THE ALEXANDRIA ORAL HISTORY CENTER
OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Oral History Interview

with

Joyce Hawkins

Interviewer: Kerry James Reed
Narrator: Joyce Hawkins
Location of Interview: Lloyd House., 220 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA, 22314
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Transcriber: Mattie Lambert

Summary:
Joyce Hawkins describes growing up in West End, Georgetown, Washington D.C. and her experiences with researching her family history.

Notes:
This recording is part of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Cemetery History Initiative.

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General	African American History; Family; 20th Century History; State Department; Play; Education; Fishing; Dolls; Biking; Urban Beautification; Multicultural Education; 4-H Clubs; Secret Service; Information Technology; The Great Migration; Genealogy; Children—Death; Tuberculosis; African American Cemeteries; World War II; Family Reunions; Federal Communications Commission; Roller Skating; Gentrification; Summer Jobs; Slavery; Family History.
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Kerry James Reed [00:00:01] My name is Kerry James Reed. I am 28 years of age, and it is March 11th, 2025, and I am here with—

Joyce Hawkins [00:00:08] Joyce Hawkins, age 63.

Kerry James Reed [00:00:12] Terrific. Well, thank you so much for agreeing to do this interview, Ms. Hawkins. It's been a pleasure having those couple of conversations with you over the last couple of weeks. I suppose we can start from the very beginning. Where were you born?

Joyce Hawkins [00:00:24] Washington, D.C.

Kerry James Reed [00:00:25] Washington D.C. In any particular hospital?

Joyce Hawkins [00:00:30] D.C. General.

Kerry James Reed [00:00:31] D.C. General. What are some of your earliest memories?

Joyce Hawkins [00:00:39] Um... playing.

Kerry James Reed [00:00:46] Playing?

Joyce Hawkins [00:00:46] Yeah, feeling safe. I have beautiful memories growing up in the neighborhood I grew up in, which is West End. Right before Georgetown.

Kerry James Reed [00:01:02] What are some of those beautiful memories?

Joyce Hawkins [00:01:08] Visiting museums. My school, [Thaddeus] Stevens Elementary School. Going to art museums as a child. National Geographic books. Learning, when children, most of them came from the State Department, when they came to school, when they were being transferred, we had to learn everything about their country that they were coming from. Their National Anthem, their resources. So, we learned so much about their country that we practically knew them once they arrived.

Kerry James Reed [00:02:10] What country was that? Where were they coming from?

Joyce Hawkins [00:02:13] Bangladesh, East Pakistan, West Pakistan, El Salvador.

Kerry James Reed [00:02:23] Interesting.

Joyce Hawkins [00:02:23] Yeah.

Kerry James Reed [00:02:24] And what year?

Joyce Hawkins [00:02:25] Guatemala.

Kerry James Reed [00:02:26] Guatemala?

Joyce Hawkins [00:02:26] Mm, 1972 or [19]71.

Kerry James Reed [00:02:35] Interesting. So, you said you grew up right outside of Georgetown in the West End?

Kerry James Reed [00:02:37] Yeah.

Joyce Hawkins [00:02:38] You called that?

Joyce Hawkins [00:02:38] This is the West End, right before Georgetown, across the bridge in Georgetown.

Kerry James Reed [00:02:42] Okay, what street would that be?

Joyce Hawkins [00:02:44] 22nd [Street] and O [Street].

Kerry James Reed [00:02:46] 22nd [Street] and O [Street]

Joyce Hawkins [00:02:48] 22nd [Street] and O Street, Northwest.

Kerry James Reed [00:02:53] Can you describe what the neighborhood looked like?

Joyce Hawkins [00:02:57] The neighborhood was fabulous. There was no crime. We had the recreation right out back, the swimming pool, you could go as you please, the ice cream man came around dressed in white. I'd never seen an ambulance pull up to take someone to the hospital. I don't recall going to a pharmacy or even seeing medicine on older people's dressers or anything. It was wonderful.

Kerry James Reed [00:03:39] Yeah, sounds like it. Can you describe what your home looked like?

Joyce Hawkins [00:03:44] I have pictures. It's a basic home, we weren't rich, weren't well off. My mother and grandmother lived in the home. Most homes had a mother and father present or, either, two maternal people in the household. Everyone looked out for everyone else, you had to respect all elders, period. So, my home, it was, I don't know, it was just home to me. I didn't know I was poor. It's a lot of love.

Kerry James Reed [00:04:39] Absolutely. Do you have a favorite room in the house, a favorite activity you would do with your family, anything like that?

Joyce Hawkins [00:04:49] Me and my brother mostly hung out together. So, he took me fishing right down the creek. The creek was right out back, Rock Creek Park, well it's P Street Beach. But yeah, so we went fishing. And then we explored the neighborhoods. We went up to Georgetown, Rosslyn, Roosevelt Island, we just, those were our neighborhoods. We played on the canal and the Potomac [River].

Kerry James Reed [00:05:21] Sounds awesome.

Joyce Hawkins [00:05:22] It was.

Kerry James Reed [00:05:23] Seems like there was a lot of nature in your childhood when you were growing up.

Joyce Hawkins [00:05:28] Yeah, I think our rec center, we went there like 9:00 in the morning to maybe 8:00 in the evening or something. Maybe came home for dinner and went back. So, we were at the rec basically all day.

Joyce Hawkins [00:05:45] What was the rec called?

Joyce Hawkins [00:05:46] Francis Recreation Center.

Kerry James Reed [00:05:47] Francis? Like Francis Scott Key?

Joyce Hawkins [00:05:50] Yes.

Kerry James Reed [00:05:51] Okay. What street was that on? Do you remember?

Joyce Hawkins [00:05:55] 24th [Street] and N [Street].

Kerry James Reed [00:06:05] So were you all good at fishing? Would you catch a lot of stuff?

Joyce Hawkins [00:06:08] Yeah, he never took me fishing again because we came up Georgetown, to a Sunny Surplus, and bought a fishing rod with a dollar or 2, and I caught all the fish that day, so he didn't take me fishing with him again.

Kerry James Reed [00:06:26] [*Laughing*]. Oh, that's funny. Oh, that's really funny. What did Roosevelt Island look like back then?

Joyce Hawkins [00:06:35] I didn't even know we were there. I don't even know how we even got over the roadways and stuff. I remember playing in Rosslyn. I guess it was just like a little forest, weeded. I didn't really know because I didn't even know that's where I was at. But I remember us leaving the canal and I guess we wanted to explore more, so we ended up in Rosslyn.

Kerry James Reed [00:07:12] Did you all go across the bridge a lot into Arlington, growing up?

Joyce Hawkins [00:07:17] Yes.

Kerry James Reed [00:07:19] What did Rosslyn look like back then?

Joyce Hawkins [00:07:22] It wasn't busy. Just looked like Rosslyn. I mean, it just looked like it was streets, but there weren't cars flying past like they are now. Yeah, so even Georgetown didn't have a lot of traffic back then.

Kerry James Reed [00:07:43] What did Georgetown look like? Cause I mean, I'm only familiar with sort of the shopping Georgetown and everything like that.

Joyce Hawkins [00:07:49] Shops were there, but they weren't... There was a candy store up there that sold all types of candy, and there was a Woolworth, which I went to get my doll babies at. They had the biggest doll clothing selection.

Kerry James Reed [00:08:03] Hmm, really.

Joyce Hawkins [00:08:07] Yeah, I saved up my money for a $2 something doll. And when I finally got the money and went up there to get the doll, I was coming back through Rose Park and there was a big storm coming. And I remember, just like, moving real fast to get home so I could play with my doll. And I had already picked out the new outfits that I was going to purchase, but that [*laughing*] didn't come to be.

