles McKnight:	In 1942....I love to talk about it. Talk about busses. I can expound on bussing! [laughs].
H.M.:	I had the same experience, too, bussed right by the white building. I only had to go nine miles, though.
P.K.:	It lasted longer than—I mean, your children had to go through that too, right? Because Mrs. Belk's daughter talks about having, getting bussed past the school here to go to another school.
Charles McKnight:	I'm not sure...Maydell Belk's...see that's a new era. See, that time, everything was...
P.K.:	She's a different generation.
Charles McKnight:	Different generation altogether, right. We passed Centreville, Annandale—all the way to Manassas.
P.K.:	I see, you went out the Alexandria-Leesburg Pike—all the way, straight out that way.
Charles McKnight:	The school—our bus started in Gum Springs. That's where the kids first boarded, at Gum Springs and Spring Bank, and then from there they came on through to where we were here, in Fairfax, then...
H.M.:	What time did you leave home, for gosh sakes?
Charles McKnight:	We left home at six o'clock in the morning. Because it made all these stops. Falls Church.
B.H.:	[unintelligible] alongside the roads, were there areas alongside the roads [unintelligible]...
Charles McKnight:	As far as stopping?

B.H.:	...well developed?
Charles McKnight:	Oh, developed? No, not at that time, absolutely not. Kids just stood...those who lived sort of back off the various highways, stood right there at their mailboxes or paper boxes. The bus came, they got on and...
H.M.:	Rainy weather, snowy weather.
Charles McKnight:	Rain, snow, or blow. Oftentimes, when the bus came, if it was extremely bad weather, the man would come, you know, off the beaten path near your home...[unintelligible]...he would do that sometimes, but not very often. And, often times, think of riding the bus that had sometimes no heat on it. Ride a bus that maybe would break down, up near the heart of Fairfax County. And, we'd then get off the bus and sit inside the garage, until they'd fix the tire or something, but we didn't mind it. And I'd always make people laugh I said now if you want to talk about bussing, ask me. And, we didn't mind it. You know we'd, it's funny how we never gave it the first thought.
P.K.:	You just accepted it.
Charles McKnight:	Accepted it you know, passed those schools, we just kept on going.
The Fort Ward Area and Its Inhabitants	
P.K.:	Let me take you back to Fort Ward....I know when Harriet deeded in her will, she gave a horse, a harness, a cow, a wagon, I think I gave you a copy of that will. Which made me wonder if in later years they still had room to keep a cow for milk, or if they had chickens or rabbits or how much they had up there.
Charles McKnight:	I don't know.
P.K.:	Were you a gardener? Did you have a garden, like a veggie garden?
Charles McKnight:	Aunt Clara didn't have a garden, no, but on the right of the house there was a pear orchard, like.
P.K.:	There is a pear tree there still.
Charles McKnight:	It's still there? That was a pear orchard there. But as far as...she always had chickens, and I don't recall any other domestic animal, like a pig or a cow or a horse, or anything like that. But she did have this pear orchard there.
P.K.:	So, was there a dairy farm behind Fort Ward, or to the east of Fort Ward?

Charles McKnight:	How often did I hear of her speak of this dairy farm, and I don't recall if it was on the—not the seminary grounds, but the high school grounds. Even as a kid growing up there, they did—there were cows there, there were horses there, and they milked their own. They had a dairy barn there. And that's how the students at the high school got their milk, through their own dairy farm right there. But as far as the dairy in that area, I don't have any knowledge of that. None whatsoever.
P.K.:	Do you remember or recall any of the surrounding properties who, who had those at that time? Were Ruffners there then? Or Brookings?
Charles McKnight:	[laughs] The reason why I laugh is because it's true. They were there. Brookings and Lawyer Ruffner. Back then. And also Clara at that time, where Lawyer Ruffner lived, and I'll say, "God rest his soul," because he was really a kind man to me, and because Clara worked for him. And after Clara took us into her home, and she became somewhat incapacitated, then I, she always spoke very highly of me, as she said, "If need be, if I needed to be bathed," she said, I would do it. Which might mean my mother [unintelligible], things like that. She always told Lawyer Ruffner this and he became very close to me. And they were there at that time. I don't recall any cows or horses as far as his property. He had a beautiful place, sort of set back and off the highway like, with trees and a sort of large beautiful awning on the front. How 'bout the name Creed? Is that in around there or?
P.K.:	Jason Creed?
Charles McKnight:	I don't know the first name, but Creed, the name Creed, he had a pig farm.
P.K.:	I heard about that. It was up in back, like, go up in the Fort and, like, up in the back.
Charles McKnight:	Exactly.
P.K.:	Was that where it was?
Charles McKnight:	Absolutely.
P.K.:	Was it still on the Fort?
Charles McKnight:	I'm not...you know, it may have been in the area where...
P.K.:	It was, like, up back in here?
Charles McKnight:	Exactly.

