



**THE SETTLEMENT ORAL HISTORY PROJECT,
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

by
Melissa Butler

Prepared for
Prince William County

Prepared by
DOVETAIL
CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP

June 2024

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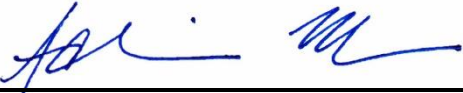
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ABSTRACT

On behalf of Prince William County, Dovetail Cultural Resource Group (Dovetail) conducted oral history interviews, genealogical research, and property research with current and former residents of The Settlement area of Gainesville, Prince William County, Virginia, in February 2020. This project builds on oral histories conducted in 2018. The project area encompasses a postbellum and twentieth-century African American enclave founded by formerly enslaved individuals that was passed down through several generations. An awareness of the significant history of this area was highlighted during analysis of a proposed Virginia Dominion Power high voltage electrical transmission lines. In 2018, Amanda Patton completed an oral history internship project on behalf of the Prince William County Historical Commission, resulting in the documentation of narratives from several longtime residents. The current work includes oral interviews and associated research that builds on the model of Amanda Patton's oral history project and includes interviews with four individuals connected to The Settlement. The information obtained from this project added notable data to our understanding of the development and occupation of The Settlement and its continued importance today.

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INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Prince William County (the County), Dovetail Cultural Resource Group (Dovetail) conducted oral interviews, genealogical research, and property research with residents of The Settlement area of Gainesville, Prince William County, Virginia, in February 2020. The project area encompasses a postbellum and twentieth-century African American enclave known as “The Settlement” that was founded by formerly enslaved individuals. Their land passed through several generations, and many parcels are still owned by their descendants. The Settlement as a historic area was likely first documented on Eugene M. Scheel’s 2000 map of African American Heritage in Prince William County. A greater awareness of the history of this area was highlighted in 2006 when part of the area was proposed for a large housing development (González et al. 2006). Although the housing development did not come to fruition, the knowledge of this area as an important place was maintained in the cultural consciousness. The significant history of this area was highlighted in 2016 during analysis of proposed Virginia Dominion Power high voltage electrical transmission lines. In 2018, the Prince William County Historical Commission sponsored an oral history internship project to begin to record details of the area’s history as known by its residents. The oral histories were documented in a report and submitted to Prince William County (Patton 2018).

The County elected to expand on the Historical Commission’s study. Working with the County and community partners, four additional individuals connected to The Settlement were selected for an oral interview as part of the current project. In-person and telephone interviews were conducted and included a dialogue revolving around a number of questions related to the history of the area, including social events, buildings, and landscapes. In order to understand the history of development in The Settlement, interview subjects were asked to provide context on their family history, to discuss community activities, connections with religious organizations, and to reflect on changes in The Settlement over time. Interviews were recorded digitally and the transcripts are included in this document.

In addition to the interviews, limited genealogical research was conducted on each interviewed person and their family. The goal was to place each of the interviewed participants within the larger social complex of The Settlement. In addition, a chain of title was created for the homestead occupied by each of the interviewed individuals to understand the occupational narrative of their property.

The goal of the interviews and subsequent genealogical and property research was to augment the oral histories commenced by the Prince William Historical Commission. In addition, this data supplemented information gathered in support of the National Register of Historic Places [NRHP] nomination for the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Preliminary Information Forms (PIFs) on the Shady Inn Dance Hall and the Settlement Historic District, and public history materials, all completed by Dovetail in 2020 concurrently with the oral history project.

The oral history interviews were conducted on February 12 and 14, 2020, and August 3, 2020, by Melissa Butler. Adriana T. Moss served as Principal Investigator, and Ms. Moss and Ms. Butler meet or exceed the standards established for Architectural Historian by the Secretary of the Interior (United States Department of the Interior 1993).

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ORAL HISTORY RESULTS

This section of the report presents the results of the oral history interviews conducted on four individuals associated with The Settlement in Prince William County, Virginia: Nimrod Dade, Floyd Brown, Mary Anne Settle, and Janet Robinson. Each interviewee has a separate subsection based on the 2018 work of Amanda Patton that contains the following: a brief biography that was compiled from information obtained during the interview; the transcript of the interview; a family tree depicting the interviewee's genealogy was made from a variety of primary-source research, such as United States Federal Population Census, birth, marriage, and death records; and a deed chain-of-title-document for The Settlement property associated with the interviewee.

Nimrod Dade

Biography

Nimrod Dade was born near Camden, New Jersey, on January 12, 1931, to mother, Lillie Mary Dade (Nimrod Dade, personal communication 2020). Lillie was born in 1909 in Fauquier County and held various jobs as a domestic worker and server at the Shady Inn Dance Hall in Gainesville. Nimrod lived with various family members during his childhood, but recalls visiting his mother in Gainesville and going to the Shady Inn when she was working. As one of two children, Nimrod helped support his family by joining the Army in 1948 and was stationed in Germany during the Korean War. Upon his return to civilian life in 1952, Nimrod met his future wife, Alberta Moore, in Gainesville. The pair settled down in Gainesville on land that belonged to Alberta's uncle, James T. Grayson (Y. King and H. Peterson, personal communication 2020). Nimrod and Alberta had one daughter, Linda Elaine Dade, who was born in Gainesville

Nimrod held many jobs during his adulthood; after retiring from the Army, he worked as a dump truck driver, manager of the furniture department at a store, and a delivery person. Prior to his retirement, he spent the latter part of his working life as a supermarket manager.

Mr. Dade expressed pride in his lifetime of service to the church; he joined the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Gainesville in 1959. He served as an usher until 1962, and then was appointed as a walking Deacon. Mr. Dade was ordained in the fall of 1964, and the following year became a trustee of the church. In the following decade, Nimrod, along with Deacon Clarence Burke, financially supported the church during times of economic hardship. In addition to these formal roles, he also served the church by recording services and community events, and maintains an archive of church film dating back to the 1960s.

During the interview, Nimrod reflected on some of the changes in Gainesville over the years. His interview offers insight into the location of the Watson Cemetery, located on the corner near his house, where several of his wife's relatives are buried. He also discussed some of the physical changes to The Settlement area that occurred due to development, including housing developments and the construction of the Buckland Mills Elementary school across the street from his house.

Transcript

Oral History Interviewee: Nimrod Dade (ND), Yolanda King (YK)

Time/Location: Wednesday, February 12, 2020/ Dade House, 7350 Carver Road, Gainesville, Virginia

Interviewer: Melissa Butler (MB), Architectural Historian (Field Director) (Dovetail Cultural Resource Group)

[Commencing at Digital Recording Time Stop: 00:00:00]

Melissa Butler: Hello. Today is Wednesday, February 12, 2020. My name is Melissa Butler and I work for Dovetail Cultural Resource Group and I'm working on The Settlement Gainesville Oral History Project. Today I will be interviewing Deacon Nimrod Dade. Would you prefer Deacon Dade, Nimrod... how would you like me to address you?

Nimrod Dade: Nimrod is fine. But my nickname is Cluck.

MB: Nimrod, ok thank you.

ND: But my nickname is Cluck.

MB: Cluck! Ok well thank you for agreeing to interview with me today.

ND: You can call me Cluck if you'd like. *(Laughter)*

MB: Ok. I'm going to begin with asking you some basic biography questions and then we will move on to your childhood and The Settlement. So, can you tell me your full name for the record and can you spell your last name?

ND: Nimrod Cornelius Dade, D-A-D-E.

MB: Thank you so much. Do you know the origin of your name, or why your parents chose it?

ND: I had a great-uncle named Nimrod, I had an uncle named Nimrod, and my name's Nimrod. It's from the bible, Genesis chapter 10, verse 8. Nimrod. That's where the name came from.

MB: Ok, very good. My next question is, do you go by any other names or nicknames? So, how did you get the nickname "Cluck"?

ND: Because I grew up on a farm, and I used to follow the hens around clucking like a chicken *(Laughter)*. I don't remember, but my uncle started calling me "little cluck" *(makes clucking sound) (indistinguishable)*...follow the chickens around because I grew up on a farm.

MB: Very good. What is your date of birth?

ND: January 12, 1931.

MB: Excellent. What are your parent's names?

ND: Lillie Mary Dade is my mother, and my father I don't know.

MB: Do you know where they were born?

ND: My mother was born in Prince William or Fauquier County. And I don't really know my father.

MB: Did your mother live in Fauquier County her whole life, or did she move to this area (Gainesville, Virginia)?

ND: She moved to this area years ago, I don't know when.

MB: That's ok. The next question is where do you currently reside, I assume here.

ND: Yes.

MB: Yes, that's correct ok, and then when where were you born?

ND: Camden, New Jersey.

MB: Camden, New Jersey, really! And how did you come to, Warrenton, is that where you said you grew up?

ND: Well, my mother is originally from Fauquier County. When I was about to be born, she went to New Jersey to live with her sister, and after I was born, and years later I came back to Virginia.

MB: About how old were you when you came back to Virginia?

ND: I don't remember, I was a boy, I was maybe two years old. My mother got married, I was three, I don't remember, but I was three when she got married.

MB: Ok, do you have any siblings?

ND: No just me, oh, I had a brother but he's dead.

MB: Ok, and was your brother older or younger?

ND: Younger.

MB: And what was his name?

ND: William Hamilton Dade.

MB: And so you are the oldest child, is that correct?

ND: Yes.

MB: Can you state your wife's name?

ND: Alberta Dade. She was Alberta Moore. When she passed away, she was Alberta Dade.

MB: She grew up... you said just up the hill (behind the current Dade residence).

ND: Just up on that hill there, there used to be a house there, I'd say it's not even half a mile maybe quarter mile.

Yolanda King (YK): That was the old family home place.

MB: Ok, thank you. And do you remember her parents' names?

ND: Her mother was Lauvina Moore, and her father was Richard Moore. I have picture of both of them sitting over there.

MB: Ok great, and do you have any children?

ND: Two.

YK: Oh no, no, children is one. He didn't hear. It was one child.

MB: One child. And what is his or her name?

ND: Her name is Linda Elaine Dade.

MB: Ok great, and where were they born?

ND: Linda was born in Gainesville. She was born in Warrenton Hospital though, but we was living here. We weren't living here, we were living in Gainesville, but I was renting a house when she was born.

MB: Ok. When did you move to this house here?

ND: In 19... I had this house built in 1958.

MB: Ok.

ND: We moved in in 1959, so we've been living here for 60 years.

MB: Wow. Was there a lot of development going on at the same time? Other people building houses?

ND: No there wasn't, it was just country then. When I moved here, none of that was there (gestures across the street to the Elementary School), there was just woods there.

MB: Ok, right. Why did you decide to build your house right here?

ND: My wife's uncle, James Grayson, this was his land. I bought it from him. This land comes from him.

MB: Moving on to a few more questions. What did your parents do for a living? Either your mother before she remarried, or your mother and stepfather?

ND: Well they separated not too long after they got married. She did domestic work.

MB: Locally? Or did she travel around for that?

ND: No, just in Haymarket.

MB: Ok, got it.

ND: She worked for the Garrets in Haymarket for years and years.

MB: I'm sorry, who did she work for?

ND: For the Garrets.

MB: The Garrets. Ok, thank you. Do you know how your mom and stepfather met?

ND: No, I don't.

MB: Ok, that's fine. These are questions that we are asking to keep continuity between the previous set of oral history that was done, so I just want you to know that I am listening to what you are saying and am trying to make sure everything is applicable. Ok, so where did you go to school as a child?

ND: I went to Waterloo Baptist Church for elementary school, there was a school in the church, and then I went to Rosenwald High School in Warrenton, and I went from Rosenwald High School into the Army.¹ So, I spent four years in the Army and when I got out, I came here to Gainesville.

MB: Ok, do you remember what year you entered the Army?

ND: 1948 and I got out in 1952. I was there during the Korean War.

MB: Wow, what was that like?

ND: *(Phone rings)* I was in Germany; I was in Germany during the Korean War. *(Indistinguishable, phone ringing. Yolanda answers phone, tape pauses at 7:00)*

MB: Ok, I am back with Deacon Nimrod Dade. Ok, so we were talking about children, about where you went to school, and then you said you were in Germany during the Korean War. Can you tell me a bit more about that?

ND: Well I had, I went in the Army, my mother was struggling. She had two children, and I was living with an aunt of mine at the time that I went in the Army. But I went in the Army because I didn't want her to have to struggle to take care of me. So, when I turned 17, they

¹ Name of school confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

allowed you to go in the Army with your parent's signature then. So, I joined the Army in 1948, on the 10th of May, and in August they sent me to Germany. And I went to Germany. And while I was in Germany, the Korean War broke out. So, they sent me back to the states to go to Korea, but I had to be back in the states a year before I'd go to Korea, and the Korean War ended before my year was up. So, I went in the Army and they extended me from three years to four, and I got out nine days before my fourth year was up. When I got out of the Army, I started living with my mother. And then I met Teenie²...

YK: Oh, Alberta's nickname was Teenie.

MB: Teenie, ok.

ND: That's her picture up there.

YK: Her nickname was Teenie, all us around here have nicknames.

MB: Ok. Can you tell me a little more about how you met?

ND: It was funny. When I was in the Army, I was in Aberdeen, Maryland. And I used to catch the bus from Aberdeen to Warrenton. But the bus stop was out here where the church was by the road, and there was a path through the cemetery down by her house, down to where my mother lived. And they had a dog named Rusty, and Rusty didn't like no strangers. So, she used to come out and hold Rusty, she'd hear Rusty barking and she'd come out and hold Rusty while I passed by their house. And that's how I met her.

MB: Oh, that's so sweet.

ND: The funny part, is, a lady named Mrs. Berry³ used to cook a lot of big pots of food. And she'd cook a big pot of beans with a big ham bone in it. And she brought my mother some beans, and I told her about Rusty being so mean, so she took that big ham bone and said next time you pass by Rusty, give him the ham bone, and Rusty became my best friend. (*Laughter*). And that's how I met Teenie, because she used to come and hold Rusty all the time. And then I took her to the movies for holding Rusty.

MB: That is so sweet.

YK: He found out that my mom and dad were... my mom was related to Teenie, and so they connected. And since he happened to be good childhood friends with my father, they ended up real tight. Like a foursome.

ND: When I was growing up, you didn't see me without seeing Ray, her father.

YK: My father.

² Name spell confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

³ Name confirmed to be Mary Berry by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

ND: Every time you see me, you'd see Ray. Well Ray wouldn't call me Cluck, he'd call me Nim all the time. So, it was Cluck and Ray, every time you'd see us. But we were together our whole childhood.

YK: So, they were all bosom buddies, my cousin, his wife, and my mom and my dad. They were tight buddies.

MB: What a good gang. That's fantastic. Thank you. I'd like to jump back to your school experience; can you describe your schools for me? Like, how many students were in your class, how did you get to school...

ND: When I was growing up, like I said, I went to school in Waterloo Church, and her father and me, we got to be the oldest ones in church, we used to go to church, and (*indistinguishable*) by the stove, it burned wood, and Ray and I used to come to church before school started to fire the stove. And there was about 25–30 kids in school then. When I graduated, I went to Rosenwald High School in Warrenton, and there was quite a few there, I guess a couple hundred kids in that school, they eventually closed it and built another school, Taylor High School, but I never went to Taylor, I went to Rosenwald. I went in the Army, I went from Junior to Senior year, I didn't do my Senior year, I went in the Army.

MB: Ok. Well, that's great. I'm going to ask a few more questions, again staying in the childhood time frame. Who did the cooking in your household?

ND: What do you mean, here?

MB: When you were growing up.

ND: One of my aunts did. Dolly Dade⁴. She was my mother's sister. She was the one who raised me. Because my mother was living here and we were living in Warrenton.

MB: Ah, I understand. Did your aunt have any signature dishes? Anything you got really excited about when she'd make or anything that you hated when she'd make it?

ND: I don't know, I guess anything she fixed was alright with me. I hated turnips, grew up on a farm but I hated turnips (*Laughter*). But she was an excellent cook, so whatever she cooked was good.

MB: Oh, that's good. That's good. So, the next question doesn't apply, you grew up on a farm. So yes, you did grow food. Did you have a vegetable garden growing up?

ND: Yes, we did.

MB: Yes, that makes sense. So, you raised chickens on your farm, any other animals?

⁴ Name spelling confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

ND: Yes, chickens are the reason I got the nickname Cluck (*Laughter*). But we had cows and horses and sheep and pigs and all that stuff on the farm.

MB: Wow, so I assume some of your chores on the farm would be tending to them?

ND: Well, the foreman of the farm's wife sold eggs, and she got me to take care of the hens that laid eggs, so every time she sold a (*indistinguishable*) had a hen hatch she'd save one for me. When I left home and went into high school, I had a hundred and some chickens in the yard that she gave me.

MB: Oh my!

ND: So, when I left home, with a hundred and some chickens, I gave them to my grandfather. I moved in with his sister in Warrenton to go to high school, then we were living in Waterloo. Waterloo Church is where I went to school then.

YK: Now Waterloo is just outside of Warrenton, it's got a Warrenton address, but if you're going up through the town of Warrenton, and you cut out, heading towards Culpeper, on the right-hand side there's a small area called Waterloo. And that's where he grew up. My dad's father grew up, all in that area. He even knew my dad's grandfather, through there. So, he's been in the family a long time.

ND: When I met Ray, her father, they lived about half a mile from us, and it snowed real bad, and we were playing in the snow. And I had on red Rodger boots and Ray had on shoes, and I went up by his house and he was shoveling snow in his shoes, and I said "Hey, your feet are going to get wet," and he bust out laughing because they were high top shoes. And that's how he and I met and we were buddies ever since.

MB: What else did you guys do for fun as kids?

ND: Just those kind of things.

YK: Sleigh riding, kids stuff.

ND: Mostly Ray and I did a lot of fishing. We didn't live too far from the river. Anything that we'd catch, his mother would cook for us. I remember we caught an eel, and eel looks like snake. And I didn't want to eat none of him! So I went by the house, we were playing, and she said, come on in and have something to eat. And I said no thanks, I'm alright, and she sliced that eel up just like you'd slice up bacon. And I thought that looked good, so I said let me have a piece of that bacon, and she said, that's the eel you just ate (*Laughter*). Well she cut it in slices like bacon.

MB: I've never seen that before! Wow!

ND: I ate that, but I didn't eat that no more (*Laughter*). (*Indistinguishable*) ... I hate snakes.

MB: That's fair!

YK: But when he came down here and met my cousin, you were down here, and you were living out on 29. I know the main idea is 29, Carver Road, and Old Carolina Road, this area, this settlement area, you were down here all these years, and you've seen so much development through here. It's been amazing. That's why we thought it would be great for you to talk with him because he's seen so much going on.

ND: So over there was all woods, it was all woods over there.

MB: Where the elementary school is now.

ND: A buddy of mine, his grandmother owned it.

MB: Oh, do you remember his name?

ND: His name was Lester Stephens⁵. His mother was Miss Emma Stephens. I knew Miss Emma well from living in Warrenton. She lived in Warrenton, but she owned this land over here, 18 acres over here. And Leister, her son, when she died he was the overseer, I think eight or nine of them total owned it. And he was talking about putting a trailer court there, he had started in the woods back putting a road. And I hate the thought of that. And then a man named F. A. Carr, the Carr Corporation, have you heard of them?

MB: I have not.

ND: They bought it from Lester Stephens. The Carr corporation got it and were going to put inexpensive, low-income houses over there. And I didn't want to see that either. And then Carr corporation went bankrupt and the Disney Corporation got it. They were going to build low income housing; Disney was going to build a Disney park in Haymarket.

MB: Oh, the America theme park?

YK: (*Murmurs of agreement*)

ND: And that fell through, and then the school board got it from Disney Corporation.

MB: Do you remember about when that was?

ND: It's been about, probably around 20 years ago.

MB: Ok, that's interesting.

ND: Because the school's been there about nine or 10 years.

MB: Ok.

YK: When Deacon Dade built this house, that was just a dirt and gravel road.

⁵ Name spelling confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

ND: They put that road in after I built the house, you couldn't sit out there during the summer time because all the dust would run you off the porch. That's why I closed it in. It was frame, and I closed it in. After I closed it in, the state comes by one day and they asked me if I'd sign the deed to give them nine feet. I've got 100 feet out front and they want to know if I'd give them nine feet. If I give them nine feet, they would blacktop the road.

MB: Ok.

ND: So, I signed it. They were cutting that corner up there, Miss Stephen's brother, Norman Watson owned next to her, Emma Stephens on this end and Norman Watson on the other, and when they died, they buried the family up there on the corner up there. And they was cutting that corner off to make it not be so short, and my wife said, my uncle's got a grave on the corner. And I went up there and the guy was running the bulldozer and I flagged him down, and I asked him, I said, my wife says there's a grave right there, where you're digging at, and he said, no kidding. And he cut the bulldozer off and at that time they had walkie-talkies, they didn't have phones, so he got on the walkie-talkie and called his boss and the boss went up there and they found three graves up there on the corner.

YK: You'll hear him say something about the Watson graveyard...

MB: Yes, that's actually one of the questions I have on my list, a little bit more about that.

ND: Well I'll leave that until you get back to it.

MB: That's ok, we can talk a little more about that now. So, you said that there were three definite graves there. To your knowledge, is that all that was there?