Kerry James Reed [00:08:38] Was it an American Girl doll, or was it—

Joyce Hawkins [00:08:40] No, it was just, most dolls were white back then. It was just a little tiny doll, but her hair came out her head and kept getting longer and longer. I was excited about that for some reason [*laughing*].

Kerry James Reed [00:08:56] [*Laughing*] That's really fun. So, you mentioned the doll store and the candy store. Were there any other notable businesses in your neighborhood or in Georgetown that you can recall?

Joyce Hawkins [00:09:06] The little mini mall. It was supposed to be a mall, but we were so excited about it. It was where the Wawa is, upstairs, it was a little mini mall. I don't believe it was 6 stores.

Kerry James Reed [00:09:23] Hmm, interesting.

Joyce Hawkins [00:09:24] Yeah.

Kerry James Reed [00:09:25] I've never heard that before.

Joyce Hawkins [00:09:27] And then we played at Rose Park, at Montrose Park. And played on the bike trail. But I don't think the bike trail was really a bike trail. I think it was just like a dirt path.

Kerry James Reed [00:09:51] Is that the Rock Creek bike trail?

Joyce Hawkins [00:09:53] Mm-hmm.

Kerry James Reed [00:09:53] Can you remember when it became a proper bike trail and you started to see a lot of people on it?

Joyce Hawkins [00:10:01] A lot of people went on it because it stopped at the [National] Zoo. I remember that, it stopped at the [National] Zoo. That was the end of the trail.

Kerry James Reed [00:10:15] And really quick, you said you went to [Thaddeus] Stevens Elementary School. Is that still around?

Joyce Hawkins [00:10:20] Yes, but it's, I think it's like a special education school now.

Kerry James Reed [00:10:29] Oh, okay. Special education. What was it like going to school there?

Joyce Hawkins [00:10:36] It was wonderful, yeah, it was wonderful. We were in the newspaper a couple of times, a beautification project. I don't know if that's Lyndon Johnson or [Richard] Nixon, but they had a big beautification project, so we out front beautified the area and planted a Christmas tree. They recently tore down the Christmas tree though. Christmas was big. We learned instruments. We had physical education. Although, it didn't have a real cafeteria. It was just a little room. So, we had to eat in groups, like first, second, third, or fourth and fifth, and then six. And our lunches came packed already because there wasn't a cafeteria in there. And also, there wasn't an auditorium, so we sat in the hallways for when we had to go to the auditorium.

Kerry James Reed [00:12:03] You mentioned that the State Department had you all learn about countries like Bangladesh, Guatemala, El Salvador. Did those students come to [Thaddeus] Stevens Elementary?

Joyce Hawkins [00:12:16] Yes.

Kerry James Reed [00:12:19] Were there a lot of them, do you recall?

[00:12:21] Mm-hmm, yes.

Joyce Hawkins [00:12:23] My sixth-grade class picture looked like a United Nations picture.

Kerry James Reed [00:12:27] Oh, really? Oh, wow.

Joyce Hawkins [00:12:28] Yeah.

Kerry James Reed [00:12:33] That's so interesting to me because I've known about the history, particularly about the El Salvadorian community, but the Bangladesh and the Pakistani history escapes me.

Joyce Hawkins [00:12:44] It was East Pakistan and West Pakistan back then.

Kerry James Reed [00:12:47] Ah, that's right.

Joyce Hawkins [00:12:48] Two separate countries.

Kerry James Reed [00:12:49] That's right. Oh wow.

Joyce Hawkins [00:12:53] They were ahead of us in math.

Kerry James Reed [00:12:59] Really?

Joyce Hawkins [00:12:59] Yeah, they were way [more] advanced than us in math.

Kerry James Reed [00:13:04] What else do you remember about them?

Joyce Hawkins [00:13:08] They were nice. Most of them lived at 21st [Street] and Newport Place. It was a big apartment building, most of them lived in there. They mostly stayed to themselves after school. But we loved them.

Kerry James Reed [00:13:29] Was that a big apartment building in your neighborhood?

Joyce Hawkins [00:13:32] Yes, mm-hmm.

Kerry James Reed [00:13:37] So when you all would go to the Francis Rec though, they wouldn't...

Joyce Hawkins [00:13:40] No, they didn't come to the recreation.

Kerry James Reed [00:13:43] Interesting, that's very interesting. You mentioned that in your household it was yourself, your brother, your mother, and your grandmother.

Joyce Hawkins [00:13:57] And my sister.

Kerry James Reed [00:13:58] And your sister. Okay.

Joyce Hawkins [00:13:59] Two brothers, my sister, my grandmother, and my mother.

Joyce Hawkins [00:14:03] Could you tell me everybody's names, starting with your grandmother down?

Joyce Hawkins [00:14:07] Virginia Hawkins, Mary Hawkins, Nathaniel Hawkins, Barbara Hawkins, Anthony Hawkins, and me, Joyce Hawkins.

Kerry James Reed [00:14:16] So, Virginia Hawkins, Mary Hawkins, Nathaniel Hawkins, yourself, and what are the other two?

Joyce Hawkins [00:14:26] Barbara Hawkins and Anthony Hawkins.

Kerry James Reed [00:14:28] Barbara and Anthony, okay. What was the age difference between the siblings?

Joyce Hawkins [00:14:42] We were like two years apart.

Kerry James Reed [00:14:44] Okay. Where are you in the order?

Joyce Hawkins [00:14:47] I'm the youngest.

Kerry James Reed [00:14:48] Youngest? Okay. Can you describe your grandmother?

Joyce Hawkins [00:14:58] My grandmother was reserved. She tolerated us, because I know we made a lot of noise, and I played the record player real loud. She was somewhat quiet, but she was stern. She's only saying something one time, and one time only. Then you may get the look.

Kerry James Reed [00:15:36] The look?

Joyce Hawkins [00:15:37] The look.

Kerry James Reed [00:15:38] Can you describe the look?

Joyce Hawkins [00:15:39] The look is saying so many more words than what she asked you to do.

Kerry James Reed [00:15:49] [*Laughing*]. Absolutely, absolutely. Oh, that's funny. What does she look like? Was she a tall woman? Short woman?

Joyce Hawkins [00:15:55] She was mid-height. She had real curly hair, but it was real, real thick. She wore dresses. She didn't own a pair of pants. I thought that was unique. And her famous trench coat, London Fog coat.

Kerry James Reed [00:16:20] Really?

Joyce Hawkins [00:16:20] Yeah.

Kerry James Reed [00:16:21] Interesting.

Joyce Hawkins [00:16:22] Yeah. My brother was in a 4-H club, and he went on a trip to Chicago. And like, I don't even remember anyone else in the neighborhood ever flying. So, he was flying. So, she took us to National Airport, to see him off. I mean, it was like, we were so excited. Like, you would [have] thought we were flying on that flight, and he sent us a postcard, and everybody around it, reading it. Like we were just so excited because no one in the neighborhood flew anywhere.

Kerry James Reed [00:17:00] You said he was in the 4-H club?

Joyce Hawkins [00:17:01] 4-H club, it was at the Church of the Pilgrims at 22nd [Street] and P [Street].

Kerry James Reed [00:17:05] Okay.

Joyce Hawkins [00:17:06] Yeah.

Kerry James Reed [00:17:10] You said Church of the Pilgrims?

Joyce Hawkins [00:17:11] Yeah, Church of the Pilgrims.

Kerry James Reed [00:17:13] 22nd [Street] and P [Street].

Joyce Hawkins [00:17:15] 22nd [Street], that would be 23rd [Street], because it's around the back part.

Kerry James Reed [00:17:22] So that's a rather unique combination, dresses and a long London trench coat.

Joyce Hawkins [00:17:28] She had that on when we went to… We had, you know, it wasn't a subway then, so we had to catch… most of the buses that went to Virginia left at 10th [Street] and Penn[sylvania Avenue]. And so, caught the bus over to National Airport.