P.K.:	Where the St. Stephens is now? You think that's it?
Charles McKnight:	In that general area. In that general area right there, where his pig farm was.
P.K.:	Who told me that is Mrs. Emery, who was the daughter of Brookings that lived in this...did you know Brookings?
Charles McKnight:	I knew the Brookings, just by name and by sight. I don't even, I think Brookings...was he a lawyer?
P.K.:	Yes he was.
Charles McKnight:	I know that lawyer. Ruffins was there.
P.K.:	Is this Ruffins right here then? There is the schoolhouse and there's Clara's. Is that Ruffins?
Charles McKnight:	This is Ruffins house right here, it should be sort of somewhat back.
P.K.:	Here is something that's back here.
Charles McKnight:	He had a great deal of property. But his home sort of somewhat set back. A beautiful home. Colonial style home.
P.K.:	We'll have to look at another map. You don't think it's this one because it's too close...
Charles McKnight:	It's entirely too close to....Does the name Hogan...does that...as far as names?
P.K.:	Not to me. I just have oral deeds.
Charles McKnight:	What I'm inclined to believe, I don't know to what degree Virginia Hogan was related to Clara Adams, but I think Clara Adams gave her this property, and there was a little bungalow that set closer to the highway than Clara's house did. That could very well be the house there.
P.K.:	This is Ruffins property?
Charles McKnight:	It was somewhat on Ruffins property, yes, exactly.
P.K.:	Was there any house back here? Like, here is the schoolhouse, and there's the cemetery, and here's the creek. Were there any houses back in here?
Charles McKnight:	I doubt very seriously that there were. Other than the Stewart residence that was somewhere in that general area.
P.K.:	The Stewart residence was to the right of the creek?

Charles McKnight:	I would say to the left of the creek.
P.K.:	You think this is the Stewart's then?
Charles McKnight:	That could very well be. Was there anything under that shows there was a spring?
P.K.:	We heard that there was three wells up there. Tell me.
Charles McKnight:	I know of the spring, because Dan Stewart's residence had the spring, and they had no well.
P.K.:	Is that at the top—is that up towards the Fort?
Charles McKnight:	No. This was sort of down like.
P.K.:	By the creek?
Charles McKnight:	By the creek—if it shows any place on there—it's where the James residence—that was one of the last houses back in that general area. But there was a spring that was down below the Stewart residence.
Medical Care	
P.K.:	How were the doctors? Did you have good medical care? Fairly good medical care?
Charles McKnight:	Now that I can expound on. I do recall—is the name anywhere on there that says by the way Dr. Dodd?
P.K.:	I don't recall.
Charles McKnight:	I do recall that where we lived as children before we moved into Clara's residence, the old McKnight residence, someone in the neighborhood had a ear infection, I recall this. And my two brothers and I were eating cherries, so I played the part of the person with the ear infection, I never shall forget. And I put the cherry seed in my ear. And it, for some reason it went in. And my mother took me, and I don't recall where, I don't recall catching a bus...[unintelligible]. But she took me to a doctor and he...[unintelligible]...put in my ear, started buzzing and what it was, and he said to me, he said...[unintelligible]... "It will decay and fall down." I know as far as the medical care, that's all that I know as far as a doctor.
P.K.:	There was a Dr. Klepstein, or a Klipstein that lived up in that area.
Charles McKnight:	Klepstein. That name doesn't sound familiar. Dr. Dodd, I do believe was somewhere in that area. Or it could have been that he was, what do you call it now?
P.K.:	Did you ever hear about how women delivered their babies? I've