ND: No, they found three but there were probably more. Once they found the three closest to the road where they were going to cut it off, they didn't search no more. They said it's probably more, but they found three there. But they didn't look no more. But you could see that there was an old chimney there sitting downhill from the cemetery, where the house was and fell down, but, you could see it at this time of year when the leaves were down (*indistinguishable*).

MB: Oh, I see.

YK: This wasn't Carver Road then. This was Route 647, and we don't know how the name Carver Road came in. I don't know on your research and what time you might have to do this, but that would be very interesting to find out, how this became Carver Road. I'm 68 and in all my years, it was all called Route 647. Then it became Carver Road, what, about 20 years back?

ND: Probably longer than that, let me see, so probably 1989 or 1990, something like that.

YK: I was married in 1971, and when I got married, in 1971, I left home and when I came back a while back, all of a sudden, it's like... Carver Road?

ND: One time, a man passed by here, and said they were trying to name this road. And they asked me if I had any suggestions. And I didn't because I hadn't even thought about it. So, he told me that somebody wanted to name it Settlement Drive, since it was called The Settlement.

And asked me if I was satisfied with that, and I said, sure, I'm satisfied with that, but this was a year before they named it. I got a letter from somebody from the state or the county saying they were naming it Carver Road.

MB: Oh.

ND: And they first gave me an address, I was a Deacon at the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, and they gave me 15008, because 15008 Lee Highway, I was chairman of the Deacon board, and they confused me and where I lived and the church. And the first address I got was 15008 Carver Road and I called them and told them that my brother in law is 7348, why am I 15008? (*Indistinguishable*) and a man came by here from the state and explained to me my name was confused with the church. And that's 15008 out there and they gave me 7350.

MB: Ah, ok, that happens sometimes. It's confusing sorting out how addresses and names get their place. But I'll keep in touch and let you know if I find out any more about Carver Road.

YK: Well, there is a rumor now, I've no proof of it, that they may have called it Carver because of George Washington Carver, because of this being an all-black neighborhood, and because he was a black dominant leader and all that, but I don't know.

ND: Someone at the church was saying some years back that they named it Carver Road so they would know it was a historical area.

YK: A black area, I haven't had a chance to research that myself. But I said, let me talk to the historian.

MB: Sure, I'll stay in touch.

YK: Like I said, it's been a long time, and since it was called The Settlement and all that like you had said, it's been a long time. But we've got family all through the area, and Deacon Dade has seen so many of us grow up. And we know every family that was through here. When you go down to Reverend Brown's house, you're going to hear them say, where everybody knows your name. It's sort of a little thing his son would say. And that's true! Everybody knew everybody, and we all had nicknames.

MB: It sure seems that way, especially when you talk about family land divisions. That's quite interesting and is something I'd like to come back to. But I'd like to turn back to you once again about growing up in the church, and how you came into your profession.

ND: Well, I went to Waterloo Baptist Church, where I went to school at, and when I met and married Teenie, that's when I joined Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. I went out there in 1959, I carried my daughter, my wife, and my wife's mother to church. And when I parked in front of the church, I asked my wife what time I need to come and get you, because I wasn't going, I was dressed like I'm dressed now, so her mother said, you don't need to come back and get us, I said I don't? She said, no, because you're going to already be here. Park this thing and come on to church. And I joined the church that day. I've been at that church for 60 years.

MB: Wow.

ND: This (*indistinguishable*) it's going to be 61 years, and I've been a Deacon out there since 1962. (*Shows MB and YK a framed plaque, included in this document, detailing the work of his service in the church 17:55–18:18*)

ND: But that's all because Effie Grayson told me I needed to go to church.

YK: Effie Grayson was my great grandmother, my mom's grandmother, his wife's grandmother. Effie Grayson, she was a real matriarch of the family.

ND: She said you ain't going anywhere, so I joined. I went in church and it seemed like the preacher was preaching to me. So, when they opened the doors in church, I looked around and I was the only one standing up in front. So, I joined the church that day and I've been there ever since. It's been 61 years this August.

MB: Wow that's fantastic. What sort of, was the church a community hub?

ND: It was a Baptist Church, a community Baptist Church, it used to be somewhere else in The Settlement but they moved it out to there where it is now. It's...practically all the black people in the neighborhood went to that church. And, of course we had a lot of people who weren't black, white people came there too. There's a cross in church that I had put in the church myself, a blue cross, and the Redskins, they were up there on the hill in Haymarket, they passed by and saw it, a car full of Redskins passed by the church and saw it, and they came to church one day and gave us a donation. I got a list somewhere of the ones that came.

MB: The football players you mean?

ND & YK: *Murmurs of agreement.*

MB: Interesting.

YK: So, he was responsible...

ND: Joe, Joe Gibbs⁶ was the coach.

YK: And we are in the process of rebuilding the church. Have you driven by the church?

MB: I have, yes.

YK: So, we are in the process of rebuilding now, we just need more money. Right now, we're just doing the exterior of the church.

ND: Have you seen it lately?

YK: I have the photos; I have the photos. I am a chairperson of the church; a trustee, not a chairperson.

⁶ Name spelling confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

ND: Joe came by with five Redskins with him and they gave ... all told I think they gave about \$1,000 or more. When we first put the brick on it. That right there will tell you what I've done (*references sheet with information about his church service*).

YK: He has been one of the main people connected with that church as far as doing certain things in that church. The family, the Grayson family, the Moore family, the Robinsons, I can't tell you the names of the families that have been so involved with the church. And the church, as you'll remember reading something about the history, was started up in 1877. And the Grayson name, they met at Sally Grayson's home to start the church. And she lived back here on one of these little roads on the side. And back in the day, and she is buried out there at Mount Pleasant.

MB: Is she, ok. What else can you tell me about her? One of my colleagues was interested in learning more about her.

YK: Well, nothing else is really known about her, other than being one of the church members, and they wanted to start a church and so they met at her home. She got involved, and I was really grateful when I found out, she's my great, great.... I'm like 6th generation, I guess. Something like that.

MB: Wow, that's neat.

YK: Yeah, so the Grayson family has been very popular and involved in that church. But there were other families, not only the Graysons. Robinsons, Johnsons, Moores, very much involved. (*YK discusses furnishing MB with a copy of church history 22:11–22:30*)

MB: Well Deacon Dade, I'd love to hear a little more about your work as a deacon and what that meant as your role in the community and your role in the church. I know it's on the sheet, but just to put a little bit of that detail into the record in your own voice would be great.

ND: What do you want to know?

MB: To talk a little about what it meant to you to be a deacon and what you did.

ND: When I joined the church, they had four deacons, older men, probably my age (*Laughter*), my wife's sister's husband and I joined the church about the same time, his name was Clarence Burke, they put Clarence and me on the deacon board as walking deacons. We walked for almost two years, then we got, it was under the leadership of Reverend John Fairfax⁷, and after we walked for two years, they ordained us in 1964, 1954, I'm sorry.⁸ hey ordained us, of course we were the youngest deacons in the church. Everything that need to be done in the church was on Clarence Burke and my shoulders. Of course, we were working people, the other people were just old and they were retired, so Clarence Burke went on to be a deacon and went on to be a pastor of a church, but he's passed away now. And he and I did most of the work in the church. Let me tell you, the church was really poor. He and I paid the bills on the church for

⁷ Name spelling confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

⁸ Transcriber's note: the dates given by Mr. Dade conflict earlier details of the story.

nearly three years, until we got a new pastor and he finally got us up on our feet so the church could take care of itself.

MB: Did you do any fundraising activities during that time?

ND: Oh, we did all kinds of fundraising.

MB: What sorts of things did you do?

ND: Well, we started a, well this Sunday coming we have one of the days we put on the church calendar, we have a talent program. People who didn't do anything at church could get up and do their talent. We found out we had more singers and people that could sing, and we started big choirs from the people who would come on the talent program. And this Sunday, we haven't done it since the church burnt, but this Sunday we're having a talent program. But we did all kinds of fundraisers, mostly were just different programs we'd have at church. Dinners, we'd sell dinners, yard sales, matter of fact we still have yard sales, weather permitted, to raise the funds to rebuild. But after my wife got sick, I stepped down to stay here and take care of her. But now that she passed, I went back to work at the church but I'm not able to work too much more because I'm old myself. I was 89 on my birthday.

MB: Wow! What sort of food would you cook for the big church dinners?

ND: Mostly it was pig feet.

MB: Oh really? Oh! Ok!

ND: We had one of the deacons in the church that loved to cook pig feet. He specialized in pig feet and people came from miles around to get some of his pig feet. That was Tyrone Edwards⁹, cooking pig feet. Fried chicken was the other thing.

MB: Ok.

ND: But people came for the pig feet (*laughter*).

MB: Alright! Local specialty...would pig feet be something that people around here would cook...would you have that for dinner normally?

ND: No not normally, it was something people did specially. When I was living here, we never cooked a pig's foot. One of the deacons, Tyrone Edwards, he's from Maryland somewhere and they love pig feet. And he was really excellent at cooking them! People would come from miles around to get some of Tyrone Edwards pig feet.

MB: Sounds like you'd need someone who is really familiar with it for sure! So that wraps up some of the questions I had about your childhood, and I'd like to ask some more questions

⁹ Name spelling confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

about The Settlement. So, we talked about families in the area, the Graysons, the Moores, the Johnsons.¹⁰ Are there any other families who first settled in this area?

YK: Robinsons...

ND: The Pye family, John Pye¹¹, back years ago when Truman was president, John Pye was one of Truman's bodyguards. And when the man from somewhere had a (*indistinguishable*) around his waist, John Pye was the one who wrestled him to the ground and took it away from him.

MB: Oh wow.

ND: He lived up on that hill right there. Of course, he's dead and gone, but he was one of the deacons at the church when I joined. But he worked at...after he retired as a bodyguard, he became a backstairs man for the White House. Every time they had big dinners, he was one of them... what do you call them, maître d's?

YK: Well like a gentleman's man or maître d'.

ND: He planned all the meals and made sure it was all done right, and he worked there for a long, long time until he was unable to. But it was him, when you get to this road there used to be a steep hill, and he worked at the White House, and one day he couldn't get up that hill. This road wasn't paved, this was still a dirt road. He tried to get up that hill and couldn't. So, when he called them and told them about the hill there, and I can't remember the congressman's name, but a load of them were going from the White House to Richmond, and they told Mr. Pye they'd come by and look at that hill. And Mr. Pye called me and asked me if I'd come out with him on a Saturday morning to look, to meet with the congressman, and they came to look at the hill, and I worked nights then. I worked Sunday night, and by Monday morning every piece of equipment you could think of was out there working on the hill. Just three days, the White House got on that and took care of that hill. They came by a little later and when I gave my nine feet, they got permission from everybody, to widen the road, they widened and blacktopped it.

MB: Oh wow!

ND: Just about two months ago, they took all the road up and put it down new. That road there is only three-four months old.

MB: Ok, do you remember about when it was that they first black topped the road?

ND: Let's see... I moved here in 60... it was probably in the 80s, when it was first tar and gravels. Then they put black over top of it, years later. First thing, they put down tar and gravel,

¹⁰ Transcriber misheard Ms. King earlier in the interview. The family's name is Robinsons, not Johnsons.

¹¹ John Pye (1888-) grew up in Newburg, Maryland and moved to Washington, D.C. where he worked at the Elks Club, as a chauffeur for Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy in 1920 as well as Franklin D. Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Upon Roosevelt's ascension to the presidency, Pye became a White House employee until 1952 through Harry S. Truman's administration. He moved to the Gainesville area later in his life (Prosper 2011).

and they extended it all the way up to the highway, round that turn up there it was just a track. It wasn't a very good road all the way through here. They eventually put... it was probably in the 1980s. It was probably 40-50 years ago when the first blacktopped it.

MB: Ok, thank you. My next question is, how did you learn about the history of the area? Was it something your wife's family taught you about when you married into it or...

ND: My wife is the one who knew all about it. Like I said, from the Grayson family is where I learned about this area. And from the church, and the church history and all that. And talking with my wife, my wife knew everything. She was the one who first told me there was a grave up on that corner there. And I went up and told them, and she said there was, and they went and found a grave there. And some kind of historical committee, I don't know who they were, called here and asked if I was ok with putting a memorial up on that corner. And sure, I agreed, it was somebody from the historical committee.

MB: Ok.

ND: Wanted to know if they could put a memorial up on the corner. And then they, the church got a call from a historical committee to put a memorial up there at the church. But I've been working at the church...well when I went there it was a cinderblock church, and me and Clarence Burke mortgaged our homes to borrow the money to brick veneer it. And that's when I had my house bricked too. This was frame, and I had them brick veneer it. The...we went to every bank around to borrow money but they wouldn't...because it's a big graveyard in back of the church, nobody would lend us any money on the church. Because they said the graves didn't belong to us, they belonged to everybody that bought up the cemetery. We were the overseers. It's one of the largest black cemeteries in Northern Virginia at the church out there.

MB: Oh, ok. I think I have a question about the church...so you were saying you had a hard time finding funding for the church because of the cemetery? So the cemetery was there before the church was built, is that correct?

YK: It was about the same time.

ND: They started burying people after they built the church. (*Indistinguishable*)... the church is landlocked. When I first joined the church, it was one lane down past it. And of course, they come to the church with their trustees before me, gave permission to widen the road. And they took off a lot of front of the church to put the road, if you go out the road this way, most of the road is on church land. So, once they built that road, the church became landlocked.

MB: Ok.

ND: So, like it is right now, we can go up but not out because it's landlocked. Nobody would lend us money on it because of the cemetery. Although the church owned the cemetery, they said the land belonged to everybody that bought a grave. We were the overseers. Two or three different banks told us. Reverend Burke, he was a deacon then, but he and I were trying to get the money for the church and finally, there was a bank in Haymarket, I can't think of the name, First Virginia Bank, anyway, a bank in Haymarket, the president of the bank was named Dickins, we knew him from being in the neighborhood, he said if you sign the mortgage on

your home, we'll lend you the money. So Reverend Burke and I went up there and signed a mortgage on our home and they lent us the money to brick veneer the church. And renovate and rebuild it and all. And then we got a new pastor named Reverend Wilbur Henry. When he came, he was a government worker, he worked for the government, and he was, once he came, the church started to grow...

MB: When was this? Do you remember?

ND: This was in 1954, around 1954. The church began to grow. Anyway, once the church started to grow, he took sick and passed away, and another pastor named Reverend (*indistinguishable*) he was in business for himself, he owned a trucking company, he was a...wealthy, wealthy man. Once he was there, it was a year before we'd burned the mortgage on the church, and the bank released Burke and my home mortgage back to us. But after... Boykin Young¹² come, the church began to grow to where it is now. And he took sick and died, and we've had two pastors since, but we haven't had another BoykinYoung though or Henry.

YK: I'll send you something on the church history.

MB: That would be fantastic. (*YK discusses sending MB an email*)

YK: But we had a community of people help each other and work together all down these years, people have done everything possible to be a community church. And it's just been wonderful. From back in the old days, from my doing research, back when he mentioned fourth Sunday in August, that's the homecoming date they set. And they had, people would bring their food and have food in the trunks of their cars, and then they'd have service, and then they'd come out and open the trunks of their cars and they'd have food and they'd share food. You know. Everybody had a good time and had the meal together. And it was, from what my mom and them told me that their grandmother used to do, they had a good time back in the day. And as time went on and the church was able to different things, from putting water in the church back in the day, and putting electricity in the church, it's just been a fantastic connection as far as that settlement goes. And Carver Road, old Carolina Road, and Route 29... all these people. And there's a Burke family as well, so, that's included as far as some of the family members that were involved down through the years. So, it's been great. And Petersons.

MB: And Petersons, ok that's quite a lot of families.

YK: Oh, I can name them! Thomas, the Thomas family. I can name them.

MB: Homecoming sounds like a very interesting event; can you tell me more about that? I'd love to hear more of your memories.

YK: Tell 'em Deacon Dade!

ND: We still have homecoming, when I first started at the church, my wife had a lot of family in New Jersey and Philadelphia and on homecoming, people we all would come to

¹² Name spelling confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

homecoming. We had big dinners and a guest speaker, and the church would be over packed. They started that back a long time before I joined the church, and we still have it today. We're renting a building down at the Baptist center now, we had homecoming just this August past. We have it the fourth Sunday of August every year. It's just wonderful. They're not as big as they used to be, the church used to be overpacked. Have somebody to park the cars, park the cars, some of the time they'd park on the other side of the church, park cars over there, there would be so many people there. That's how I ended up joining the church, because it was a homecoming day.

MB: Oh, I see. I see. What sort of themes would the guest speaker talk about?

YK: Oh, the minister would just pick a theme in the bible or scripture and would just go for it. And after that, you know, from family togetherness...

(ND and YK discuss sending MB church history document)

ND: It was our biggest day. It still is, but just not overrun like it used to be. Most all of my wife's family up in Pennsylvania has all passed away, and the younger generation don't know us since they grew up up there, so they don't come here no more.

YK: We have fundraisers to try to get money to rebuild the church, or to come back in, we have yard sales and bake sales, and people stop and they say, we can't wait for you to rebuild the church, we miss the church. And so many new people have moved to the area and they've driven by and stopped by and ask, when are you all going to rebuild the church? We can't wait for you all to rebuild the church. Because they would just look forward to the good food. I mean bake sales, cakes, oh, pies!

MB: What are some of the first things to go? What are the hot sellers?

ND: One of the things I got used to doing was baking cakes. The last homecoming, I had to take two cakes.

MB: What kind of cakes?

ND: Bundt cake.

YK: Yes, he makes a good bundt cake!

ND: I had a, Christmas I had to bake two. One for the pastor's wife and one for the oldest member of the church, Miss Woodson's daughter. I brought two of them at Christmas. My wife taught me how to bake the bundt cake. Her birthday was in December...

YK: I called him up and I said we're going to have a yard sale at this date, and can you make a cake and he said, ok I'll be there *(Laughter)*. So, he comes in his car out to the front of the church, and I told the young lady, tell Johnny, who is one of the trustees, I said Deacon Dade is bringing a cake, he said, I bought it, no problem. And he can't even get it out of the bag, he said, sit it over on the side and put "sold" on it *(Laughter)*.

ND: When my wife was...I couldn't leave her here by herself since she couldn't walk, Johnny used to come around all the time to get the cakes. And he never did take the cakes to the church, he took the money for it to the church and kept the cakes. He'd give the money and keep the cake (*Laughter*).

MB: Sounds like you're a good man to know.

ND: The secret's in the Pam, (*Laughter*), if you spray Pam in your pan for a Bundt cake, it'll come out perfect.

YK: You can't tell us your secret! (*Laughter*)

MB: It's out in the open now, it's on the record (*Laughter*).

ND: Then when you'd turn it upside down, it's beautiful.

YK: There were ladies that had specialties, Alberta's cousin, her name was Thelma, she was famous for her potato salad. And we always knew that her potato salad would be in a special yellow bowl. And we would look for that yellow bowl on the table. You know. And there's another cousin named Mabel. And she makes a really good potato salad. So, you know, there are some specialties. Potato salad, macaroni salad, one lady makes good cole slaw, pineapple upside down cakes, yours truly makes those, bundt cakes, he makes those, pumpkin pound cakes, yes. Yes.

MB: You're making me hungry now!

YK: Coconut cakes, we had folks who have their specialties. And all down through the years, our grandmothers, aunts, have passed these recipes down. And there's one lady named Miss Emma Nickens who makes the best lemon meringue pie.

ND: (*ND offers us beverages, we decline to keep the interview going*)

YK: I'm sorry, I know you're doing the interview on him. I'm just adding to it, his wife, she could make some really good food too. I'm telling you. She made really good baked beans, yeah.

MB: Well, as my stomach is growling, let's keep going a bit.

ND: One other thing, when people were sick in the neighborhood, she used to make chicken and rice. She taught me how to do it, I can do it too. She'd make a beautiful bowl of rice and put chicken breast on top of it and bake it in the oven. And, we used to take him chicken and rice. She was a good cook and she taught me how to cook a few things.

MB: That's fantastic. I have a couple more questions before we wrap up. Could you tell me a little about the dance hall?

ND: Shady Inn? My mother used to work at Shady Inn.

MB: Oh really? What did she do there?

ND: She used to be behind the counter. They had a kitchen, had a cook area, she used to bring me there, I was only about 8 or 9, and I'd be under the counter. But, see I lived in Warrenton and she lived here, and I'd come up at the weekend and she'd come home, and she'd get me or my brother, he was littler, she'd never bring both of us at the same time because she only had a room in a house with another lady. But anyway, she used to bring me out there and I'd lay under the counter while she served food. A lot of times the Shady Inn...One thing I remember about the Shady Inn was somebody got killed there. One night they got to fighting and somebody got killed out there. Somebody shot somebody. I wasn't there when it happened, I only heard about that. But a little afterwards, after that happened, they had a dance at Shady Inn one night, and everybody said, they say the Devil come up out of the floor. A big fire came up out of the floor. They said the Devil come up out of the floor.

YK: (*Laughter*) It was a rumor!

ND: Anyway, the place burnt down.

MB: Oh!

