



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



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**Title:** *Interview with B.J. Sheridan*

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**Interviewer:** *B.J. Sheridan*

**Transcriber:** *Tess Christine Evans*

**Abstract:** *B. J. Sheridan grew up in post-Depression era Alexandria and became a fighter pilot during the Korean War. In this self-recorded reflection, B.J. speaks about his many adventures --childhood adventures at Hunting Creek and Lake Barcroft, and later adventures, including working for United Airlines. He recalls his childhood home at 207 S. Washington, stories of his uncles and his stepfather's car dealership, 'Hunter Motors,' as well as anecdotes of famous people he once knew.*

**This transcript has been edited by the interviewee and may not reflect the audio-recording exactly.**

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<b>207 South Washington Street</b>	
B. J. Sheridan:	<p>Thank you for your letter Mr. [Jim] Mackay and I hope I don't bore you to death with two hours of talking! I remember an old TV show where they said, "If you accept this mission we will deny it." I will deny I ever said this. The tape will not self destruct -- unless you get so bored and sick of hearing me run my mouth, you just burn it up.</p> <p>So, I'll start off with the house on 207 South Washington Street. It had fourteen rooms, and if I remember correctly, each of these rooms had a large wood-burning fireplace because that was basically the heat in the olden days. Fortunately, when I arrived there they had the old fashioned radiators, which I believe even today are one of the more efficient ways of heating an area. The house itself was really an adventure; three stories and a basement. I remember I had a small room on Washington Street. So, I could always look out the windows and see everything that was taking place because Washington Street and King Street were the places that everything went on.</p> <p>About the house itself. I believe it was built by my grandfather in the late eighteen hundreds. His family had seven -- two girls and five boys. I still remember, at the time I was there, you still had the gas mantles. They were no longer in operating order, but they were still in place. My mother told me that she believes this was one of the first, or perhaps I should say, one of the larger houses in Alexandria to have electricity completely through the house. Those interior walls were about four bricks thick. The people that put the wiring in there all went and found other work after they did the Howard family house. The house had a big front and back yard. I don't remember the outhouse itself, but I do remember in the back yard, you had the back wall. [It] was common to St. Mary's Academy, which I believe was a Catholic girl's boarding school at that time. Naturally, [?] people and the McGuire's originally were next door. Those people were really just a name to me because I think he died or moved on. Then a family, I believe the name was Sears, and he was the Secretary of the Treasury or had a major governmental position [having] to do with government finances. As I said, the house itself, the interior, was really beautiful. The floors were, I'm trying to think of the correct word for it, parquet, that's not really the word, but they were wooded floors and in the hall, it was really a wonderful pattern. Also, as you went into the house there were big wide front steps, and I believe the term then was vestibule. You go</p>

	<p>back into the house and naturally, I remember a lot in the kitchen. There was a gas stove and a large wood-burning stove that my grandmother always used to cook on and it really turned out great meals. I also remember, at that time, we had an ice box. I remember the guys would come in every two days with the ice and I believe this was delivered by Pinkerton's Express. It was an old Alexandria colored man and it was a horse-drawn wagon and he'd throw the tongs over his shoulder and come in the back door with the big load of ice. That's what I remember about that.</p> <p>Also, during the War, and other times when all the kids grew up and moved out, we rented the third floor to a Mr. Palmer who was a big wheel with-- I think-- the Virginia Public Service Company. Then he moved on to the Carolinas for a new position. During the War, we rented that upstairs, that third floor, to an Army captain from Texas. Unfortunately, I've forgotten his name. Later on, to an Air Force navigator, Lieutenant David Atwater. Naturally, he was my absolute hero. After the War was over, I believe we rented it to two doctors who were interning at the hospital around the corner. Again, I'm trying to remember their names, but that was a long, long time ago. I believe one was Dr. Hoil, but I can certainly be wrong on that.</p> <p>One of the wonderful things I remember on the house, it had a big wide banister and as a kid I used to slide down the banisters. My Uncle Bob, as my mother told me, also used to do that except one time he slipped and fell off the banister, but fortunately he went head first through the seat of a wicker chair and that broke his fall and he was uninjured. It was just a nice, fun place to grow up.</p>
<b>Remembering Uncles</b>	
	<p>It was an interesting time. Just being around my uncles, I certainly knew Brooke Howard. He was an attorney of the old school and the stories of him are legend. My Uncle Jack and Uncle Bob were both food brokers in Washington. Bob was the Chairman of the Alexandria School Board and he was in that time when integration took place. I got some interesting stories about what took place, and it went well because he had a lot of common sense. Trying to think of anything else. He was in business, very active in the Masons and Sarah can naturally tell you more about her father than I can. My mother worked on the playgrounds, Garfield playgrounds over in D.C. for a long, long, time. That's where she met my stepfather, Mr. Hunter who was a Congressman at the time.</p> <p>My Uncle Frank, as you know, was a well-known grocer in town.</p>