Joyce Hawkins [00:17:44] Interesting, what did National [Airport] look like back then?

Joyce Hawkins [00:17:48] I think it was only one part.

Kerry James Reed [00:17:50] Was it only one?

Joyce Hawkins [00:17:51] Yeah, the old part, where Southwest is, that was it. Yeah, yeah. That I recall.

Kerry James Reed [00:17:57] Yeah, I can't even imagine that. I've only ever known National [Airport] when it's just bustling all the time with the three terminals and everything. Oh, wow.

Kerry James Reed [00:18:05] That was the only terminal that I'd seen it.

Kerry James Reed [00:18:07] [*Laughing*]. So can you describe... Oh really quick, how old was your grandmother when you all were growing up?

Joyce Hawkins [00:18:19] I want to say she probably was in her late 40s. Because of course, we didn't ask questions like that back then [*laughing*].

Kerry James Reed [00:18:30] [*Laughing*]. Okay, so like late 40s, early 50s maybe?

Joyce Hawkins [00:18:34] Yeah. 70, yeah, she's going to be late 40s, early 50s.

Kerry James Reed [00:18:45] Okay. Can you describe your mother?

Joyce Hawkins [00:18:48] My mother, I loved my mother. My mother was independent. What's the word for making sure something's done?

Kerry James Reed [00:19:08] Responsible, maybe? Or...

Joyce Hawkins [00:19:09] Yeah, responsible for her children. She made sure we had proper clothing, food to eat, and especially manners. I didn't know manners goes such a long way, but yeah.

Kerry James Reed [00:19:28] Absolutely.

Joyce Hawkins [00:19:28] She partied on the weekend, her and her girlfriends in the neighborhood. They partied, her best friends.

Kerry James Reed [00:19:41] Do you remember where they would go?

Joyce Hawkins [00:19:46] On a back patio on Newport Place. Yeah, that's where they were. That was it. That was it. That was their party every weekend.

Kerry James Reed [00:20:02] Sounds fun.

Joyce Hawkins [00:20:03] Yeah.

Kerry James Reed [00:20:05] So what would the kids be doing? Would you all be watching?

Joyce Hawkins [00:20:08] Running around, playing on the street. What's that, green light, red light. Mostly running, playing.

Kerry James Reed [00:20:24] What did your mother do for work?

Joyce Hawkins [00:20:27] She was a housekeeper.

Kerry James Reed [00:20:29] Housekeeper?

Joyce Hawkins [00:20:30] Yeah, that's the proper way of saying it. She worked for [a] Sheraton Hotel, for like 40 years.

Kerry James Reed [00:20:46] And then, what did your grandmother do?

Joyce Hawkins [00:20:48] My grandma was a housewife. Stayed at home.

Kerry James Reed [00:20:59] Was it Nathaniel or was it Anthony that you would go fish with?

Joyce Hawkins [00:21:03] Anthony.

Kerry James Reed [00:21:03] Anthony? Okay. Could you describe your siblings?

Joyce Hawkins [00:21:09] Nathaniel was very intelligent, liked to put together the matchbox cars with the tiny pieces. Nathaniel, he went to Secret Service on his summer job, and he stayed there for 47 years.

Kerry James Reed [00:21:29] Secret Service?

Joyce Hawkins [00:21:30] That was his only job.

Kerry James Reed [00:21:32] Oh, wow.

Joyce Hawkins [00:21:35] Yeah, he never had another. He was like the only person I know who just had one job their whole life. He worked in the IT section, computer room.

Kerry James Reed [00:21:48] Mm-hmm.

Kerry James Reed [00:21:49] He wasn't an agent. Barbara is authoritative. She liked to be in charge. What she did, she took all the neighborhood children, she was the one to gather everyone and took us all over Georgetown, wherever. Anthony was a typical boy, just running around playing, getting into mischief. But he took me along with him.

Kerry James Reed [00:22:27] Sounds fun. When we talked on the phone previously, you had mentioned that you didn't really know much about your great-grandmother growing up.

Joyce Hawkins [00:22:44] Right, I didn't know anything about her.

Kerry James Reed [00:22:46] So were there never any conversations in the home about family history or anything like that?

Joyce Hawkins [00:22:52] No.

Kerry James Reed [00:22:52] Interesting.

Joyce Hawkins [00:22:55] I told you I thought everything started with my grandma because she could see through walls.

Kerry James Reed [00:23:00] [*Laughing*]. Yeah.

Joyce Hawkins [00:23:02] I never asked her about her mother, or... Never.

Kerry James Reed [00:23:10] Interesting. Was your grandfather, was he living with you all as well?

Joyce Hawkins [00:23:22] No.

Kerry James Reed [00:23:22] Okay. Got it. I've got to tell you, your grandmother paints an intimidating picture. Oh, my word, seeing through walls and the stern eyes. Oh gosh [*laughing*]. Oh, that's so funny. Without these conversations of family history in the home, when did you start to have an interest in your own family history?

Joyce Hawkins [00:24:03] I want to say it was... I still have the paper I wrote it on. It was 1975 or [197]6? It could have been [19]77, somewhere between [19]75 and [19]77. And I only had 4 names, which was me, and my siblings, and my mother, and grandmother. So, I guess that's 6 names. That's all I had.

Kerry James Reed [00:24:32] What was the cause for writing that down on a piece of paper?

Joyce Hawkins [00:24:37] I just wanted to start somewhere.

Kerry James Reed [00:24:45] What prompted that? Like why did you want to start?

Joyce Hawkins [00:24:51] I don't know. I think I wanted to know why my grandmother, how she ended up at [the] West End part of the city as opposed to other parts of the city. And I found out she never really left the area, because from... I like to go to Hayes Point, because I could watch the whole migration route from Alexandria to Rosslyn to Georgetown and Northwest D.C.

Kerry James Reed [00:25:26] When did that migration route start in your family? Because you mentioned that, I think it was, was it your grandmother that was born in D.C.?

Kerry James Reed [00:25:38] Yes. 1916. In Georgetown.

Kerry James Reed [00:25:44] So your grandmother was born in the District [of Columbia], but it was your great-grandmother, Maggie Williams Hoskins, that was born...

Joyce Hawkins [00:25:54] Supposed to be Alexandria, [Virginia].

Kerry James Reed [00:25:55] Yeah, Alexandria, got it. So that, what have you learned about that migration route, as you called it? How did your family end up in the District [of Columbia]?

Joyce Hawkins [00:26:10] The route wasn't that far after all. Yeah, from Alexandria to Georgetown to Rosslyn and northwest Washington. That's what I found out.

Kerry James Reed [00:26:28] When did you find that out? Because you started writing down the family history in 1977.

Joyce Hawkins [00:26:32] I just found that out in the, I want to say, early 2000s? From my grandmother's birth certificate, I found my great-great-grandmother's name in Alexandria, but I didn't know anything beyond that until last summer.

Kerry James Reed [00:26:57] So you found the birth certificate in the early 2000s?

Joyce Hawkins [00:27:01] Yeah, I found the birth certificate.

Kerry James Reed [00:27:09] What was it like to learn about your great-grandmother for the first time?

Joyce Hawkins [00:27:16] It was interesting because, now that was a little further back, but I hit a brick wall. But her ages fluctuate, like on the death certificate, which I found out gave the most information. It has [that] she's born in 1900, but that doesn't line up with the other ages on the other children's birth certificates. So, I'm thinking she was born a few years before 1900. And they didn't put down the name of the informant, which threw me off, so I don't know who gave the information. Did they really know her or what?

Kerry James Reed [00:28:15] So you've learned about her death. What else have you learned about your great-grandmother?