ND: Next year the Shady Inn...My uncle, I had an uncle named William Randolph Dade, he started a church in, they rebuilt it and they started a church in it. He became pastor of the church there at Shady Inn. For years, before he left the area, and somebody else got it and they called it ... what did they call it?

YK: Church of God of Prophecy. Miss Mary Anne Settle will tell you more. Her aunt, Miss Flora Dean, went and sold dinners and all that. She said something about having it built back in the day.

ND: That was the last dance they had there and they said the Devil came up out of the floor.

YK: It was just a rumor! (*Laughter*).

MB: Let me make sure I understand this correctly. So when you were about eight or nine, so in the late 1930s–early 1940s, you would come to the dance hall with your mom and she would serve in the kitchen, and then sometime around there, there was a fire and it burned down, and then it was rebuilt as a church. Is that correct?

ND: They rebuilt the Shady Inn, but there wasn't that much activity there anymore so eventually they closed it. And after they closed it was when my uncle got it and opened it up as a church. And he was there for quite a number of years, I believe one of Maryann's sisters was named after his sister. Anyway, after he left, a lady minister got it and came there. And named it the Church of God of Prophecy.

MB: Do you remember about when it was that your uncle started it as the church?

ND: It's kind of hard to remember because it was quite a while ago.

MB: That's ok.

ND: I don't think I was living here then. I rented several houses before I built my own. I rented one from, on the other side of the highway from Fred Beale¹³, and he and I fell out, I rented one from Miss Luke, and then I rented one from Gene...anyway. And while I was living in Miss Luke's house, I had this one built.

YK: But he still stayed in the area. All around the area. He never left the area.

MB: Can you tell me a little more about the houses that you rented and the people you rented them from? Were these second houses that people had or were they built to be rental houses?

ND: The first house I rented was from Gene Atkins.¹⁴ He moved to Washington on his job, and there was nobody in the house, so he asked if anybody wanted to rent it. And I rented it from him. Only thing he charged was tax. I could live there as long as I paid the tax on the house. I lived there for a while. The first house I rented was from... what was his name. Anyway, the first house I rented was up on the hill, I rented that house, from, I can't think of his name.

YK: It was only two or three rooms, it was a small, small little house. That's the one out there behind that state place.

ND: Up on the hill, back of the gas station.

YK: It was a small, small house.

ND: It had one...two...four. Four rooms. And it had a small kitchen that I lived in. It didn't have a bathroom.

YK: It had an outhouse.

ND: And you had to pump your water. But I rented that one first, and then I rented from Gene Atkins.

YK: And that didn't have water either. None of these houses had water.

ND: Then I rented the house from Fred Beale that didn't have water either, I got water from next door. Then I moved down by the highway and a lady had a house, she turned the garage into a house, she lived in the house and I lived in the garage. It was nice, it was two bedrooms, and a living room, and a kitchen. And she built out the garage. I was living there when I had this house built. I got the land from my wife's uncle, and one day I was coming down the lane, she's gone now she's dead too, and I was coming down the lane and she stopped me, and she asked if I was building a house up there and I said yeah, and Jim Walter homes is building homes in the area, and she sent him to talk to me and all I had to do was sign the deed to the land and they would build me a house, it wouldn't cost, just a monthly payment, and I went

¹³ Name spelling confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

¹⁴ Name spelling confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

ahead and signed it. And they gave me, I think it was six years I had to pay for it, and they built this house in about a week.

YK: Yeah, but it was the kitchen, this room, and your bedrooms, right? You didn't have this room on it (gestures to the sunroom) because that was like a porch. You didn't add that room on it. He has a family rec room out there, and a laundry room. I remember when I was a little girl we used to come down and all the kids would play in the woods.

ND: When my wife died, one of her nephews told me how she used to run about the yard, because there was a path there.

MB: Oh, I see.

YK: It was all family all through there, so we could be free and comfortable to run through the woods and nobody would bother us or anything. Everybody knew everybody. But it was just a small house and he added on to it. You know, making it a nice home.

ND: We moved here, there were no inside walls. It was just a house. There was a carport on the other side. There weren't any walls. There was a guy in the neighborhood we called Rookie...

YK: His formal name was Henry Johnson.

ND: He was a carpenter, and he was also my wife's cousin. He came around in his spare time and filled it in for us. When we moved here, I could sit and talk to you here back in the bedroom. There weren't no walls nowhere.

MB: So the builder when you purchased the house and he built it in a week, he just put up the frame?

ND: That's right. And it was in the contract and everything, they would do the frame and you would do the inside. Of course, they put studs in, all you had to do was put the wall board up. The wall was there, you had to put the wall board over it. I got Rookie to come in and do the wall board and all.

MB: Ok. Did you use any sort of Veteran financing to build the house?

ND: No, because it was, back then, when I started off, I had a construction job for (*indistinguishable*) in Warrenton. And then I got a job driving a dump truck for a man in Gainesville. So, I drove a dump truck for quite a few years, and I got a job with more money than a dump truck at Hill Furniture Company. They made me a manager of all the furniture coming in. I wasn't a manager of the store; I was a manager of the furniture part. And when I left there, I went to, I moved to Washington, and the best job I ever had in my life was when I drove a whiskey truck.

MB: Oh, when was this?

ND: Back in the... back in the 1960s maybe. I drove a whisky truck in Washington. Back then, salaries were like \$35 a week, they paid me \$35 a week plus tips. I'd make \$300–400 a week in tips!

MB: Really!

ND: I remember going to a graduation, to one of those high-rises uptown, there was a senior graduating from college, they called the store and ordered two cases of half-pints of whiskey. I went up there on the high-rise, and the guy came to the door and he yelled, hey the whisky man is here, and I had on my jacket, and he said can you open that? And I had a cutter, and everybody got a bottle. And there were 24 bottles to a case so 48 bottles, and every kid that got a bottle, I guess when they got out they drank it themselves, but everyone that got a bottle out of that case stuck some money in my coat pocket. When I got to my car, I didn't do it while I was driving the truck because I didn't want anyone to know I had that money on me, but when I got back to my car, I took the truck back to the whisky store and got in my car, I opened my jacket and I had over \$200. Back when a salary was \$35 a week I had over \$250. They were all teenagers, well college graduates so probably 20, 21 years old. But they gave me over \$200.

MB: Everyone loves the whisky man.

ND: (*Laughter*) I delivered uptown, on Upshire Street, upper side of 14th street, high rises and wealthy people. Victor's Liquors is who I was working for. When I left Victor's Liquors and moved back to Virginia, I missed that money. But after I joined the church out here, that was 1959, so that was all between 1952 and 1959, but that was a... man worked at church named Faxie Burke.¹⁵ And he worked at the Grand Union Supermarket. And they needed a porter. So I went down and they interviewed me and hired me the same day. I went from porter to assistant manager with them. So I was a store manager down in Woodbridge. I'm trying to think what year. I retired in 1992. I had 35 years with the grocery business when I retired. I was store manager, but when Shoppers bought it, they didn't want me as manager so they hired me as assistant manager. And I worked for them for a while and then I retired when I got my 35 years, I was 62 years old when I retired. I retired when I was 62, and I'm 89 now so I've been retired for quite a while.

YK: Tell her about your shift though. You worked at night.

ND: I worked at night for 22 years, 10 to 7.

YK: He was a devoted man, going to work at night all those years. His wife would work during the day, and he would work at night, and he was here to send his daughter off to school or whatever she needed. He was always available and was always a devoted family man. Doing everything he could possibly do to make sure his family survived.

ND: They tricked me off nights though, I made good money at night, and I loved it because I had my days off. They tricked me, they called me and they said, Mr. Dade, can you go on days for two weeks while my assistant manager is off? We'll give you the same pay, as a matter of fact, we'll give you assistant manager. Night pay... I was making \$30 plus \$20, as night crew

¹⁵ Name spelling confirmed by Yolanda King (Y. King, personal communication 2020).

manager, and night manager was \$30, so I was making \$50 a week extra, and they told me that they'd give me that, they wouldn't change my salary for doing it, so I said ok, I'll do it. I worked two weeks and days, and when it came time to going back on night, I didn't want to go back on night.

MB: That sounds like a tough transition.

ND: They said they would switch me back to nights, and they said they'd make me assistant manager if I stayed on days. That was more money still since the night pay was making. So after 22 years I started working days.

YK: But I have to mention that because of him working, all thorough the military and the devotion he had all through those years, and he has seen and been exposed to all types of prejudices and people being unnecessarily difficult. I mean that's the best way I can put it. They were cruel.

ND: When I was in the Army, the Army integrated, when I went in the Army, only troops I saw were black troops. The bosses where white, but all the troops were black. The captains and them were white but the troops were black. When I went to Germany it was that way. When I came back to Aberdeen, the Army integrated. When it integrated, the first white person that I met became my best buddy. His name was Richard O'Brien, he was from Wichita, Kansas, and he and I became the best of buddies. But I was mail orderly when they integrated,

MB: What was that?

ND: Mail orderly, I worked with the mail. They sent me to school and I could type like 35 words a minute, I was a typist in the Army. When I came back to the states, they made me mail orderly. I picked up the mail, brought it to the mail room, and passed out the mail. That's what I did. But when we integrated, the mail orderly from the white company and me became best of buddies, and then I met Richard O'Brien, they put him in the room with me and we became best buddies. He was like me and Ray, you never saw one without the other. (*Discusses Army training course, not relevant to The Settlement, 1:00:13-1:02:32*)

ND: Like I said, I met Teenie coming from Aberdeen to home. There used to be a path up there by the church, through the woods, down to where my mother lived at.

MB: Yep. Yes. So when you would walk through here in the 40s and 50s, was this referred to as The Settlement or Gainesville?

ND: It was referred to as Gainesville. It wasn't, since I've been here it wasn't called The Settlement. It wasn't called that since I've been here. They stopped calling it that quite a bit before I came here.

YK: It's just that when we were doing some church history and writing it up, it would continue on from where it started, The Settlement and going down and going down, it was called The Settlement every so often, but most of the time it was called Gainesville.

MB: Ok, yep.

YK: Then we said, this place has such history, we've got to do what we can do to make sure that it's acknowledged. Our church history goes back so far and so deep that we need to make sure to get this out there. As time goes on, you know, the older people are going on to glory and we want to make sure that we let them know and let the younger generation know how much we appreciate them.

ND: *(Shows MB and YK neighborhood aerial map regarding landscaping around the church. YK points out triangular area between Route 29, Old Carolina Road, and Carver Road 1:03:57-1:04:30)*

MB: Would you say that's considered the historic boundary? Would you say it extended further?

YK: Well it probably extended further...

ND: Somebody from the historical committee put this in my mailbox, I put it on the cardboard *(referencing aerial map)*.

YK: Yeah, we were going to the meetings with Mrs. Lawson, one of the board of supervisors, because people are buying up land all through the area, through here. And we don't want, we know that development is going to come through, but we still want them to know that this area itself is a historical area. That's why this area, the meetings that we've been going to that Deacon Dade has not been able to attend, because he was assisting his wife and all that, this has been going on for quite a while.

MB: Right, right. The last oral histories were from 2018 I believe. So I'd like to talk a little more about the boundary and how the community is defined. Would you consider The Settlement/Gainesville a community, or a neighborhood? Do you have another way that you think about this area and the connections between people?

ND: I never thought about it. Because it...when I look at history it was called The Settlement, but since I lived here it wasn't called The Settlement. All, everything from The Settlement is all gone now. Like I said, when I moved here, you could see the chimney off Norman Watson's house on the corner but that's fallen down now. And, well two men came by here one day with metal detectors, they wanted to know if they could walk through my land and see if they could find anything, and I told them yeah, and they came back the next day with a metal box. And they found it and dug it up, and it was a women's corset in it, and a receipt in it from where they bought it. And the receipt was so faded you could hardly see it. And somebody bought that and buried it in the ground for someone to find in the future. And they said when they talked to me, they couldn't show it to me. He had the box, they didn't have cell phones in those days, they had, what do you call it? Walkie talkies. They called the Library of Congress and they told him don't open the box up no more because the air could destroy it. To bring it to them. They took it to the Library of Congress. He said the receipt was over a hundred years old.

MB: That's interesting.

ND: It was over by Watson's house.

YK: You see, that's why we, this next generation want to make sure that it's written down and established as a settlement in appreciation...this was the area that the blacks were allowed to purchase land. We couldn't get in... there are no other areas as far as we can determine where they actually settled. So that's why we want to...it's a strong goal of ours to make sure that our next generations understand their roots. And appreciate their roots. And they do, but we want to make sure that it's down on paper and acknowledged by the county and the state that this is something that is very important. And we are riding on the shoulders of these our forefathers and mothers. Because these people were here and they went through all of that. And I understand and I appreciate and I've got children that are in their 30s and 40s and appreciate it too, but they're not the same as the other ones that are like 50, 60, 70. But it's going to get there. We just need people like you, willing to come and talk and listen and understand and write something down for us and get this straightened out.

MB: Absolutely.

ND: I wish my daughter had been able to be here today, she's been with the government for 40 years. Two months ago, she got awarded a good conduct medal. She got a big reward for that, and the next week they promoted her to a G12, and she just spent 40 years in jail. Not in jail, in the CIA.

MB: Ah, big difference!

ND: She just spent 40 years in the CIA.

MB: That's great!

YK: All those years in the CIA. And she's a major influence too, she's an usher in our church. All our family, the Graysons, they've been ushers, they've been trustees, deacons and deaconesses, his wife was a deaconess, you know, and all down through the families. From great chefs you could say, country cooks, on down through the line.

MB: So, your daughter grew up in this house, and then what schools did she go to?

ND: She went to, Antioch-McCrea...

YK: Antioch-McCrea, and then went to Marsteller in Manassas. Our elementary school was Antioch-McCrea, and then the middle school was Marsteller, and the high school was Stonewall Jackson.

MB: Ok, great. The last question I have on my list is about the Watson graveyard on the corner. Was it called the Watson Graveyard because of who owned the house on the corner?

ND: Yeah, I don't think it ever had a name, they just buried people there, the house was up there and they buried people there on the front of the house and I don't even think they had a name for it, it was just a family cemetery.

YK: That's been known from what I remember from back in the day when people would pass away they would bury their family members on their grounds. We don't have anybody as far

as we know buried in this area, that was the only one as far as we know up there. (*YK requests a pause in recording*)

MB: Ok we are back with our interview of Deacon Nimrod Dade, and we were discussing the Watson graveyard and how people would be buried on their family land. So, my last couple questions are about the burials on the corner. So, you said there are three burials that are known, and then there were likely others on that land.

ND: They said there were probably more. See they were going to cut that corner off up there, it was funny, the guy on the bulldozer up there he's a comical guy, I didn't know him, he came down to cut the corner off and had a break, and I stopped him and said, my wife says there's a cemetery on the corner. He called his boss, and said there are graves up there and they found three. So, he comes back down and told me, there's three up there and probably more. But three is enough that we're not going to cut that corner off.

MB: Sure.

ND: So, they had three big boulders up there where the graves are, when the school board got this land and started building the school, they must have moved them. At first, they couldn't move them because they were too big, so they must have moved them. When they went up to cut the corner, they put a stake in the ground. I went up there and told the overseer that my wife said there were graves on the corner, so he checked in to it. And he said they found three.

MB: Ok.

ND: So, they put a (*indistinguishable*) up there between the school and the graves, but they must have moved the boulders because they're gone. They were too big for a person to move so they must have used a machine.

MB: And you mentioned that one of your wife's relatives are buried there.

ND: Yeah, my wife's uncle.

MB: Ok, do you know about when he would have passed? I'm just trying to get a timeframe...

ND: I really wouldn't know. Actually, I came here in 1952, and it had already been... it was already....

MB: Ok.

ND: The house was built and it happened quite a time before then.

MB: Ok, that's helpful for framing that. And that wraps up what I had on my list. But I'd like to give you the opportunity if there is anything else, you'd like to share about living here, about your life here, to put it on the record, this is an opportunity. If you are done, that's also ok!

ND: That's about all I know. But I appreciate what you are doing so far.

MB: Thank you, I appreciate you sharing your life story with me today!

ND: I really enjoyed living in Gainesville. It's grown up so much now, all those houses back over there, it was woods when I moved here. Actually, it was woods right there. I had, I guess when I had prostate cancer and I was bedridden during treatment, when they was cutting those trees down, I laid back on the bed and I watched what they were doing. (*ND describes the bulldozer operator's reluctance to cut a tree down with a hawk nest*). It was woods over there until they decided to put the school there, which I think was the best thing that could happen in front of my house. Because they talked about putting income houses, low income houses, bring all kinds of criminals and stuff.

MB: They bring all sorts of people.

ND: I ... was glad that deal fell through, Carr went bankrupt. The man owned the land where the water tanks were, Carr, he told me, he walked around and talked to me about it, I knew him pretty well. And he said that, Carr gave him \$100,000 for 40 acres, gave him \$60,000 and \$40,000, and when Carr went bankrupt, he got to keep it. He got his land, and the money.

MB: That worked out well for him.

ND: So I guess he still owns the land, this was quite a while ago. (*Indistinguishable*). When someone told me that was going to be a school, they were trying to find a good name for it. I said Emma Stephens High School, since she was the one who owned the land. They say that she, the land was obtained for taxes, so they wouldn't consider it. I told them to name it Emma Stephens, because I knew her from Warrenton. I said name it Emma Stephens High School, but they said no they couldn't, because the land...they didn't buy the land from her. She was already dead; she couldn't give them the land. But then they, someone over on this hill, wanted it to be The Settlement Drive, and they considered that too. Where Buckland Mills came from I don't know.

YK: I think Buckland because of the Buckland up in here, that area next, is already historical.

ND: I said there must be somebody named Buckland Mills. Must have been...up there in the county there's a Buckland.

MB: Ok.

ND: I think there must have been somebody named Buckland Mills since it's Buckland Mills Elementary.

MB: Ok. Well, thank you so much. This will conclude our interview, but if you'd like to chat we've got a few more minutes.

Genealogy

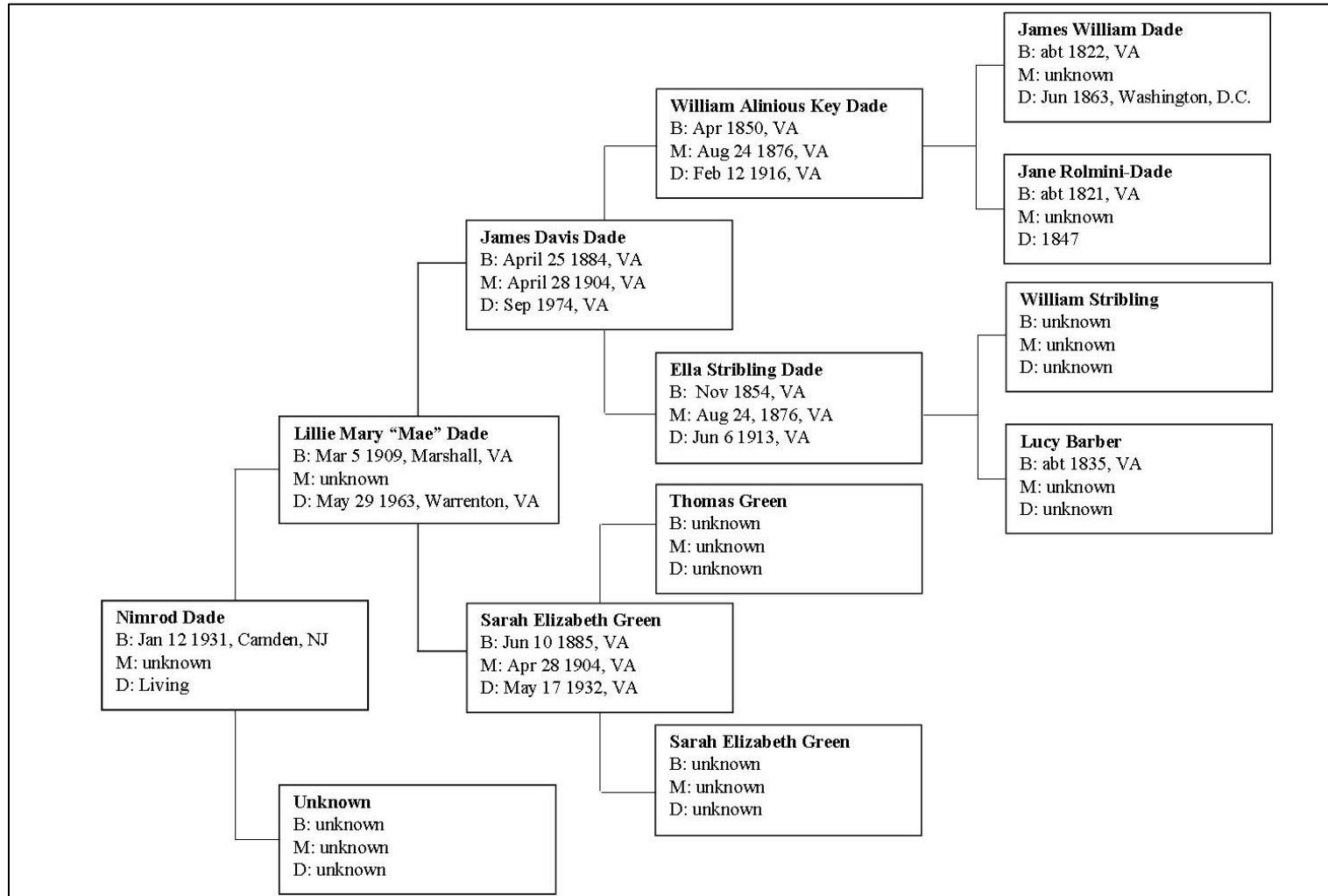


Figure 1: Dade Family Genealogy (Ancestry.com 2020a).