	<p>If I may regress a bit, I remember that my grandfather had a big grocery store. It was on the southwest corner of King and Washington Street. I remember growing up there and Teddy the butcher used to cut beef and it was an old fashioned. Well, it wasn't old-fashioned at that time, but it was the big grocery store in town.</p> <p>After he passed away and the building was sold, my Uncle Frank opened down on King Street. Again, Sarah can tell you a lot about Frank, he was really an exceptional man. It was an old fashioned grocery and my uncle did a lot for people around town. When they needed food, he gave it to them. He provided books for a lot of kids that couldn't afford books and went to school.</p> <p>I was in Germany in the service when he passed away, but my mother said the service was at the Presbyterian church. They were standing -- the place was packed. He was so well thought of. There were quite a few members of the Virginia State Legislature, well-known attorneys and judges around town. I believe Senator Harry Bird Sr. also attended. Also, as my mother said, beside these people of notoriety, you had the rich and the poor. You have farmers that came in; she said it looked like they just found out about it and came out of the fields. You also had blacks (the term was colored at the time). The blacks [were] there, and this was in an era before integration, but he was so well thought of that these were all friends of Frank Howard and nobody said a word. So, I say the Howard family did a good bit to contribute to the growth of Alexandria and just keeping the place nice in general. He never had children.</p> <p>I had another Uncle Miran, but he died when I was relatively young and I don't know too much about him. I believe his son was still living in Alexandria, but again, I've sort of lost touch with that.</p>
<b>Childhood</b>	
B. J. Sheridan:	<p>My uncle Frank lived up on George Washington Park behind the Masonic Temple, and I knew a bunch of kids up there. And we used to play. Every night I'd ride my bike up from South Washington Street, and we'd play baseball. We played baseball on the lot that the Masonic Temple owned. We made our own diamond and dug-out and everything. We just played every night, and when we finished playing baseball, when it got dark, we used to go over on the street corner across from Donald Knight's father and family, and we'd drink soda, read comic books, play games, and just had fun. We made our own fun then, and we've all remained friends for a lifetime even though we've gone in many different directions.</p>

And, I think I've mentioned to you, we didn't know at the time, but we found out later, I think watching a film on Patton with George C. Scott, that one of the guys, Dan Hopebrass Field Mason, his father Colonel Mason was the chief of Patton's artillery in the 3<sup>rd</sup> army in Europe. That we didn't know until a considerable time after the war. Up there, I played with the Knights, and these were the kids of the Knight family that had Knights Hardware store down on, I think, just one block east of Washington Street on King Street. And the Fanon family, which had Fanon's Fuel and Oil, a bunch of them. We all just grew up together and played together and had a good time.

My good friends Donald Knight, Fred Boswell and a bunch of us, loved to go fishing. We would go down to Hunting Creek, and as we got older, we'd go further along. The big adventure of the day was going off to Lake Barcroft, which at that time was the city reservoir. Now Lake Barcroft had big Blue Gills and big Bass, but of course it was restricted so you couldn't fish there. At our ages of fifteen and sixteen, the great adventure was sneaking into Lake Barcroft to go fishing. We'd fish and we'd always have a look out watching for the watchmen Mr. Kirby. So when we'd see him making his rounds we would disappear into the woods. In our simply society that was quite an adventure. Then we received a wonderful, wonderful break. Mr. Richards moved into the general area. He had a son about our age, Donald Richards. He was the water commissioner so we got to know Don and he would take us up fishing at Barcroft, and as far as we were concerned in the summer and fall we were in paradise.

I was also thinking, I remembered, like I said we used to go fishing and play baseball and basketball and football all over the lot that it was on the property owned by the Masonic Temple. I think the last time I was in town I remember going up there, there's a big fence up there now, but times have changed. I also remember that we just had a bunch of people, just a plane pick-up team. We hear about another bunch of guys, a team of some name down somewhere, and we'd just call up and meet and we'd play ball. Each team would pick an umpire. We didn't have uniforms, sponsors, we just did it. We've had a lot of people and very good camaraderie. I think all the organized sports now, the kids are missing an element it was just plain fun and we didn't have the parents there, 99 percent of the time. That was certainly a different era.

Also another thing I remember in Alexandria, they used to have wonderful car sales on George Washington's birthday, which at that time was the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February before Congress moved it around.

We'd have some older people buy us a ten dollar car. These things were from the [19]30s and they'd run for three days. They'd bring them up to the field and we'd drive them around the field. No seatbelts, they wouldn't go more than ten miles an hour, all of us hanging on, hitting the bouncers, parts falling off, and we had a wonderful time. Then the same guys that bought us the cars would fix them up so the junkyard would come and haul them away.

I remember one of the guys, he was quite a character in Alexandria, Boon Knight, and he did wacky things. I think I told you the story of Rajah Him [unclear] hamburgers at the Cavalier Hotel in Virginia Beach. Then, as they left, he spilled a bag of quote jewels. I believe my uncle Brookes' law partner --I hope he's still alive and in Alexandria-- Quillen Hancock, happened to be there to witness that.