Joyce Hawkins [00:28:24] I don't know where she's buried at. I'm trying to go from there. That's all. It looked like she was a housewife. She lost three children before she passed. Two babies, and the other one, she died at, I think she was 14. She died of T.B.

Kerry James Reed [00:28:58] Ah man, that was a horrible way to go. How did you find all this information out?

Joyce Hawkins [00:29:09] Through Ancestry, Census Records, Library, National Archives.

Kerry James Reed [00:29:20] Was that a library here in Alexandria?

Joyce Hawkins [00:29:21] Yes, Queen Street Library.

Kerry James Reed [00:29:24] Oh, the Kate Waller [Barrett Branch Library] one, right there. Oh wow.

Joyce Hawkins [00:29:29] That's how I found out she was buried in Alexandria, through Ancestry. The AI has gone through the obituaries and grouped the names together. So that's how I found out. Then I went to the library, found out the cemetery, and walked down there.

Kerry James Reed [00:29:53] So when you walk down from Kate Waller [Barrett Branch] Library here on Queen Street down to South Payne [Street], where Douglass [Memorial Cemetery] is, what was your reaction to seeing Douglass [Memorial Cemetery] for the first time?

Joyce Hawkins [00:30:06] Hmm, a little overwhelming. I knew she was buried there, but I kept looking, and I didn't find her headstone. But then I read the history that a lot of headstones are missing.

Kerry James Reed [00:30:28] How many times have you gone down there, to Douglass [Memorial Cemetery]?

Joyce Hawkins [00:30:32] I believe I've only been one time so far.

Kerry James Reed [00:30:34] Okay. And that's when the tour guide approached you as well?

Joyce Hawkins [00:30:39] Yeah, the tour guide approached me while I was looking for the headstones and linked me up with Michael, who linked me up with you.

Kerry James Reed [00:30:50] So when you found out there was a whole descendant group trying to find out more about their ancestors like you have been, what were your thoughts about that?

Joyce Hawkins [00:31:03] What, the other group people?

Kerry James Reed [00:31:06] Yeah, well, just that there's a group trying to do the same thing that you're doing.

Joyce Hawkins [00:31:10] Oh yeah, I thought that was amazing because this is the second Black cemetery. You know, she lost her two children, they're buried at Mount Zion up in Georgetown Cemetery. So yeah, it's been interesting. Making me feel a little more complete.

Kerry James Reed [00:31:29] Yeah, absolutely. So, the children she lost are buried at Mount Zion. So, was your great-grandmother living in the District [of Columbia]?

Joyce Hawkins [00:31:40] No, she was living in Georgetown.

Kerry James Reed [00:31:42] Georgetown? Of course.

Joyce Hawkins [00:31:48] It's on Grace Street, and then it's a court that comes right off of Rosslyn, I mean off Key Bridge. As soon as you make that first right, I can't think of the name. It's a court.

Kerry James Reed [00:32:05] I think I can picture what you're talking about.

Joyce Hawkins [00:32:07] There's a lot of shops and offices back there now.

Kerry James Reed [00:32:12] Grace Street, yeah. So, when did you sign up for Ancestry.com?

Joyce Hawkins [00:32:20] I signed up back in the [19]90s, it was free.

Kerry James Reed [00:32:24] [19]90s?

Joyce Hawkins [00:32:25] Mm-hmm. But you know, you have to pay for it now.

Kerry James Reed [00:32:27] Right, right, right.

Joyce Hawkins [00:32:27] It was late [19]90s, [19]97, [19]98.

Kerry James Reed [00:32:35] So I'm just curious about the timeline because you started, well, I guess it's fair to say you had an idea about your missing family history, starting in [19]77, right? And then you started your research in the late [19]90s, [19]97, [19]98 with Ancestry.

Joyce Hawkins [00:32:57] Well, I tried to start it with my [aunt], because they had a list of questions down to ask the oldest member in your family about your history. So I went to my aunt, Aunt Purcell, that's her name. And I asked her, has she been married? She said yes. I said, how many times? She said five. And I said... Why you was married so many times? And she said, mind your business, child. And that was the end of the interview.

Kerry James Reed [00:33:34] [*Laughing*]. That was funny.

Joyce Hawkins [00:33:39] That was it.

Kerry James Reed [00:33:41] So this was, this is your aunt.

Joyce Hawkins [00:33:43] Yes, that was right after when I wrote the names down. She's a great-aunt, supposed to be my grandmother's sister, or great-great-grandmother's sister.

Kerry James Reed [00:33:57] Okay. So, her last name was Hawkins as well? Purcell?

Joyce Hawkins [00:33:59] No, because she had been married five times.

Kerry James Reed [00:34:02] [*Laughing*]. Right.

Joyce Hawkins [00:34:08] [*Laughing*]. I think she's a Williams, but what I can see, I found a couple of her husbands, but I believe she was a Williams.

Kerry James Reed [00:34:23] How did it feel that your family members were reluctant to talk about their own history?

Joyce Hawkins [00:34:32] I guess they went through a lot. Like my grandma's brother, he was in World War II, and he was missing behind enemy lines for like two, three years in the Italian campaign. So, I guess they went through a lot of tragedy and trauma that they didn't really want to talk about.

Kerry James Reed [00:35:01] How did you learn about, well, I guess that'd be your great-uncle who was in... How did you learn about him?

Joyce Hawkins [00:35:08] Well, the government is pretty good at keeping records. So, through his government, military records and stuff. But my mother did tell me he had been missing in action, but her timing was wrong. I think she said something like a year or something, but it was like three years or something. Yeah, it was a while.

Kerry James Reed [00:35:30] That's incredible.

Joyce Hawkins [00:35:32] He was behind enemy lines.

Kerry James Reed [00:35:32] Oh my gosh, three years, my word. So, did you find that out at the National Archives?

Joyce Hawkins [00:35:45] Yes.

Kerry James Reed [00:35:46] When did you start to go to the National Archives?

Joyce Hawkins [00:35:54] I sent away for that because they mailed it to you, the military records. But I started going to [the] National Archives because they used to have a genealogy festival every year.

Kerry James Reed [00:36:06] Mm, okay.

Joyce Hawkins [00:36:07] Yeah, I don't know if they have it anymore, but it was free, and so I want to say that might have been about 10 years ago or more.

Kerry James Reed [00:36:20] I didn't know they had a genealogy festival

Joyce Hawkins [00:36:21] Yeah, they used to have it every year. Yeah, big one. A lot of free information. Most of the stuff was free back then. They gave out CDs and everything.

Kerry James Reed [00:36:34] Interesting. How many family members have you discovered since beginning your research? Just like a general sense.

Joyce Hawkins [00:36:59] How many family members I've discovered?

Kerry James Reed [00:37:01] Yeah. So, you know, like you've learned the names about them.

Joyce Hawkins [00:37:05] You're talking about in the past? I want to say about 5 or 6. Yeah, my mother also gave me a piece of paper, well, she didn't give me a piece of paper, she gave me the names of her sisters. So, I've been trying to group these names together. But she gave me Mandy and Molly, and then I found out it's Amanda. And Margaret. So, they're on the obituary. Yeah, her obituary.

Kerry James Reed [00:37:56] Do you know why your great-grandmother was buried in Alexandria as opposed to being buried in Mount Zion in Georgetown?

Joyce Hawkins [00:38:03] I think her family was here in Alexandria, and she had already purchased her plot and everything. Yeah, because that was in the library.

Kerry James Reed [00:38:15] Did it say when she purchased her plot?

Joyce Hawkins [00:38:17] It doesn't say. I didn't really pay attention to that. but she had purchased her plot and everything.

Kerry James Reed [00:38:30] She purchased the plot, and then when was she buried?

Joyce Hawkins [00:38:35] 1939, December the 2nd, 1939. Or was it the 1st?