Chain of Title

The Nimrod and Alberta Moore Dade House, 7350 Carver Road

Year Constructed: 1958

Type	Book	Page	Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes/Comments
Deed of Correction	378	91	12/28/1965	Ryland Grayson, Mary Grayson, Mozella G. Whitney, Louvinia G. Moore, James Grayson, Idella Grayson, Willette Grayson Wilson, Philmore G. Wilson	Herbert T. Moore, Christene Moore, Nimrod C. Dade, Alberta Moore Dade	Corrected the meets and bounds of the property.
Deed	260	529	8/8/1960	Herbert T. Moore and Christine Moore	Nimrod C. Dade and Alberta Moore Dade	"And being a part of property conveyed May 12, 1960 from Ryland Grayson et al. to Hebert T. Moore and Christina Moore, recorded simultaneously here with."
Deed of Trust	259	501	7/20/1960	Nimrod C. Dade and Alberta Dade	Charles A. Blanton II and James M. Lumpkin	"...along the eastern boundary of property belonging to Herbert T. Moore. This being the eastern half of property conveyed from Helen Hall to Ryland Graydon" DB 190 279
Quit Claim Deed	190	279	8/29/1955	Hellen Hall (Unmarried) Heir to land owned by James Watson	Ryland Grayson, Lauvinia Grayson Moore, James Grayson, Willetta Grayson, Mozella Grayson Whitney, Idella Grayson	-Parcel A: Property E.E. Meredith assignee in bankruptcy of C. E. Tyler and James Watson, 12/31/1898, Book 46 page 499 -Parcel B: Lydia Hudley to James Watson 3/2/1909, Book 58 page 230, two tracts 10 acres and 4 acres
vDeed	58	230	4/05/1909	Lydia Hudley	James Watson	Formerly the property of C. E. Tyler, bankrupt. 2 tracts, 10 acres and 4 acres.
Deed	52	0294A	2/18/1904	C. E. Tyler and A. W. Sinclair (Assignee)	Lydia Hudley	2 tracts aggregating in 14 acres. Lots 13 and 5 in bankruptcy proceedings.
Deed	47	285	9/1/1899	Meredith E. Lee	Lydia Hudley	4 acres, according to plat by Silas BATTERY 9/17/1875, bounded by lots 2, 3, and 4
Deed	46	499	12/31/1898	C. E. Tyler	James Watson	8 acres, 31 poles, property of C. E. Tyler, bankrupt.
Deed	47	11	1/03/1889	Grayson Tyler and Annie H. Tyler	Lydia Hudley	1 acre, bound by Lydia Hudley, Green Hill Farm, and Carolina Road

Floyd Brown

Biography

Floyd Brown was born in Washington, D.C. on September 15, 1930, to Floyd Brown and Sarah Harris (Floyd Brown, personal communication 2020). Sarah Brown worked at the federal Bureau of Engravement.

As a young man in Washington, D.C., he met his future wife, Marjorie A. Watts, and they were married in 1952. Together they had three children, Floyd, Ezora and Eric, all born in Washington, D.C. He held several jobs and had a professional interest in photography; working for People's Drug Store in Washington, D.C. and later joining the National Defense Intelligence Agency and the Air Force in 1951.

In 1961, Floyd Brown established the Church of the Blessed Trinity in Centreville, Virginia. While doing mission work with seniors in Prince William County, Floyd met Miss Carter, whose brother, Charles "Charlie" W. Tyler, had property for sale in Gainesville. The Brown family moved to Gainesville in August 1967 after Floyd retired from the Air Force, in order to be closer to their church. Using a Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loan, Mr. Brown built a house on land he purchased from Charles Tyler. Mr. Brown describes the community he found in Gainesville as welcoming of him and his family. He recalls being friendly with neighbors, though he isn't one to comment on anyone else's business. Through a community connection, he and his family purchased the land on which they built their house, where Floyd still resides.

His interview reflects the perspective of an outsider's welcome into the community, with insights offered by his daughter, Ezora. She reminisces on her childhood in Gainesville, recalling a warm welcome to the neighborhood and playing with other children in the community. Together with her father, Ezora describes the role her mother, Marjorie Brown, played in community advocacy through the local organization, Gainesville Citizens in Action. Mr. Brown currently resides on Carver Road, in the house he had built in 1967, and continues to serve as the pastor of the Church of the Blessed Trinity.

Transcript

Note about this recording: Reverend Brown spoke softly, so Ms. Butler repeats what he says to confirm and clarify for the recording.

Interviewee: Floyd Brown (FB), Floyd Brown's daughter, Ezora Brown (EB), Yolanda King (YK)

Time/Location: Friday, February 12, 2020/ Brown House, 7411 Carver Road, Gainesville, Virginia

Interviewer: Melissa Butler (MB), Architectural Historian (Field Director) (Dovetail Cultural Resource Group)

[Commencing at Digital Recording Time Stop: 00:00:00]

Melissa Butler (MB): Today is Wednesday, February 12, 2020. My name is Melissa Butler and I work for Dovetail Cultural Resource Group and I'm working on The Settlement Oral History Project. Today I will be interviewing Reverend Brown. Reverend Brown, thank you so much for agreeing to interview with me today. I'm going to begin with asking you some basic biography questions and then we will move on to your childhood and The Settlement. So, for the record, can you tell me your full name and, I'd ask you to spell your last name but I think that's pretty clear.

Reverend Floyd Brown (FB): *(Laughter)* My name is Floyd B. Brown.

MB: Ok, that's great. Do you know how you got your name or why your parents chose it?

FB: Well, *(indistinguishable)*

EB: He was named after his father.

MB: Ok, there we go. Do you go by any nicknames?

FB: No, in my childhood I did but I go by my name now.

MB: What was your childhood nickname?

FB: Junior.

MB: Junior, ok.

(EB clarifies question for FB)

FB: I went by Little Junior.

MB: Louis Junior?

FB and EB: No, Little Junior.

MB: Little Junior, ok because your father had the same name, ok. And what is your date of birth?

FB: September 15, 1930.

MB: Ok. So, your father's name was also Floyd Brown, what about your mother's name?

FB: Her name was Sarah.

MB: Do you remember her Maiden name?

FB: Harris.

MB: Harris. Can you spell that?

FB: H-A-R-R-I-S, I guess.

MB: Great! And where were your parents born?

FB: In...Centreville.

MB: Centreville, ok. Did they ever live in Gainesville?

FB: No, Centreville.

EB: Your father was born in Centreville?

FB: No, my father was born in Maryland.

MB: You were born in Maryland?

FB: No, my father was born in Maryland.

MB: Your father was born in Maryland, ok.

FB: As far as I know.

MB: Ok! Do you remember where in Maryland at all?

FB: I think it was Annapolis.

MB: Annapolis, ok great. And where were you born?

FB: Washington.

MB: Great, were your parents living there at the time or did they go there around the time of your birth?

FB: Around the time of my birth, I think, they moved from Centreville to Washington.

MB: So then when did you move to Gainesville?

(Phone rings, recording ends at 3:07. Off record, FB and EB clarify family history and we decide to focus on Gainesville instead of FB early life)

MB: And I'm back with Reverend Floyd Brown and we were discussing when he moved to Gainesville.

FB: I moved in August of 1967.

MB: August of 1967. Did you move right into this house or did you reside elsewhere?

FB: We moved right into this house.

MB: Was this house here when you moved or did you have this house built?

EB: It was built.

MB: It was built previously?

EB: No, we had it built.

MB: Ah ok.

EB: We didn't move in until it was built.

MB: Ok, can you tell me a little about what it was like with the house building process? Did you get to pick finishes, were there options for you to choose from, how did that work?

(YK on the phone in the background)

FB: I had a company build it, a package house, and we had all kinds of problems when we had it built. It was on an FHA Loan, I had no problem with the builder but *(indistinguishable)*

MB: Ok. If you don't mind me asking, what sort of problem did you have with the builder?

FB: Well, first the builder didn't tell me that I needed a drain *(indistinguishable)*, and I come to find out that my basement flooded after he built it. He didn't put no drain *(indistinguishable)* in. I had somebody else, a friend of mine, he came in and put the drain *(indistinguishable)* in for me. We had water come up from the basement every time it rained, you had to go up and down the stairs with a dust pan and a bucket.

MB: Do you remember other people moving to Gainesville around the same time, or do you remember being one of the only houses being built?

FB: Ours was one of the only houses being built at that time.

MB: Ok.

FB: Ms. Allen, they came here later on.

MB: Ok, that's a neighbor?

FB: Yes, Mrs. Allen and these two people right next door, next to them, they're recent.

MB: Ok. Ok. Jumping back a little bit, we may be jumping back and forth a bit but I'll try to keep this chronological, do you have any siblings?

FB: Yes.

MB: Do they also live in the area?

FB: In Manassas.

MB: Ok...

FB: And one lives here.

EB: Daddy, siblings are brothers and sisters.

FB: Oh brothers and sisters...

EB: I'm sorry.

MB: No, that's ok!

EB: He has two brothers in California and a sister in Texas.

MB: And what are their names?

EB: Edward, Richard, and Blanche.

MB: Ok, thank you. What number child are you? Are you the oldest? Youngest?

EB: First born.

MB: Are you married?

FB: Yeah, not now.

MB: Not now, ok. What was your wife's name?

FB: Marjorie A. Brown.

MB: And what was her maiden name?

FB: Ann

EB: Watts was her maiden name.

MB: Watts, ok. And where did she grow up?

FB: Washington.

MB: Washington as well. Ok. My next question is do you have any children; I know that answer is yes.

EB: Yes.

MB: How many children do you have?

EB: He has three. My brother in California, the first born, Floyd III, myself, and then we have a brother Eric.

MB: And were you all born here in Gainesville?

EB: No, Floyd and I, all three of us actually were born in D.C. We are all Washingtonians by birth.

MB: Ok.

EB: Eric was three years old when we came, and he was the youngest of us when we came.

MB: What part of Washington did you live in?

EB: Northeast.

MB: Ok, well that's...

YK: The youngest son, Eric, is a minister also.

MB: Ok, very neat.

FB: Ordained minister.

MB: Ok. Floyd, what did your parents do for a living?

FB: What was that again now?

MB: What did your parents do for a living?

FB: Floyd did...

EB: No, your parents. What did they do.

FB: Oh, my mother worked for the Bureau of Engravement...

EB: She was a federal government worker. Can we pause?

(Recorder stops at 4:48. EB clarifies family relationship off the record, we switch gears away from personal family history and agree that further questions will discuss Gainesville more specifically)

MB: Ok, we are back with Reverend Floyd Brown and we are discussing life once he moved to Gainesville. So, can you tell me why you chose to move to Gainesville?

FB: Well, I was working, I got a job in near here. I was living and working in Washington, do you want to know the people I worked for in Washington?

MB: Sure, yeah!

FB: I worked for several years for People's Drug Store. And then Mrs. Alexander, my cousin, she asked me why don't I get another job in photography, that was my profession, that's what I was in... *(phone rings)*...And so, I came and got the application... and then through that I got the job at Vint Hill. Because my church is in Centreville. And I was thinking I could move out here and be close to the church. And she got me the job at *(indistinguishable)* hill farms, and I stayed there until they moved me back to Washington. And then I moved here and I've been here ever since.

MB: Ok, can you tell me a little more about the photography aspect?

FB: Well, I worked for People's Drug Store, until I got into photography *(phone rings)* I got into photography at People's Drug Store. And then I applied for a government job, NDIA.

MB: NDIA, what does that stand for?

FB: Department of Defense. D-... Defense Intelligence Agency.

MB: Oh ok, Defense Intelligence Agency.

FB: In the Department of Defense. And then I applied for Vint Hill, and I got a job at Vint Hill and I stayed until was with the Department of Defense until I retired. I was 11 years I think at the drug store, and the rest of the time, I think I was 18 years or something like that until I retired.

MB: Ok.

FB: But at the time we lived at Madison Street.

EB: *(Indistinguishable)* We lived at Oneida Street.

FB: We lived on Oneida Street. That was 55 miles one way, I used to commute. Mrs. Alexander got me the job at Vint Hill Station.

MB: Ok.

FB: And I was traveling from Madison Street...no, Oneida Street, which is on the other side of Washington. And then when I got the job, I cut mileage down, I stayed there until they

decided to send me back to Washington, across from the Pentagon, and I transferred from the Pentagon to Bolling Air Force Base.

MB: Oh, ok...

FB: And then I was at the Air Force base, and I stayed there until I retired in 1967, that's when we moved here, that's when we had the house built here.

MB: Did you rent a house in the area before you built this house?

FB: Yes.

MB: Can you tell me a little about that?

EB: *(Clarifies question to FB)*

FB: You mean here?

MB: Yes, here in Gainesville.

FB: Oh, we didn't rent a house in Gainesville.

MB: Oh, ok. So, 1967 you have this house built, because it was closer to your church, is that correct?

FB: And job.

MB: Ok, can you tell me about how you came to that church?

FB: Well...

MB: And what church was it?

FB: I had it built. The Church of the Blessed Trinity in Centreville, Virginia. And I was pastor there, and I'm still pastor there. So, we built the church. Why would I buy a house in D.C. when my church is in Centreville. I decided to get out here and be closer to my church and job, just up the road.

(Recording ends at 5:35)

MB: Ok, we are back and we are going to clarify how the Brown family came to the Carver Road area.

EB: Reverend Brown, who is my father, not only had his church that he established in 1961 in the Centreville area, he also had a mission. And a mission is something outside of a physical church building, with Miss Carter, she lived here and had a senior residence home. Certain Sundays of the month, we would come once every month, to render service for the seniors. And then in conversation, when it was coming for time for us to move, my parents had looked around in the Centreville area, but they didn't find anything suitable that they cared to come

to. And so, during conversation with Miss Carter, they asked if she had any property to sell. And at that time, she didn't have property, but she had her brother, whose name is Charles Tyler, to contact him, and see if he had any property. After contacting Mr. Carter, Mr. Tyler, we come to find out that he was the husband of one of the wives that was in our church fellowship. We weren't aware of that until we met him. And then we found out that they were members of a church that my father and mother fostered. To be straight, they were birthed from my parents' home church.

MB: Oh, ok.

EB: There's the home church and the church that sprung off of it, membership of the church that was sprung off from the home church.

MB: Ok.

EB: Then that's how Mr. Tyler said he did have property, and he set up meetings for my parents to talk about where the property was or how much they wanted.

MB: Oh, that makes sense. And what was it like when you first moved here? What was your welcome into the community like? Or reception like? And how did you form ties with other residents?

FB: I had no problem with the people. No problem. The road was muddy, and it was no cement road. And that's when Mrs. Brown.... (*indistinguishable*)

EB: Not quite. Well the first thing you notice when you come from Washington where there's street lights on every corner, and you come to this where the lights go out, it was very dark. (*Laughter*) That was the first thing you notice when you come from Washington. On the very first day, I'll never forget, Mr. Charles Moore, that's right here at the brown home at the end of our drive, his children, Sharlene Moore, Patty Moore, Junior Moore, came up the middle of the road, and they sort of was our welcome committee. Because we didn't know anybody. And the first thing they said was, do you all have any children? And so, they were around my age and my younger brother. That was our welcome to the neighborhood committee, like I said we didn't really learn anyone else until that September when we started going to school, but our first neighbors to come greet us were the family, the children of Mr. Charles and Mary Moore.

YK: My cousins.

EB: So that's how the relationship is. We're hooking it up here (*Laughter*).

MB: That makes sense! What schools did you go to here?

EB: My older brother and I started at the old Marstella School, it's now the Manassas Baptist Church but it was Marsteller when we came along. And we attended 8th grade there, 9th to high school was the old Stonewall High School on Loman Drive. That school has been renamed Stonewall Middle now, but back in our day, it was Stonewall High School on Loman Drive.

MB: Ok so when we were at Deacon Dade's house, we talked about how the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church was a community hub. Where was your community hub within Gainesville?

EB: We...as a family, I don't think we had a hub. We were very friendly with the neighbors, but we really didn't...because there was no real hub going on during the time, until the Gainesville Association started, that's when we got, became a part of a neighborhood, because that involved... I don't know if I'm going off script...

MB: That's ok!

EB: Like my father was about to say, this road that you see here is not what it was when we came here in 1967. It was, when you came off (Route) 29/211, there was a drop. There was no curb. It was like a drop. And then you proceeded on to the highway. And a year or so after we got here, my mom said, because my older brother and I had to physically walk out to the highway, up 29/211, so my mom, she was like the spokesperson, she said, oh no, my children are not going to continue to do that. So, in order to get the attention of the county, she had to go through with other persons and take a survey of how many children were on what is Carver Road now, the present Carver Road. And after taking that and presenting it to whoever was responsible for it, then that's when the improvement of the highway came. That's when the school busses came, but they had to elevate it coming up because that drop was too steep for even a school bus to come down.

(YK requests a pause to share an anecdote unrelated to Floyd Brown, recording stops at 6:06)

MB: Ok, we are back. I'd like to ask about how you came to know about the history of The Settlement during your time living in Gainesville.

FB: Well, I don't know about too many personal....

(Recording stops at 0:25).

MB: Ok, and we are back. I'd like to ask you what it was like as an outsider coming into the community, learning the history of The Settlement, what you heard from your neighbors about the history of the land, or if you did a title search, what you found out about the predominantly African American nature of the area?

FB: I think when they sold Hopewell, that's when we got into the history of how many negroes were in this area.

MB: Can you tell me more about that?

FB: No, I don't know too much.

MB: Ok, that's fine!

FB: I want to say this, I was a person to mind my own business. So, I didn't run into people's houses, and people didn't run in to ours, not even to borrow a cup of coffee. The first people I

met were Mrs. and Mr. Tyler and them, and the Graysons, and the Moores, they lived next door to me.

MB: And were these family's that had been here a long time?

FB: Yes, we had just moved in and they came to welcome us. But I wasn't the person who ran to the next person's house. I minded my business, I spoke, and things like that, and I did preach at the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church now and again, I got to know a Reverend Smith, he was across the road, I preached at his church, and Mr. Pye of course, he was at Mount Olive of course but (*Indistinguishable*)

EB: Mount Pleasant.

FB: Mount Pleasant. And I came to preach at his church up here, so that's how, I've always been a person to mind my business (*Laughter*). So I... didn't...

MB: That's ok.

EB: I think our association....

FB: My wife met the people, she was the talker. I wasn't the talker (*Laughter*).

EB: Like before stated, our first initial knowledge was through the title search for the deed. After that, it was more so when we as children started meeting our neighbors, that whatever knowledge we learned from that, it came from the children, and then through the process of time, probably more came about the establishment that when the Hopewell development came along. Between that and the road projects is when the Gainesville Association was established and my mother was the treasurer of that, so therefore she was able to talk to the neighbors and get more familiar. And I don't think not too many neighbors on Carver Road were a part of that association, I think the relatives on the 29 end (Rt 29 part of town), the Burkes, and that is when we gained more knowledge of the Gainesville area. Not just Carver Road, but from the whole Gainesville, that was the Fieldsons, the Moores, the Graysons came in there, I mean they were not only here on Carver Road, but across on 29 that we got to know more the history and the founding families of this area.

YK: It was called Gainesville Citizens in Action.

EB: Oh yeah, it was called something like that, yeah.

MB: Can you tell me a little more about that group and why it was formed, and what sort of things the Gainesville Citizens in Action did?

EB: From what I know of, probably the bus project, and then they became an association where the schools were established, and they would help through the backpack program, that was more of a recent agenda, I don't know too much about when it was first established, the projects they really worked on then. At one time, they were trying to widen 29/211, and they were trying to take Mr. Fields, who is at the beginning of the highway, they were trying to take some more of his property and there was a piece of land that was right across, there was a clearing

there. And so the Gainesville Association stepped up and, because I think they wanted to do a commercial area where they could bring trucks and park it, and anything that would deface the property, that's when the Gainesville Citizens in Action would take a step to block them from really degrading this particular area.

MB: Ok, ok.

EB: So we learned more as we lived here and got to know our neighbors. Because, like my father was saying, he's a pastor, we were going, going, going, going all the time, we got to learn people more as we came in contact with them, that's when we got to learn more about the history, we started talking and then they would tell us things, we didn't know anything about this area at all.

MB: Sure.

YK: And in school too. Her oldest brother, Floyd, was instrumental in starting a singing group with us kids in high school. It was called the Northern Virginia Majestic Choir. And Floyd started that group. That was kids from out here on 29, Carver Road, Old Carolina Road, up on Waterfall Road, all through there. We were all Stonewall Jackson kids at first, then it branched out to some kids from up in Marshall I think it was, what's that other area... the plains?

EB: Rectortown?