There was also another bit of a character in Alexandria that we knew of named Carlin Payton. Carlin Payton joined the Eagle Squadron, flew in the Battle of Britain, and was quite a character. Somebody I knew said he had eight German and seven British planes to his credit. He used to fly while drunk, but in desperate times you did anything. I think I also mentioned that he was drunk and flying an airplane and tried to fly through the smoke stacks of the power company that used to be on the water front. Well, you can do it if your wings are in the vertical position, but not horizontal. He lands in the water, and some drunk, who was sleeping it off down at the pier, swims out, pulls him out, rescues him. If I remember right, he received a Carnegie Heroism Award, and then they took him and treated him, and actually he became a useful citizen.

Now, Sarah can tell you lots of stories about my grandmother, Mrs. Howard, who I guess, in the early [19]30s ran the town. Also, Brooke Howard is well-known and she could tell you more stories about the family.

207 South Washington Street, we used to sit on the front porch, the front steps and watch everything go by. We saw all kind of dignitaries drive back and forth, always going to Mount Vernon. I started out in Lee School on Prince Street, and then went to Jefferson School, then you rode you bike up there. From there G.W. High. I had some tremendous teachers. Mr. Irving Lindsay for math, Dolly Callahan for history, social studies. Just some great teachers. At that time the schools could actually teach you something because you wanted to learn. The school people ran the school. I remember, I think we had normally six periods of class per day. From Mr.

	<p>Lindsay’s math class, if you were called on to answer a problem, you went to the board and you put it on the board and you illustrated it, how you solved it, almost as you were the teacher. If you didn’t do that you got to go to Mr. Lindsay’s seventh period and you would stay until dark, if necessary. Nobody complained. Nobody filed lawsuits; nobody was picked on or humiliated like they are today. You learned something. And, I remember, as I look back now as I’m giving you this narrative on some of the familiar faces in there, and those people, as I understand it through some reunions, have been rather successful in their careers. So, Mr. Lindsay taught us a lot. The school system are much better than, I have a daughter that graduated from high school two years ago, they just don’t seem to teach them, plus now, a lot of the kids don’t realize that you have to learn, you aren’t entitled to everything, but again, I refer to these kids as the MTV generation and I don’t consider that much of an honor.</p> <p>Okay. What else happened to me? Well, I might have mentioned my father died when I was three years old. I never, naturally, really knew him. My mother remarried, John Hunter, when I think I was about 14. He was a congressman at that time. And two of the memorable events I do remember. He took me over and we were on the south lawn of the White House with snow on the ground to watch Franklin D. Roosevelt take his oath of office for his fourth term. And my step father said to me at that time, “He will not live to complete his term.” Also, he took me on the floor of the joint session of Congress to hear General Eisenhower’s speech to Congress after victory in Europe. I still remember these things. Of course, when you get older you remember young things, but I can actually tell you what I had for breakfast today and yesterday so I’m not quite falling apart.</p>
<b>Career</b>	
B. J. Sheridan:	<p>After graduating from G.W. High I went to Randolph Macon for three years. The Korean War came along and I had always wanted to be an Air Force pilot. I got my chance a little sooner than expected, but I had qualified for aviation cadets. Then, we get a notice saying ‘well, you can join the Air Force as an airman basic and maintain your designated class date,’ or if you don’t, you go to the end of the list. So, I enlisted. I was an enlisted man for about 14 months before going to aviation cadets and I was assigned at Craig Air Force Base in Selma, Alabama, I believe, as a Link Trader Operator and that worked out very well. Then went to basic training in Hondo, Texas. Advanced training at Williams Air Force Base, the fighters school, then into Jet Photo Reconnaissance. Finished that up and zipped</p>

over to Korea. I guess the North Koreans and Chinese heard I was coming because they said, 'okay, we have arms,' and then the Russians kicked up some stuff in Europe so we had a build up there and I was in Korea for about three weeks and was sent to Germany.

I was over there three years in Photo Reconnaissance and just had a most interesting time. I learned to speak some German, got out on the economy, and I got to see Europe putting itself back together. I had a photographic mission to photograph all of the historic castles in Germany and some in Denmark, and being single I would be sent out for three and four weeks and TDY to other bases and operate out of there. And these were big 36' by 40' color photographs and when we get some copies back, some of the ones that weren't absolutely perfect, I could get copies of them. So, being fairly bright, I would take copies of these and go knocking on the castle door and say would you like to have a copy. Well, I got invited into some castles. I had some unbelievable meals, house wine, heard stories, met with families who had been in these castles from the fifteen hundreds. This was quite an interesting time for me. You learn a lot about Europe and how it's different from us. I got to hear the German's perspective of how Hitler came to power and I've summed it up by simply saying Germany was in chaos, a strong man brought order, and the Germans said, "Well, this is better than what we've had, so this guy must know something," and "Things were real good, so we'll just go along with it." Sounds a little like Wall Street.