Kerry James Reed [00:38:45] December 2nd, 1939. Got it. So, you also mentioned to me that your research into your family history lately has hit somewhat of a brick wall. Could you describe that to me?

Joyce Hawkins [00:39:04] The brick wall is that I can't find her mother's maiden name. On the death certificate it has John Williams, which is her father, like they're very, very sure that's her father. But the mother's name was Mary and a question mark.

Kerry James Reed [00:39:29] What is it like running into these difficulties?

Joyce Hawkins [00:39:34] A little frustrating. Sometimes I just put it away and wait for a month, 2 months, or whatever, and pick it back up.

Kerry James Reed [00:39:48] So I think your research journey to learn more about your kin has been pretty incredible because you've gone from the libraries here in Alexandria all the way to the National Archives and that's a lot more work than most people would put in to learning about their kin, their family history. So, I guess, what is your motivation behind doing all this?

Joyce Hawkins [00:40:17] I'm writing a book, but to leave the information for the younger generation. So, when they're in the doctor's office, and the doctor asks them what runs in their family, they won't be stumped. They'll know the diseases that run in their family, so they can prepare themselves for it.

Kerry James Reed [00:40:43] Why do you think that's so important?

Joyce Hawkins [00:40:47] Health is always important.

Kerry James Reed [00:40:53] Why did you decide that you were going to write this book?

Joyce Hawkins [00:40:56] Probably within the last year, so... The information kept piling up.

Kerry James Reed [00:41:10] Very interesting. [*Sound of a bag or briefcase being opened*]. Oh, you brought some research. Oh, wow. Oh, my word. This is a whole manuscript.

Joyce Hawkins [00:41:30] That's the book.

Kerry James Reed [00:41:31] Ms. Hawkins has just given me at least 100 plus pages, I would say, of her research. Oh wow. This is incredible.

Joyce Hawkins [00:41:42] That's where she was born, on Grace Street, and the midwife's house is right here. And they were born in one of these apartment buildings, the one with the address.

Kerry James Reed [00:41:58] This is gorgeous, this is very impressive. This is more organized than I am and I do my research. Have you shown this to your family?

Joyce Hawkins [00:42:15] Yeah, I gave a couple of them copies. I asked for whatever they could tell me on the siblings. Any type of information or stories they could remember on the siblings. I haven't received anything back. Guess they don't want me to fill it in.

Kerry James Reed [00:42:40] This is incredible. I guess, are there any really pressing questions that you have in your mind, like a missing link that you feel would solve everything?

Joyce Hawkins [00:42:55] Yeah, I think it's going to have to be through the DNA part now.

Kerry James Reed [00:42:59] The DNA part?

Joyce Hawkins [00:43:00] Yeah, because I'm stumped.

Kerry James Reed [00:43:02] When did you start that process?

Joyce Hawkins [00:43:04] Just recently. Probably not even a year. I take classes on it.

Kerry James Reed [00:43:20] Where are those classes offered?

Joyce Hawkins [00:43:23] FamilySearch.

Kerry James Reed [00:43:24] FamilySearch.

Joyce Hawkins [00:43:26] They have a Zoom meeting once a month. So, I was doing the beginner's DNA, but I find it easier. First, I didn't know what they were talking about in advanced DNA. But as I go to the advanced DNA and listen to them, when I go back to the basic DNA, I'm more aware of what they're saying.

Kerry James Reed [00:43:49] Yeah, absolutely. So, this class meets once a month. Is it free?

Joyce Hawkins [00:43:58] Yes.

Kerry James Reed [00:43:59] Oh, that's good. That's very good. What are you trying to learn with this DNA type of research?

Joyce Hawkins [00:44:07] I'm trying to learn her siblings, her mother or siblings. My great-great-grandmother.

Kerry James Reed [00:44:13] What is the method behind it? What are they teaching you how to do?

Joyce Hawkins [00:44:19] Uh, now they've narrowed it down to, uh... like your second cousin or your first cousin. And then you can see the other people who they're related on their end. They're the aunt of, or the niece or nephew. It's like narrowed down now. I believe once we have our… because we have an in-person class, we just started and they have people who are more advanced and who also do DNA work. So, I think once they look at it, they're going to be able to tell right away, okay.

Kerry James Reed [00:45:00] That's terrific, that's great. This is so cool, I'm sorry I just can't…

Joyce Hawkins [00:45:09] So I had pictures of everyone except for my great-great grandmother. And my uncle told me she had a Bible. He said she had a Bible, and it had all the names in it of people in the family. He said it's like a raggedy Bible, but she had it all the time. And I sure wish I could find that Bible.

Kerry James Reed [00:45:32] Yeah, I'll say.

Joyce Hawkins [00:45:32] Or maybe some family member has that Bible.

Kerry James Reed [00:45:40] So this is your Uncle Leroy, who told you that?

Joyce Hawkins [00:45:44] Yes. That's my mother's brother.

Kerry James Reed [00:45:50] This is great. This is a lot of good research. So, you mentioned to me before that you think that your family has some origins in Fairfax?

Joyce Hawkins [00:46:02] Yeah, I believe so.

Kerry James Reed [00:46:04] Why do you think that?

Joyce Hawkins [00:46:06] Because like the first, I want to say 12, 14 people that I'm kin to in the DNA, their common ancestor [is] this one lady, who was Mariah.

Kerry James Reed [00:46:24] Did you know her last name?

Joyce Hawkins [00:46:24] Radcliffe Lee.

Kerry James Reed [00:46:26] Mariah Radcliffe?

Joyce Hawkins [00:46:27] Mariah Radcliffe Lee, she's a common ancestor.

Kerry James Reed [00:46:37] And then what is her timeline? Where, where does she…?

Joyce Hawkins [00:46:43] Her timeline should be, I want to say, right before my great-great-grandmother's.

Kerry James Reed [00:46:53] Ok, so it'd be…

Joyce Hawkins [00:46:55] Mid-1800s or something.

Kerry James Reed [00:46:57] Okay, interesting. And then what about finding her is a roadblock? Is there no information dating from before her, or why is that an endpoint?

Joyce Hawkins [00:47:11] No, she has a mother, Jane Jackson. And then the main point is Anne. Anne Radcliffe.

Kerry James Reed [00:47:27] Got it, got it, okay. So, what are your family member[s'] reactions when you go and you tell them that you've been doing all this research?

Joyce Hawkins [00:47:47] Oh, they love it. I'm trying to do the tree now, so I'm going to take classes. They have classes at the library. I'm going to try to do the tree, because I went online. I think Ancestry, they only go up to five generations, and I'm at seven. So, I want to do that. I'll have the book finished at our reunion next year, not this year.

Kerry James Reed [00:48:17] Oh, you're having a family reunion?

Joyce Hawkins [00:48:19] Yeah, we have family reunions.

Kerry James Reed [00:48:20] Oh, that's terrific.

Joyce Hawkins [00:48:19] Yeah, my sister started it.
Kerry James Reed [00:48:20] How many people attend the family reunions?

Joyce Hawkins [00:48:27] About 100 and something.

Kerry James Reed [00:48:28] Oh, wow. So, the family reunions, does this all stem from your...

Joyce Hawkins [00:48:36] The two sisters.

Kerry James Reed [00:48:38] Oh wow, that's incredible. Is everybody still in the D.C. area?

Joyce Hawkins [00:48:46] Yeah, well, some of them are in North Carolina. Yeah, Rocky Mountain. But the majority are in the D.C. area.

Kerry James Reed [00:48:54] Oh wow. That's so cool. Is your plan to give it to everybody?

Joyce Hawkins [00:49:02] What, the book? I don't know, they may have some photos.

Kerry James Reed [00:49:06] [*Laughing*].

Joyce Hawkins [00:49:07] I don't have the money for the book for everyone.