	heard that there was a midwife in the area.
Charles McKnight:	My mother told me that I was delivered by a midwife and her name was Marly Nelson. Does that name...Nelson? She was a midwife back then, 'cause I...[unintelligible]...what being a midwife was. But I was delivered by a midwife, and I think my older brother was born in Washington. He was born in Washington. My younger brother was born in North Carolina. That was during the time that she was having some problems. I had left here at the age of four and went down to live with my mother's sister. So she came down and he was delivered in North Carolina. But I was delivered by a midwife by the name of Marly Nelson.
Social Climate	
P.K.:	What was the—I don't know how to say it—like the climate. Like, I've had people say to me, "We never locked our doors." The people got along, and you felt safe letting your children play out in the yards and ride their bikes or—How do you remember it?
Charles McKnight:	I remember distinctly. We never locked our doors. We never did. We played during the summers and the spring weather, we played outside until it got dark, or your parents called you in to go to bed. We played outside, to the point that we, during that time, 'cause the store still stands—called Donaldson's Store, right across up in back it says—we had to walk down there in order to get groceries, and oftentimes, I don't recall how long he stayed open, but we even walked down West Braddock Road which is there now, past the school up there...[unintelligible]...there was never any problems or any incidents. And as far as locking your home, never. Never. Even in the summertime in order to get a breeze, back then, the doors were not locked, they just pushed open. You had a screen, screen door, something like that. But there was never any problems. It was just a haven of peace back then.
P.K.:	Nice time.
Charles McKnight:	Yes it was. I'll grant you that. Exactly.
P.K.:	I can't think of any more questions. Is there something that you would like to leave for posterity? This is your chance.
Charles McKnight:	I'll say this then. It has been very apropos in my being able to give this. And I'm somewhat very enthusiastic about this, and hope that things will work well as far as what you're planning on doing, and we can look back and say that I was part of it.
Religion	

H.M.:	I'm just curious, Charles—how come you remained an Episcopalian and the rest of them, some of the others didn't? How did that break down, in terms of the families? You named about five families. Was there any animosity between the two groups?
Charles McKnight:	No. I can say it in this fashion—my father, you know I often wondered, even when he went, was going then, went to St. Paul's then, I would venture to say that those who lived at the Fort Ward, at that time and when they speak of the church, the Seminary grounds, that was...[unintelligible]....And I do recall one or two occasions that I was inside of the chapel. I don't know why. I don't know if it was for a service or what. But when St. Cyprian's became a chapel, we all—at that time I had no idea what an Episcopalian was or anything, so we came to Sunday School here. There was a person who gave the service there.
P.K.:	How old were you then?
Charles McKnight:	I would venture to say that was after I came back from North Carolina. I guess I was about nine years old. I do believe—let me correct that—I was I guess about four. I never shall forget that the name Warner would always stick with me. A kind person. He had to have been a student at the Seminary. I don't think he was a priest; I never saw him in clerical clothes. He gave a service, as a student. I don't even recall when we were going there as far as how they went about as far as taking Communion, or anything of that nature. That's somewhat [unintelligible] skipped my memory. On a Christmas eve, we all had gone over there, and this man...
P.K.:	To the chapel? To St. Cyprian's? To the chapel at the Seminary?
Charles McKnight:	No. St. Cyprian's. The chapel on the Seminary grounds, as I said, was somewhat, I can recall maybe once or twice going inside and I don't know for what reason. I know for sure that it wasn't for any service. My connection as far as the Episcopal church was St. Cyprian's. From the beginning more or less. They referred to him as Dr. Warner. I guess he had his degree. I never shall forget. He was dressed in a Santa Claus suit and he jumped off the roof of the church and made all this noise and all, and my mother said I buried my head in her lap and when he came down to pass out candy, I just held my hand out like that. Down through the years when I became an adult and went into the service, when I was stationed in Alaska, I called or sent word, I wrote a letter to one of the churches there. I don't recall what area or where it was now, in Nome or some place, and Dr. Warner had been a priest there. And of course, he