Then, I left the service in [19]56, flew with the D.C. Guard, and started with Capital Airlines in 1959. Then we merged into United in 1960 and that was just the most wonderful thing that could've happened. Let me go back a little bit on Capital. Some of the people that were there then -- that's when airline people ran airlines. They knew the financial and the operational end of it. The man that was chief pilot was Captain Dock Reed. I had applied and hadn't heard anything, I didn't know they pulled your file every six months, but a very, very senior captain, Norm Hunter, was a good friend of my Uncle Brooke. Norm was quite a legend. He'd called my uncle Brooke and Norm called me and he said Capital is hiring and they don't have any file for you so get over there. So, I went over there on a Monday. I have a good bit of flying time. I met Captain Jimmy Shett who did the interviewing. He said, "Can you come back here and talk to Captain Reed on Wednesday?" I did that, went in, and Captain Reed said, "I hear you're one of those goddamn D.C. Guard, you're flying, gotta go all these places all the time, and I keep losing guys, and they're gone here and I think they're gonna fly

for me, then they come back and they're gone again." I said, "Well, Captain Reed, if I'm hired by Capital Airlines, my job is with Capital Airlines first, not the D.C. Guard. If I can still fly fighters with them that's fine, but you employ me and my loyalties are here." I got hired. He said, "Can you come to work by Monday?" And I said, "Make sure the doors are open or I'm going to run right through them." It was just a fun operation. I flew about a year with Capital before the merger, flying DC-3s out of Washington, up and down into little towns in Pennsylvania, and then down Tobacco Road which was Charleston, Huntsville, Wheeling, Tri Cities, and Knoxville. In a DC-3 you just about had to shoot the cows off the pasture. A little different flying than I had experienced before in the military. It was wonderful, the guys were terrific, and things were not as organized, but it was an experience to put it mildly.

Then, with United it was much more, how would I say it, not...it was much more organized. United was a big operation. The training with United was absolutely spectacular. No if, ands, or buts about that. The equipment was excellent, the maintenance was excellent, and it was a first-rate airline. As I say in my 33 years with airlines it was a privileged occupation. I just was able to emulate my hero, which is Peter Pan because all he did was fly around all day and never had to grow up --and neither did I. I could never quite find all the straining and hassle in flying an airplane. I had the best toys of any kid on my block and I got paid for it. It just was a wonderful experience.

Unfortunately, with the situation now and the type of management that airline has and other factors, it's just not the job and the fun that it used to be. Some of this is due to security and my own opinion on airline security you have to have to have it. The high-jacking was not exactly the work of noble scholars, in my opinion. It was basically, they knew our procedures for high-jacking, which at that time, [was] let them into the cockpit [and] do what they say because that way it had [usually] worked out very well, especially in the U.S. We took them places and there were negotiations, but no one got hurt. If you just get on the airplane, fly back and forth, get familiar with the routes. If you're willing to die, you have a basic idea of how to get an airplane and keep it in the air until you hit a building. They say they had all of these different clues from these aviation schools, well, that's hindsight. I mean, you have a lot of people; we trained a lot of foreign people in this country both in the airline industry and in private operations. They knew exactly what the procedures were, they got on carrying small knives and box cutters

and they just made a move. The people on United 93 realized what was happening and they said, "You know, we ain't gonna sit here and die, let's storm the cockpit door." Unfortunately, they didn't know that there's a cockpit door key hidden in the airplane and you wouldn't know that unless you were a crew member. That's just a little side comment on that. To me, this is a situation that was a one time situation and the situation now with the reinforced doors and the pilots can be armed. There's a lot of bureaucracy that doesn't want them armed. But remember pilots have been screened and checked almost their entire careers, much more so than more routine law officers. You can carry now a large caliber weapon with a relatively low powder charge. The bullet itself can be designed so that if it hits anything hard or metallic or hard wood it almost becomes powder, but if it hits you in the flesh it's like being hit by a cannon ball, which is exactly what you want. You're going to have to bust through the door and then take six rounds, if you're a good shot, in the cockpit. So, some of this stuff they're doing, in my opinion, much, much overkill.

That doesn't say much about all the interesting people I knew with Capital. I flew a lot with Chuck Beatley who was really a neat guy. It was always nice to fly with Captain Beatley because as copilot he did everything because he always had all his Alexandria paper work to do with him. He'd take it out, taxied, take off, take off, then I would take off and do everything else, land, he'd taxi into L.A. or wherever we went. He was really a fun guy. He did a lot for the city of Alexandria. There were other just really good guys, but it was a real, real good bunch. With United, I was based in Detroit, and then a little bit in Chicago, then in Denver for about three and a half years, and when I moved up to Captain I went out to San Francisco and flew the 737 up and down the west coast, which actually I should have paid them to do it. That was just absolute fun. Then later on, I transitioned to the new 767 which was quite an airplane. It was the first of the wide body, what we refer to as 'glass cockpit computerized airplanes' if you wanted to fly with a computer. I had to retire at age 60. They had to pull the buttons off and throw me off the property because I did not want to go. That is kind of a summary of my airline career. I had fortunately, no major incidents, or at least I don't consider them major, perhaps if you're reading what was going on. We were very, very well trained at that time. Now, with the economy and fuel prices, a lot of things in management, we've gotten away from the person in management that knew the operational ends of things into the era of corporate CEO and the bean counters. The bean counters are fine, if they're smart enough to