YK: Rectortown, all through there. And made connections, you know, the kids would be going to church and they'd meet each other. But Floyd was the one who called us one day into the choir room at school and said I want to start this group. He said, I know you think you can't sing, but you all can sing, and you've got voices, you can sing. And he started it and had us singing, and like you saw on some of Deacon Dade's tapes, the gospel songs, we sang gospel songs and it was great. And they went around to the different churches and locations and all that. And they stayed in existence for quite a while, and it was great, but it was all because of Floyd.

MB: Ok...

YK: And it was another way for our church and our group and our community to connect with each other.

MB: Ok. What other sorts of ways were people connected? I've heard a lot about the church, were there any local sports? Any fairs or carnivals? I'm trying to think of other examples. I'm wondering in what other ways would there be a cross-pollination?

EB: I would say mostly through school. And we'd have neighborhood events, but because we were on 2 acres, my younger brother Eric and the boys in his age group, they would play football on the front acre. So, it was more or less mingling as a neighborhood, but not a titled neighborhood event. Like a carnival on Carver Road or anything like that, it was association as the kids got together and got to know each other.

MB: Ok, that's right. And you mentioned neighborhood events, I missed if you said that there were neighborhood events or if you said the neighborhood events were kids meeting.

EB: Just kids meeting, everybody came to our front yard to play football.

MB: Any lawn parties? I heard something about lawn parties?

YK: We had lawn parties and everybody was invited and welcome if they wanted to attend. Now when we had our bake sales and yard sales, up at Mount Pleasant, you could count on the Browns putting their order in for dinners and all that. They'd come out. Mrs. Brown would call and say I'm ordering so and so amount of dinners, and we'd have them ready. One way or another, she would come out or would send one of the kids, or Mr. Brown would come out, and we'd get it. And so, we would all connect.

FB: I would sit on that rock down there often and watch people go by and wave to them.

EB: Yes, yes, he did.

MB: Very neat.

FB: Yeah, those two rocks down there, I'd sit and wave to people.

YK: That's what his son Eric would say, you could sit in the neighborhood where everybody knows your name. You know, and you'd be comfortable, you know. And like he said, he minded his own business. Whatever he saw, if it was something that wasn't quite kosher, you didn't hear it from Reverend Brown. You didn't hear it from Mrs. Brown. Whatever went on, went on. If anything went on, it wasn't nothing from the Brown house. Everybody minded their own business, did their own thing, the kids communicated with each other and loved each other and worked with each other, and you know, where was your first job?

EB: I was department, I was a federal government worker down in D.C.

YK: And how many years was it? She just retired.

EB: 41 years. I've been retired six, going on seven. Like I said, for us, for us not to be kin and relatives with anyone, we were new kids on the block, we were really well received. We didn't, like I said, from day one when the neighbors came and welcomed us, we were right in the community. It's not like we said, why'd you bring us down here, nobody likes us, we never felt that. They took us right in from the very first day that we moved in. Because there weren't really, you see a whole lot of homes now, but there weren't that many, and we didn't know the children of the area until school came, and that's when we learned where everybody else lived, but from that first day when the neighbors came up and said, do you have any children, they threw us right in to the neighborhood. It wasn't like they said, oh, there are those D.C. people.

MB: Ok...

EB: They really received us well.

MB: That's great! Well, I'd like to wrap up by asking both of you (*EB and FB*) to describe some of the changes that you've seen in living here. I know we talked about the road paving, we talked about the housing development, what other sorts of things have you witnessed?

FB: Well we had problems with the mailbox, not a mailbox....

EB: She said talk about the changes.

FB: This is a change. When the mailbox...

EB: Post office box.

FB: Yeah well, at that time, segregation was kind of bad. And they asked her (*his wife, Marjorie*), why nobody else had a mailbox, why did we need one. She just told them, she wanted one. She was instrumental in getting a mail box in the post office down here. At that time, segregation was pretty rough.

MB: I see, so she did end up getting the postal box?

FB: Yes.

EB: No, they wanted a post office box and my mother wasn't having it. She wanted her mail delivered down here.

MB: Ah, thank you. That makes sense.

EB: So, they....

FB: Is that right? Are you sure?

EB: I'm positive, we never had a post office box. Momma wouldn't have it. And that's why we started getting our mail delivered. Momma never went to the post office...

FB: She did the first time, and she asked that question and she didn't get it. When they called and told her one was open, she didn't get it. But she did go up there.

EB: Well she might have went up there to find out how to get the mail system, you're going to remember how the mail was delivered but I know she did not want a post office box. She wanted actual mail delivery. But other changes, the Gainesville area itself has changed. When we first came to the Gainesville area, and I don't know how you define it, where the railroad is, there was only five stations. We'd call Gainesville the gas station because there was an Exxon, a Shell, and then it was another station from that, and I think it was two Exxons in Gainesville, so Gainesville was mostly made of five gas stations I believe at the time.

YK: And two little stores, Phil's Market...

EB: Phil's Market! And the post office was right down at the railroad track.

YK: We had to go to Manassas to go to the grocery store.

EB: So, all these stores that have come in the area, the giant, I think the first fast food, our first big excitement was a McDonalds. And when the McDonalds came, we said, oh they're going to come through now, because once you have a McDonalds, you are going to get something else. So, that whole first area where the train track is, five stores, you see it's Gateway, sometimes I...

YK: Patients First, I was like oh my gosh, it's a Patients First in Gainesville.

EB: To look back and see all these...sometimes I have to go up 29/211 just to find out what's opened, I live in Manassas but the strip from the railroad track to probably Warrenton was just land. So all this development, Harris Teeter's, Gateway, all these subdivisions, of course Hopewell, that development came before Hopewell came, I think the biggest impact was like, you look back and say I wish I took a picture when I first came up here, all that, I want to say the road was even different. Was it a double highway?

YK: It was a single highway. When I was a girl and later on, they made it a double.

EB: But like I said, that whole area was different.

YK: The Hopewell Landing, and all that out by the church, and further out, that was owned by the Lucas family. That was a whole big development, all that land out there was just woods, like I said. But the kids, we could walk down the street, walk down the road and ride our bicycles. And be comfortable and all that. It's just amazing, all the development.

EB: I think the impact of all the stores coming to this area...because one time, Gainesville wasn't even on the map. And I remember the first time I heard the newscast say something about Gainesville, I was like OOH! Gainesville made it on the news! (*Laughter*) Channel 4 news or Channel 5 news, we're on the map now!

YK: Those orange state trucks were the biggest things going around, I was like, oh, ok, fine!

FB: And there was that church up here.

YK: Yes.

FB: Not Mount Pleasant, the other church.

YK: The Church of God and Prophecy, which was at one time, you didn't go because you were in D.C., it was called the Shady Inn.

FB: Yeah, the dance hall.

YK: The dance hall.

FB: Where the devil came up from the floor! (*Laughter*)

YK: Deacon Dade told her about that rumor! (*Laughter*)

MB: How funny. So, it's a pervasive rumor! (*Laughter*)

YK: I think some of the parents must have said that to keep some of the younger ones out of there.

FB: I was told that my mother and my aunt used to go there on Sundays for dancing.

MB: Oh! Really!

FB: And that Sunday, this thing come up from the middle of the floor, and everybody who was having a good time, they ran out, jumped out the window.

YK: Wow! (*Laughter*) So your aunt told you that?

FB: Yeah!

YK: Did your aunt come from Centreville and come up here?

FB: No, she was raised in Centreville, all my family...

YK: You see, everybody... (*indistinguishable*) She's going to be talking on the phone on Friday to Mary Anne Settle, and she can talk more about that too.

MB: Wow now I've got a good story to ask about.

YK: That was hilarious. I'm telling you I think some those other ones told them that to keep them away from that place.

MB: That's so funny!

YK: And her Aunt Flora was selling chicken dinners and all that.

FB: Oh, yeah!

YK: The Rosses, the Carters, Jacksons...

MB: That's great. You mentioned Phil's Market along with the gas stations. Could you tell me a little more about that?

EB: It's what you call a general store. That's the only kind of store that you had. A five and dime, general store, if you need something right away, you could go to Phil's market, or like Yolanda said, you had to go to Warrenton or to Manassas, it was not like a 7-11, it was a local store. It didn't have everything, you couldn't go shopping, if you needed milk, or if you need eggs, or ice cream, it was there. Like I said this post office right here now was down in Gainesville where the railroad tracks are, you had the post office and you had Phil's market was next to it.

MB: Ok. Well that's great. That wraps up I think the most applicable questions. If there's anything else that you'd like to share about your time in Gainesville, the floor is open, if not, we can wrap up. But I want to give you this opportunity if there is anything you'd like to share.

FB: The school was built.

MB: Tell me more.

EB: We didn't ever think we would have a school right in our yard.

MB: Sure!

EB: Even though that school is there, my parents haven't had any trouble. Any kind of kids doing crazy things to cars, that kind of thing. And we know they are there, we can hear them playing during recess. But for a school to be there, I'm thinking you would hear noise, you really don't! So that's something different. But the access to that school is really coming through Hopewell, or is that Somerset?

YK: Somerset.

EB: So, the access really isn't coming through Carver Road, they thought that was going to be an issue. With the school busses coming through here to try to get in there. So, it's just the back of it is to Carver Road, but the entrance is through the Somerset development.

YK: What my brother Nathan was trying to let them know about is that we, the people driving their cars through here, there are so many people coming over from Somerset to jog, because it's so relaxing, it's just so comfortable, it's a nice peaceful atmosphere for the kids to get out and play, and nice neighborhood where people take pride in their yards and do whatever they got to do. We were just trying to make sure that this neighborhood stay comfortable. That's the best way we can put it. We understand that development is going to come, but we, you know, we don't want to sell if we don't want to sell. Why be forced to do it? We want to make sure and be comfortable in the atmosphere in the area.

MB: Sure.

YK: All these years, from 1967, all up to now, that's a lot of years!

FB: Only problem is that the road is, we're trying to get the speed limit cut down.

MB: Oh, I see. Is that Carver Road you're talking about?

FB: Yeah. They speed on this road.

EB: That came though once they brought the black top through. Before they did that you wasn't speeding nowhere!

MB: I can't imagine.

EB: And now that's really because we've got more activity with 29 getting so full, sometimes they try to cut through, especially if they coming down 29, they try to cut through Thoroughfare Road and Carver Road to get back on 29 further on down. Like I said, they're trying to get

some speed traps or get the speed limit cut back down to 25 because that's the way it was. So that, because you do have children that's hit, along this way we want to keep things safe.

YK: And I don't want to keep interrupting, I know that you're doing the interview, with Reverend Brown and his daughter and all, but because of the us being so sincere about wanting to make this area a settlement, well it is a settlement, wanting this area to be declared a historical area, is because I did a small little speech or something back with the people down at the county building last year, and I said, years ago, our people were promised 40 acres and a mule, and we never got that. Ok, but when they were allowed to purchase land, they started raising their families, they were proud and they were people that were farmers, they were blacksmiths, they were nurses, as far as what we call homemade nurses, taking care of their master's children and raising their kids in their nurseries and their homes and all that. Cooks and all that. And they have now since kept their homes, and they have raised their children up to be government workers, people who have been proud as far as their foundation, standing on the footsteps and the shoulders of these wonderful people who have come before us. And they want to make this their legacy. They want to keep their land and keep it established as their land. And if they do choose to sell it, it's when they want to sell it, not when someone is forcing us to sell it. So that's what we were trying to push and make sure when, and I don't have any grandchildren yet, but when my grandchildren do come along, I can point out and say, my great-great-great grandmother planted flowers in this yard, and I can come and stick my toes in my brother's yard. I don't have a yard now myself, but you got a yard! And that's wonderful! That's just great! A foundation of Mount Pleasant has been a staple, because Mount Pleasant was established in 1877. And when people have come here, although they weren't born here, they've come here and dug in some roots.

FB: Like my church now...

EB: The church was built in 1961.

FB: The land that my church is on was first...free slaved in this area (*phone rings*).

MB: Really? (*Phone rings*).

FB: And the Harris's, Robinsons, from my church on down were the first free slaves. My grandmother used to take care of the Civil War veterans who were wounded (*indistinguishable*).

MB: Wow. Can you state the name of that church, for the record?

FB: The Church of the Blessed Trinity.

MB: Ok, in Centreville.

FB: Yeah.

MB: Ok, perfect.

FB: Where Gatepost Estates is.

EB: We were there first and they built around us.

MB: Ok, ok I see. Ok. Well I thank you both for speaking with us today! Ma'am for the record can you state your name and the spelling?

EB: My name is Ezora, E-Z-O-R-A Brown.

MB: Thank you.

FB: They gave her a Zorro sword for graduation, you know Zorro?

MB: Yes!

EB: Back in the day, Ezora was hard to think about so they gave me a nickname, Zorro. My senior year, I got a sword for a gag gift (*Laughter*).

MB: Ok, I understand. Ok well I thank you both for agreeing to speak with us, this has been enlightening. Thank you so much.

EB: We are happy to help!

(Recording ends at 26:38)

Genealogy

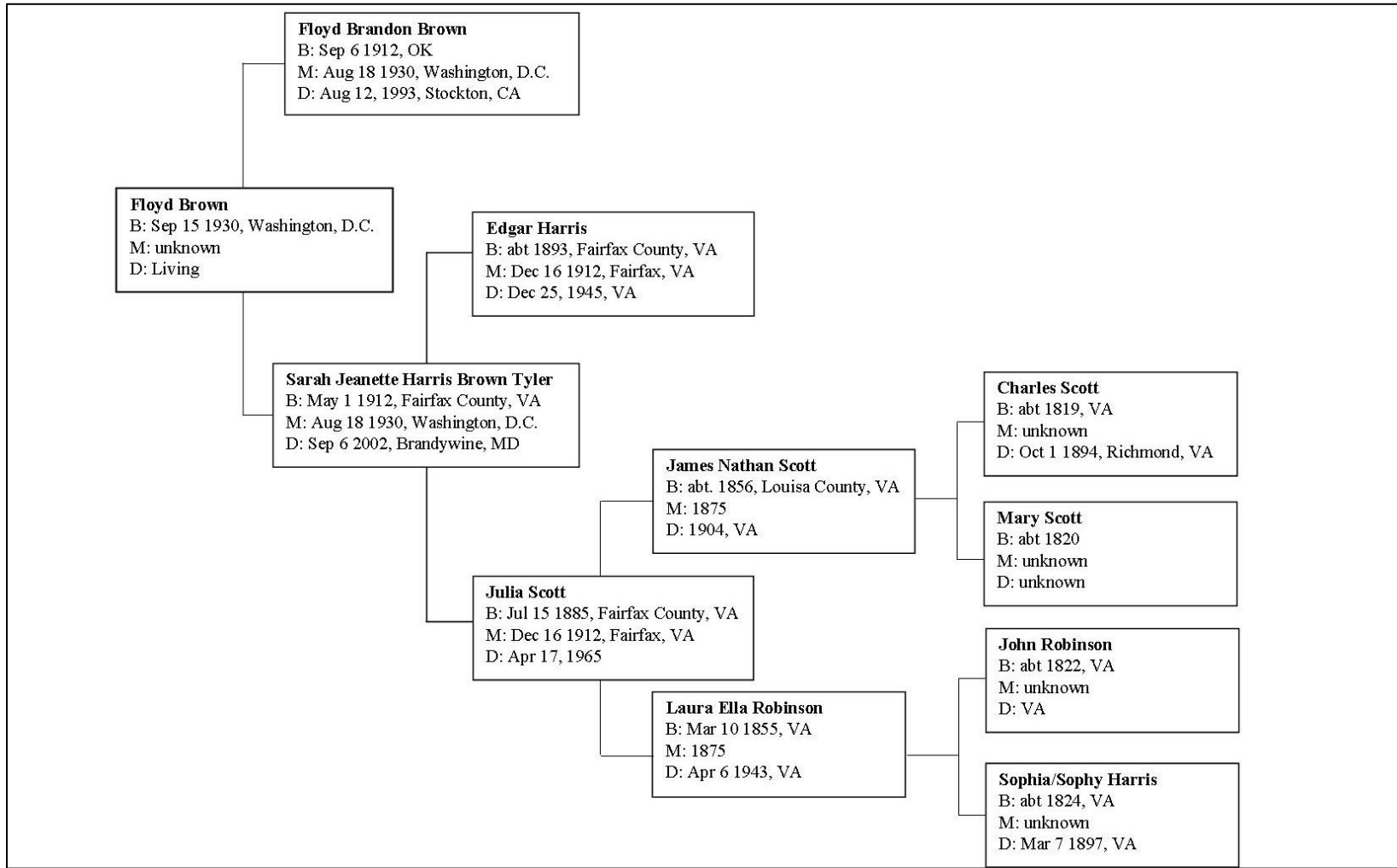


Figure 2: Brown Family Genealogy (Ancestry.com 2020b).

Chain of Title

The Floyd and Marjorie Brown House, 7411 Carver Road

Year Constructed: 1966

Type	Book	Page	Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes/Comments
Deed	403	324	8/31/1966	Charles "Charlie" W. Tyler	Reverend Floyd B. Brown, Marjorie A. Brown	2 Parcels, A1 and A2
Decree, Deed, and Plat	170	53	9/16/1953	Sadie T. Pye et al. (Complainants)	Charlie W. Tyler and Richard Tyler (Defendants)	Adjustment of boundaries of the land of Sylvia Tyler, 19 acres
Trust	78	499	9/19/1923	Sylvia Tyler	H. Thornton Davis	Adjoining lands of Blight, Peters, Perry, etc. About 19 acres.
Deed	61	228	8/08/1911	William Coates, Julia Coates	Sylvia Tyler	8 acres, 3 rods, 4 poles, same as DB 34 445-8
Deed	54	369	11/11/1905	Spencer Lee	Sylvia Tyler	9 acres, give or take, reserving also ¼ acre "surrounding the graveyard with perpetual right of ingress and egress." No other deed referenced
Deed	34	445	12/21/1883	C. E. Tyler , E. E. Meredith (Assignee)	William Coates	Bounded by lot numbers 5, 6, 19 and 18, totaling 8 Acres, 3 rods, 4 poles. Property of C. E. Tyler, bankrupt.

Mary Anne Settle

*Biography*¹⁶

Mary Anne Settle was born on November 7, 1943¹⁷, in Gainesville, Virginia, to Zulean Golden Turner Ross and Clem Edward Ross. Mary Anne was raised in Gainesville, along with her older siblings, in a house owned by her aunt, Flora Dean. Ms. Settle's father, Clem, lived and worked in Paris, Virginia, as well as Upperville, Virginia. Later, he moved to Gainesville, Virginia. He worked at Wallace and Monroe Drug Store in Falls Church, Virginia during her childhood, and her mother primarily stayed at home raising her children. She describes a happy childhood, with the freedom to play in the neighborhood with other children. She attended McCrea Elementary School and Antioch-McCrea School, both in Gainesville. She also attended Jenny Dean High School located in Manassas, Virginia (J. Hudson, personal communication 2023). Ms. Settle's uncle and aunt, John and Flora Dean, ran the Shady Inn Dance Hall, located next door to the house she grew up in.

During her childhood, the family attended the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, and Ms. Settle would occasionally attend Sunday school at the church. However, she attended regularly with her family the Way of the Cross Church, pastored by Randolph Dade (building formerly known as Shady Inn Dance Hall). Her teen years and adult life was pastored by Bishop Dennis Carter and Pastor Artilla Carter, whom had taken over the building and renamed the church as Golden Church of God of Prophecy. Ms. Settle's mother, Zulean Golden Turner Ross became the "mother" of the church. Throughout the years, Ms. Settle attended the Homecoming Services for Mount Pleasant Baptist Church to enjoy the service and revisit with friends (J. Hudson, personal communication 2023).

As an adult, Ms. Settle later married Mr. Sherman C. Settle, Jr., whose parents moved to Gainesville, Virginia, and opened a restaurant called Pleasant Pines. Sherman and Mary had four children: Sonja Settle (Gray) in 1963, Lauren A. Settle (Buckles) in 1964, Julia Settle (-Strange) in 1970, and Bryant K. Settle in 1971. Ms. Settle and family moved to Jeffersonton, Virginia, in 1986 and from there in 1998 she and Mr. Settle moved to Manassas, Virginia. They resided there until 2005 when they moved to Culpeper, Virginia. Mr. Settle passed away in May 2015 and Ms. Settle continues to reside in Culpeper.

¹⁶ This section was updated with information from relative of Mary Anne Settle (Relative of Mary Anne Settle, personal communication 2021). It was also requested by said relative that the genealogy section be removed from this chapter.

¹⁷ Provided from relative of Mary Anne Settle by personal communication in 2021.

Transcript

Interviewee: Mary Anne Settle (MAS)

Time/Location: Friday, February 14, 2020/ Phone Interview, Fredericksburg, Virginia and Culpeper, Virginia.

Interviewer: Melissa Butler (MB), Architectural Historian (Field Director) (Dovetail Cultural Resource Group)

[Commencing at Digital Recording Time Stop: 00:00:11]

Melissa Butler (MB): Today is Friday, February 14, 2020. My name is Melissa Butler and I work for Dovetail Cultural Resource Group and I'm working on The Settlement Oral History Project. Today I will be interviewing Ms. Mary Anne Settle.¹⁸ Ms. Settle, thank you so much for agreeing to interview with me today. I'm going to begin with asking you some basic biography questions and then we will move on to your childhood and The Settlement. So for the record, can you tell me your full name and can you spell your last name?