	[unintelligible]. That's how much I recall St. Cyprian's church that was utilized by the service boys and students at the Seminary. Very pleasant. Dr. Warner, I can only say it in this fashion, was a true Christian man. He came, he even walked from there, and I think that's how—it could've been he who Aunt Clara became attached to as far as her redemption. But...
P.K.:	When did St. Cyprian's cease to be?
Charles McKnight:	St. Cyprian's ceased to be, and I don't recall who was the bishop of Virginia then. It was Bishop Goodwin? It had to have been. What would you say?
H.M.:	Probably Bishop Goodwin.
Charles McKnight:	Bishop Goodwin, right. I can't recall the year.
P.K.:	1942?
Charles McKnight:	No, it may have been I think before that. I'm almost sure. They saw fit to merge Meade, which was a mission, and St. Cyprian's mission as to come as one. It was around the 1930s, early '30s, or 1940s.
P.K.:	Julia Randall, the archivist at the Seminary and also at Christ Church is writing a history of Christ Church and she was wondering about the atmosphere between Christ Church and Meade. Can you remember when you joined Meade, and that would've been?
Charles McKnight:	When I joined Meade, Meade—let me just say the beginning of Meade Memorial Episcopal mission across from a canal and where the canal was in Alexandria I have no knowledge of that. There was a frame church, I do believe from the beginning, and the reason why we have the name of Meade Memorial, at that time it was Bishop Meade who was the Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia. And the people wanted to attend Christ Church, and I think they went I guess, I don't know what happened there, but there was some animosity, and Bishop Meade had this little frame church across the canal. And where the canal is, I have no knowledge. and then it was moved from there to where it is now, on Alfred Street. It bears the name of Meade Memorial. And there was some animosity. And I understand that, and I'm saying this only through what I have been told—that Bishop Meade was a racist. And it was he who said it would never happen as far as blacks attending Christ Church at that time. But even today, there's always a change as time goes on, I'm not even sure if there are any black members at Christ Church or not.
H.M.:	There are.

<p>Charles McKnight:</p>	<p>There are some now. Very good. The only church that befriended me is Grace, on Russell Road. There was a Father Merrill, and at that time we had Father Cochran who was our priest. [unintelligible]. Even today, now, as I was saying, I said once before that Father Mitchell here was the first clerical on the standing committee, and I was the first layman on the standing committee. And that was in a period of over 250 years, that never happened before. So we have close ties with that. In the region—this is Region 4—in Region 4 there are eight Episcopal churches. And out of the eight priests, besides our priest, Father Mark Anshew, we became very close as friends, and he gave me his life story. He marched in Selma, Alabama. And I had great admiration for Mark Anshew. And I was always accepted with pleasure at Christ Church because of my work within the Diocese itself. But there's great love now in Christ Church.</p>
<p>H.M.:</p>	<p>Yeah. Bishop Meade, though, has an interesting history. He was considered one of the milder of the slave—he didn't own slaves, I don't think. But I know that he is famous for preaching a sermon, justifying correction. What he called correction. Correction is whipping. He wrote a famous sermon on that—that if you got whipped, you deserved it. Even if you hadn't done anything you probably will do something, and who knows what you've done in the past and all that. He had it justified any way you could do it. And then he said, finally he said if you—he was famous for, "Those slaves be obedient to them that are your masters." That was a famous text that white preachers used to preach to the slaves, you know. St. Paul's. That's why Howard Thurmon today—this is digressing a little—Howard Thurmon used to read to his grandmother. His grandmother couldn't read. She used to have him read the Bible to her, but she would never let him read anything in St. Paul's. She never would let him read the Epistles. So he wondered about that, you know, and so finally he got nerve enough to ask her when he came home one day from college. She says, "The reason I won't let you read anything about St. Paul because he was the one that wrote in Ephesians, "Slaves, be obedient to them that are your masters," and every preacher that used to come to preach to the slaves, they used to always preach on that text. And she swore that she would never let anybody read that text to her. But Bishop Meade was famous for that, though. And that's why some people objected to the name in Meade Memorial Church.</p>
<p>Charles McKnight:</p>	<p>But they were talking to me recently about changing the name.</p>