Kerry James Reed [00:49:09] That's a lot. Well, they can pay for it.

Joyce Hawkins [00:49:11] Or they could just take a picture on their phone and go print it out or something [*laughing*].

Kerry James Reed [00:49:17] That would be a lot, very impressive as a book in and of itself. Very interesting. Turning to Douglass [Memorial Cemetery], when the tour guide first approached you, what did he say?

Joyce Hawkins [00:49:41] Uh... He asked me, was I looking for someone? Because I was going back and forth. And he said, well, I have someone you could talk to. He named the organization.

Kerry James Reed [00:50:01] Douglass Advisory Group?

Joyce Hawkins [00:50:02] Right. He named them. And he said the guy, he was going to get in touch with him and give him my information. And he contacted me, Michael.

Kerry James Reed [00:50:15] What did Mr. Mike tell you about the Douglass Project when he first called you?

Joyce Hawkins [00:50:23] He said they were having a meeting maybe in the fall or something, and he would keep in touch with me, which he did, and he sent me links to reading and information on Douglas. Yeah, I found that interesting.

Kerry James Reed [00:50:43] So what did you think once you realized that your great-grandmother's gravesite had been so, neglected, I guess is a good word for it?

Joyce Hawkins [00:50:57] Well, I read a lot, and a lot of Black American cemeteries had been neglected or paved over. I've seen the research. The National Zoo was part of a Black cemetery that they put the zoo on. So, yeah. It wasn't surprising.

Kerry James Reed [00:51:31] When you attended our last meeting, and we were talking about the restoration that we're trying to do, how did you feel about that?

Joyce Hawkins [00:51:41] I think that's wonderful. We did, at Mount Zion, on Juneteenth day last year. They were restoring the stone.

Kerry James Reed [00:51:53] Do you visit Mount Zion frequently?

Joyce Hawkins [00:51:55] Yeah, I go there sometimes.

Kerry James Reed [00:51:58] I guess if you had to compare the two cemeteries, like which one looks better, [Mount] Zion or Douglass [Memorial Cemetery]?

Joyce Hawkins [00:52:10] Well, Mount Zion is partially in Rock Creek Park, and I love nature. But I was surprised there were so many cemeteries in [inaudible]. He told me 13.

Kerry James Reed [00:52:24] Yeah, there are a lot. There are an incredible amount of cemeteries. When you learned from Mr. Mike that there was going to be an oral history component to the Douglass Initiative, what we're trying to do, how did you feel about that?

Joyce Hawkins [00:52:48] I was elated.

Kerry James Reed [00:52:51] I'm glad. I'm always worried that I'm like an intimidating presence or something.

Joyce Hawkins [00:52:56] No, you're easy. I'm not even nervous.

Kerry James Reed [00:52:59] [*Laughing*]. Terrific, I'm glad to hear it. You know, I think it's fascinating, because when I have talked to a lot of descendants who are trying to find out more about their kin, there's always a common thread that the grownups, when they were little sort of seemed, like you mentioned, like brick-walled.

Joyce Hawkins [00:53:27] Distant.

Kerry James Reed [00:53:30] They just didn't really want to talk about the past. Yeah, or the family or anything like that. So, guess the question would be, in your family tree, do the younger generations, do they talk to you about your research? Are they interested in it at all?

Joyce Hawkins [00:53:47] Yes.

Kerry James Reed [00:53:48] What do you tell them about it?

Joyce Hawkins [00:53:50] As much as I can.

Kerry James Reed [00:53:55] Very interesting.

Joyce Hawkins [00:53:57] Yeah, especially my children.

Kerry James Reed [00:53:59] How many, how many kids do you have?

Joyce Hawkins [00:54:03] 3.

Kerry James Reed [00:54:02] 3? What are their names?

Joyce Hawkins [00:54:03] Terence, Chancellor, and Angel.

Kerry James Reed [00:54:08] They live in D.C. as well?

Joyce Hawkins [00:54:16] Well, Angel lives in Fairfax.

Kerry James Reed [00:54:30] That's really cool. It's amazing that you're sort of ending that tradition of being stonewalled. I think that's really cool. I guess another question I would have is... How do you describe your research to people that aren't aware of it? So, when you tell them about this project, like someone who has no idea about any of it, how do you describe it?

Joyce Hawkins [00:55:08] About the research or my family history?

Kerry James Reed [00:55:13] I guess both, but we can start with the research.

Joyce Hawkins [00:55:16] There are some people who I talk to, they're amazed by it, they're interested in it, but they don't know how to go about it.

Kerry James Reed [00:55:31] So, do you try to lead—?

Joyce Hawkins [00:55:32] Yes, always ways tell them which way to go, how to start.

Kerry James Reed [00:55:41] What do you think the importance of knowing your family history is?

Joyce Hawkins [00:55:45] You know you, and when you think you're going through something you're not really going through anything compared to what they've been through.

Kerry James Reed [00:55:57] Sort of larger perspective, absolutely. What about your family history? So, when you talk to people outside of your family tree about your family history, how do you describe it?

Joyce Hawkins [00:56:11] How do I describe the family history?

Kerry James Reed [00:56:13] Yeah, it was, you know, like…

Joyce Hawkins [00:56:15] Once I usually tell them the story, they're fascinated by it. I don't know. I just give my truth.

Kerry James Reed [00:56:30] Yeah, absolutely. Have you directed people, I guess, or, pointed people in the right direction to start this process a lot?

Joyce Hawkins [00:56:46] Yes.

Kerry James Reed [00:56:48] How does it, your friends, people in your community, who is asking?

Joyce Hawkins [00:56:49] Community. I just did a lady the other day, she owns a hairdresser and she was amazed because I pulled up the census of her family, and she saw her uncle and she saw which house they lived in and I was telling her all the information. I was like, they own that home. And then it was the first time I've ever seen a census where... Everyone on the street were some kin and they each gave each family information. Like one family gave information for the other family. That was the first time I encountered it

Kerry James Reed [00:57:33] That was for the hairdresser's family?

Joyce Hawkins [00:56:36] Yes.

Kerry James Reed [00:57:38] So there's an entire street of just kin. I can only imagine that, must've been a lot of fun and a big headache all at once [*laughing*]. Oh wow, that's so cool. Were they living in D.C. as well?

Joyce Hawkins [00:57:48] No, they were in Virginia.

Kerry James Reed [00:57:50] Okay, I'll just stay.

Joyce Hawkins [00:57:52] Wanda's on 7th. That's the name of her hair salon.

Kerry James Reed [00:58:06] Why do you think there's so much interest in what you do when you talk to people about your own research?

Joyce Hawkins [00:58:15] I believe most of my generation, you didn't ask the older people a lot of questions. So, I guess they would like to know their family history.

Kerry James Reed [00:58:32] Absolutely.

Joyce Hawkins [00:58:33] But I don't know if they had like the time and energy to go through all the paperwork. I worked in a reference room for computers. So, I memorized the cable television branch at FCC [Federal Communications Commission]. So, we had registrations for places all over the United States, every county, city, or whatever. So, a lot of it I memorized, but I'm also a speed reader. So it makes it easier for me to do research because I can read real fast and like that.

Kerry James Reed [00:59:09] That's really interesting. So you worked for the FCC [Federal Communications Commission]?

Joyce Hawkins [00:59:12] Yeah, one time.

Kerry James Reed [00:59:14] That's where you gain some of the skills to be able to do this stuff.

Joyce Hawkins [00:59:16] Right, in a research room.

Kerry James Reed [00:59:21] So you've been doing research then for a long time? That's really interesting.

Joyce Hawkins [00:59:28] I'm good at it too.

Kerry James Reed [00:59:29] Yeah, I'll say [*laughing*]. The proof is right here. Oh my word. So, when you saw some of these pictures for the first time, what emotions did you feel? I mean, I can only imagine.