Mary Anne Settle (MAS): My name is Mary Anne Ross Settle and my last name is S-E-T-T-L-E.

MB: Do you know why your parents chose the name Mary Anne?

MAS: I think it was after my Godmother.

MB: Very nice. Did you go by any nicknames growing up?

MAS: No.

MB: No, ok. And where were you born?

MAS: I was born in Gainesville, Virginia.

MB: Gainesville, Virginia. And what is your date of birth?

MAS: I was born in 1943.¹⁹

MB: Ok, thank you so much. What are your parents' names?

MAS: Excuse me?

MB: What are your parents' names?

¹⁸ Note, interviewer originally called Ms. Settle by "Mrs. Settles" in the beginning of the interview.

¹⁹ Ms. Settle was born on November 7, 1943 (Relative of Mary Anne Settle, personal communication 2021).

MAS: Oh, my mothers' name was Zulean Golden,²⁰ and my dad's name was Clem Edward, and Ross was their last name.

MB: Thank you. Could you please spell your mother's maiden name?

MAS: Her maiden name was Turner, T-U-R-N-E-R.

MB: Thank you so much. Were they also born in Gainesville?

MAS: No.

MB: No, ok. Do you know when they moved to Gainesville?

MAS: I don't know the dates.

MB: Ok! That's totally fine. But it was before you were born, correct?

MAS: Oh yes.

MB: Perfect. And where do you currently reside?

MAS: I reside now in Culpeper, Virginia.

MB: Ok. And when did you move to Culpeper?

MAS: Hm, that's been a few years ago. I want to say in maybe like 2011 or maybe 2010.²¹

MB: Ok. Did you live in Gainesville up until that time or did you move around before that?

MAS: No, I moved around. I lived in Manassas for a while.

MB: Do you have any siblings?

MAS: Yes, I do have siblings. Two sisters that are still alive and two brothers.

MB: Would you say for the record what their names are?

MAS: One of my sisters is Gloria Walker, and one sister is Dorothy Jackson.

MB: Are you married?

MAS: I'm widowed.

MB: Ok thank you. Would you share your husband's name?

²⁰ Ms. Settle's mother's full name was Zulean Goldren Turn Ross and her father's full name was Clem Edward Ross (Relative of Mary Anne Settle, personal communication 2021).

²¹ Ms. Hudson suggests this occurred in 2004–2005 (Relative of Mary Anne Settle, personal communication 2021).

MAS: My husband was named Sherman Settle, Jr.²²

MB: And did he also grow up in Gainesville?

MAS: No he did not.

MB: How did you meet?

MAS: We met in Gainesville. His parents opened a restaurant in Gainesville and that's how we met.

MB: Oh! Would you mind telling me a little more about that? What was the restaurant?

MAS: I really don't know that much about it, but the name of the restaurant was Pleasant Pines, and they came to Gainesville and opened a business, and Sherman and I met later.

MB: Ok, great, thank you. And do you have any children?

MAS: I have four children.

MB: Four children, what are their names and when were they born?

MAS: My oldest daughter is named Sonja Gray and she was born in [19]63. My middle daughter is named Lori Buckles and she was born in [19]64, my youngest daughter is Julia Settle-Strange, and she was born in [19]70. My son is the youngest and he was born—his name is Bryant Settle, and Bryant was born in 1971.

MB: Ok great. Going back to your parents, when you were growing up, what were their occupations?

MAS: Excuse me?

MB: What did your parents do for a living in Gainesville?

MAS: My mother was a stay at home mom, and she sometimes did day's work. And my dad worked at a drug store, Wallace and Monroe drug store.²³

MB: Wallace and Monroe, was that in Gainesville?

MAS: No that was in Falls Church, Virginia.

MB: Ok, ok. Where did you go to school as a child?

²² Ms. Hudson noted Ms. Settle's husband's full name was Sherman C. Settle, Jr. (Relative of Mary Anne Settle, personal communication 2021).

²³ Ms. Hudson clarified that Mr. Settle worked at this location as an adult (Relative of Mary Anne Settle, personal communication 2021). Refer to page 54 for more information.

MAS: I went to what was called McCrea Elementary School in Gainesville, Virginia.

MB: Ok, and then?

MAS: And then I went to Antioch-McCrea School, which was in Gainesville, Virginia.²⁴

MB: And how did you get there?

MAS: We were bussed, there was a bus.

MB: Ok. Can you describe what your household was like growing up?

MAS: I had a nice childhood, like I said my siblings were older, so I was kind of like everyone's baby. So, my childhood was good. I can remember that we did a lot of... there were a lot of games, we did a lot of outside play. And since it was kind of rural, you learned to play amongst yourselves.

MB: Sure. I heard from some other folks that you could just run and play in the woods sort of between everyone's property, was that your experience?

MAS: Wherever, yeah, because it wasn't the Gainesville that's there now, you understand.

MB: Sure, sure. I heard that some families had gardens and would make special dishes from their gardens. Did your family have one?

MAS: Oh yeah, we had gardens and kind of like where they raised the hogs, you know, the pigs, so they had their own meat, and that type of thing, yes, we had a lot of that.

MB: Very neat! Any signature dishes in your household?

MAS: Meaning what, honey?

MB: Signature dishes, special foods that you would get excited when it would be made.

MAS: No, not really. My mother did the light rolls, so we were very excited when it was time to make rolls. Homemade rolls, hot bread, stuff like that.

MB: Very neat. So, with the garden and the pigs, did you have any chores as a child?

MAS: I was the baby, so I got away with nothing (*Laughter*) so I didn't really have the chores.

MB: (*Laughter*) You lucked out there!

MAS: Yeah, I did.

²⁴ Ms. Hudson noted that Ms. Settle also went to Jenny Dean High School located in Manassas, Virginia (Relative of Mary Anne Settle, personal communication 2021).

MB: Did you go to church growing up?

MAS: I did, I went to the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church for Sunday school, I did that, that was the beginning, and then I went to the church that I now attend, the Golden Church of God the Prophecy.

MB: Ok. Do you remember about how old you were when you transitioned between Mount Pleasant Baptist Church and the church you attend now?

MAS: Maybe a teenager?

MB: Ok, do you remember any specific reason for changing churches?

MAS: No, except my mother, it was my mother's choice. She went to church there so we did too. It became our home church.

MB: Ok. Do you remember any differences between the types of services the two churches would have?

MAS: Um, I can't say, maybe the, I'm just trying to think on that. As a child, I didn't notice that much differences, but maybe I noticed... I really couldn't tell you a difference, difference.²⁵

MB: Sure, that's ok. But your family...once you made the switch, you stayed at that church, correct?

MAS: Yes, that's the church I attend now.

MB: Sorry, can you repeat the name of the church one more time?

MAS: The church that I now attend?

MB: Yes, that's correct.

MAS: It's the Golden Church of God of Prophecy. And the Golden part was for my mother, it was my mother's middle name.

MB: Oh!

MAS: She became the mother of the church, and in her honor, they named that after she was deceased.

MB: Oh, that's very interesting! So, what does it mean to be the mother of a church?

²⁵ Ms. Hudson noted that further information can be found on the Biography page for this section (see page 54).

MAS: That was just kind of like, you set the example for the younger people in church, that kind of thing. And you, you know, that's the only thing that I can see. You set the example, or you were looked up to, to, if there were issues, you worked along with the pastor.

MB: Ok, ok. So, she was a pastor's helper, aide, of some sort and set an example. This is very interesting. So, when your family started attending church, it was called Church of God of Prophecy, correct?

MAS: Actually, before that, we had another minister and the church was, the very first church in that building was, I think it was the Way of the Cross, the Way of the Cross Church.

MB: Ok and is this church in the building where the dance hall was or am I misunderstanding?

MAS: No, you're correct. It was a dance hall prior to becoming a church. Then the building was just there, and it was opened as a church.

MB: Ok, I understand. Ok so now I'll start asking a couple more questions about the building since we're on that. To your knowledge, was there any renovation work on the inside or something like that between when it was a dance hall to fit it out to be a church, or did it feel sort of like a multi-use space? Can you describe the interior for me?

MAS: Well actually, the building itself where we had the services and I guess the dance hall itself was just a big open room, with maybe some benches around the wall or something like that. But when we opened it as a church, the minister that opened it as church just had regular chairs, you know, he didn't have the pews and all that, he just had regular chairs, individual seating.

MB: Ok, so previously when I first called you, you mentioned that you had some secondhand information about the building as a dance hall. What you remember hearing about it?

MAS: Well, the only thing I knew was that it was a building and that's where they had dances. It was a dance hall. And my aunt owned the building. My aunt and her husband.

MB: Oh! What were their names?

MAS: Well his name was John Dean, D-E-A-N, and her name was Flora.

MB: Flora Dean, ok. What sort of people were they? What do you remember about them?

MAS: About, excuse me dear, honey?

MB: About your aunt and uncle, Flora and John.

MAS: Actually, John was deceased so I never met him. And my aunt Flora, that was my mom's sister, so she was like a second mother to me.

MB: Oh ok.

MAS: So, you know.

MB: Fond memories?

MAS: Excuse me?

MB: I said, fond memories of her, is that true?

MAS: Yes, very fond.

MB: Very nice. That's neat that she ran the dance hall. I heard something that the dance hall burned in the early 1940s and was rebuilt, do you know anything about that?

MAS: Well no, other than what you just said, that's what I heard as well. I don't actually know when it burned and I don't know when it was rebuilt. Like I said, I was a child, so I didn't pay attention to those things that much.

MB: Sure.

MAS: But I did hear that.

MB: Sure. One more question for you, I heard a rumor when I was talking to some other folks that there's a story about the Devil coming up out of the floor...

MAS: *(Laughter)*

MB: Are you familiar with this?

MAS: I did hear that; I did hear that!

MB: Yeah?

MAS: I heard that rumor as well. Whether I can say yes that happened or no it did not happen, I cannot say that. But I did hear that.

MB: That's totally fine, it's interesting to hear what folklore has sprung up around the building. Interesting, interesting. Well thank you for talking about that. So your Aunt ran the dance hall, do you know the name of the minister who started it as a church?

MAS: The very first church?

MB: Yeah.

MAS: His name was Randolph Dade.

MB: Randolph Dade, ok.

MAS: He was the one who started the Way of the Cross church here in Gainesville.

MB: Ok, so in Gainesville, was there any... I don't want to say tension, but was it known who went to the Way of the Cross church and who went to Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, did people get along who went to the different churches?

MAS: Oh yes, we've always gotten along. We were like sisterly churches; we've always gotten along.

MB: Ok, did you come together to put on any community events? Was your church involved with homecoming at all?

MAS: So, we never stopped attending Mount Pleasant, when they would have homecomings we would go. Not always as a church, but as individuals, you understand?

MB: Yeah.

MAS: My sisters and I, we always went. And we never felt...It was always friendly between the two churches, and people in Gainesville, we always got along. You went to each other's houses, we were like family, you know.

MB: Yeah, yeah that makes sense. What other sort of neighborhood events would happen? Were there lawn parties, or block parties, or anything like that?

MAS: Oh, they used to have baseball games and different things happening, but like I said I was young and I didn't go to all those things. I didn't do that. That would be my older sisters.

MB: Oh, I understand. Ok. So, you were the one running through the woods and playing games, and they were doing the organized things? Is that accurate?

MAS: Sometimes I did, sometimes I was allowed to go to the (*indistinguishable*) houses and I would go down to... I had a good friend who was a Dade and I would go to her house, like I said, I didn't do the older things because I was younger.

MB: Ok. That makes sense. If your family was to take a trip out of Gainesville, where would you go and what would you do?

MAS: If we took a trip? I had an aunt who lived in Upperville, Virginia, and we visited her quite often. And an uncle who lived in Paris, Virginia, my dad's brother, and we went there quite often. Those are the things I remember.

MB: Ok, so when did you first leave Gainesville to go live somewhere else?

MAS: Oh...that must have been in [19]87.²⁶

MB: And why did you leave Gainesville at that time?

²⁶ Ms. Hudson noted this to have occurred in July 1986 (Relative of Mary Anne Settle, personal communication 2021).

MAS: Oh I moved to, we had a house built in Jeffersonton, Virginia, and I was married at that time. That was when I first moved away.

MB: What sort of changes have you noticed in Gainesville...well since you were born there, that's sort of a long-time span to talk about.

MAS: Yeah (*Laughter*).

MB: But can you speak to some of the development that's happened and feelings and conversations that you've heard around that?

MAS: Some of what, honey?

MB: So, Gainesville looks different today than it used to...

MAS: Oh, yeah, when I was growing up, I think there was a post office and a store, and that was... and the school like I told you about. But basically, Gainesville has developed, all of this is in later years, so. I remember that there was a food store, a grocery store, and a post office and... let me see. Post office, store, and that was about it. And the school that I attended.

MB: What was the name of the store? Was it Paul's?²⁷

MAS: I don't even remember. I don't remember what the name of it was. It was a little grocery store.

MB: That's ok. That's ok. So, I have a couple questions about the area as The Settlement. And I'm curious, what do you know about The Settlement and why it's called The Settlement? And what sort of history you know about the area.

MAS: I really don't know anything about it, to tell you the truth. I just remember seeing it on the paper that I guess, whoever had interviewed before, because I didn't realize it was called The Settlement until I saw that. I just knew it as Gainesville.

MB: Sure, that's ok. That's a valid point of view to hear, too, in understanding what level of knowledge of area history is common among people who lived here. So, that is totally valid. Do you remember anything about any cemeteries that were separate from the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church cemetery?

MAS: No, I don't.

MB: Ok, that's fine. Do you remember hearing anything about...So the house you grew up in. Do you remember hearing anything about that land or who used to own it?

MAS: From what I understand, the house I was born in and grew up in was my aunt's house. The one who owned the dance hall, she also owned the house that was next door. So that was her

²⁷ Henry Peterson noted that the store's name was Phil's (H. Peterson, personal communication 2023).

property. From what I understand, she and her husband bought the property, or her husband bought the property, from Mrs. Georgie Bonds, I believe her name was. From her and her husband. So, my Aunt owned the property that the church is on, the church I was telling you about, the Golden Church, and also the house next door, she owned that. And that's where I was born when I grew up in Gainesville.

MB: And is that the house you lived in until you got married and moved out?

MAS: Yes, let me see. I lived there through high school, and then I moved away. I moved to D.C.

MB: Oh, ok, neat. When did you move to D.C.? Was that in 1987?

MAS: Um, with one of my sisters, but that isn't relevant, really.

MB: Ok.

MAS: But basically, I stayed in the house in Gainesville.

MB: Ok, that makes sense, thank you. What do you know about your oldest ancestor that you can remember in your family? Did you ever hear stories growing up about your family roots?

MAS: Yeah, I knew my grandparents. I didn't know my dad's mom, other than by name and by pictures, and also his father, because they were deceased when I was born. But my mother's mom was still alive when I was born, so I knew her. She was Bell Turner.

MB: Could you say that name one more time?

MAS: Her name was Bell, B-E-L-L Turner, T-U-R-N-E-R. So, she was Bell Marshall Turner, she had been married, she was married twice.

MB: And this is asking you to go way back in your memory...

MAS: Yeah, I do remember her though, I do remember Grandma Bell.

MB: Do you remember where she might have been born?

MAS: No (*Laughing*). My other sisters would remember that.

MB: Ok, well I appreciate you stretching your memory there to pull some of those details. I'm looking over my list of questions and I'm wondering if there is anything that I haven't asked but that you know about the dance hall or the Golden Church of the Prophecy or growing up in Gainesville that you would like to share?

MAS: I can't think of anything, you know, it was, to me it was just a normal life.

MB: I understand. I appreciate you taking the time out of your morning to chat with me about this, it's helpful to get an understanding. Thank you.

MAS: Thank you.

MB: This concludes our interview.

Chain of Title

The Sherman and Mary Anne Settle House, 15048 Lee Highway

Year Constructed: ca. 1935

Type	Book/ Conveyance	Page	Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes/Comments
Deed	201810120074759		10/02/2018	Mortgage Equity Conversion Asset Trust 2011-1 by U. S. Bank National Associates as Co-Trustee	Kavta Estate, LLC	Parcel conveyed to Sherman C. Settle Jr. and Mary A. Settle, June 14, 1972. 0.91 acre.
Mortg	201807030048460		7/03/2018	Gloria Ellen Walker	Mortgage Equity Conversion Asset Trust	
Deed	1204	0877	2/01/1983	Sherman C. Settle, Jr. and Mary A. Settle	Gloria Walker Ellen	0.91 acre
Deed	639	185	7/14/1972	Emily C. & Kenneth Wilkins	Sherman C. Settle Jr and Mary A. Settle	0.91 acre. For \$10.00, the residue of the lot containing 4.746 acres, less 1) a parcel sold to Claude & Dorothy Jackson of approximately 1.0 acre in October 1967 and 2) a parcel conveyed to Sherman C. Settle, Jr. in June 1972 approximately 0.91 acre. Plat attached. (This property Flora Dean sold to Gloria Ellen Walker, "feme sole free from the rights of her husband" on Feb. 11, 1983, DB 1204, p. 877)
Deed	639	579	7/18/1972	Emily C. & Kenneth Wilkins	Flora E. Dean	2.836 acres.
Deed	410	537	6/25/1965	Emily C. & Kenneth Wilkins	Dennis & Artiller Carter	0.4787 acre
Deed	164	326	11/21/1952	Emily C. & Kenneth Wilkins	Flora Dean, widow	5.37 acres. For \$500... notes a plat made June 10, 1936 & also indicates that Emily Wilkins lives at 770 Dawson St, Bronx, NY in 1952. And on the next page, Wilkins sells back to Dean. No note of release on either deed

Type	Book/ Conveyance	Page	Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes/Comments
Deed	164	325	11/21/1952	Flora Dean, widow	Emily C. & Kenneth Wilkins	5.37 acres. For \$500... notes a plat made June 10, 1936 & also indicates that Emily Wilkins lives at 770 Dawson St, Bronx, NY in 1952. And on the next page, Wilkins sells back to Dean. No note of release on either deed
Mortg	131	339	5/19/1948	Flora Dean, widow	J. Jenkyn Davies and H. Thorton Davies, Trustees	for indebtedness... and to secure to Emily C. Wilkins of New York, the payment of \$2,500... the sum drawn by Flora with a note indicating monthly payments to Wilkins.
Mortg	126	328	7/25/1947	Flora Dean, widow	C.W. Carter and Stanley A. Owens, Trustees	5.37 acres. For a debt of \$3,000 to Peoples National Bank of Warrenton for a term of one year. Side note in margins indicated full release on Nov. 20, 1952.
Lis Pende ns	103	487	1/15/1940	Eva Turner, Plaintiff	John & Flora Dean, Defendants	Notice of pending litigation regarding the partnership of Eva Turner and John Dean, "under the style of Shady Inn," to be wound up and dissolved with an accounting of the monies Dean received with the 5.37-acre parcel of John & Flora Dean conveyed by deed of June 1936 to be held until judgement is rendered for such amount as may be due the plaintiff.
Deed	97	136	6/17/1936	Georgia Barnes, widow, et al.	Flora Dean (2nd party) and T. E. Didlake, Trustee (3rd), & George Baker, J. Dennis Khaker, J.H. Stauff/ partners in firm of George D. Baker & Sons (4th pt)	5.37 acres. For \$10... Dean takes over mortgage from Georgia Barnes and Raymond (her deceased husband) T.E. Didlake... being portion of the land conveyed to Georgia Barnes by M.B. Strother et al. also notes plat made April 10, 1936 by W.P. Whitmore with courses along lines of Alfred H. Strother, Randall, and highway.
Mortg	95	146	4/1/1936	Georgia Barnes, widow	T. E. Didlake, Trustee	14.6 acres. Per deed April 1, 1936, Barnes' mortgage 14.6 A tract to Didlake for \$146.49 note...

Type	Book/ Conveyance	Page	Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes/Comments
Deed	70	415	2/2/1918	M.B. Strother & wife, Evelina	Georgia Barnes of D.C. (3rd) & H. Thorton Davids, Trustee (2nd)	14.6 acres.
Deed	59	16-7	9/3/1909	Sandy Travers	M.B. Strother	½ interest
Mortg	53	280	11/28/1904	M.B. Strother & Sandy Travers	J.B.T. Thorton (financier)	Lot 2: 28+ acres
Deed	53	279	11/28/1904	W. N. Berry man	M.B. Strother & Sandy Travers	Containing 28 acres 3 rods, 31 poles... same more or less as seen in plat of Sept. 30, 1903.
Deed	53	174	9/15/1904	J.B.T. Thorton, Special Commr.	W.N. Berryman	By decree of Prince Wm County Circuit Ct on Oct. 12, 1901 in Chancery case of C.E. Jordan v. Demory et al. ... J.B.T. Thornton and AW Sinclair appointed special commrs. to sell land at public auction... sold on Oct. 6, 1902, Lot 2 to Berryman for \$243.13.
Deed/ Order	52	85-86	8/25/1903	T.E. Garrett, John White, Enoch Rector, & H.R. Bragg	J.C. & Oscar Demory	56.25 acres. In Chancery case of Jordan v. Demory, May Term 1901, Court ordered the division of real estate jointly owned by J.C. and Oscar Demory at the time of J.C.'s death (56.25 acres in Gainesville District adjoining R. Stokes) into two equal parts with respect to quantity and quality... Plat included.
Deed	37	473	15 June 1887	Eppa Hunton, Jr., Commr.	John C. & Oscar Demory	56 acres. For \$500... at decree of Circuit Ct in Chancery case of Thomas & Davis vs. Macrae... land adjacent lands of C.E. Tyler. Containing 56 acres.