	There were those old members like Miss Keys and all, they said, "No, we've gone this far," so...
More About the Fort Ward Area	
B.H.:	What happened to the school?
Charles McKnight:	Eventually it was purchased by a barber who lived in Alexandria. His name was Claiborn. He bought the property and he had the school totally refurbished into a beautiful home somewhat like a bungalow like, and I don't recall how long, they—this was during the tenure when I was in the military. And I'm on leave, and they were still living there. Eventually, I don't know whether he passed away or his wife passed away, so they decided to leave the area and go back to Alexandria—that's where they came from. Then after the war, more or less, then Sergeant Young and who the park belongs to, I don't know, unless it was still with the Claiborn family. But it was Sergeant Young, who was a retired master sergeant, he bought it, and then when the turn came as far as refurbishing Mudtown and those of us who lived or had property at the Fort were allowed to buy down here. That's why we're down here now.
B.H.:	So, the building was destroyed?
Charles McKnight:	Yes. It was destroyed. I don't know how soon then after. We moved down here, then it was destroyed. I think it may have been when they started this Fort Ward project there. It's just like the home that we left was destroyed also.
B.H.:	[unintelligible]
Charles McKnight:	Well, I was in the military. And I guess I was in my—fortyish.
H.M.:	So how long have you been living here?
Charles McKnight:	Pretty close to 35 years.
B.H.:	[unintelligible]
Charles McKnight:	You know, I have no idea—believe it or not.
H.M.:	Seems to me, that would be just before Fort Ward Park was built.
Charles McKnight:	Oh, yeah. Sure. Right. Just before Ward Park was built there. Even though the Fort was there—even was there when we lived there because there were bunkers and all, sort of off in a certain area there.
P.K.:	Did you play in those?
Charles McKnight:	Oh, sure. Absolutely. Many a day we played in those bunkers there. And there was, I don't even know if that was brought up also—there

	also was a cemetery there. Is that also on the...?
P.K.:	No, tell me.
B.H.:	We heard about that, but...
Charles McKnight:	There was a cemetery there. I don't know to what degree or where it was located. During my tenure up there, I only recall one burial there—it was a Taylor family. Now my Aunt Clara always said there was a cemetery up there.
P.K.:	In addition to...
Charles McKnight:	In addition to Oakland Baptist Cemetery.
P.K.:	Somebody said maybe where that building is now. Where the frame building is. Behind it.
Charles McKnight:	I think...somewhat to the side, and maybe as you go through the gate, the archway up there to the park itself. But there was at one time a cemetery there. How many graves it held, I have no idea.
B.H.:	Was there a church sponsoring this in some way?
Charles McKnight:	I don't know. I have no idea.
B.H.:	What were the banked-up portions of the Fort like at that time? Were there trees all over there and a well? We know there was a well.
Charles McKnight:	There is a well there, you said? I don't recall a well being there. I guess like in all instances, wherever there is a fort, where they have trenches and like that, and I'm not even sure if there was a battle fought there. I don't believe that—it may have been a storage area for ammunition. As far as the Fort, if there was an enclosed area for a fort, like they had back then as far as the posts and all, and log cabin houses, and whatever—I don't even recall that.
B.H.:	[unintelligible]
P.K.:	Do you want to do the photos now?
B.H.:	Yes, I'd love to.
P.K.:	Thank you again. [End]