Joyce Hawkins [00:59:42] What do you mean for the first time?

Kerry James Reed [00:59:43] So you mentioned the story about your great-grandmother being born to a midwife here in this photo of Grace Street.

Joyce Hawkins [00:59:49] No, that's my grandmother.

Kerry James Reed [00:59:50] Oh, that's your grandmother, I'm sorry. So, like seeing this picture for the first time—

Joyce Hawkins [00:59:55] Oh, this one here? I got this at the Georgetown Library. They had someone that went around and photographed all the streets up in Georgetown, and this was Grace Street. It's like 9 years before she was born.

Kerry James Reed [01:00:09] Oh, wow.

Joyce Hawkins [01:00:09] Yeah, it's 1899 or something like that. So it might be, yeah, about 15 years. I don't know the date on the [inaudible] right here. Yeah, that's 1895 to 1905, so that's about 11 years before she was born. And how to street looked.

Kerry James Reed [01:00:38] God, it looks so different. The cobblestone streets and everything like that. That's incredible.

Joyce Hawkins [01:00:42] And they lit the lamps. They lit the gas lamps for light.

Kerry James Reed [01:00:53] I could just pore over this forever.

Joyce Hawkins [01:00:55] You can look at it.

Kerry James Reed [01:01:01] I guess if we could reconstruct a sort of rudimentary family tree here today. So, if we were starting with your great-grandmother.

Joyce Hawkins [01:01:14] Great-great-grandmother.

Kerry James Reed [01:01:14] Yeah, great-great grandmother. Her name was…?

Joyce Hawkins [01:01:20] Maggie.

Kerry James Reed [01:01:21] Maggie..?

Joyce Hawkins [01:01:22] Williams Hawkins.

Kerry James Reed [01:01:23] Maggie Williams Hawkins. Then she was married to, I think you said, Joseph Hawkins?

Joyce Hawkins [01:01:28] Benjamin.

Kerry James Reed [01:01:28] Benjamin Hawkins. And they had 5 children, 3 of whom passed away, and then the 2 surviving sisters. So that was...

Joyce Hawkins [01:01:43] Louise and Virginia.

Kerry James Reed [01:01:45] Louise and Virginia. And then from them, there's a hundred plus descendants now with the family reunion. That's incredible. So then your grandmother was Virginia?

Joyce Hawkins [01:02:02] Right.

Kerry James Reed [01:02:06] How many children did Virginia have?

Joyce Hawkins [01:02:06] She had 3.

Kerry James Reed [01:02:12] 3? Okay. So, one of them was Mary, your mother.

Joyce Hawkins [01:02:15] Right. Leroy and Joseph.

Kerry James Reed [01:02:18] Mary, Leroy and Joseph. And then what about Louise?

Joyce Hawkins [01:02:29] Winston, Elizabeth, Margaret. What else is there? Oh, Virginia, and Elsie.

Kerry James Reed [01:02:56] And then your mother had the 4 children.

Speaker 3 [01:03:02] Right, 5, but I found out 5.

Kerry James Reed [01:03:07] 5. Interesting. So, you can see how, you know, it's amazing to me how this research can sort of build upon itself like this. All these family stories, it's incredible. When is the family reunion?

Joyce Hawkins [01:03:26] It's next year, so it will probably be June. We go down to Presidential Wilderness Resort. Chancellor Bill. Spotsylvania County. That's where we have it at.

Kerry James Reed [01:03:40] Is there a particular reason you all go there?

Joyce Hawkins [01:03:42] It's like a campground, and the children love it. And they're not on their phones, they're being children. And there's so much to do.

Kerry James Reed [01:03:54] That's excellent. Terrific. So, briefly, I know you mentioned that, growing up, you came over the bridge to Virginia a little bit. Did you ever come into Alexandria a little?

Joyce Hawkins [01:04:17] Yes, to the skating rink.

Kerry James Reed [01:04:19] The skating rink?

Joyce Hawkins [01:04:20] Mm-hmm.

Kerry James Reed [01:04:20] Where was the skating rink?

Joyce Hawkins [01:04:29] Where was the skating rink? Right off of GW Parkway [George Washington Memorial Parkway]? I don't know what street that was, I don't know what street that was.

Kerry James Reed [01:04:35] Okay. No problem.

Joyce Hawkins [01:04:37] Not far from here, I know that.

Kerry James Reed [01:04:39] What did the skating rink look like?

Joyce Hawkins [01:04:41] Wooden floor.

Kerry James Reed [01:04:43] Wooden floor.

Joyce Hawkins [01:04:43] I loved that skating rink, oh I loved that skating rink, it was so nice.

Kerry James Reed [01:04:54] How big was it?

Joyce Hawkins [01:04:56] It was large to me.

Kerry James Reed [01:04:59] Absolutely.

Joyce Hawkins [01:05:00] Yeah, it was a pretty big skating rink.

Kerry James Reed [01:05:06] Was it just you that came down here, or was it all your siblings?

Joyce Hawkins [01:05:08] No, my friends.

Kerry James Reed [01:05:010] Friends?

Joyce Hawkins [01:05:11] Yeah, just friends. Yeah, not my siblings.

Kerry James Reed [01:05:17] How often did you all come down?

Joyce Hawkins [01:05:19] Every week.

Kerry James Reed [01:05:20] Oh really? Oh wow, you must have been pretty good at it.

Joyce Hawkins [01:05:20] I think it was Friday night. I believe it was Friday night. It could have been Saturday, but it was Friday or Saturday, because Sunday we went to Kalorama in D.C.

Kerry James Reed [01:05:34] So what did a Friday night at the Alexandria skating rink look like?

Joyce Hawkins [01:05:41] I don't know, we were just fun, and we were teenagers, just having fun.

Kerry James Reed [01:05:46] Absolutely.

Joyce Hawkins [01:05:48] I remember it being real cold one night and... Ronald Reagan was getting ready to go in the office.

Kerry James Reed [01:05:57] Ronald Reagan.

Joyce Hawkins [01:05:57] Yeah, and there were so many limousines. We had to wait for all these limousines to pass, to get on. We was around by the Lincoln Memorial. I guess we're trying to get on 95 or get to the G.W. Parkway or whatever. Yeah. It was so many limos. I do remember that.

Kerry James Reed [01:06:28] Before they turned National [airport] into Reagan, I guess that was?

Joyce Hawkins [01:06:32] Right, of course [*laughing*].

Kerry James Reed [01:06:35] Travesty that is [*laughing*].

Joyce Hawkins [01:06:37] Yeah, I still call it National.

Kerry James Reed [01:06:39] Yeah, so do I. My parents, my dad, lived in Alexandria his whole life. I was born here.

Speaker 3 [01:06:45] Okay.

Kerry James Reed [01:06:46] Yeah, it's always been National to us. My grandfather lived in Georgetown when he was a baby before coming over here. But that must have been like in the 1910s at some time.

Joyce Hawkins [01:07:09] My uncle was born in a house right near the market.

Kerry James Reed [01:07:17] Really? Oh wow.

Kerry James Reed [01:07:20] When was that?

Joyce Hawkins [01:07:20] But he was born 1918, I believe. That's Uncle George, the one that was behind enemy lines. I can imagine what he learned at that market.

Kerry James Reed [01:07:31] Yeah [*laughing*].

Joyce Hawkins [01:07:32] Man, that little boy.

Kerry James Reed [01:07:36] That's so interesting.

Joyce Hawkins [01:07:40] Potomac Street.

Kerry James Reed [01:07:42] Because your uncle was growing up probably, really close to my grandfather.

Joyce Hawkins [01:07:49] Mm-hmm.

Kerry James Reed [01:07:50] And then my grandfather was in the Italian campaign as well.