	<p>listen to people that know what they're doing and know the operational end of it and can kind of tell them what color their beans are and don't mix them up. That does not seem to be the case, with the exception of Southwest. Also, American has good management, but unfortunately United, from what I hear, does not seem to have the best management. There is a lot of friction between the pilots and the management. I must say ALPA is not always right, sometimes they forget. You better have a strong company because if the company fails, you are going to be out on the street with 100 percent of nothing. Some of the guys don't seem to realize this.</p>
<p><b>Hunter Motors</b></p>	
<p>B. J. Sheridan:</p>	<p>Before I close, I will go back to Hunter Motors. After leaving Congress my stepfather opened Hunter Motors Jeep dealership up on Prince Street. Before they took over it used to be a furniture store. It was just one block down from Lee School. I don't know if that's still there or part of the school system. I was pretty young at that time and just don't remember as much. They moved out to Mount Vernon Avenue. I remember one of the guys who initially did work over there was a guy named Roy Chambers. Now, Roy opened a machine and engine building and hot rod shop; again that was way up at the end of Prince Street, I believe, and he built up quite a name for engines and it was quite a place. It was quite a bunch of guys up there; it was like some of the stuff you see on the History channel on TV and these guys in California building their cars. I learned a lot about cars then, putting engines together. I remember his sales manager, Eddie Clark discovered an old World War II Jeep out on a farm in Leesburg or Middleburg. It had been brought back by either a retired brigadier or major general who had it in the War and was shot up in it. But he survived the War. He was riding his horse, the horse threw him and broke his neck and he died in result of the fall after the War. The Jeep just sat around, so Clark said, "You want us to get rid of it?" and they said, "Yes," so they towed it in. They said, "Here's a real World War II Army Jeep." There were three bullet holes in it. I rebuilt the engine and rebuilt the thing mechanically and it kind of looked like shrapnel ripped through it and it was so ugly it was handsome. I drove that thing all over the place and I do have a picture of myself driving that thing, I think it was the newspaper the <i>Arlington Son</i>. I will try to come up with that and get a copy of that and send it to you because I don't think Sarah has it. Sarah would probably have the same family photographs that I do because she has traced the Howard family to Henry the Eighth and even passed that so she can give you some of those I think, but I will look when I come up with enough time.</p>

Also, you might want to talk to Brooke Howard's son, T. Brooke Howard, Jr. He lives in Alexandria and Sarah certainly has his phone number; it should be in the phone book. He was a tutor; he is now retired. He could tell you a lot more about his father naturally than I can except any of the old people around the town, but I certainly know, perhaps younger guys, would know [too] of Brooke Howard's ability in the court room. The last murder case he took was one that Perry Mason wouldn't take. A woman was accused of killing her son in Leesburg by hitting him in the head 22 times with a ball-pin hammer. Without going into details he defended her. She first was going to plead insanity and he said, "She said to me, I didn't kill my son, I will not plead guilty." They went to trial and it was a packed house in that big court house in Leesburg because up there they were used to lost horses and dogs. He presented his case; they checked everything out without really going into circumstances, but he proved that when they took this boy --who was still alive-- to the hospital, which was about six-thirty, I think, of [a] July or August evening, everybody left. When he was pronounced dead and they brought the mother back to the house, there were lights on at the house. Well, you're not going to have lights on in your house in July at six-thirty in the evening. He also produced a small bit of a blood print of a tread of a shoe. Now, none of the shoes in the house matched this. Also, the murder weapon was never found, and a boy's sweatshirt with blood on it was found in a dumpster about thirty minutes away, and the woman, the timeline, she could not have done it. When he made his summation to the jury, a couple of reporters there, one was doing sketching and one was writing. His summation was so hypnotic that, I was sitting behind this reporter, and he was so caught up in it he stopped writing. Brooke could've turned around like Perry Mason, pointed to anyone in the court room, and said, "You did it, stand up." They would have stood up and said, "Yes." His final statement was -- he had the woman stand up, look at the jury -- and say, "Did you kill your son?" and she said, "No." The jury was riveted on him. It was an acquittal. And, it was an acquittal based on evidence, not screaming hysteria and denial of evidence that a lot of lawyers do today. Brooke can tell you a lot more about that case, but it is one for textbooks. What a way to close a career. I guess, I'll kind of shut down for now and see what I can come up with tomorrow. See ya tomorrow. Bye, bye. [Tape stopped.]