Janet Robinson

Biography

Janet Robinson was born on January 26, 1957 in Alexandria, Virginia, to Mabel Marie Robinson and was named for the nurse that delivered her during a blizzard (Janet Robinson, personal communication 2020). Janet lived in Gainesville, Warrenton, Falls Church, and Centreville during her childhood and early teens, along with her siblings, on land owned by her great-grandmother, Mattie Robinson. Ms. Robinson's mother worked in domestic service and her grandmother, Gladys, watched children.

Despite the family moving in and out of Gainesville during her childhood, they always attended service at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church and remained active participants in the congregation. She describes going to Sunday school and vacation bible school, as well as to church activities and functions which all helped develop a deep connection to the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. Her great-grandfather, John Robinson (husband of Mattie Robinson), was a deacon in the church.

The Robinson land has been in the family since it was purchased by Ms. Robinson's great-great grandfather, Sandy Travers, in 1909. While there is no longer a dwelling on the property, aerial imagery suggests that it existed on the property until the 1980s. Ms. Robinson describes it as being a part of the boundaries of The Settlement that she knew as a child, where the community offered a respite from discrimination:

We could walk down the lane, we would cross over (Route) 29 and come to the church, and then I had aunts who lived on Carver Road and Old Carolina Road; we couldn't walk around the road. We would have to walk across the street and go across the graveyard and walk through the woods because it was safer for us to go through the woods. Because the concern was, if we walked down the road, and the longer we stayed on the road, if someone drove by and they would see us, they may throw something out the car, they may turn around and do something to us [Janet Robinson, personal communication 2020].

Church outings, such as to nearby theme parks, opened up the boundaries of the community by traveling as a group. The community remained strong through its annual homecoming celebrations, which Ms. Robinson recounts in her oral history interview. She emphasizes some of the community values, such as the importance of knowing a skill, working hard, and maintaining land ownership. Land ownership, she explains, was especially important to the earliest land owners in The Settlement, who prioritized their finances in order to be able to pay property tax and maintain possession of their land.

Ms. Robinson, who currently resides in Manassas, Virginia, maintains involvement with the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church as vice chair of the Trustee Ministry.

Transcript

Interviewee: Janet Robinson (JR)

Time/Location: Monday, August 3, 2020/ Phone Interview, Fredericksburg, Virginia and Manassas, Virginia

Interviewer: Melissa Butler (MB), Architectural Historian (Field Director) (Dovetail Cultural Resource Group)

[Commencing at Digital Recording Time Stop: 00:00:00]

Melissa Butler (MB): Today is August 3, 2020. My name is Melissa Butler and I work for Dovetail Cultural Resource Group and I'm working on The Settlement Oral History Project. Today I will be interviewing Janet Robinson. Janet, thank you so much for agreeing to interview with me today. For the record, can you please state and spell your name?

Janet Robinson (JR): My name is Janet Elaine Robinson. First name J-A-N-E-T, middle name E-L-A-I-N-E, last name R-O-B-I-N-S-O-N

MB: Great, thank you so much. And is that your married name or your maiden name?

JR: That's my maiden name.

MB: Ok great. Do you know the origin of your name or why your parents chose it?

JR: My first name, I'm actually named after the nurse that delivered me in the hospital.

MB: Oh, how neat! Was she significant to your family and to your birth story?

JR: No, I think what happened is, my mother did not have a name for me, and the story goes that I was born during a blizzard, and so what happened back in that day because of segregation, there was only a certain hospital that we would have to go to, so we had to go from Gainesville to a hospital in Alexandria.

MB: Oh wow, that sounds like a hike.

JR: Back in the day I think so, because it was prior to Route 66, so they probably went around another way.

MB: Oh my gosh. What is your date of birth, when was this?

JR: It's January 26, 1957.

MB: Ok, wow. There was really no closer hospital that you could go to? How long did that last? Was there a hospital closer to Gainesville in the next decade or did it take longer?

JR: Well the hospital in Manassas was built in the '60s, and I'm not sure when they ended the segregation as for whether we would have been able to go to that hospital.

MB: Ah ok. What are you parent's names or what were your parent's names?

JR: Ok, my mother's name is Mabel Marie Robinson.

MB: And your father's name?

JR: I don't have any information on my father.

MB: That is A-Ok, thank you for your mother's name. Where was your mother born?

JR: She was born in Gainesville, Virginia, with a midwife.

MB: Do you remember her date of birth?

JR: It's September 7, 1941.

MB: Ok 1941. And did she live in Gainesville all her life?

JR: Most of it.

MB: Do you happen to know the address of the house she grew up in?

JR: She... that would be my great-grandmother's property, and that address is 15017 Lee Highway.

MB: Ok, this is great information! What was your great-grandmother's name?

JR: Mattie Robinson, and Robinson is her married name. Her husband, which is my great-grandfather, his name is John Robinson. And my great-grandmother, Mattie, her maiden name was Travers or something of that nature. I don't know the spelling.

MB: Ok, well that's really helpful! Genealogy is a big part of this project so that is good data to have for tracing up your family tree. Do you know if your great-grandmother Mattie and John, the Robinsons, if they lived in Gainesville all their lives or if they moved to the area?

JR: They lived in Gainesville because that address that I gave you, the address where my mother would have grown up most of her life, that is my great-grandmother Mattie, that is her property. And it is still listed in her name. And it is kind of like we never paid the tax on the property, since back then it was not like a will or anything, and so one of my great-aunts paid the tax on it for a while, but my great-grandmother, Mattie Robinson, she has a daughter that is Mattie Robinson Stevens, because she married, so there is two Mattie Robinsons in the family.

MB: Oh, ok that's good to know, let me just jot that down.

JR: *(Laughter)*.

MB: Ok, that's great! I'm going to have some more questions about your family legacy in the area, but I don't want to neglect to get the full context of you and who you are. So, you were born in Manassas but I assume you grew up in Gainesville then? *(Interviewer misspoke and improperly recalled where Ms. Robinson was born)*

JR: I was born in Alexandria hospital.

MB: I'm sorry, Alexandria, yes you said that!

JR: I grew up most of the time in Gainesville in my early life and then we kind of moved away when I was in my teens.

MB: Ok, did you grow up with any siblings?

JR: Yes, I think there's five of us.

MB: What are their names?

JR: My brother that's next to me, his name is Clinton Delaney Robinson, and then there's my sister, Faye Settle, and then my brother, Gilbert Robinson, and then another brother, Otis Robinson.

MB: Very good, ok thank you. What did your mom do for a living?

JR: She did domestic work. She basically cleaned houses.

MB: Did she do that locally or would she travel or stay with a family?

JR: No, what happens is, she would have carpoled into like Fairfax or Annandale, you know.

MB: Ok, that makes sense. Did she have that job most of the time when you were growing up or was that just for a period of time?

JR: No, that's the only job she ever had, she still does that for a living.

MB: Ok. Sorry if this is jumping around a little bit, I'm going down my list of questions and making sure what I'm asking is still relevant. So, you grew up in Gainesville and moved away for a time in your teens, where did you go to school when you were living in Gainesville?

JR: Ok, now in first grade, for some reason we moved out to Warrenton. So, in first grade, I went to Central Elementary School, which would have been a segregated school in Warrenton, Virginia. But then in second grade, we were back in Gainesville, and I went to Antioch-McCrea School, and that was a segregated school also.

MB: And then did you stay there through the rest of elementary school and middle school? Was that just an elementary school?

JR: Middle school was back to Warrenton and then from middle school after that and the beginning of high school we moved to the City of Falls Church.

MB: Ok.

JR: And then by high school we moved to Centreville.

MB: In high school you moved to Centreville, ok. I want to make sure my geography is correct here, Centreville is not terribly far from Gainesville, is that correct?

JR: Yes, it's right down 29.

MB: At that time when you were in school in Centreville, was that a shared high school with Gainesville students or was that separate?

JR: No, Centreville is in Fairfax County, so I went to a Fairfax County school. And at that time, they didn't have a high school in Centreville, so they bussed us to Herndon, Virginia.

MB: Ok, got it. So then when did you come back to Gainesville?

JR: Well my grandparents lived in Gainesville, and my aunts, so we were always in Gainesville for family things, and we always came to church at Mount Pleasant.

MB: Oh, throughout all of the moves you were at Mount Pleasant still. I would love to talk a bit more about the church since you have a long legacy there. Did your parents go Mount Pleasant church or did your mom go to Mount Pleasant church before you were born?

JR: My great-grandparents went to Mount Pleasant; my great-grandfather was a deacon at Mount Pleasant...

MB: What was his name?

JR: John Robinson. So, my great-grandparents, my grandmother, my mother, and me, so I'm the fourth generation.

MB: Wow that's fantastic! Wow, ok. What are some of your earliest memories of being in the church?

JR: Of course, I attended Sunday school and vacation bible.

MB: What was that like? First of all, where were the Sunday school and vacation bible school functions held within the church building?

JR: Within the church building, we would have back in the early days, we would have had it in the actual church building. The addition for the dining hall, that was put on later. So, the sanctuary part is the older part of the church.

MB: Right.

JR: And back in those days, we didn't have any running water or indoor bathrooms. We had outdoor bathrooms.

MB: I did see, I watched the church's 135th anniversary video with the great visual of the cinderblock bathroom wall. Is that what you are referring to?

JR: Yes, the outdoor bathrooms that all the kids, we were scared (*Laughter*)

MB: Why were you scared to go in there?

JR: It's just like, outdoors and you're always thinking, well maybe there is a snake in there or something crazy.

MB: Oh, ok yes that makes sense. Was there running water to that [outdoor] bathroom?

JR: No, it was an outdoor bathroom kind of like, you know how the Don John is? But it is permanent, like I guess they made a hole in the ground or something. And one of those outdoor bathrooms like that, that's what they had.

MB: I understand. Was that there when you were really little? I'm trying to get a sense of when that would have been built.

JR: Well yeah, and what happens is, a lot of the homes that's what we had, the outdoor, we didn't have indoor plumbing, we had outdoor bathrooms. And I want to say, the indoor bathrooms and indoor plumbing didn't come to the church until like the 70s.

MB: Ok, there seems to have been a lot of work done in the 70s. But I want to go back, I think we were at vacation bible school, and it was inside the actual sanctuary space. Did vacation bible school and Sunday school...well, let me ask you this for clarification first on the record, what are the differences between vacation bible school and Sunday school?

JR: Ok, Sunday school is on Sunday school before church and the children would have their class and of course the grown people would have their class. Vacation bible school is something that happens over the summer.

MB: Ah, I see ok. That makes sense. And that's something independent of the church services that would be during the week? Is that correct?

JR: Yes, you would go there during the week during the day. Back then, now children they have camps and swimming pools and all that stuff to go to. Remember, most of my young years, it was a time of segregation. So... as for what the community had to offer, a lot of the things you went to were family things or church things, because that's what you were allowed to do. Because when things were segregated there was like...you kind of did things in your own little community because there was a fear of you know, only going where we were allowed to go.

MB: That's a really good perspective, so what did you know as the boundaries of where you felt safe to go as a kid? Where were your parents comfortable with you going?

JR: We basically went the area of The Settlement. Like where the church is, where Mount Pleasant is, not straight across from Mount Pleasant, but across and there's a lane, back up in there, that's where my great-grandmother's land is, and that's where, part of my growing up that's where we were. We could walk down the lane, we would cross over 29 and come to the church, and then I had aunts who lived on Carver Road and Old Carolina Road, we couldn't walk around the road. We would have to walk across the street and go across the graveyard and walk through the woods because it was safer for us to go through the woods. Because the concern was, if we walked down the road, and the longer we stayed on the road, if someone drove by and they would see us, they may throw something out the car, they may turn around and do something to us.

MB: You know, other folks I've interviewed have talked about going through the woods and being in people's back yards and playing, and defined a similar boundary, but didn't express the same reasons for it. So, I thank you so much for sharing that, it's really good to have that perspective. I would like to come back to that for sure if you are comfortable talking about it, but while we are still on the church train of thought I want to make sure we get all that good information out there. I'm curious, so there was vacation bible school, what other sorts of activities did the church organize and run both when you were a kid and then when you got older, what sort of activities did the church have for adults?

JR: Well we had; we went on trips. One of the... Deacon Fields, he was interviewed for the oral history, he used to have a bus company. So, we would go on trips with the bus, back in those days, in Glen Echo, Maryland, there was Glen Echo Park.

MB: Right!

JR: So, we would go on trips like that on Saturday morning. I think we would go, there were places like to different fairs, you know how they have those county fairs?

MB: Yeah, yeah.

JR: We would go there and do that.

MB: That sounds neat. And for adults, do you remember... when you were a kid, do you remember the adults getting together for similar types of trips, or would everyone go all together to Glen Echo or to the fair?

JR: We would go together; the adults would accompany us.

MB: Great! I'm going to regroup for a moment and look over my questions here. Ok, so with your brothers and sisters, did you also have cousins in The Settlement?

JR: Yes, my cousins lived on Carver Road and they lived on Old Carolina Road.

MB: What sort of games did you play outside of church activities? What did you do for fun?

JR: They would play like, ball or we would play hide and go seek in the graveyard.

MB: *(Laughter)* What!

JR: We used to play in the cemetery.

MB: Oh my gosh, ok! Well talk about things to be creeped out by, you were afraid of the bathrooms but were playing in the cemetery!

JR: We were not afraid of the cemetery, we wouldn't go there at night, but we were not afraid.

MB: How was the cemetery... I want to say how were you taught about it from the church, but that's also not quite the right question. What I'm asking is how did the current body of the church feel connected to the ancestors that were buried in the cemetery?

JR: Well, we were always told about the history and the history of the church and you know, where we lived, why we lived, and our great-grandparents, and why they were able to buy the land and live in that area, and how hard things were. I think you could buy a loaf of bread was like a nickel or something, and how they would work all day and weeks and bring home very little. But it was important that they save enough and pay their taxes so that they could keep their land. They always had a garden, they grew food in the garden and they had like, pigs, they would keep the pigs and the women they did canning and freezing, the fruit that you can eat during the winter. And how everybody came together in The Settlement. Like say for example, if you needed something repaired in your house, and somebody that had they skillset they would help you out, somebody would help in the garden, and different things like that. They... it was always like a team, a good community spirit. You always knew if you needed this or that, you could go to this person.

MB: And did that feel true for you growing up there?

JR: Oh yeah, everybody knew everybody, we knew this was a safe place for you.

MB: Yeah. I want to back up to something you said in the story of how your great-grandparents and that generation worked really hard to pay the property taxes and keep their land, could you elaborate on that story more? I'd be really interested in hearing what that story is and how they were able to acquire the land.

JR: Well, see, back then, with everything being segregated, you knew where you would be able to live, you knew where you would be able to buy land. So, you know, like down that lane where my great-grandmother's land was, I had an Aunt Virginia and Uncle Abraham. They had land there, and it was like, everything is kind of like in a cluster, that's why The Settlement is the way that it is. Because, I guess, once the word was out that you could buy here, this is where you would buy. And most of the women, if they worked, they did domestic work, they usually cleaned houses or did laundry, or if they didn't work, they would babysit the kids of the women that did work. And the men, most of the men, they worked on a farm or if they had a trade, like if they had a trade where they laid bricks or stone, back in the day sometimes you would see where they would put stone on the houses...

MB: I know what you're talking about, yes.

JR: That would be their trade. Most of the people in The Settlement, they didn't have a lot of education where they were college graduates, some didn't even have high school diplomas. But they were taught the importance of a skill.

MB: Right. And would skills typically be taught within families? Would you have several generations of people with similar skills? Or did people go seek vocational training elsewhere?

JR: Well, usually, you would usually carry on the skills from your family, or if not, there would be a conversation about what are you doing, where are you going to go, you need to do this or you need to do that. See, what happens is back when my mother was growing up, the closest school for them to go to was in Manassas, which is Jennie Dean. And I don't know if you know the story of Jennie Dean?

MB: No, but I would love to hear it.

JR: Ok, so it's a long story, but Jennie Dean was an African American lady and she raised money to have the school, it was the industrial school, so that the African American children could learn the trades. And so, at the Manassas Museum, there's a lot of information about her and there's a school here that's named after her, and in front of the school they have the area where the actual old industrial school was. And they're making a statue of her now.

MB: Very neat. Do you know roughly when about that school was in operation?

JR: Oh, no, but if you Google her, the history will come up.

MB: Ok, I will definitely have to check that out. That's really neat.

JR: Yeah, but that's... you'll notice the distance from Gainesville to where Jennie Dean is in Manassas, and that's how far they went to school.

MB: And I'm guessing... at that time, were they bussed? Did they have to walk; did they have to get their own way there?

JR: They walked, they had to walk a distance to meet a bus, and the bus would take them there. Now, it was told to me, that from kind of like where the church is, all the way down to where you get on to 66 in Gainesville.

MB: Ok, wow...

JR: And then a bus would take you the rest of the way.

MB: I'll have to look in to that a little further, that's good to know about. Ok, so schools... I'd like to know a bit about shops and community amenities in Gainesville. Where was the closest store or grocery store?

JR: Well, there wasn't really like a grocery store, like they have a Giant or Safeway or something like that, there was no grocery store in Gainesville. There was a little country store and it was... I think it was Sherman's down on 29 where the Ryan's (?) Used Tire place is. That's where the country store was that was owned by African Americans. We used to go there and get candy for a penny.

MB: Would you be sent there to pick up things for your parents? Would that be a children's errand?

JR: No, it would be a treat for the parents to walk with us there so we could get penny candy or ice cream or something like that. But basically, the parents would, if they didn't have a car, someone in the community had a car and they would carpool and go to Manassas to buy groceries.

MB: Ok, I see. So down in the area where Sherman's was, was there anything else when you were growing up?

JR: Not really. There's a... there was an old school up on the hill, but I can't remember the name of the school or if they went there before Jennie Dean. No, I'm sorry, that was the old, I think McCrea School before they built Antioch-McCrea.

MB: Ok, I can always look into that further. Speaking of the McCrea School, there was a hall building next to Mount Pleasant Baptist church in the early-twentieth century. What can you tell me about that? I heard that it was used by the county as a school for a period of time, but not much more than that.

JR: Ok, if you look in Prince William County schools, they have a history book of their school, and I think if you Google "Prince William County Schools for colored children or African American children," and you will see that the old Mount Pleasant Hall is what they called it, that they used it for a school. Now, where the Mount Pleasant building is now, ok, on our same property, down farther, was where the old hall was, and that's where the other building was that caught on fire many years ago. That hall was used for the colored children, and that would have been in... I don't know, my great-grandmother's day.

MB: Ok, I see.

JR: It is in the book, the Prince William County School history book. When I was doing some research on the church's history, I found it.

MB: Was that the first time you knew there was a hall next to the church, or had you heard about it prior to your discovery?

JR: I had heard about it, because it was a story that was told, because back in the day, some of the people that lived in The Settlement, they didn't have running water or inside bathrooms, some of them didn't have electric, they used Kerosene lamps, so it was no electric to watch television, so they would tell stories, and so that's how the history got passed down, the oral history got passed down, they would tell the history.

MB: Right! Do you remember any of the stories you heard about the hall or about the church in the old day?

JR: They said the hall was used, that's where they went to school, and they were saying I think that the land was bought for \$10, and that kind of stuff.

MB: Were there oral history stories passed down about the founding of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church?

JR: Yes, it was passed down and when it came to writing it down, the elders were the ones who told it, and that's how the oral history was put in writing so that the church history could be recorded.

MB: Is there anything that stands out to you that you find interesting or powerful about the church's founding?

JR: I find that the most powerful thing to me is that they purchased the land for \$10. Back in the day, \$10 was a lot of money! The church was established in 1877. And then when you look at when they purchased the land for \$10, on 29, for them, the type of work that they had to do, they cleaned someone else's house, they did someone's laundry, and they carpoled to work, there wasn't a whole lot of places they could go, or things they could do, just to survive with their own little families, to come together as a congregation and put money together, and be able to have \$10. And plus, they were saving their coins, they had to pay taxes on their own properties to keep it. So, they had to have excellent surviving skills and think hard about putting their coins away so they could be able to pay their property tax, or even save the money to be able to buy the land. Because it wasn't like, sometimes people inherit money.

MB: Sometimes (*Laughter*)

JR: Yeah, sometimes if they have some kind of inheritance. I think of my great-grandparents, I don't know who their parents are, but I would imagine that their parents may have been born into slavery. So, when they got out of slavery, they had nothing. So to start from nothing, and to work to get money and try to save enough, and have enough sense to know that you must be able to buy the land, the importance of the land, and the land would be the inheritance that they could pass down to the next generation.

MB: Mm, that is important. Do you know why the particular plot of land was chosen for the building of the church?