Speaker 3 [01:07:52] Oh, he was?

Kerry James Reed [01:07:53] Yeah, he commanded tanks, so he was all over the place.

Kerry James Reed [01:07:58] This is fascinating how, you know, family history is intertwined like that. Ms. Hawkins, I've kept you here for about an hour and 10 minutes.

Joyce Hawkins [01:08:11] I don't feel like it.

Kerry James Reed [01:08:13] I know, right? It goes so fast when we're having fun. I have a couple [of] closing questions for you. But before I get there, just briefly, I would like to ask you some questions about basic things. So, you went to Stevens Elementary School, and then did you attend a middle school, or did you just go straight into high school?

Joyce Hawkins [01:08:35] We went to Francis.

Kerry James Reed [01:08:36] Francis? So, Francis Middle School

Joyce Hawkins [01:08:37] Francis bought Banner, but yeah. Because Francis and the neighborhood started gentrifying, and we [inaudible] to Banner.

Kerry James Reed [01:08:50] When did the neighborhood start to gentrify?

Joyce Hawkins [01:08:54] 1970s. Yeah, mid-[19]70s. Early [19]70s and mid-[19]70s. Somewhere around that line.

Kerry James Reed [01:09:01] Okay, what was the first thing to be gentrified in your neighborhood?

Joyce Hawkins [01:09:05] What do you mean?

Kerry James Reed [01:09:06] So they started the gentrification process in the middle of the [19]70s. So, when you were growing up, what was the first thing you saw that, "they're changing this," I guess?

Joyce Hawkins [01:09:24] I don't know, they started buying up the houses in the neighborhood.

Kerry James Reed [01:09:29] And demolishing them?

Joyce Hawkins [01:09:31] They didn't demolish them, they just purchased them. I think Mr. Blackie [Ulysses G. "Blackie" Auger Sr.] from Blackie['s] House of Beef, you remember that?

Kerry James Reed [01:09:49] No, I don't. Mr. Blackie?

Joyce Hawkins [01:09:51] Where the Marriott is on 22nd [Street] and M [Street].

Kerry James Reed [01:09:55] I know the Marriott, what was that?

Joyce Hawkins [01:09:57] It was Blackie's House of Beef.

Kerry James Reed [01:09:59] I've never heard of that before.

Joyce Hawkins [01:10:00] Oh, yeah, that was right there, 22nd [Street] and M [Street]. It was there at one time, and they built the Marriott behind it. And then, I don't know, I guess they just tore it down.

Kerry James Reed [01:10:16] Do you remember when they tore it down?

Joyce Hawkins [01:10:18] No, it had to be probably the [19]80s. Might have been the late [19]80s, [19]90s, I don't know. Or the Secret Service garage right there too. Cross from where Blackie's [House of Beef] was, they used to let us like look in the car and whatever. The President's car.

Kerry James Reed [01:10:39] Oh really? Oh wow. That's pretty cool.

Joyce Hawkins [01:10:43] Back then, they wouldn't dare do that today.

Kerry James Reed [01:10:44] Oh, no, no chance. Must be where your brother got interested in the Secret Service. He's like looking into the cars.

Joyce Hawkins [01:10:51] No, no, he just went there as a summer job. Yeah, they had summer jobs back then.

Kerry James Reed [01:11:00] I've never heard of those.

Joyce Hawkins [01:11:01] You've never heard of summer jobs?

Kerry James Reed [01:11:03] No, no, no, but like for like the Secret Service, that's pretty intense for a summer job.

Joyce Hawkins [01:11:06] Oh yeah, they put them in Secret Service. It was at 18th [Street] and G [Street] then.

Kerry James Reed [01:11:11] Okay. Oh, wow.

Joyce Hawkins [01:11:11] I don't know what he did, but they liked him. They loved him. Kept him there all year.

Kerry James Reed [01:11:21] I can only imagine this is an intense summer job for a kid. [In a humorous voice] We have to protect the president. That's fun. So, Stevens Elementary School, Francis Middle School.

Joyce Hawkins [01:11:34] And I went to Cardoza.

Kerry James Reed [01:11:35] Cardoza? Okay, Cardoza High School.

Joyce Hawkins [01:11:39] I was looking forward to going to Western.

Kerry James Reed [01:11:43] Western High School?

Joyce Hawkins [01:11:43] Yeah, up in Georgetown, but it is Duke Ellington now, but they closed it, when it became Duke Ellington.

Kerry James Reed [01:11:52] When did it become Duke Ellington?

Joyce Hawkins [01:11:53] I don't know what year that was.

Kerry James Reed [01:11:56] I didn't know Duke Ellington was anything else.

Joyce Hawkins [01:11:58] Yeah, it was Western High School.

Kerry James Reed [01:12:00] I didn't know that.

Joyce Hawkins [01:12:02] Yeah, it was Western High School. That's where my sister and brother, all them went there.

Kerry James Reed [01:12:18] Fascinating. And then you graduated, and then did you immediately start working for the FCC [Federal Communications Commission]?

Joyce Hawkins [01:12:25] Yes.

Kerry James Reed [01:12:31] FCC [Federal Communications Commission] job and then that was in the research room. Got it. How long did you work there?

Joyce Hawkins [01:12:43] I only worked there about 5 years.

Kerry James Reed [01:12:54] Got it, all right, terrific. Okay, Ms. Hawkins, so before I move on to some of my closing questions, is there anything else you would like to talk about? Anything about your research? Anything about growing up in the West End, anything like that.

Joyce Hawkins [01:13:14] Wish my girlfriend Renee was here because she can remember everything.

Kerry James Reed [01:13:20] Oh yeah? I'm happy to talk to you. I'll talk to anybody. I love doing this stuff. You just let me know and I'll do an interview.

Joyce Hawkins [01:13:27] Oh, okay.

Kerry James Reed [01:13:28] Yeah, it's fun for me. I love doing it. So, I guess one of the first questions I would have would be what do you hope comes out of all your research efforts?

Joyce Hawkins [01:13:43] That I learn who my great-great-grandmother's mother is.

Kerry James Reed [01:13:51] Why is that so important to you?

Joyce Hawkins [01:13:55] And her mother, because then that should be past that slavery blockade.

Kerry James Reed [01:14:11] Why is passing that slavery block so important in your mind?

Joyce Hawkins [01:14:20] Seeing who they were, what they were doing, it just seemed like it would be a milestone.

Kerry James Reed [01:14:32] Yeah, absolutely. What do you hope for the younger generations of your family?

Joyce Hawkins [01:14:44] I hope they'll be better off than this generation, yeah, than this generation.

Kerry James Reed [01:14:54] Absolutely.

Joyce Hawkins [01:14:54] They seem to be achieving it.

Kerry James Reed [01:14:57] And then what are your hopes for the Douglass Cemetery initiative moving forward?

Joyce Hawkins [01:15:10] To see the plan in its finished stage.

Kerry James Reed [01:15:18] Absolutely. And then how would you like to see people's family history treated moving forward?

Joyce Hawkins [01:15:38] I wish it could be more widespread.

Kerry James Reed [01:15:43] Absolutely. Lastly, if you could hold on to one memory forever, what would it be?

Joyce Hawkins [01:15:53] Growing up in Georgetown, West End.

Kerry James Reed [01:15:57] Catching all the fish, that one thing.

Joyce Hawkins [01:16:03] [*Laughing*]. Yeah, that too.

Kerry James Reed [01:16:05] Oh, that's funny.

Joyce Hawkins [01:16:05] The whole neighborhood.

Kerry James Reed [01:16:09] Absolutely Well, thank you so much Ms. Hawkins, but it's been an absolute blessing talking to you today. I had a lot of fun.

Joyce Hawkins [01:16:16] Thank you.

Kerry James Reed [01:16:19] Thank you.