[Tape resumes.] I'm back again sooner than expected, a few little things popped into my mind. I went to high school and I was about two years ahead of Willard Scott. Willard had the radio show over in Washington; he had a farm outside of Leesburg. He used to come

	<p>over to Hunter Motors on Mount Vernon Avenue to get his Jeeps and stuff and equipment for it and things like that. He went on to much bigger and better things. I was flying the Night Hawk one night out of L.A. to Dulles and who should be sitting there, but Willard. So, I went up to him and said, "I'll stick a G.W. graduate in first class," and he kind of looked puzzled. I told him who I was and he remembered the name and we shot the breeze a little bit. That was kind of a little bit of a surprise, but in all my time in moving around I don't think I've ever run into any other G.W. graduates except Bobby Baker. His folks had, I believe, the Monticello Hotel down on about two blocks up King Street from Washington. He went to the Navel Academy and I bumped into him, he was living in Denver, I was there for training, and I bumped into him again and he had a real estate office out in California in the Bay area.</p> <p>One other memorable thing that happened, I do remember this with the airline. It's referred to in the United memorabilia as "The Party." We had 737 shuttle services between San Francisco and L.A. about every hour, half an hour; I believe this was a Friday or Saturday night. [Tape 1 Ends. Tape 2 Begins.] I was walking down the jet way and there was some eighteen year old honey or so in front of me getting on flying from San Francisco to L.A. in a mini-skirt and T-shirt. She sits down about three rows back in coach. Then, a little later comes a nun who sits opposite her on the isle seat. I'm still standing there and here comes this commotion down the jet way and laughing and just having a good time.</p>
<p><b>Mel Brooks</b></p>	
<p>B. J. Sheridan:</p>	<p>Here comes Mel Brooks, and I guess his writers and they had been pulling a few G's at the bar so they were all set up in First Class, but I had a chance to talk to Mr. Brooks and comment on his wonderful movies that are just hysterically funny and idiotic with no great Hollywood message. I knew he was sitting in First Class, but I thought and said, "Mr. Brooks there's a vacant seat back here you might just want to change your seats." He goes back and he sees this eighteen year old T-shirted, mini-skirted honey on the window seat. The isle seat is the nun. Five seconds he goes back there and says, "Is this middle seat taken, or are you girls traveling together?" Pops down there. Well, off we go. We get up to cruise about five or ten minutes into cruise, the flight attendant comes up, mascara running, and says it's total chaos back here. You could hear the laughing and everybody singing and laughing and just a ball. Well, Brooks and company had gotten the whole airplane gone. We landed in L.A. promptly around eleven o'clock. The passenger agent opens the doors, no one, including the nun, gets off. The party was really</p>

	<p>going so I got a couple of complimentary trays of drinks and this went on until about twelve or twelve-thirty when the mechanics had to move the plane. So, we rolled everybody off, including the nun, and the eighteen year old honey went off in the company of Brooks and his friends.</p> <p>About a week or so later, I'm going out for a trip and my boss, the head flight manager in San Francisco calls me and says, "Beano could you come into the office and explain something. We've been getting these calls from headquarters and they've been getting phone calls and letters from people saying thanking United for the 'great party,' and is there any way they can find out if Mel Brooks and Captain Sheridan are flying together again. What happened?" So, I told him about this adventure and he said, "You got to come out in the office and tell everybody about this one, this is terrific." I said, "I got those complimentary little mini drinks for everybody and I'll certainly pay for them out of my pocket." He says, "Pay for them? God, we couldn't have paid for that kind of publicity." He said, "I just wish I'd been back there in the airplane." Unfortunately, I don't think you could do that today, but it sure was fun when it happened.</p>
<p><b>Memories</b></p>	
<p>B. J. Sheridan:</p>	<p>One other thing that just happened to pop into my mind. I was watching <i>Lonesome Dove</i>, and Robert Duvall is one of the stars, certainly a well-know actor, and I'm pretty certain he has a brother who practices law right there on Prince Street, or he did at least fifteen years ago, Paul Duvall. Now, my Uncle Brooke is tied into this because Robert and Paul's father went to school and graduated from the Alexandria Academy down on probably about the four- or five-hundred block of South Washington Street. They both wanted to go to the Naval Academy and both applied for it. Well, Robert Duvall's father got the appointment and my Uncle Brooke got an appointment to West Point, but he didn't take it. So, that's a little bit of Alexandria history and chance that's probably not too well-known. You could probably talk to Brooke, Jr. and he can give you a lot more details on that. And, as I sit here with a glass of ice-tea out on the deck, I remember a little bit more about Hunter Motors, in fact, when we were up there on Mount Vernon Avenue, Willard Scott used to have his Jeep worked on there because I think he had a farm up in Leesburg, which also reminds me...</p> <p>I was flying a Night Hawk from L.A. to Dulles and we're flying along. Flight attendant comes up and says we got that big TV celebrity, Willard Scott back in Coach. Said, "Willard Scott on TV? Are there any seats in First Class?" She said, "Yeah plenty." I said,</p>

“You go back and tell him that anybody that’s a graduate of G.W. High School in Mr. Lindsay’s seventh period deserves a First Class seat.” She came up and she said, “I told him this,” and she said, “He had the most amazed look on his face,” and he came up to the cockpit and remembered me from many, many years before as I was a couple years ahead of him, and that was a little chance, but other than that, even in the service, I don’t think I’ve ever run into anybody from G. W. again, especially not in my professional life.