JR: Well, the way it was told is the... it was a Mount Pleasant plantation or farm, and I think when the father died, he left it to his two sons, and the one son had bankruptcy or something. And then it was sold, and I think that's in the history of the church if I remember correctly. And I think that's why they were able to go and buy it for \$10.

MB: So, the way that that sounds to me, the site was selected because they could afford it and it was close to the congregation, does that sound right to you?

JR: Well the area, the land, I think the land in The Settlement nobody really wanted it. So, it was set aside, they used to say it was set aside for the... back in the day they would use the word colored, set aside for the colored. And then if you notice, in any area in our country where the blacks or the African Americans were allowed to settle, there's always a church.

MB: Why do you think that is?

JR: Because I think with all of the hardship that was going on, you would have to have some faith in order to survive. And I think that faith and believing in God was very important to them. So it helped them to endure, to push through.

MB: It is interesting what you said earlier too about having a safe place to gather and the strength of the community that developed out of necessity. I think it says a lot about the connections that are formed between people.

JR: Right.

MB: When did you first hear about The Settlement being called The Settlement? Were you taught as a child that that's what it was called?

JR: That's what it was called. That's what the community was called, The Settlement. I think our great-grandparents or the ones before them, they knew that they called it The Settlement, because that's where we could settle. I don't know beyond my great-grandparents, but I'm thinking that if their parents were slaves, and then you're no longer a slave, where are you going to go and what are you going to do, you know you can settle here. So, I think that's maybe where The Settlement came.

MB: That does make logical sense, sure. When I spoke to Mr. Nimrod Dade back earlier in the year, he said he didn't know it was called The Settlement until people started asking questions about The Settlement.

JR: Well Deacon Dade, Nimrod Dade, he married someone that was originally from The Settlement. So, he married into The Settlement.

MB: Ah I see, so growing up here that was common knowledge?

JR: Right, right.

MB: I got you. I would like to hear a bit more about your great-grandparents, if there are any stories that you remember, anything about their land, about their legacy, I'm all ears.

JR: Well, I haven't been able to figure this out, but the land was owned by my great-grandmother, and to this day it is still titled in my great-grandmother's name, not my great grandfather's. And my great-grandmother passed before my great-grandfather. But the land was deeded in my great-grandmother's name, it was never put in my great-grandfather's name. Because she passed first. I'm thinking well, if it was my great-grandmother's land, and when she passed or whatever, I don't know why my great-grandfather never put it in his name.

MB: That's a good question! There's another property that I can think of off-hand in The Settlement that was titled in the woman's name, from the '20s or the '30s, and that was Flora Dean's property by the Shady Inn Dance Hall. She held the title. So that's an interesting trend of female land ownership.

JR: Back in the day. And was it because they felt it was safer to put it in the woman's name? Do you see what I'm saying?

MB: I'm not sure.

JR: Even some of the ones on Carver Road it was deeded in the lady's name. And I'm not sure if it was safer when they went to purchase it wouldn't be questioned if it was a woman, or I don't know back then, because of, you know.

MB: It's worth further research for sure.

JR: I really don't know if my great-grandmother if she worked outside of the home. I know my grandmother didn't work outside the home, she used to babysit for some children, but my grandmother never had a physical job where she went and cleaned houses.

MB: What did your grandfather do to support them?

JR: Most of the men back then went in the military or went in the Army, and then they would send the money back.

MB: Was that common in The Settlement? I'm imagining this is the 1940s? World War II?

JR: Yes, the 1940s, most of the men went in the military.

MB: Maybe that's another reason the land is in the women's names.

JR: It was a sure income being in the Army, most of them were in the Army from what I hear, they went in the military and they would send the money back. It's very interesting because, not to get off the subject, but I live in the City of Manassas, and the area that I live in is a historical African American community. But the, one of the houses on my street that they just renovated, the lady did some research, and the man, he owned three houses up from me and he fought in the Civil War and he was given \$1,000 and he took that money and purchased the land on which I now live. Not on my property, but that's three houses up from me. And at one point, he owned even my house and the house beside me, so it would be like five houses down. And she traced it back where he fought in the Civil War and he was one of the African Americans, colored they said, who fought in the Civil War and earned \$1000 and purchased the land. So, I think the military was a way for them to get established.

MB: That does make a lot of sense, thanks for sharing that! I want to jump back and talk a little more about the church building to see if there is anything else that you might know about the changes that were done in the '70s and what the building looked like before those changes. (*Interviewer rephrases question*) In the '70s the church got a new façade, is that when the dining hall and back wing was expanded?

JR: Yes, and indoor plumbing and all of that.

MB: So, prior to that expansion, can you talk me through what was there and what the church looked like? For example, the windows, what can you tell me about the older building?

JR: The older building, to me, was a typical old white stucco church. Old white stucco church. And the windows, they did not have the color on them. I think they put that in the '70s. They were just plain windows with windowpanes.

MB: The windows on the side of the church, they have what we would call a lancet shape that points at the top, were those windows always there to your knowledge?

JR: Yes, that was standard for church windows back then, and they always put like a steeple on it.

MB: Right, ok.

JR: So, you could tell that it was a church building.

MB: I guess the steeple is pretty iconic as you are driving down the road, you do know it is a church building.

JR: I think that they wanted it to be known that it was a church building, so it could kind of be like a protected or seem like a sacred place. A safe place.

MB: Right. And on the inside of the church...can you describe the inside?

JR: They had like a stove, you know, a wood stove.

MB: Up until the '70s when it got the grand makeover?

JR: Yeah, it got the grand makeover and that's when they went to oil heat. But you had to use the wood stove or you had to use those kerosene heater things. And back in the day, when I was a little girl, we didn't have church every Sunday. We only had church on the second and fourth Sunday of the month. That's because we used to share ministers with another church, and that church had church on the first and third Sunday.

MB: Oh, ok, interesting. Did the congregation still gather on alternate Sundays when it wasn't your turn to have the minister?

JR: No, we didn't have it. You didn't go to church; you could read the bible or do something at home. Mount Pleasant used to have it on the second and fourth Sunday of the month.

MB: And would you also have your Sunday school just on the second and fourth of the month as well?

JR: Yes, and they would ring the bell. And I knew when I walked down the lane to go Sunday school, the bell would be ringing that would let you know it's time for church. That's what they would do in the old days, and the people in the neighborhood... you could hear the bell.

MB: Neat! Well, I guess only neat if you were already on your way to church, not so neat if you were realizing you were late for church.

JR: (*Laughter*) Back in those days, you were not late for church.

MB: I believe it! Oh, I'm realizing I didn't ask you anything about homecoming. I would love to hear some memories of homecoming.

JR: Ok, homecoming was always the fourth Sunday in August. The fourth Sunday in August was homecoming, and then anybody that moved away, they would always come back for homecoming. And the church would always be really crowded, and the adults would be inside and the kids would be playing outside (*Laughter*). We'd be playing outside because there wasn't room for all of us, it was always hot, and the windows would be up, and the church fans, you know how people fan themselves with those church fans, we would be fanning with the fans, and the ladies would have those hats on that they wear. We would always be like, ok, homecoming is the fourth Sunday in

August and what are you going to wear, you have to wear your best shoes. I remember that growing up, you always knew the fourth Sunday in August was homecoming.

MB: That's really special. Walk me through a typical homecoming day. What is the sermon usually about, is there a theme?

JR: There is a theme. You would have your morning service, and then, back in the days prior to us having the dining hall, people would bring their lunch in a picnic basket, ok, and you would put a blanket down to the ground and eat your picnic, or some people ate their picnic out of the trunk of their car, because then after lunch, there would be another service. So, homecoming church is all day. So, and then after we had the dining hall, we served lunch. The church serves lunch for homecoming. And in the evening service, you usually invite another church to come over and a guest minister would give the sermon.

MB: That's neat, is it usually a pretty local church or does it vary?

JR: It could be local, it depends on, there would be a homecoming committee and they would decide. There would be a theme in the scripture. And the whole thing about homecoming is, when I was researching what it was... African American church fundraisers, and I came up with it, it said that homecoming originally started as a fundraiser, to raise funds for the church. Because people that grew up in the church, sometimes they would move out of the community and move away. Maybe it would be for their jobs, if maybe they got a job in New York or somewhere. This was a way to have those people come back, and when they came back, they would put money in the offering and that would help the church. So, homecoming was originally established as a fundraiser.

MB: Do you know about when it was first established?

JR: I don't know, because it is a tradition in a lot of the African American churches. It's an African American tradition from what I've heard.

MB: That does make sense. Would the church have other fundraisers throughout the year for some of those improvements that just need to happen over time? And then more recently what sort of fundraising have you been doing for the rebuild?

JR: We had a pastor, and he was the pastor I remember growing up, Reverend Henry. He had... no. I'm sorry, not Reverend Henry. Reverend Young, he would have been a young adult. He said let's do a June rally. And June rally was a fundraiser where you would just rally, you would give everyone an envelope and whatever amount they could rally they would do. Or he said, you can ask each member to give \$20, \$25, \$50 or something like that, and we would call it June rally. So every June, the fourth Sunday of June, you would turn in your envelope and it would be a fundraiser.

MB: Did the church host any kinds of dinners or any events outside of the fundraisers, and homecoming and services?

JR: We always had bake sales, the women that whatever their specialty would be, bake a certain cake or cookies or something like that, and we would always sell cakes. Or we would sell dinners where they would fry chicken or fish or something, and then they would sell them. Potato salad, they would make certain meals and they would sell the dinners and get money for that. In the most modern time, say if we wanted to take the children on a trip, and we needed to rent a bus... like one time we were taking all the kids to Hershey Park. So what happens is, we had a fundraiser where we sold the baked good and dinners and a yard sale, because we wanted to be able to pay for the bus we rented and we wanted the tickets to not be that expensive. If we raised enough money with the fundraiser, then each child could go, their parents would pay \$15 or \$10, and the church would pay the difference. Because, one time we had a lady that was there, she wasn't originally from The Settlement, and she had six kids, and for her to pay, she couldn't. So, we had people sponsor her kids and the church helped pay the difference.

MB: Very nice. That speaks again to the community spirit you spoke about and it's neat to hear how people look out for other people.

JR: Yes.

MB: I'd like to switch gears a little bit, I have a couple questions about other things in Gainesville. I'm wondering about the Shady Inn Dance Hall. Do you remember hearing any stories about it when you were growing up?

JR: I did! My great aunts said, what is, my great-grandfather would not allow them to go there. So what happens is, they used to steal out the window. They would go to bed when it was their bed time, and they would steal out the window and go to the Shady Inn Dance. And then one night, they were there, and they said the devil, Satan came up from the floor. But as they got older and I kept hearing the story and hearing the story, what I said that I think happened is, in the older houses the floor was one piece. The floor was one piece, and I think the floor fell down in the foundation, and they knew they weren't supposed to be there in the first place and they were guilty, so they said Satan came up from the floor and they ran home.

MB: (*Laughter*) So I've heard that story from the last few folks I've had the pleasure of speaking to, and it seems like that's a classic Gainesville... did everyone know about this devil coming up out of the floor story?

JR: I'm sure they did! Because my great aunts were there, can you imagine everyone else's, they may have been there too. And I guess they told it down. The Shady Inn Dance Hall.

MB: And just so that it's on the record, did you hear anything else about what would happen at the dance hall? What sort of music was played, if there were refreshments... anything like that?

JR: Well they had a band. Now if you have something, they have a DJ that plays music, but back then they had a band. So, they would have had a band there. And I heard they would have certain bands there. As for who came or if they were famous, I don't know. I don't know if someone was there... if back in the day... some of those singers...

MB: That's ok if you don't know, I'm asking in case you did know, it's good to add more to the record. We were trying to chase down more information about it. You know, there aren't too many dance halls like that left or places you can go on a Saturday night like that.

JR: I find it amazing that it was a dance hall and after the floor fell in and they got scared, now it's a church.

MB: Yeah, the devil should be staying far away from there. So we've talked about growing up in Gainesville, we talked about the church, I'd like to hear a little of your perspective of how Gainesville has changed over time since you've known it. And you can take that whatever way comes to mind.

JR: Well, Gainesville has grown a whole lot. When I was a little girl in Gainesville, of course 29 was only one lane both ways. And then it was widened to four lanes. And there was no grocery store. The housing development that is next to the church, that is Hopewell Landing, that was on land owned by African Americans, that went to our church. That was land that was owned, it was woods, there was no development. Gainesville was considered rural. There was really nothing there. If you wanted to grocery shop, you would go to Manassas or go out to Warrenton. And then... so it's really nothing there.

MB: Do you feel like there is a strong sense of community among the people who still live in The Settlement?

JR: I think so, because most of the people who still live in The Settlement area, they are seniors. They're in their 80s and 90s. Late 70s, 80s, and 90s. A lot of them, they've sold their land, so it's not all there, it didn't pass down generation to generation. But they're still there.

MB: And what about the church congregation. How has that developed or changed, maybe even over the last 15 or 20 years? Do you still have a strong membership?

JR: Yes, we have 130 members, the majority of the membership they are the seniors.

MB: Well, I appreciate all the time you took to talk to me. Before we wrap up, is there anything that I didn't ask about that you were hoping to talk about? Or if you have any other thoughts that you would like to share, I'm all ears and the floor is yours.

JR: No, but if you review anything and there is anything you would like to revisit, just shoot me an email or we can call and talk again. But hopefully I answered mostly.

MB: You did great, I really appreciate you opening up and sharing with me! I hope you have a great rest of your day and stay dry with whatever weather is coming our way.

JR: I know this tropical storm, I think we're going to get some much needed rain.

MB: Amen to that. Well, thank you so much Janet.

JR: Take care, Melissa.

Genealogy

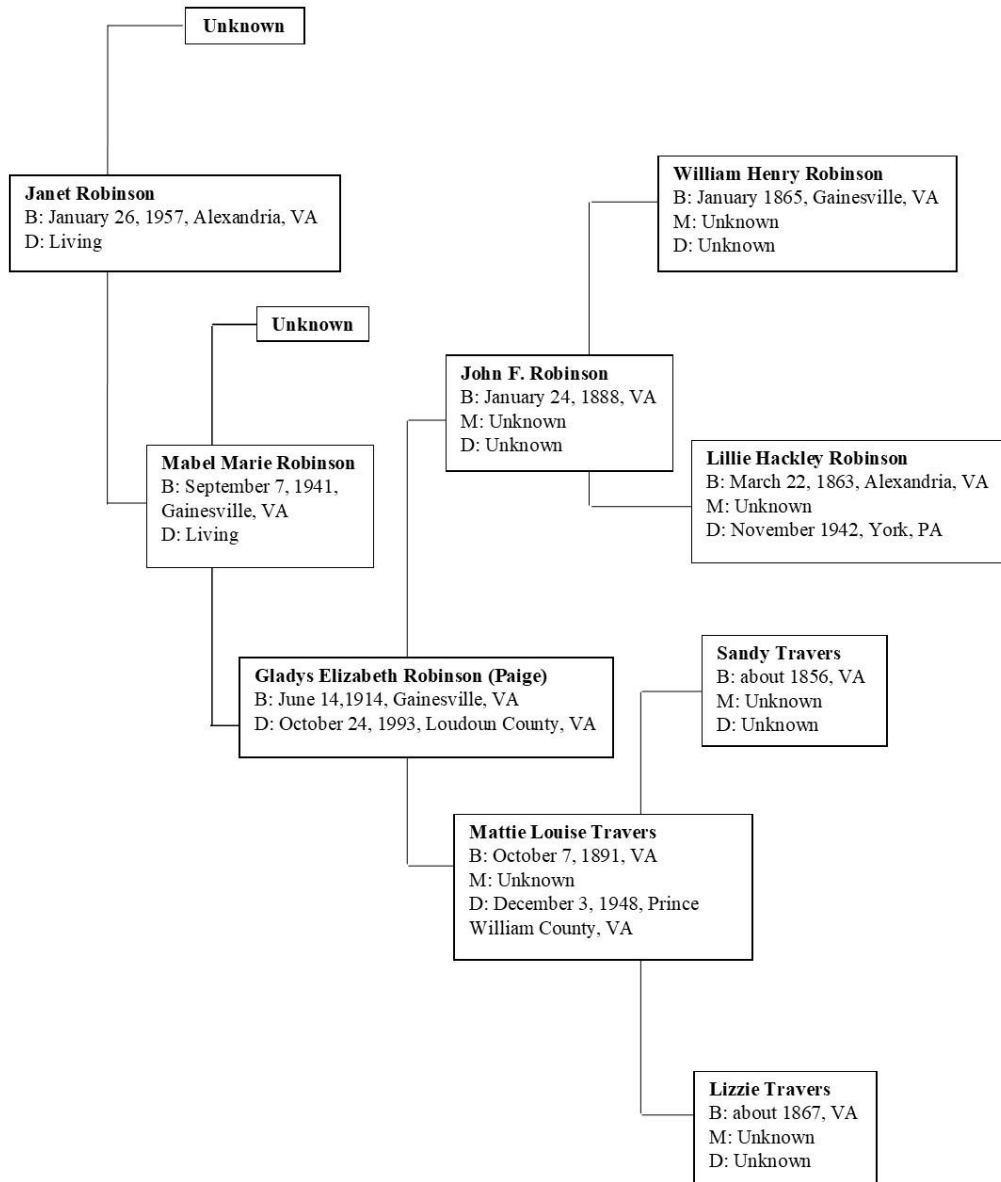


Figure 3: Robinson Family Genealogy (Ancestry.com 2020d).

Chain of Title

The Mattie Robinson Property, 15017 Lee Highway

The property is currently vacant, an early twentieth-century building was demolished around the 1980s.

Type	Book/Conveyance	Page	Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes/Comments
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Sandy Travers	Mattie (Travers) Robinson c/o Evelyn Hill	Formal deed not identified, land likely passed informally from father (Sandy Traver) to daughter (Mattie Travers Robinson).
Deed	0059	0080	11/02/1909	Joseph and Ida Ware	Sandy Travers	“The parties of the first part hath this day sold conveyed and doth hereby covenant and warrant the title to the land hereby conveyed consisting of one acre of land lying in the said county and bounded as follows, runs 47-1/2 yards S from said Ware corner, thence 102 yards EW from Sd. Ware corner, thence down a lane 47-1/2 yards to said ware corner, in consideration of the sum of Thirty dollars, ten dollars in receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, and twenty dollars in three years from above date.”
Deed	0055	0445	08/30/1906	Enoch and Sarah Churchill	Joseph and Ida Ware	7 acres
Deed	5	142	1898	J. C. Tyler (Possibly Jane Tyler)	Enoch Churchill	Deed currently not available for public viewing due to Covid-19 pandemic

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APPENDIX A: ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions and the interview format outline is based on the work by Amanda Patton in 2018.

Biography

Can you tell me your full name? Can you spell your last name?

What is your maiden name (if applicable)?

Do you know the origin of your name or why your parents chose it?

Such as a relative with the same name.

Do you go by any nicknames or any other names?

What is your date of birth?

What are your parents' names?

Can you spell their names for me?

What is your mother's maiden name?

When were your parents born?

Where were your parents born?

If not born in Gainesville, when did they move to the area?

Do you know how your parents met?

Where do you currently reside?

Where were you born?

If born in Gainesville, have you lived here your whole life?

If not born in Gainesville, when did you move to the area?

Have you moved houses? Where did you previously live?

Do you have any siblings?

What are their names?

What number child are you?

Do any of your siblings live in the area?

Are you married?

What is/was your spouse's name?

Where did your spouse grow up?

Do you have any children?

How many? What are their names? When were they born?

Childhood and Carver Road

What did your parents do for a living?

How long did they have that job? Where was that job and how did they get there?

Do you know how your parents met?

Where did you go to school as a child?

Could you point it out to me on a map?

How long did you attend school?

How did you get to school?

Can you describe the school for me?

Was it an all-black school? How many students in your class?

Can you describe what your household was like while growing up?

Who did the cooking in your household?

What were some signature dishes that you remember? Your favorite?

I heard that some families had gardens, did your house grown any food or produce?

Did you raise any animals?

Did you have any chores as a child?

What would you do for fun as a child? (Trips with the church, school, dance hall?)

I also heard that there were often lawn parties? Did you ever attend any of these gatherings?

Did you attend church?

How often? What church? Were you involved in the church—how?

What was it like growing up on Carver Road?

Can you tell me any stories from your childhood or growing up?

Did you work any jobs when you were younger?

What were they? For how long? Where did you work? How did you get there?

The Settlement

Can you tell me any names I should know of the people who first settled in this area?

How did you learn about the history of The Settlement? Were you taught by your parents, or in school, in church, etc.?

Can you tell me the names of your oldest ancestors?

How would you label The Settlement—is it a community, a neighborhood, etc.?

Did/ do people call it The Settlement in conversation, or say they are from The Settlement?

What changes have you noticed in the area over the years?

Can you tell me about the history of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church?

Can you tell me about the trips that the church would take with your bus company?

Can you tell me more about homecoming?

Can you tell me what you know about any dance halls that used to exist in the area?

What was the name of the band that played at the Shady Inn Dance Hall? Did Duke Ellington and the International Sweethearts of Rhythm play there?

Are you familiar with the Watson Graveyard near Buckland Mills Elementary School? Can you tell me what you know about it?

How many gravestones?

Who was buried there?

How were the people buried related?

When did they pass?

How long have you owned this property?

Who owned it before you?