Back to Hunter Motors, all of the people that were up there have certainly passed on by now. One guy I think, that worked when they were on Prince Street was a guy Roy Chambers. He later branched out on his own and had quite a machine and hot-rod engine building shop and I think that was pretty far up Prince Street like you’re going up toward the Masonic Temple. I remember after Mr. Hunter died, the business was sold and I believe to a man Doc something, but unfortunately just became not, you know there was no association with it anymore and I can’t give you any additional information on that. Just trying to think...Like I said, we really had a good time growing up in Alexandria. We lived on 207 South Washington Street. That was finally sold and we moved out to Oak Street in Rosemont. The home was formally the home of Judge Wolse’s mother. Built in about 1935 and, I think, recently someone told me that place sold for a million dollars. We couldn’t have afforded it. That was a nice neighborhood. Everyone knew each other. We all had a good time. We all had a block party once a year. We all remained friends for a lifetime and of course, at that period of time, things were simply more stable and we’re not going to be able to go back to that I don’t think. Unless gasoline gets ten dollars an hour --we’d all stay home.

I just remember when I’d fly with Chuck Beatley and he’d be doing City Council work, and he was certainly a fine mayor. Did a lot for the City of Alexandria, and then it was kind of politics that seemed to, the objective seemed to be improving the lives of the citizens and people worked together, not at each other which is unfortunately, I think the way things are done now. I think, perhaps you had a better quality of person. I can’t think of anyone in their right mind [who] would want to go into politics today, unless they were wealthy and had dedication and were tough as nails.

I’m trying to think of other things that we used to do. Growing up was so different than today and we made our own fun and every body got in little scrapes, but nothing bad. I remember one of the

guys we grew up with, the Pins up on --I think it was George Washington Park, the area up behind the Masonic Temple and up Seminary Road, or King Street Road. You had the older brother Milton Pin, I think became a fire chief or fire captain in Alexandria and we grew up with his younger brother Billy, and all the Fannons lived up there...Most of the Knights -- that was Knight's Hardware store that used to be down on the first block of King Street, east of Washington Street. Trying to think of anybody else I knew that...

I remember also, this is way back in my memory, I must have been ten or twelve, but we went to a party in a house done in what would be the historic section now, and I may have said this previously, but I believe this was the granddaughter of Chief Justice Hugo Black. I remember meeting him and asking him some questions, and another guy, I think, who also became an assistant attorney general under Carter. We went there and asked questions a twelve or thirteen year old would ask and I just remember his patience. When I got home I told my mother, and then I told my stepfather and he said, "Well, you're probably too young to realize this, but," he said, "There's not many people who[ 'd] sit down and have an hour personal conversation with the Chief Justice of the United States." I guess now, you'd have to go past all the security people. It was a happy, fulfilling life down there, nothing spectacular. Like I said, our old days of sneaking in Barcroft Lake was a big [deal]. I mean, this was like going to the moon for us. Other friends of mine, we had a little partnership and these guys were all in their late twenties and they rented a home out at Lake Barcroft where there had been development and we were out there that night of the mystery death of that man. This was years ago, but he was swimming and some kids were firing firecrackers and then they found him floating with a lump on his head. They think he hit a floating log or something, but we were there that night and we were questioned. I've never been questioned as I was as if I'd been involved in a murder.

Oh, my claim to fame, while I was flying in the D.C. Guard because I'd flown an F84F, I was offered a job as a test pilot on a project. This involved a high-speed mid-air refueling. What it was, most of the jets at that time were refueled off of a KC97, a prompt driven plane and the plane had to go in a dive so the jets wouldn't stall out while they were taking fuel. What this was, was an 84 and the right inboard external drop tank had been converted into a refueling device with 380 gallons of fuel in that tank and this would retract, it was a rigid pipe that would come down and then the horizontal pipe would trail for refueling. That had its moments, but we were able to

do that successfully. This was just something, say somebody was in trouble with a stuck gear, you'd slap this on a plane and launch it, go up there and give this guy enough gas until a regular tanker could get airborne. I have a picture of us making the first successful refueling and we were doing it at a very high speed of about Mock92 and much, much faster than with the prompt-driven plane. The picture I have and this is my claim to fame, was taken by our chase pilot, Gus Gresham, the astronaut who unfortunately perished in that terrible capsule fire. So, that was one of the things I remember that was kind of a thrill.

My aviation career has fortunately been without any great trauma, maybe a lot of luck isn't always involved in that. As I said, flying with Capital, flying the DC3s into Charleston, Wheeling, and what they refer to [as] "Down Tobacco Road" was really a lot of fun. You were really on your own, and of course, flying with United was much more, I'll say, professional and sophisticated out of necessity and I cannot say enough for the outstanding training that we had at that time and it was run by people who knew something about aviation, not as I've probably refereed to before, and this seems to be in many industries. Bean counters who count their beans very well, but they may not have the expertise to arrange the beans in the right order.

That is my comment.

So, very shortly this next weekend, I'll be heading up to a place in Montana and I've been going up there in the summer to Cook City, that's the northeast entrance of Yellowstone Park for 46 years and it's just a wonderful, wonderful place. I've had some incredible luck up there. I bought a cabin in an auction in 1970 for \$270 and of course, for that high price it was furnished. It sat in the middle of the city street in Cook City for thirteen years, but nobody cared because the street didn't go there. The Park County people of Livingston is about three hours away. Finally, two old people in Cook City [said], "You got to have somebody as mayor or some people that we can talk to, to get something done." So, they elected the smartest person in town, Johnny Collie. Now Johnny Collie was named Johnny Collie because he's a Collie dog and he's still the smartest person in town. Cook City, Montana is the gene pool in America for candidates for Darwin awards. It's the wackiest place, but somehow nobody ever gets seriously hurt, but it's been a wonderful time for me up there. The fishing in the back country in Montana has just been unbelievable and I've wondered all over the back country and fished lakes maybe that one or two people fish all year. I've also had

an incredible stroke of luck as in 1983 a gentleman, a rather wealthy gentleman, sold me a little over three acres adjoining the Yellowstone Park line three miles down the road in Silver Gate. I moved the old cabin down there and then I was going to put up a Lindale cedar home, I was single at the time and someone said, "You really ought to get an architect," so some friends of mine heard about this architect that designed a home for a physician who lives about 15 miles west of Billings around the concept of a nodules shell. Well, wow that sounds pretty interesting. So I met him, he came up and looked over the property and said I'd like to think about this for a while. Next summer, I went up to see him in his office, he had a couple of sketches. He rolled out this big sheet with five projections. I just said, "Wow." Well, it's basically stone and 68 windows. The upstairs, the corners of the upstairs floor above the windows are cutoff so you could walk right off the second floor and land on the first floor. Everything is wide open and I'll let you guess what concept this is derived from. Well, this man studied under Frank Lloyd Wright out here in Scottsdale in Taliesin West. So, I claim my superior design and engineering skills, my superior intellect, plus 100 percent pure luck. I have a summer place adjoining Yellowstone Park designed by a man who studied under Frank Lloyd Wright. This, and it went up for practically nothing; I got the stone for the price of hauling it away from a guy who sold his business in Billings. Some incredible chance and luck and I appreciate every second of it and I'm not even Donald Trump. This is the kind of thing that happens to him, but it is really just an unbelievable place, and to top it off, I found out the old cabin has been is known as the Gambler's Cabin. It is now an historic cabin because it's where the people that would come up to the Beartooth Lake Lodge and worked around the ranches around there, would go and meet on weekends and smoke and drink and play cards and gamble and Ernest Hemingway used to summer there at the old Bar T, which is now owned by Quaker Oats. He'd go over to this cabin just like anybody else when he'd do some of his writing so they decided that's an historic cabin. It's maintained beautifully and I do it, and also down on the corner of my property, the back line is the park, the front line is the old original Indian Bannock trail that went from the mountains over into the plains. It was all neutral country for the Indian tribes because they were going out to gather food. Well, down there at the very end, right at the park line, there's a huge old tree and the bark on the front and the back had been cut out umpteen years ago. You can look inside the north side of the tree and it's chiseled in there Montana, the back side of the tree is chiseled in Wyoming. The date is 1879. I told Montana Forest

Service people up there, they went crazy. They were up there with GPSs, their surveyors their archaeologists, their historians. As far as we know, that is the only known boundary tree that's been found up there of the original, I guess it was the Hayden Survey that went through in 1877. Again this is none of my doings, this is pure luck. It came with the property. I guarantee that one will *not* be cut down for firewood. That's got a little plaque on it too saying essentially, 'don't cut.' So, I'll be heading back up there and it's a nice place and I can't think of anything else and any of the other people I've known around Alexandria and I guess most of the ones, the adults when we were there, have all passed on now.

It was fun growing up there. So, I guess I'll just sort of shut up now. Sarah can give you much more family history and she will even go back into about the middle eighteenth hundreds, either before, it had to be after the Civil War. Some of the things she has documented and part of the Howard family. Part of them were, I think it was pronounced then, 'Huward' of Howard Country. He was Lord Mayor of Baltimore and I believe his wife was Anne Arundel. Howard county is named after him. We come down from those people and part of the clan was from Virginia. One man in his will gave his property to his daughters and Sarah has a copy of this other things that says and to my black man or my hired man, I bequeathed his cabin and so many acres as long as he lives there and I declare him upon my death to be a free man. Now, that little piece of paper I think, probably will be a little bit of historic interest around the town. She can go back and tell you about all the Howards. Big family, a good bunch. Everybody got along just fine, no black sheep, very boring. She can also tell you and I guess the records in the city or people can tell you about my grandmother, Minnie Howard and she just, as I previously said, really, in the Depression years really ran the town. She was a hundred years ahead of her time. So, I'll sign off for now. I'll shut up and if I can think of anything else I'll come up with it in a day or so and I'll get this into the mail before I leave, so I'll give you my Montana number. I'll also put this in writing. It's area code \*\*\*\*\*. I'm probably going to be up there until the middle of September. I'll sign off and say good night, for now. **[End of Recording]**